



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

26 April 2023

BS/WG/T/R(2023)1

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT

Online, 26 April 2023

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport was held online on 26 April 2023.
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 participants were welcomed by Ambassador Dimitrios RALLIS, Deputy Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS.
4. The following BSEC Member States participated in the Meeting:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Türkiye
 - Ukraine
5. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) participated in the Meeting as a BSEC Related Body.
6. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany attended the Meeting as an Observer.
7. The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA) attended the Meeting as Sectoral Dialogue Partners.

8. The representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) participated in the Meeting as a Guest.
9. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.
10. 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

11. 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

12. 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.
13. The delegations of the Russian Federation and the Hellenic Republic presented updated information about their representatives.
14. 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. The newly updated List of representatives is attached as **Annex III**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 JANUARY 2021 – 31 DECEMBER 2022

15. The Working Group took note of the Evaluation Report on implementation of the Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Transport for the period of 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2022, presented by Ukraine, as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group during the mentioned period. The said report is attached as **Annex IV**.
16. The Working Group expressed appreciation to Ukraine, as the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Transport, for the comprehensive Evaluation Report and the valuable contribution to promotion of transport in the BSEC Region.

AGENDA ITEM 5: CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2024

17. The Working Group considered and approved the Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Transport for the period of 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2024, presented by Ukraine as the Country-Coordinator, as a road map with concrete objectives and priorities,

as well as a number of activities in the field of transport. The Plan of Action, as approved by the Working Group, is attached as **Annex V**.

18. The Member States and partner organizations were invited to communicate to the BSEC PERMIS their proposals to the Calendar of transport activities for the years 2023-2024.

19. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic highlighted the following:

«The present Plan of Action in the field of transport sets the main guidelines for enhancing mutually beneficial co-operation between the BSEC Member States for the period 2023-2024 directed the development of reliable, efficient, safe, integrated and sustainable transport systems in the BSEC region.

As we have stated in the past meetings, Hellenic Republic's ports strategically integrate Black Sea Region into their planning and explore important actions and prospects in their relationship with other ports in the Region and the development of Transport Corridors. To this end, related interventions have been included both in the Hellenic National (Strategic) Transport Plan, as well as to the draft Operational Programme for Infrastructure & Transport for 2021-2027, towards the promotion of Motorways of the Sea towards BSEC Region and the potential realization of the so-called Sea2Sea cross-border project, aiming at the development of a multimodal transport corridor interlinking the ports of Thessaloniki, Kavala and Alexandroupolis in the Eastern Mediterranean with the Black Sea ports of Burgas, Varna, as well as with Danube river.

Furthermore, potential development of another Solidarity Lane from Ukraine borders down to the port of Alexandroupolis, as well as the port of Thessaloniki, for the exportation of grain, strengthens the strategic importance of Greek ports for the Black Sea Maritime transportation system.

It is noted, that within the upcoming revision of TEN-T Regulation, the port of Alexandroupolis will join the TEN-T comprehensive network a development that shapes the dynamics and the geopolitical map of the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea basins».

AGENDA ITEM 6: 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

20. The Working Group:

- took note of the Report of the 13th Meeting of the Steering Committee on the Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway, held online on 24 October 2022, 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;

- reiterated its invitation to the Parties to the MoU to steer the next phase of work to the preparation of feasibility studies on selected segments of the BSRH in their territories, in order to potentially form a portfolio of bankable projects and to facilitate the attraction of interest of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs);

- invited the leadership in the BSRH Steering Committee to organize the next meeting of the latter during the second semester of 2023, in cooperation with the BSRH Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat (JPTS), the BSEC PERMIS and in consultations with the incoming BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

21. Furthermore, the Working Group took note of information, provided by the BSEC PERMIS on its participation in the Webinar on the revision of the Trans-European Transport

Network (TEN-T) Regulation, which was organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) on 15 March 2022, and the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) TRACECA, which was held in Tbilisi on 10 February 2023.

