



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

BS/WG/EP/R(2024)1

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

Online, 11 March 2024

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection was held online, on 11 March 2024.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, Deputy General Director of General Directorate of Water, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests of Romania.

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

Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Georgia
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Türkiye
Ukraine

4. The following BSEC Related Bodies also participated in the Meeting:

Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC),
Economic, Commercial and Financial Affairs Committee;

International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), Research and Policy
Development Department.

5. The following Observer participated in the meeting:

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Black Sea
Commission).

6. The following Sectoral Dialogue Partner participated in the meeting:

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions in Europe, Balkans and Black Sea Commission.

7. The following guest attended the meeting:

United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Istanbul Hub.

8. The List of Participants is attached as Annex I.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

AGENDA ITEM 2: INFORMATION ON THE NEWLY UPDATED BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA, EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NATIONAL POLICIES, ON PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND ON BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

10. The Secretariat informed the participants on the adoption of the updated BSEC Economic Agenda, by the BSEC CMFA on 15 December 2023 and the contents of Goal 5 on Environment and Climate Action.

11. In order to achieve the monitoring of the implementation of the targets and goals, a reporting mechanism will be set up, therefore all Member States are invited to send their contributions until the end of the calendar year to the Secretariat for the preparation of the Report.

AGENDA ITEM 3: PRESENTATION OF THE COMPILATION ON THE REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK SEA REGION (ADOPTED BY THE CMFA ON 15 DECEMBER 2017 IN KIEV), FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

12. The Secretariat made a short presentation of the Compilation on the replies from the Member States to the Questionnaire on Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Black Sea Region.

13. The Questionnaire on the Implementation of the BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was disseminated with BSEC PERMIS Note No: BS/INFO.2023.0203 dated 15 June 2023 and only 8 Member States replied to it (6 Member States within the deadline and 2 latter on).

14. The representative of the Secretariat proposed that a more detailed Report on the implementation of the BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy can be prepared in order to present it during COP29.

15. The representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan informed the Member States about the “Green World Solidarity Year” declared in Azerbaijan for the year 2024 and the preparations in this regard for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29), which will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024. Azerbaijan’s readiness for the cooperation with the relevant international and regional organizations in the interest of sustainable development of the Black Sea region was expressed.

16. The participants agreed with the proposal of the Secretariat and the representative of Romania proposed that instead of a Questionnaire, the Member States may send a national Report on the implementation of the BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to the Secretariat. The proposal was endorsed by the participants that decided that the Reports should be send until 15 April 2024.

17. The representative of the Black Sea Commission informed the participants that last year, together with Republic of Bulgaria, they co-organized a side-event in COP28 and for COP29 they plan on organizing a side-event in Baku on the Climate Change effects on the Caspian and Mediterranean Seas, but they can include the Black Sea to this project and cooperate with PERMIS to this effect. The representative of the Secretariat confirmed their will to join forces and present a comprehensive Report that include the area from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean during COP29 in Baku.

18. The representatives from Republic of Armenia, Georgia and Republic of Serbia, while supporting this initiative, expressed their will to send a more detailed Report on national and regional actions in the field of climate change adaptation strategies.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONTRIBUTION OF UPCOMING, ONGOING AND RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS AND EVENTS TO THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT. NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS TO BE JOINTLY DEVELOPED WITHIN THE WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. PRESENTATIONS BY THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

19. The representatives of Romania, Georgia and Republic of Bulgaria informed the participants on the activities carried out in their countries, which include different projects on improving the knowledge of the Black Sea about fish species, pollution including plastic, pesticides and nutrient pollution, marine litter, integrated coastal zones management and Action Plans, strengthening the national capacities through equipment upgrades for laboratories and monitoring, etc.

AGENDA ITEM 5: COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL OR REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION. DISCUSSIONS ON EVENTUAL PROJECTS FOR JOINT IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOWED BY THE PRESENTATION OF THE DANUBE BASIN LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT

20. The Secretariat informed the participants on the state of play of the projects that is implementing or preparing to implement in this field. The representative of the Russian Federation stressed that the use of external funding for BSEC projects should comply with rules and procedures, be beneficial for all Member States and invited to explore the

possibilities for the funding of projects with regional ownership and with the use of existing project development mechanisms.

21. The representatives of Black Sea Commission, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions in Europe and UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, informed the participants of their activities in the field of environmental protection in the region, as for example the EU4EMBLAS, PREP4BLUE projects, the trilateral cooperation among Danube Commission, Mediterranean Commission and DGMare, etc. They expressed their will to cooperate with BSEC Member States and PERMIS in the implementation of their activities.

22. The representative of Romania informed the participants about the EU Danube Lighthouse Project and the opportunities it creates for the region. They also informed that during the next Working Group meeting they will present their suggestions for projects that BSEC Member States may present in this framework.

AGENDA ITEM 6: PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR 2022-2023, PREPARED BY THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, WATERS AND FORESTS OF ROMANIA

23. The presentative of the Country-Coordinator (Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests of Romania) presented the Report on the implementation of the Plan of Action of the Working Group for 2022-2023, which they intend to continue during 2024 as well.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24. The Secretariat informed the participants about the decision of the Republic of Bulgaria to take up the Country-Coordination of this Working Group starting from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 8: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

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

AGENDA ITEM 9: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

26. 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.