

*Check Against Delivery*

**STATEMENT BY**  
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**ORGANIZATION OF THE**  
**BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)**  
**PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)**  
  
**AT THE**  
  
**71<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

*(Geneva, 24 February 2009)*

**Mr. Chairman,**

I totally agree with the contents of paras 4-7 of document ECE/TRANS/2009/2 concerning the General Assembly Resolution 63/11 on the cooperation between the UN and BSEC. My presence here today demonstrates the importance that BSEC gives to enforcing its relations with the UN and in particular with UNECE.

Allow me very briefly to inform you of recent BSEC developments in the transport area.

BSEC is currently concentrated on the implementation of its three MoUs related to the development of road and port infrastructure, maritime links and facilitating of road transport of goods. These three projects also constitute regional contribution to the extension of Trans-European Networks and the development of Euro-Asian transport links. The BSEC Heads of State and Government and Ministers of Transport highlighted the importance of proceeding with the implementation of the said Memoranda of Understanding without delay.

The MoU on the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway entered into force on 1 November 2008. On 15-16 January 2009 in Istanbul, the BSRH Steering Committee, chaired by the Russian Federation, adopted documents necessary for its functioning as well as for functioning of its Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat (BSRH JPTS). The BSRH JPTS, operated by the Greek public company “Egnatia Odos A.E”, located in Thessaloniki, started its work. It is expected, that at its next meeting in May 2009 the Steering Committee will finalize the BSRH main route and make a preliminary cost estimation of the BSRH project.

Another BSEC project - development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC region is about strengthening the maritime links among the ports of the BSEC Member States. Activities include the upgrading of port facilities, identification of projects of common interest, securing free and fair competition in international shipping, facilitation of access to all modes of transport and promotion of intermodality and enhancement of maritime security and safety in the BSEC region.

The MoU on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea entered into force on 1 December 2008. The Ad Hoc Working Group was established and it is working on the elaboration of a Master Plan, creation of a secretariat and other issues related to the implementation of the MoU.

The two projects are interlinked. With their implementations BSEC is going to create a reliable integrated transport system with its developed road and maritime infrastructure and complement work of other international organizations, in particular UNECE.

At the meeting, held in Istanbul on 12-13 February 2009 in Istanbul, the BSEC Working Group on Transport recommended to the BSRH Steering Committee to benefit from the work done by the UNECE on the elaboration of the TEM and TER Master Plan and from the cooperation with the CEI on road infrastructure projects.

The Working Group also stressed that the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorways of the Sea could benefit from the work of the UNECE Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports. In this regard, the BSEC Member States (which are also UNECE members) were kindly invited to complete the UNECE questionnaires on Hinterland Connections of Seaports.

**Mr. Chairman,**

BSEC has one more positive development in the development of road transport of goods. Guided by the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods, its Parties established a Steering Committee and elaborated basic documents, which are necessary for its functioning and achievements of goals of the MoU. In particular, a Time-table of the Steering Committee includes its activities and deadlines related to the issues of liberalization of international road transport of goods; accession to international agreements; harmonization of charging policies; facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers. Presently, the Steering Committee chaired by the Republic of Turkey. The secretarial services are provided by BSEC PERMIS.

One of the achievements of this MoU is approval of an Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States on 23 October 2008 in Tirana and its opening for signing. Four Members States (Albania, Armenia, Moldova and Turkey) have already signed the Agreement.

I am very pleased to inform you about the growing partnership of BSEC with IRU and BSEC Union of Road Transport Associations (BSEC-URTA) which is based on concrete joint projects and actions with regard to road transport. I recall the experience of the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan 2007, organized by the BSEC Secretariat, in cooperation with IRU and BSEC-URTA, with a goal to promote BSEC to its people, to the world and to gather information on the existing infrastructure and other problems that we would have to face.

The Caravan of 12 trucks from the BSEC countries achieved all these objectives. The Caravan monitored road conditions, border crossing procedures and waiting times at the borders during its journey. They were indeed long, the longest being in the east of the Black Sea region. BSEC-URTA has published a report of its findings which will be useful for the BSEC work on the development of the Black Sea Ring Highway and facilitation of road transport of goods.

Last example of the BSEC-IRU cooperation is co-sponsorship of a Study on the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods which was done by the Consultancy Company NEA Research and Transport. The Study was presented at the Round Table with participation of the public and private road sector on 10 February 2009 in Istanbul.

I believe that the Report of the Caravan and the NEA Study will contribute into work of a Joint ITF/UNECE/WB Seminar on Overcoming Border Crossing Obstacles on 5-6 March 2009 in Paris.

Based on the recommendations of the Study, the Steering Committee elaborated several options on the progressive liberalization of the International Road Transport of Goods, which also include the establishment of a BSEC permit system, similar to ICMT, for road transit of goods. BSEC PERMIS together with the IRU and BSEC-URTA were invited to develop a BSEC permit format and rules for usage to be submitted to the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

The BSEC countries consider that the entering into force of the new Annex 8 to the UNECE International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982) on 20 May 2008 will make the practice of the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) universal and it will greatly facilitate the road transport of goods in the region. In this regard, the Steering Committee recommended organizing a joint BSEC-UNECE seminar with the participation of all interested parties, to consider the ways of introduction of IVWC in the BSEC region.

**Mr. Chairman,**

To conclude, I consider that coordinating and complementing their activities the international organization strengthen their capacity in order to resolve complex problems related to facilitation of transportation. In parallel to its work BSEC, as a project-oriented organization, will continue exploring new areas where it is desirable and realistic to develop and deepen multilateral cooperation in a regional format in the transport sphere, which carries particular prominence for our Organization. In this work we rely on fruitful cooperation with other international organizations.

In this regard, I would like to refer to the importance of work of the UNECE Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links, whose objective, in particular, is to establish an appropriate mechanism for coordination and monitoring of the development of the Euro-Asian inland transport links EATL. BSEC will gladly contribute into its work.

I also believe that a new impetus to BSEC transport cooperation and its interaction with other international organizations will be given at a meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Transport in Yerevan on March 27 2009 within a Program of the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office in BSEC.

Thanking you for your kind attention, I wish you fruitful deliberations with a concrete and successful outcome.

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