



## ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

### Permanent International Secretariat

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BS/WG/CT/R(2017)1

#### REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM

**Burgas, Bulgaria, 20 November 2017**

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism (WGCT) was held in Burgas, Republic of Bulgaria, on 20 November 2017.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Georgi ALIPIEV, Expert, Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, and Mr. Rustam AZHDAR, Counsellor for Economic Affairs, Embassy of Ukraine to the Republic of Bulgaria.
3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:  
  
Republic of Armenia  
Republic of Bulgaria  
Hellenic Republic  
Republic of Moldova  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Republic of Turkey  
Ukraine
4. The representative of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) attended the Meeting as the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.
5. The Deputy Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, H.E. Mrs. Irena GUEORGUIEVA delivered a welcome statement (attached as **Annex I**).
6. The Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS H.E. Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES also delivered a welcome statement.
7. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex II** to the present Report.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

8. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex III**.

**AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL, AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

9. The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council and the follow up of the Declarations and the Statements of the Ministers in charge of Tourism since the last Meeting of the Working Group (BSEC Headquarters, 21 November 2016).

**AGENDA ITEM 3: ACTION TAKEN OR TO BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM COOPERATION AREAS**

10. The BSEC PERMIS presented brief information on the sub-items under this agenda item.

**a) Gastronomy and Wine Tourism and b) Film-induced Tourism**

11. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria, taking note of the proposal to shoulder the responsibility of collecting the relevant information concerning Gastronomy and Wine Tourism in order to have it published, declared its readiness to consider the above proposal and inform the BSEC Member States accordingly.

12. In response to the similar proposal on the Film-induced Tourism, the Hellenic Republic expressed its readiness to consider the proposal and to report back to the Working Group.

13. The Working Group took note of the Project “*Black Sea Cuisine*”, proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation, to be considered at the next meeting of the Working Group. The Russian Federation will prepare a Concept Paper on the issue for the next meeting.

14. The representative of Ukraine informed that an *Association for the Promotion of Gastronomy and Wine Tourism in Ukraine* was established, which will prepare the Ukrainian gastronomy map of the country.

15. The representative of Ukraine also informed that the 8<sup>th</sup> *Odessa International Film Festival* was held on 14-22 July 2017 and that the 9<sup>th</sup> *Odessa International Film Festival* will take place from 13 to 21 July 2018. The call for entries for the next Film Festival opens on 13 December 2017.

16. The Working Group took note of the statement by the representative of the UNWTO who invited BSEC Member States to attend UNWTO events on Gastronomy and Wine Tourism.

**c) Maritime, Nautical and Cruise Tourism**

- **Preparation of an International Conference on Attracting Cruise Tourism in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean**

17. The Working Group took note of the information, provided by the BSEC PERMIS and the UNWTO, on the preparations for the *International Conference on Attracting Cruise Tourism in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean*, to be organized jointly with the UNWTO and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, in April 2018 (TBC) in Istanbul. In view of the importance of the Conference, Member States together with other interested stakeholders were invited to actively participate in the preparation of the said event.

#### **d) Training in the field of Tourism**

18. Upon proposal of the representative of the Russian Federation, the Working Group decided to consider the proposal on the *University Environment Integration for Specialist Training in Tourism Sphere of the Black Sea Region* at its next meeting. The Working Group agreed to consider the removal of this proposal from its Agenda if no further information is provided until its next meeting.

19. The Working Group took note of the Paper containing various options on education and training of tourism professionals, prepared by the UNWTO Affiliated Tourism Training Centre of Boğaziçi University from Istanbul, and invited the Member States to submit to the BSEC PERMIS concrete proposals on the issue **by 28 February 2018**. The Paper is attached as **Annex IV**.

20. The Working Group agreed with the proposal of the BSEC PERMIS to proceed with the organization of a *Seminar on how to more effectively attract Chinese tourists to the BSEC Region*, in cooperation with the UNWTO.

21. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the UNWTO for its offer of three special sponsorship packages to the Silk Road Training and Capacity Building Programme.

#### **e) Cultural Routes/Cultural Tourism Projects**

22. The Working Group took note of updated information on the project the “*Cultural Port of the Black Sea*”, prepared by the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, and requested the proponents of the project to keep it informed on further developments.

23. The Working Group also took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the outcome of the *First Balkans and Black Sea Cooperation Forum* (Serres, Greece, 25-26 May 2017) and on the preparations for the second edition of the Forum, to be held in Thessaloniki on 30 May – 1 June 2018. The Working Group requested the BSEC PERMIS to keep it informed on further developments with regard to the activities of the Forum.

24. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria, informed that the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria has elaborated a total of 8 cultural and historical destinations /or routes/ on Bulgarian territory listed on the website of the Ministry, as follows:

- *The wealth of Northwest;*
- *Valley of Roses and Thracian Kings;*
- *Marine strongholds of Bulgaria;*
- *Capitals and cities of the Bulgarian tsars and patriarchs;*
- *Bulgarian architecture and craftsmanship;*
- *The magic of the Eastern Rhodopes;*
- *Sofia Sveta Gora;*
- *Struma.*

25. The representative of Romania presented and distributed the promotional materials created within the *Project of Collaborative Networks of Multilevel Actors to advance Quality Standards for Heritage Tourism at Cross Border Level (Alector)*; the Project was implemented by seven BSEC Member States (Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine).

26. The Working Group expressed its appreciation for the significance and usefulness of the above publications and invited the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States to consider proposing new or other concrete joint projects on cultural routes / cultural tourism.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE BSEC AND THE UNWTO**

##### **(i) Silk Road Projects**

27. The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on its cooperation with the UNWTO Silk Road Programme.

28. The Working Group invited relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States to come up **by 31 May 2018** with concrete proposals on *the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road Project* and also to contribute to *the Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative, as well as the Western Silk Road Heritage Map* within the UNWTO Silk Road Programme.

29. The representative of the Republic of Armenia presented a *Project on the “Silk Road Wine Trail Program”* and invited interested Member States to participate in the project. It is attached as **Annex V**. A relevant request from the Republic of Armenia will be sent to the BSEC PERMIS for its distribution among the BSEC Member States.

30. The Working Group encouraged participation of more Universities from BSEC Member States in the *Western Silk Road University Research Group*.

##### **(ii) Collection, Analysis and Interpretation of Data on Tourism of BSEC Member States**

31. The Working Group agreed with the proposal of the BSEC PERMIS to further cooperate with the Centre of Boğaziçi University for the collection, analysis and interpretation of tourism statistical data, with the support of the UNWTO, along the lines proposed in the paper prepared by the above Centre (attached as **Annex VI**), in order to develop an annual report, to be distributed among BSEC Member States.

32. The representative of the UNWTO presented the *Draft Edition of the First Working Document on Tourism in the BSEC Region* (attached as **Annex VII**) with vital and interesting information on tourism trends in the same region. The Working Group expressed its appreciation for this UNWTO initiative and invited the latter to continue this effort on an annual basis.

33. The representative of the UNWTO agreed on the proposal to include in the above *Draft Edition* a brief paragraph on its fruitful cooperation with the BSEC and distribute the final version as widely as possible.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 5: TOURISM EVENTS AND FAIRS IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING UNWTO'S INITIATIVE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT (IN 2017)**

34. The Working Group recalled its previous agreement to encourage organizers of one or two important tourism fairs / exhibitions in BSEC Member States to provide adequate space for the collective touristic presentation of other interested Member States, with material to be furnished to the organizers of the event by the former. The participants agreed to name in due course and **not later than the 28 February 2018**, any future Tourism events on their territory, during which the above presentation could be realized.

35. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria informed that the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria during the incoming Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU and in the second semester of 2018, will organize the following events:

- *High Level Ministerial Conference – „Tourism and Economic Growth“ (13 February 2018, Sofia);*

- *Holiday and SPA Expo (14-16 February 2018, Sofia);*
- *International round table – “Digital Transformation in Tourism” within Holiday and SPA Expo (15 February 2018, Sofia);*
- *Cultural Tourism Expo (5-10 April 2018 (TBC), Veliko Tarnovo);*
- *Cultural Tourism Round Table during the Cultural Tourism Expo (5-10 April 2018 (TBC), Veliko Tarnovo);*
- *International Forum on Tourism and Energy within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (23 May 2018, Sofia);*
- *Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States (14 June 2018, Varna (TBC));*
- *Annual Forum 2018 for the EUSDR (18-19 October 2018, Sofia);*
- *International Congress on World Civilizations and Ancient Routes (together with the UNWTO) (14-16 November 2018, Sofia).*

36. The representative of the Russian Federation informed the Working Group about following events, to be organized in the Russian Federation:

- *Annual International Tourism Market (Intourmarket) (10-12 March 2018, Moscow);*
- *FIFA Football World Championship (14 June – 15 July 2018, Volgograd, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Moscow, Nizhniy Novgorod, St. Petersburg, Samara, Saransk, Sochi, Rostov-on-Don).*

37. The representative of Ukraine informed on the following events to be organized in Ukraine and invited interested Member States to participate:

- *Ukrainian International Travel and Tourism Fair (28-30 March 2018, Kyiv);*
- *The 25<sup>th</sup> International Travel Market (3-5 October 2018, Kyiv).*

38. The representative of the UNWTO informed on the activities of the UNWTO on the implementation of the *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*. He underlined the importance of the active participation of the BSEC PERMIS in the annual *ITB Berlin* and *WTM London* and expressed his readiness to provide support in this direction.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

39. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria stated that the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria will inform in due course the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC on the proposal to hold a *Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States* (14 June 2018, Varna (TBC)).

40. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the Meeting.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**

41. The Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism adopted the present Report and submitted it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the BSEC Member States.