



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

13 March 2024

BS/WG/T/R(2024)1

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT

Online, 13 March 2024

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport was held online on 13 March 2024.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Ivan TOKATLY, Chief Specialist of the Division of Cooperation with International Organizations, Department of International Cooperation and European Integration of the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine, as a representative of the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Transport.
3. The following BSEC Member States participated in the Meeting:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Türkiye
 - Ukraine
4. The representatives of the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA) participated in the Meeting in the capacity of the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners.
5. The representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) participated in the Meeting as a Guest.
6. The representatives of the BSRH Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat (JPTS) also attended the Meeting.
7. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

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 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT

9. The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the state of implementation of the relevant Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Declarations and Joint Statements adopted by the Ministers in charge of Transport of the BSEC Member States.

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT

10. In line with the Resolution “Assessment of the work deployed in the BSEC Working Groups”, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States in Belgrade on 19 April 2007, the Working Group considered the List of representatives to the Working Group and took note of the updates to it.

11. The updates to the list were provided by the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Serbia. The delegation of the Republic of Albania informed on its intention to update its Contact Points in the said List. The newly updated List of Representatives is attached as **Annex III**.

12. The Working Group invited the BSEC Member States to timely update, whenever necessary, information regarding their representatives in the Working Group, in order to facilitate a direct communication between the BSEC PERMIS and the relevant Ministries.

AGENDA ITEM 4: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA

13. The Working Group exchanged views on the modalities of cooperation in the field of transport and giving importance to all provisions of the Goal 3 of the “BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards a sustainable future of the wider Black Sea area” decided that the priority areas for the first medium-term (2024-2026) will be the following:

- Accelerating the efforts at the national level and within the BSEC framework aimed at the implementation of the BSEC projects in the field of transport, especially as regards the development of the Black Sea Ring Highway, of the Motorways of the Sea and of the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.
- Promoting digitalization of transport documents and other innovative solutions, which facilitate the flow of goods and passengers across borders and provide new services to the transport sector, including automatic issuance and electronic processing of transport and accompanying documents, development of telecommunication networks in transport sector.
- Elaborating joint transport projects of regional impact within the framework of BSEC mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and with the participation of other regional and international organizations and institutions.

- Promoting and developing a sustainable intermodal transport and logistics system in the BSEC Region.
- Further enhancing integration of the environmental dimension into the transport policies in the region and acceleration of the decarbonization of transport and emission reductions through the use of alternative fuels (including biofuels, e-fuels, electricity, LNG, hydrogen). Promoting the use of onshore power supply (or equivalent technology with zero and low emissions).
- Improving road safety in the BSEC Region in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030).
- Enhancing the cooperation and interaction with the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners, Partner Organizations and other international and regional organizations, institutions and initiatives with a view to implementing the infrastructure projects and increasing the transport capacity of the Region.

14. On the basis of the above points, the Working Group invited the BSEC Member States to elaborate on possible joint projects.

15. Under this Item the delegation of the Russian Federation informed on current activities in the country in the transport sector, as well as expressed its support for the above priority areas of the BSEC cooperation.

AGENDA ITEM 5: INTEGRATED ROAD AND SEA TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK IN THE BSEC REGION. STATE OF AFFAIRS WITH REGARD TO:

a. Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway

16. The Working Group took note of the Report of the 14th Meeting of the Steering Committee on the Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway, held at the BSEC Headquarters on 9 November 2023, and encouraged the Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding for the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway to take further steps for its implementation.

17. The Working Group invited the leadership in the BSRH Steering Committee to organize the next meeting of the latter during the second semester of 2024, in cooperation with the BSRH Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat (BSRH JPTS), the BSEC PERMIS and in consultations with the incoming BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

18. Furthermore, the Working Group took note of the:

a) Presentation made by the representative of the BSRH Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat, informing on the activities of the public Greek company ‘Egnatia Odos S.A.’ (Thessaloniki), which is responsible for the implementation of the Egnatia Motorway project, company objectives, project monitoring and modern project management systems, as well as international projects.

b) Presentation made by the delegation of the Republic of Türkiye on the development of the Black Sea Ring Highway in Türkiye, focusing on the BSRH main routes in the country and their connections, important rehabilitation projects on BSRH in Türkiye, etc.

b. Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC Region

19. The Working Group took note of the outcomes of the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea, held at the BSEC Headquarters on 9 November 2023, and encouraged the Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea at the BSEC Region to take further steps for its implementation.

