



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

BS/WG/T/R(2020)1

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON TRANSPORT**

Videoconference, 23 November 2020

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport was held online on 23 November 2020.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mrs. Viorica FILIP, Head of International Relations, European Affairs and International Relations Directorate, Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communications of Romania.
3. The participants were welcomed by Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS.
4. The following BSEC Member States participated in the Meeting:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Republic of North Macedonia
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
5. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) participated in the Meeting as a BSEC Related Body.
6. The representatives of the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and the Danube Commission participated in the Meeting in the capacity of the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners.

7. The representatives of the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the Conference of European Directors of Roads (CEDR), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Customs and Tourism Enterprises Co. Inc. (GTI) participated in the Meeting as Guests.

8. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

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

AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

a/ Appointment of representatives to the Working Group on Transport

10. In line with the resolution “Assessment of the work deployed in the BSEC Working Groups” adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States in Belgrade on 19 April 2007, the Working Group considered the list of representatives to the Working Group and took note of the updates to it.

11. The delegation of the Russian Federation provided updates to the said List.

12. The Working Group invited the BSEC Member States to timely update, whenever necessary, information regarding their representatives in the Working Group. The newly updated list of representatives is attached as **Annex III**.

b/ Nomination of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Transport

13. The Working Group welcomed the willingness expressed by Ukraine to assume the role of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Transport and invited the former to present its candidacy for this post officially at its earliest convenience.

c/ PABSEC recommendations on the transport related issues

14. The Working Group considered and decided to use in its work the following PABSEC Reports and Recommendations:

- PABSEC Report “Legal and Political Aspects of the Development of Transport Routes in the BSEC Region” and the PABSEC Recommendation 171/2019, adopted at the 54th Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly on 20 November 2019 in Sofia.
- PABSEC Report “Legislative Framework for the Realization of the Projects Connecting Europe and Asia (One Belt - One Road)” and the PABSEC Recommendation 174/2020, adopted at the 55th PABSEC General Assembly on 6 August 2020 at online meeting.

d/ Renewal of the PDF operations. Consideration of PDF project proposals

15. The Working Group took note of the information provided by PERMIS regarding the latest state-of-affairs of the Project Development Fund (PDF).

AGENDA ITEM 3: INTENSIFYING EFFORTS WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACK SEA RING HIGHWAY

16. The Working Group took note of the information of the BSRH Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat (JPTS) presented by PERMIS, regarding the implementation of decisions of the Tenth and Eleventh Meetings of the Steering Committee on the Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH SC), which were held at the BSEC Headquarters on 21 March 2018 and 11 November 2019, respectively. In this context, the Working Group invited the BSEC Member States, which have not yet provided their replies to the Questionnaire on the BSRH route passing on their territories, to do so at their earliest possible convenience.

17. The delegations of the Russian Federation and Ukraine informed the participants about the recent developments with regard to the BSRH project at the national level.

18. The Working Group took note that, in accordance with the Rotation List of the Steering Committee, the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Albania assumed, respectively, the Presidency and Vice-Presidency in the Steering Committee for a biannual period as of 1 November 2020.

19. The Working Group welcomed the PERMIS initiatives aimed at revitalizing the BSRH Project and invited the new leadership in the BSRH Steering Committee to organize the next meeting of the latter during the first semester of 2021, in cooperation with the BSRH JPTS, the BSEC PERMIS and in consultation with the incoming BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office. The objective of this meeting is to steer the next phase of work to the preparation of feasibility studies on selected segments of the BSRH in the territories of the Parties to the MoU, in order to attract the potential interest of the *Black Sea Trade and Development Bank* (BSTDB) and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

20. The Delegation of Ukraine made a Statement, which is attached as **Annex IV**.

21. The Delegation of the Russian Federation made a Statement, which is attached as **Annex V**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: STATE OF AFFAIRS WITH REGARD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA AT THE BSEC REGION

22. The Working Group took note of the information provided by BSEC PERMIS on the state of affairs with regard to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) in the BSEC Region and invited the Parties to the MoU to renew their efforts in this direction.

23. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic informed the participants about the recent developments with regard to the MoS project at the national level and delivered a Statement on behalf of Mr. Evangelos KYRIAZOPOULOS, Secretary General of Ports, Port Policy and Maritime Investments of the Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy. The Statement is attached as **Annex VI**.

24. The BSEC PERMIS informed the participants about its forthcoming consultations with Prof. Kurt BODEWIG, European Coordinator for the Motorways of the Sea, to be held online on 25 November 2020, with the aim to jointly explore the possibilities of establishing a

contact mechanism for potentially coordinating efforts concerning the Motorways of the Sea, especially in the Black Sea area.

25. The Working Group welcomed the PERMIS initiatives aimed at revitalizing the MoS Project and invited the leadership in the MoS Ad Hoc Working Group to organize the next meeting of the latter during the first semester of 2021, in cooperation with the MoS JTS, BSEC PERMIS and in consultation with the incoming BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office. The objective of this meeting is to steer the next phase of work to the preparation of feasibility studies for MoS projects in the territories of the Parties to the MoU, in order to potentially form a portfolio of bankable projects.

