



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
Permanent International Secretariat

27 November 2024

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**REPORT OF THE
MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

Online, 27 November 2024

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters was held online on 27 November 2024.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Nairi PETROSSIAN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the Organization of BSEC, the representative of the Armenian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.
3. Opening remarks were made by the BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Dimitrios RALLIS.
4. The Meeting was attended by the following BSEC Member States:

Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Hellenic Republic
Republic of Moldova
Russian Federation
Republic of Türkiye
Ukraine
5. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC (PABSEC) and BSEC Business Council (BSEC BC) attended the Meeting as the BSEC Related Bodies.
6. The List of Participants in the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

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AGENDA ITEM 2: STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELATED TO CUSTOMS MATTERS AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS ADOPTED BY THE HEADS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

8. The BSEC PERMIS informed the Working Group on the state of implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council and of the Declarations adopted by the Heads of Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States.

AGENDA ITEM 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPDATED BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA “TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA”

9. The BSEC PERMIS informed the Working Group on the “*BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards a sustainable future of the wider Black Sea area*”, adopted by the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (BSEC Council) on 15 December 2023, the Decision on Implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda, adopted by the BSEC Council on 28 June 2024, and the content of Goal 2 of the BSEC Economic Agenda (*Cooperation among the Customs and Border Crossing Administrations*).

10. The Working Group agreed with the modalities of cooperation in the respective area in accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned Goal.

AGENDA ITEM 4: HARMONIZATION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

11. The representative of the Republic of Armenia informed the participants on recent developments in the area of harmonization and simplification of customs procedures, particularly those related to Authorized Economic Operators (AEO), preliminary declaration, Single Window, targeted risk management, Permitting documents system, as well as achievements made through implementation of World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement.

12. The representative of the Republic of Moldova informed the participants on the state of affairs with regard to implementation of AEO scheme in the country which was elaborated in line with EU standards and requirements and significantly simplified customs clearance, particularly, on the border with Romania. Further information was provided on the work done with regard to harmonization of the country's respective legislation in accordance with EU standards and EU Customs Code (UCC). Information on simplifications for crossing the border with the EU, including Romania, under Agreement No. 1/2022 on the mutual recognition of AEO status between Moldova and the European Union was also provided.

13. The representative of the Republic of Türkiye informed the Working Group on the importance the country attaches to the process of constantly harmonizing and simplifying customs procedures, paying specific attention to the transparency, digitalization of the procedures, cooperation with other stakeholders, etc. The participants of the meeting were also briefed on the activities of the Turkish National Trade Facilitation Committee, AEO scheme, Single Window system, which is currently able to process about 170 different documents on one single platform.

AGENDA ITEM 5: EXCHANGING EXPERIENCE ON METHODOLOGY OF TIME RELEASE STUDY

14. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia highlighted importance given to the Time Release Study (TRS) by both WTO and World Customs Organization (WCO). In this context, several capacity building programs, organized by WCO for Armenia and the WCO Europe region, were mentioned. The Working Group was also briefly informed on how TRS procedure is being applied in the country.

15. The delegation of the Republic of Türkiye underlined the significance of the TRS from the trade facilitation and simplification points of view. It was stated that in 2013, Türkiye has launched AEO certification process, which has become another efficient tool in sense of cutting of red tape on the border-crossing points (BCP). The Working Group was also informed that currently the work on modernization of the country's Customs Code is on the way.

16. During the discussions the Working Group reiterated once again, the usefulness of study-visits to the BCPs in the BSEC region and further encouraged the Member States to use this exercise for coming period of time as well.

AGENDA ITEM 6: IMPROVING CUSTOMS OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMS CONTROL IN RESPECT OF GOODS FOR PERSONAL USE MOVED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL E-COMMERCE

17. The representative of the Republic of Armenia informed the participants on recent legislative amendments with regard to improvement of customs clearance of e-commerce trade flows to provide better facilitation and compliance. Information on the ongoing amendments toward minimizing e-commerce threshold, as well as already existing simplified declarations for express shipments was also provided.

18. The representative of the Hellenic Republic informed the Working Group on the usage in the country of the pre-arrival declaration in respect of a new customs procedure for goods up to 150 Euros imported under e-commerce, and postal consignments that essentially simplify the e-commerce-related customs clearance.

19. The representative of the Republic of Moldova informed the participants of the meeting on the country's priorities with regard to e-commerce activities, including in the context of the Customs Code which entered into force on 1 January 2024.

The representative of the Republic of Moldova further informed about the implementation of the new procedures for clearance of postal and express shipments, starting from 1 January 2024, which establishes the exchange of advance electronic data between Customs Service and postal and express operators. The Working Group was also briefed on the implementation of the declaration with reduced data set for shipments of natural persons, and that now the country is developing an app-like platform for declaring shipments by natural persons.

20. The representative of Ukraine briefed the Working Group on the activities done in the respective country to further simplify e-commerce transactions. Information was also provided about the procedure for transmitting preliminary information regarding goods in parcels and certain issues related to determining the nature of their designation (commercial or personal use).

AGENDA ITEM 7: CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE PROJECT IDEAS IN THE RESPECTIVE AREA OF COOPERATION

21. The Working Group took note of the remarks made by the BSEC PERMIS on the possible areas and ideas of cooperation including, but not limited to, conducting TRS and Business Process Analyses (BPA) and publishing the results; implementation of AEO schemes; developing and implementing procedures giving priority to customs processing of perishable goods; experience sharing on New Computerized Transit System (NCTS); exchange of information on Free Zone best practices in the respective context; further strengthening cooperation on customs clearance and customs control; establishing Green Lanes on the BCPs, etc.

22. Information on the BSEC Project Development Fund (PDF) and possibility to submit an application, in accordance with the statutory documents of PDF, was also presented to the participants of the Working Group. All respective information with regard to the PDF may be found on <https://www.bsec-organization.org/development-fund>.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. No issue was raised under this Agenda Item.

AGENDA ITEM 9: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

24. The date and venue of the next Meeting of the Working Group will be communicated through diplomatic channels in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

25. The Working Group adopted the Report of the Meeting to be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.