20. The BSEC PERMIS informed on its participation in the following online events, organized by the European Coordinator for Motorways of the Sea (MoS), Prof. Kurt Bodewig:

- Motorways of the Sea Digital Workshop (6 October 2023), aimed to explore the latest developments and trends regarding port infrastructural challenges in relation to offshore renewable energy and synthetic & e-fuels, focusing on their applications and potential impact on the maritime and port industry.
- Webinar, dedicated to the transition from Motorways of the Sea to the European Maritime Space, held on 4 December 2023.

21. The Working Group invited the leadership in the MoS Ad Hoc Working Group to organize the next meeting of the latter during the second semester of 2024, in cooperation with the MoS Joint Technical Secretariat, the BSEC PERMIS and in consultations with the incoming BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

AGENDA ITEM 6: FACILITATION OF TRANSPORT OF GOODS IN THE BSEC REGION

a. Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods

22. The Working Group took note of the outcomes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, held at the BSEC Headquarters on 8 November 2023, and encouraged the Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region to take further steps for its implementation.

23. Furthermore, the Working Group took note of the:

- Driver Shortage Report 2023 – Freight, published by the International Road Transport Union (IRU) on 20 November 2023, which outlines the current shortage of truck drivers, including a brief overview of demographic trends. The Report is available at: <https://www.iru.org/resources/iru-library/driver-shortage-report-2023-freight-global-executive-summary>;

- Road Safety Annual Report 2023, published by the International Transport Forum (ITF) on 18 December 2023, which provides an overview of road safety performance for the countries participating in the ITF's permanent working group on road safety. The Report is available at: <https://www.itf-oecd.org/road-safety-annual-report-2023>;

- Technical Report on the Impact of Freight on Road Infrastructure, published by the Conference of European Directors of Roads (CEDR) on 19 June 2023, which compare different approaches for dealing with ageing infrastructure and developments in road freight. The Report is available at: <https://www.cedr.eu/docs/view/64904f5fd3572-en>.

24. The BSEC-URTA representative informed on the current situation at the most congested border-crossing points (BCPs) between some BSEC Member States, as well as on current and planned activities of the BSEC-URTA Working Party on Border Crossings. The participants were also informed on the first Erasmus Project of BSEC-URTA for the mobility of transport experts from BSEC-URTA Member Associations aimed to offer specific training on transport and logistics to vocational schools to promote cooperation in the field of education and training.

25. The Working Group encouraged the BSEC PERMIS to continue its collaboration with IRU and BSEC-URTA on the issues of facilitation of road transport of goods, and, in order to further discuss possible practical steps, suggested to organize the next meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region in the second semester of 2024.

26. The delegation of the Republic of Albania (Albanian Road Association) made a statement, giving a positive impact of the BSEC Permit system on regional cooperation and intelligent transport system, deployed and used in trade and transport facilitation.

27. The delegation of Ukraine made a statement.

28. The delegation of the Russian Federation made a statement.

b. Project “BSEC Permit System”

29. The Working Group took note of the Conclusions of the Meeting of the BSEC Member States participating in the Project “BSEC Permit System”, held online on 1 November 2023, underlining the importance of the BSEC Permit System in the overall efforts to gradually liberalize the transport market in the BSEC Region and reiterating its invitation to the BSEC Member States who so far do not participate in the BSEC Permit Project, to join it.

30. The BSEC-URTA representatives informed on the outcomes of the Meeting of the BSEC-URTA Working Party on Digitalization, held online on 5 March 2024, as well as BSEC-URTA efforts, aimed to digitalize the BSEC Permit System and increase its geographical coverage.

31. The delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Bulgaria informed on the current position of their countries concerning the BSEC Permit System.

c. Development of Intermodal Transportation

32. The Working Group took note of the Report of the Meeting of the BSEC Task Force on Intermodal Transportation, held online on 12 March 2024, and reiterated the importance of the development of sustainable intermodal transport and logistics system in the Black Sea Region.

33. The delegation of the Republic of Albania informed on the current activities in the country related to the development of One-Stop-Shop solutions, permit system, intermodal/combined transport, as well as on the relevant transport regulations in Albania, in particular, European Agreement for Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations. International Transport Policy aligned in the Legislation for Maritime, Road and Railway was emphasized for the BSEC region and economic cooperation.

AGENDA ITEM 7: COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BSEC SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNERS

34. The Working Group took note of the BSEC PERMIS information regarding the BSEC cooperation with other international organizations and the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners in the concrete fields, since its last meeting, held on 26 April 2023, and appreciated the valuable contribution of the partners to the BSEC cooperation on transport.

AGENDA ITEM 8: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

35. The date and venue of the next Meeting will be communicated in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

36. No issue was raised under this Agenda Item.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

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