22. The delegation of the Russian Federation informed the participants about the recent developments with regard to the BSRH project at the national level.

23. The delegation of Ukraine made a statement, which is attached as **Annex VI**.

24. The delegation of the Russian Federation made a statement, which is attached as **Annex VII**.

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

25. The Working Group took note of the:

- Report of the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea, held online on 25 October 2022, 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;

- Information, provided by the BSEC PERMIS on its participation in the Motorways of the Sea Forum, organized online on 4 October 2022 by the European Coordinator for Motorways of the Sea (MoS), Prof. Kurt Bodewig.

26. Furthermore, the Working Group reiterated its invitation to the Parties to the MoU:

- to present as soon as possible their candidacies for assuming the duties of the MoS Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), considering that the term of office of Ukraine in the MoS JTS expired in 2021;

- to steer the next phase of work to the preparation of feasibility studies for MoS projects in their territories, in order to potentially form a portfolio of bankable projects and to facilitate the attraction of interest of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

27. 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 2023, in cooperation with the MoS Joint Technical Secretariat, the BSEC PERMIS and in consultations with the incoming BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

28. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic underlined the following:

«The Member States of BSEC should coordinate and enhance their efforts towards a comprehensive and integrated approach for transport in the Black Sea Region, as well as towards a policy design and strategies that can facilitate intermodal services and development of transport and logistics chains. In this prospect, the role of maritime transport and maritime connections should be highlighted.

Recent developments such as the inclusion of European Maritime Space in the revision of the TEN-T regulation the new Baltic – Black Sea – Aegean Sea Corridor, the Western Balkans Corridor with its horizontal and vertical potential extensions down to the Hellenic Republic as well as the promotion of the European – Asian Middle Route which is expected in the near future to connect Azerbaijan ports with the ports of Konstanza and Bourgas via maritime routes, are towards the right direction to revitalize Motorways of the Sea in the Black Sea towards the interest of all its Member States».

29. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria underlined the importance of the development of the Middle Corridor and the connection also with the port of Varna.

AGENDA ITEM 7: FACILITATION OF TRANSPORT OF GOODS IN THE BSEC REGION

a. Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods

30. The Working Group took note of the:

- Report of the Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, held online on 8 November 2022, 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;

- Information on the BSEC PERMIS participation in the 85th Session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC), which took place from 21 to 24 February 2023 in Geneva.

31. 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.

32. 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 2023.

b. Project “BSEC Permit System”

33. The Working Group took note of the Conclusions of the online Meeting of the BSEC Member States participating in the Project “BSEC Permit System”, held on 1 November 2022, underlining the importance of this project as a useful tool in international transport of goods.

34. The BSEC-URTA representative informed on the BSEC-URTA efforts, aimed to digitalize the BSEC Permit System and increase its geographical coverage.

35. The delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic informed about the position of their countries to join the BSEC Permit System.

c. Development of Intermodal Transportation

36. The Working Group took note of the Report of the Meeting of the BSEC Task Force on Intermodal Transportation, held online on 25 April 2023, and reiterated the importance of the development of sustainable intermodal transport and logistics system in the Black Sea Region.

AGENDA ITEM 8: COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BSEC SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNERS

37. The Working Group took note of the BSEC PERMIS information regarding the BSEC cooperation with the international organizations and the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners in

the concrete fields, since its last meeting, and appreciated the valuable contribution of the partners to the BSEC cooperation on transport.

38. The Working Group considered the BSEC presence at the Annual Sessions of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee in Geneva and the ITF Annual Summits in Leipzig as an effective tool for presenting to the rest of the world the Organization's achievements in the sector of transports and for enhancing the visibility of the BSEC Organization.

AGENDA ITEM 9: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

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

AGENDA ITEM 10: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

40. The BSEC PERMIS informed on the current activity of BSEC aimed to digitalize transport documents (e-TIR, e-CMR, e-Permit, e-Visa for professional drivers).

AGENDA ITEM 11: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

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