



## ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

### Permanent International Secretariat

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BS/WG/ED/C(2019)

### CONCLUSIONS OF THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION

BSEC Headquarters, 14 November 2019

1. The Informal Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Education was held at the BSEC Headquarters on 14 November 2019.
2. The Informal Meeting was chaired by Mr. Panagiotis PASSAS, Director-General, President-in-Office of the Working Group of Education, Directorate-General for International and European Affairs, Education of Greeks of the Diaspora and Intercultural Education, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.
3. Opening remarks were made by the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES.
4. The following BSEC Member States participated in the Informal Meeting:  
  
Republic of Armenia  
Georgia  
Hellenic Republic  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Republic of Turkey
5. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC attended the meeting as the BSEC Related Body.
6. The representative of the Black Sea Universities Network attended the meeting as the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.
7. List of Participants of the Informal Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

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

8. The Draft Agenda of the Informal Meeting was considered and agreed on. The Agenda, as agreed, is attached as **Annex II**.

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

9. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council and the follow-up of Declarations and Statements adopted by the Ministers in charge of Education, since the last Meeting of the Working Group (BSEC Headquarters, 13 November 2018).

10. The Member States were requested to update the list containing the coordinates of their respective focal points in charge of Education (attached as **Annex III**) in order to facilitate a direct communication between the BSEC PERMIS and the relevant Ministries.

**AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE EVALUATION REPORT OF THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION (1 JANUARY 2018 – 31 DECEMBER 2019)**

11. The delegation of the Russian Federation, the current Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Education, briefly presented the Evaluation Report on the activity of the Working Group for the period of its Coordinatorship (1 January 2018 – 31 December 2019), including the key priorities of the Working Group, as well as the challenges and opportunities for further development of projects and initiatives within the Working Group.

12. The Russian Federation highlighted the importance to enhance involvement of experts in the field of education to the meetings of the Working Group or relevant back-to-back events and noted the need to utilize the experience of other regional organizations and expressed readiness to conduct an analysis and prepare a concept paper on best practices of regional cooperation.

13. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia suggested that the combination of physical presence and video conferencing should be considered as a way of participating in the meetings of the Working Group in order to ensure a quorum and greater participation of experts from the BSEC Member States.

14. The participants took note of the presented Evaluation Report and expressed their appreciation for the work done by the Country-Coordinator. The Evaluation Report is attached as **Annex IV**.

15. At the same time, the Hellenic Republic expressed its intention to assume the mandate of the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Education for the next two-year term, beginning on 1 January 2020.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: DISCUSSION OF CONCRETE PROPOSALS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT PROGRAMMES**

a) **Creation of a Leaflet/Brochure on Higher Education in Black Sea Region;**

16. The participants took note of the information provided by the Hellenic Republic on the progress of the finalization of the leaflet/brochure on Higher Education in the Black Sea Region.

17. The delegations of the Republic of Armenia, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey supported further development of the brochure on Higher Education in the Black Sea Region and highlighted the significance of utilization of digital technologies for more efficient presentation of the results to the targeted audience.

18. The participants called upon the Member States which have not yet responded to the above request to submit their relevant written contributions at their earlier convenience, preferably **by 31 January 2020**, in order to enable the Working Group to study the submitted information and come up with the relevant conclusions on the matter. (The Concept Note is attached as **Annex V**).

**b) Information Network in Recognition and Equivalency of Qualification in Higher Education among BSEC Member States;**

19. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey presented the Concept Paper on the Information Network in Recognition and Equivalency of Qualification in Higher Education among BSEC Member States prepared by the Turkish Council of Higher Education (attached as **Annex VI**).

20. The participant exchanged views on the presented Concept Paper and agreed to continue the discussion at the next meeting of the Working Group.

21. The Member States were invited to send their written comments and questions on the information network proposal to the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Turkey with a view to clarify and improve the content presented in the Concept Paper.

**c) Questionnaire on Cooperation Development in Education among the BSEC Member States;**

22. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS regarding the Member States that have so far responded to the Questionnaire on Cooperation Development in Education among the BSEC Member States. (**Annex VII**)

23. The participants invited the remaining Member States to respond to the request to send their written contributions on this matter as soon as possible, preferably before the next meeting of the Working Group.

**d) Black Sea Academic and Research Consortium;**

24. The delegation of the Russian Federation presented updates on the development of the Black Sea Academic and Research Consortium (BSAARC Initiative), developed by Southern Federal University, underlining that this initiative is open for any interested party.

25. The participants took note of the presentation of the Russian Federation and recommended to continue discussion on the issue at the next meeting of the Working Group.

**e) Other project proposals**

26. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia delivered a presentation on “*EDU2WORK*”. The presentation is attached as **Annex VIII**.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5: YOUTH AND SPORTS ISSUES AND EDUCATION**

27. The BSEC PERMIS informed on the second Workshop for Young Diplomats from the BSEC Member States on “The Role of Economic Diplomacy Today”, jointly organized by the BSEC PERMIS and the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, Turkey (KAS), which was held in Istanbul on 23-25 October 2019.

28. The delegation of the Russian Federation proposed to consider organization of a Workshop for talented young teachers / educators involved in the field of higher education from the BSEC Member States, preferably back-to-back to the Working Group on Education meeting, and expressed its readiness to prepare a relevant concept note.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WINNERS OF THE DRAWING COMPETITION “BLACK SEA; THE SEA THAT UNITES US”**

29. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic informed on the outcomes of the Drawing Competition “Black Sea; the Sea that Unites Us” and announced the winners. The top three ranked were students of the Secondary Education of the Republic of Moldova. The possibility of displaying the best awarded paintings during the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, to be held in Athens on 13 December 2019, was also considered. (The pictures of the awarded paintings are attached as **Annex IX**).

30. The participants underlined the importance of this and similar initiatives aimed at bringing young generations in the Black Sea Region closer and raising awareness among them about the role of the BSEC Organization. In this regard, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General suggested exploring the possibility of institutionalizing such events and replicating them on annual / biennial bases.

31. The participants also considered ways to ensure visibility of the awarded drawings. The representative of the BSEC PERMIS suggested, inter alia, exhibiting the works at the BSEC PERMIS Headquarters as well as creating the BSEC calendar for 2020 of the best 12 paintings.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

32. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the latest developments with regard to the discussion with UNESCO on the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two Organizations.

33. The representative of BSUN informed on the BSUN Congress, to be held in Yerevan, September 2020, concerning quality assurance in higher education.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

34. No discussion was held under this agenda item.

## **AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE INFORMAL MEETING**

35. The participants agreed on the present Conclusions for their submission to the next Meeting of the Committee of the Senior Officials of the BSEC Member States.