ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGIES**

BSEC Headquarters, 27 November 2019

1.   The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies was held at the BSEC Headquarters on 27 November 2019.

2.   The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Apostolos DIGBASSANIS, Counsellor for Economic and Commercial Affairs, Head of the Economic and Commercial Section of the Consulate General of the Hellenic Republic in Istanbul, and Mr. Sahak SARGSYAN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to BSEC.

3.   The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:

Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Hellenic Republic
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 2: REVIEW OF THE RECENT ICT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

6.   The participants discussed the recent developments in the field of ICT in the BSEC Member States and made presentations on the specific related issues linked to ICT activities in their countries.

7.   The delegation of the Hellenic Republic made a presentation of the main issues of the development of the ICT sector in Greece. Special attention is given to the broadband development and progress. Efforts are made for the implementation of a robust, scalable and

interoperable broadband environment, which can cover the Greek territory and be able to offer new high-quality and high-speed broadband services to all Greek citizens, trying to follow and reach the average of EU performance at this Sector. The National Digital Strategy, the increased performance in broadband coverage and the usage of internet digital services, important infrastructure projects, as well as the growing penetration of digital technology in the public and private sector were the main points of the presentation. Cyber security also is an emerging topic and the national strategy for cyber security has been established. The presentation is attached as **Annex III**.

8.   The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed the Working Group on the ICT policy framework in Bulgaria, which includes, *inter alia*, National Digital Bulgaria 2025 Program, high-speed internet modernization, free wi-fi access in public places, e-government program 2014-2020, national cybersecurity strategy and the deployment of 5G networks. The information is attached as **Annex IV**.

9.   The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan made a presentation on the recent developments of the ICT sector in Azerbaijan, highlighting the measures by the government aimed at implementing the National Strategy for Development of Information Society 2016-2020, Strategic Road Map on the Development of Telecommunication and Information Technologies, Government Cloud Concept and informing about the drafting process of the National Cybersecurity Strategy. A number of proposals for the cooperation in ICT field have been presented and agreed to be considered at the next Meeting, as follows:
1. mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates;
2. establishment of cooperation on ICT innovation and start-ups;
3. expansion of cooperation between CERTs (Computer Emergency Response Team).
The presentation is attached as **Annex V**.

10.   The delegation of the Republic of Turkey informed the Working Group on the developments of ICT sector in Turkey, including on the digital economy, broadband internet services, e-government gateway, national cybersecurity strategy covering protection of critical infrastructure. The information is attached as **Annex VI**.

11.   The Working Group agreed to continue the discussion about the recent developments and activities of their countries in the field of ICT with a view to consider the possible prospects of cooperation among the BSEC Member States.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ELABORATION AND PROMOTION OF PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF ICT

12.   The Working Group exchanged views on the possible ways of initiating joint cooperation projects in the field of ICT.

13.   The representative of the Republic of Armenia made a presentation on the implementation of the project "Data-driven solutions for SMEs" by the Microsoft Innovation Centre of Armenia under the Black Sea Project promotion Facility (BSPPF) with the participation of the entities from Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Moldova. The presentation is attached as **Annex VII**.

14.   The Working Group agreed to continue the discussion on the possible means of encouraging the public and private companies in the Member States to initiate potential project proposals in the field of ICT to be implemented in the BSEC framework.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF EVENTS:

- 23rd World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT 2019)

15.   The Working Group took note of the hosting of the 23rd World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) in Yerevan on 6-9 October 2019 in conformity with the Calendar of BSEC Events for the second semester of 2019. The Working Group also noted the presence at the WCIT of many Ministers, high-level government representatives, academics, experts in IT and many other high-level stakeholders.

- BSEC High Level Side Event on the margins of WCIT 2019

16.   The Working Group took note of the outcome of the High Level side event under the title "Harnessing the Power of Technology for Impact: BSEC Perspective on Regional Collaboration" co-organized by the Republic of Armenia as the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group in ICT and by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on the sidelines of the WCIT. The Working Group noted that the side event was attended by senior government officials and delegation members of the BSEC Member States, as well as by the representatives from the private sector, from educational and research institutions and other interested entities.

- 51st Session of the PABSEC General Assembly

17.   The Working Group took note of the PABSEC Report and Recommendation 161/2018 "The Prospects of the Development of Digital Economy in the BSEC Member States" and of the Report and Recommendation 162/2018 "Strengthening Cooperation in Cybersecurity in the BSEC Member States".

AGENDA ITEM 5: BSEC-REPUBLIC OF KOREA SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNERSHIP

-2019 Korea-ICT Cooperation Program

18.   The participants took note of the 2019 Korea-BSEC ICT Cooperation Program, which took place in Seoul, on 11-15 November 2019 and was organized by the Korean National Information Society Agency (NIA) with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Interior and Safety (MOIS) of Korea.

19.   The delegations expressed their gratitude to the Korean Government for the 2019 Program and expressed their readiness to further strengthen the cooperation with the Republic of Korea.

20.   The participants took note of the intention of the Korean Government to continue the Korea-BSEC ICT Cooperation Program in 2020, to be organized in two BSEC Member States, and in 2021, to be held again in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

21.   The Working Group also kindly requested the Korean side to submit the invitations to the next cycle of Program, in addition to the bilateral channels, through the BSEC PERMIS in order to prepare their participation in the Program well in advance.

AGENDA ITEM 6: EVALUATION REPORT OF THE COUNTRY COORDINATOR

22.   The participants considered and approved the Evaluation Report, elaborated and presented by the Republic of Armenia as the Country-coordinator of the Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies. The Evaluation Report, as approved by the Working Group, is attached as **Annex VIII**.

23.   The participants took note of the recommendations, suggestions and observations contained in the Evaluation Report aimed at improving the activities of the Working Group and comments made by some delegations on the said Report.

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR

24.   The Working Group took note of the interest of the Republic of Armenia and of the Republic of Azerbaijan to take over the duties of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies for the next two years.

25.   In the absence of a consensus and taking into account that the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed the Working Group about the intention of the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communication of the Republic of Bulgaria to present its nomination for the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on ICT for the next period of two years, it was recommended to submit the issue to the Committee of Senior Officials for further consideration and endorsement.

AGENDA ITEM 8: THE TECHNICAL ISSUES OF USING VIDEO CONFERENCES FOR THE BSEC MEETINGS

26.   Upon the request of the Working Group on Organizational and Legal Matters, the Working Group considered the issue of using the video conferences for BSEC meetings and mentioned that from a technological point of view it is possible to organize video conferences for BSEC meetings.

27.   The BSEC PERMIS provided information on its technical capabilities to hold video conferences with third parties.

28.   The Working Group agreed to further discuss the issue at its next Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

29.   No issue was raised under this Agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 10: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

30.   The date and venue of the next Meeting of the Working Group will be communicated in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 11: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

31.   The Working Group adopted the present Report for its submission to the Committee of Senior Officials and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for their consideration.