26. The Delegation of Ukraine made a Statement, which is attached as **Annex VII**.

27. The Delegation of the Russian Federation made a Statement, which is attached as **Annex VIII**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: FACILITATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS IN THE BSEC REGION

a/ COVID-19 and its impact on supply chains and mobility networks

28. The Working Group took note of the Report of the Informal Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, held via videoconference on 10 June 2020, and exchanged views on possible means and ways for economic recovery and mitigation of negative impacts of the pandemic on internal and international transports.

29. The Working Group welcomed the most urgent and feasible proposals put forward by the IRU and the BSEC-URTA aimed at finding concrete solutions to the problems, which aggravate the unimpeded functioning of the road-transport sector in the BSEC region, especially during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

30. Furthermore, the Working Group appreciated the valuable initiative of the BSEC PERMIS to upload to the PERMIS Website the packages of measures adopted by the Governments of BSEC Member States, in order to better inform all interested stakeholders in the region and to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19. The Working Group invited the respective Authorities responsible for transports to forward to PERMIS any updates on the measures adopted by them.

31. The representative of the IRU made a presentation «COVID-19 – Analysis of the impacts on road transport». The presentation is attached as **Annex IX**.

b/ Establishment of facilities for trucks at the border-crossing points (BCPs) in the BSEC area

32. The Working Group took note of the information, provided by the BSEC-URTA, regarding the current situation at the more congested border-crossing points (BCPs) between some BSEC Member States.

33. The Working Group welcomed the joint efforts of BSEC PERMIS, BSEC-URTA and IRU in taking practical steps, aimed at facilitating border-crossings in the BSEC Region, in particular through the establishment of modern and efficient border station facilities.

34. The participants took note of the presentation made by the representative of the *Customs and Tourism Enterprises Co. Inc. (GTI)* of Turkey on the Turkish experience in the development and modernization of BCPs, and exchanged views on possible steps to be undertaken for the due facilitation of border-crossings in the BSEC Region. The said presentation is attached as **Annex X**.

35. It was stressed by PERMIS that the experience of GTI Co. Inc. and other companies could serve as a useful example to any BSEC Member State wishing to modernize and upgrade the facilities at some of its border-crossing points. PERMIS encouraged the interested Member States to elaborate comprehensive proposals which could be placed under the consideration of potentially interested International Financial Institutions (IFIs) or other sources of financial support.

c/ "BSEC Permit System". State of affairs with regard to the implementation of the e-Permit Pilot Project

36. The Working Group took note of information presented by PERMIS and BSEC-URTA on the outcomes of the Meeting of the BSEC Member States participating in the Project "BSEC Permit System", held online on 21 October 2020, and arrangements made for the usage of the BSEC Permits in 2021.

37. The Member States participating in the project underlined the importance of the BSEC Permit System in the overall efforts to gradually liberalize the transport market in the BSEC Region, and welcomed the increase of the number of permits for the year 2021 from 1000 to 1500 pieces for the Republic of Albania, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine.

38. The participants welcomed the intention of the respective public transport authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia and the leadership of the country's Association of Enterprises for International Road Transport to join the "BSEC Permit System".

39. The Working Group took note of information presented by BSEC-URTA on the outcome of the Technical Meetings on the e-Permit Project, which were held, respectively, on 10-11 March 2020 (Ankara) and on 1 July 2020 (online), and on prospects for the implementation of the e-Permit Pilot Project.

AGENDA ITEM 6: COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BSEC SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNERS

40. The Working Group took note of the BSEC PERMIS information regarding the BSEC cooperation with the international organizations and the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners in the concrete fields, since its last meeting on 12 November 2019, and appreciated the valuable contribution of the partners to the BSEC cooperation on transport.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING COOPERATION RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BSEC AND THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN DIRECTORS OF ROADS (CEDR)

41. The Working Group took note of the presentation delivered by Mr. Steve PHILLIPS, Secretary General of the *Conference of European Directors of Roads (CEDR)*, as a special

guest, concerning the CEDR activities and possible areas of cooperation with BSEC. The presentation is attached as **Annex XI**.

42. The Working Group exchanged views on the issue and requested the BSEC PERMIS to explore ways and means for further exploring possibilities of a potential BSEC-CEDR cooperation.

AGENDA ITEM 8: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPORT OF THE MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES (24 NOVEMBER 2020, ONLINE)

43. The Working Group considered, amended and agreed on the text of the draft Report of the Meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Transport of the BSEC Member States (24 November 2020, Online). The text of the draft Report is attached as **Annex XII**.

AGENDA ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

44. No issues were raised under this Agenda Item.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

45. The Working Group adopted the present Report for its submission to Ministers in charge of Transport of the BSEC Member States, the Committee of Senior Officials and the 42nd Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.