



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

BS/WG/EP/R(2022)1

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

10 November 2022, online

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection was held online, on 10 November 2022.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, Deputy General Director of General Directorate of Water, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Bucharest, Romania.
3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Türkiye
 - Ukraine
4. The following BSEC Related Body also participated in the Meeting:
 - Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Economic, Commercial and financial Affairs Committee.
5. The following guest attended the Meeting:
 - United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Climate, Environment, Resilience Portfolio Lead.
6. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I**.

7. The Opening Remarks were made by:

- Mr. Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, Deputy General Director of General Directorate of Water, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Bucharest, Romania, on behalf of the Country-Coordinator;
- Ambassador Dimitrios RALLIS, Deputy Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS on behalf of the Secretariat;
- Mr. Igor ZAHARCIUC, Deputy Head of Regional Cooperation Unit, European Integration Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova on behalf of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

8. 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 BSEC COUNCIL AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE JOINT STATEMENTS (DECLARATION) ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

9. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the developments with regard to the process of updating the “BSEC Economic Agenda 2012” and on the status of implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council and follow-up to the Joint Declarations of the Ministers in charge of Environmental Protection of the BSEC Member States (Bucharest, March 2006 and May 2011 and Belgrade, April 2012).

10. The Working Group agreed that long-term representatives of the Working Group should be nominated by the Member States. The esteemed Member States are invited to provide the updated information about their national representatives through the Secretariat by sending a Verbal Note before the next meeting of the Working Group and encouraged to have an active participation.

AGENDA ITEM 3: PRESENTATION OF THE REVISED DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR 2022—2023 BY THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR. DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWED BY ITS ADOPTION

11. The Draft Plan of Action for 2022-2023, prepared by the Country-Coordinator, was presented and discussed.

12. The Russian Federation presented its ideas to the Action Plan and in order to expedite the work on the document proposed to continue it in a written format. Additional proposals to the Action Plan will be sent by the Russian side to the BSEC PERMIS.

13. After deliberations, and acknowledging that the Plan of Action should be adopted as soon as possible, the participants decided that the Secretariat will re-disseminate the Plan of Action for any amendments and proposals from the Member States to be sent until 30 November 2022 and organize an extraordinary meeting of the Working Group in December 2022 to discuss and adopt the Plan of Action.

14. The draft Plan of Action with the actual amendments is attached as **Annex III**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NATIONAL POLICIES, ON PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND ON BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

15. The representative from Ukraine made a statement on the current situation in the country. It was followed by a statement of the representative of the Russian Federation. Both statements are attached to this Report as **Annex IV** and **Annex V** respectively.

16. The representatives of Romania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Azerbaijan shared their contributions about their countries policies and experiences on different areas, such as preservation of the Black Sea and its marine environment, conservation, protection, improvement, recovery and rational use of environment and natural resources, elimination of single use plastic, minimization of the negative impacts on the environment and exclusion of the overexploitation and illegal use of natural resources, green, resilient and low carbon growth, air quality legislation, waste management strategies, increase of protected areas and the new updated National Determined Contributions (NDC) for mitigating the Climate Change effects.

17. The briefings by the representatives of Romania and the Republic of Albania and the presentations by the representatives of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan are attached as **Annex VI**, **Annex VII**, **Annex VIII** and **Annex IX**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: MODALITIES OF ESTABLISHING AN INFORMATION EXCHANGE MECHANISM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

18. The participants discussed on the issue of the Establishment of Information Exchange Mechanism for Environment Protection, following the Decision of Member States of 26 October 2017 to send links of their Legislative documents available on the portals of their relevant National Authorities to the BSEC website.

19. The representatives of Romania proposed to set up a platform for exchange information. They asked the Secretariat to support a project for developing a platform which should be fed with information by Member States.

20. The Secretariat informed that a new platform is not possible in the foreseeable future due to budget restraints, but the interested Member States can send links that the Secretariat may introduce in the page dedicated to the Environmental Protection.

AGENDA ITEM 6: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSEC CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK SEA REGION, ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL ON 15 DECEMBER 2017 IN KIEV

21. The participants shared their views about the implementation of the BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which was adopted on 15 December 2017 in Kiev.

22. The representative of Romania, as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group, referring to the Draft Plan of Action, confirmed that they have planned to hold a dedicated meeting to explore this issue in further details.

AGENDA ITEM 7: PROJECT PROPOSALS TO BE JOINTLY DEVELOPED WITHIN THE WG ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

23. The representative of Romania shared their project proposals than can be implemented within the Working Group, focused on:

- Strengthening of the competent authorities capacity and of the cooperation for the control of the transboundary waste transport in order to face illegal traffic.
- Reduce marine litter, including plastic and microplastic, in the Black Sea marine region for the protection of marine diversity

24. The participants, acknowledging the importance of the cooperation in the field of Environmental Protection, reiterated their appeal to the Member States and the BSEC Related Bodies to further support it, in order to ensure that the Working Group can prepare and implement projects aimed at environment protection and conservation within the scope of BSEC activities and its Statutory documents.

AGENDA ITEM 8: CONTRIBUTION OF RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS TO THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT. RECENT, ONGOING AND UPCOMING INITIATIVES, EVENTS AND PROJECTS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION – PRESENTATIONS BY THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

25. The Secretariat informed the participants on the state of play of the projects is implementing or preparing to implement in this field. The presentation of the Secretariat is attached as **Annex X**.

26. The participants asked the Secretariat to inform the WG more often about the activities involving the projects it is implementing. The Secretariat informed the participants that it issues a newsletter usually on a trimester basis that can be found in <http://www.bsec-organization.org/news-letter>. The Secretariat also informed the participants that every new issue it will also be disseminated to the representatives of the Member States in this Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

27. No issue was raised under this item.

AGENDA ITEM 10: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

28. The date of the extraordinary meeting, to be held in December 2022, in order to discuss and adopt the Plan of Action for 2022-2023, will be agreed in consultation between Chairmanship-in-Office, the Country-Coordinator and the BSEC PERMIS and will be disseminated in due time.

29. The date and venue of the next meeting will be communicated in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 11: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

30. 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.