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**CONCLUSIONS
OF THE INFORMAL MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

BSEC Headquarters, 3 April 2018

1. The Informal Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology was held at the BSEC Headquarters, on 3 April 2018.
2. The Informal Meeting was chaired by Mr. Arsen AVAGYAN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the BSEC Organization.
3. The Informal Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
4. The representative of the ICBSS attended the Informal Meeting as a BSEC Related Body.
5. The List of Participants of the Informal Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Draft Agenda of the Informal Meeting was discussed, amended and agreed upon. The Agenda, as agreed, is attached as **Annex II**.

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

7. The participants 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 Science and Technology since the last Informal Meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology (BSEC Headquarters, 23 October 2017).

AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE EVALUATION REPORT OF THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2018

8. The participants took note of the Evaluation Report of the Country-Coordinator (Russian Federation) for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018, and agreed to continue the consideration at the next meeting of the Working Group. The Evaluation Report is attached as **Annex III**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: ACTIONS TAKEN OR TO BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD BSEC ACTION PLAN ON COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (2014-2018)

9. The participants took note of information on the steps taken to implement the Third BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology (2014–2018), provided by the BSEC PERMIS.

10. The delegation of the Russian Federation noted the importance of further promotion of cooperation among the BSEC Member States and information exchange in the field of science, technology and innovation, its dissemination through different channels, especially the Internet, and presented information on digital initiatives, inter alia, aimed at strengthening the project-oriented profile of the BSEC.

11. Guided by the principles of the Digital Economy, in regard of services for efficient decision making and being inspired by the dedication of the Working Group towards creating the respective database, the Russian Federation proposed creating a standalone portal — digital version of a database of national and regional research infrastructures of the BSEC Member States (based on the current data of the corresponding Questionnaire) and presented information on a pilot version of the web portal with integrated interactive features, including content filtering.

12. The participants took note of the presentation (attached as **Annex IV**) delivered by the delegation of the Russian Federation on the prospects of the following digital initiatives, related to:

— the digital STI platform to foster knowledge exchange and raise awareness of the future challenges related to science, technology and innovation in the Black Sea region through lectures;

— the digital registry of STI financial resources (aimed at aggregating information on national contests that are open for international participants and international teams and respective funding parties in the BSEC Region);

— the web-portal for aggregating information on seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, exhibitions, summer schools and other international events within the framework of BSEC;

— the project for fostering cross-border interregional international STI cooperation (in line with the Goal 11 of the BSEC Economic Agenda of 2012: Strengthening Regional Cooperation in Scientific Research and Technology);

— the Online Collaboration Toolkit for informal discussions of the actions and initiatives of the Working Group aimed at facilitating international cooperation in science, technology and innovation;

— the web-portal dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the BSEC Region (inter alia aimed at promoting BSEC—UN cooperation and the BSEC brand).

13. The delegation of the Russian Federation also delivered a presentation on “The Mechanisms used by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science for Supporting Science and Technology” (attached as **Annex V**).

14. The participants also took note of the updated information, prepared by the ICBSS, on its involvement in the “Black Sea Horizon” project and other activities in the field of Science and Technology (**attached as Annex VI**).

15. As only five BSEC Member States responded up to now, the participants reiterated their call to the relevant authorities of the Member States that have not yet done so, to reply to the Questionnaire on national innovation related structures, as soon as possible.

AGENDA ITEM 5: YOUTH AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

16. The participants took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the consideration of Youth and Sports issues within BSEC and reiterated their call to the Member States to propose projects reflecting the interconnection between Science and Technology and Youth.

17. The delegation of the Russian Federation reiterated its proposal to consider creating an award “Annual BSEC Prize” for young scientists working in the promising areas of research (sustainable technologies, digital economy, quantum technologies etc.) related to the Black Sea Region. The Award might serve as a promotion element of the BSEC. It was also noted that further cooperation with the BSEC Working Group on Education may be required.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP

18. The participants took note of the draft Revised Terms of Reference of the Working Group, prepared by the BSEC PERMIS (attached as **Annex VII**), and agreed to continue its consideration at the next meeting of the Working Group.

19. The delegation of the Russian Federation proposed to include in the draft Revised Terms of Reference of the Working Group the following item: “Promoting Youth Initiatives in the Field of STI”.

AGENDA ITEM 7: MEMORANDUM OF INTENT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BSEC–USA

20. The BSEC PERMIS informed on its intention to convene a meeting with the representatives of the Consulate General of the United States in Istanbul in order to discuss concrete issues of implementation of the Memorandum of Intent concluded between BSEC and the USA in 2010.

21. The participants requested the BSEC PERMIS to keep the Working Group informed on any new developments with regard to the issue.

AGENDA ITEM 8: COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

22. The participants took note of information provided by BSEC PERMIS on the following events hosted at the BSEC Headquarters, in collaboration with the European Commission and the Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), respectively, with a view to increasing funding capabilities:

- 4th Meeting for Developing a Blue Growth Initiative for Research and Innovation in the Black Sea (27 March 2018);
- Workshop on Project Promotion addressed to Regional and Local Authorities and other stakeholders from the wider Black Sea Region (28 March 2018).

AGENDA ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey proposed to focus in the next Fourth BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology, inter alia, on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Digital Transformation of Industry.

24. The representative of Romania informed that, in the context of preparation for the forthcoming Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (1 January – 30 June 2019), the priority of the Ministry of Research and Innovation of Romania will be to enhance scientific cooperation between EU and the Black Sea Region, based on the common interests. The Ministry will be launching in the near future consultations on an initiative for cooperation in the Black Sea Region in the field of scientific research, with the financial support of the European Commission. Romania will inform the BSEC Member States on further development of this initiative.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE INFORMAL MEETING

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