



21 April 2017

BS/IM/WG/CM/C (2017)1

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE
INFORMAL MEETING OF THE
BSEC WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

BSEC Headquarters, 21 April 2017

1. The Informal Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters was held at the BSEC Headquarters on 21 April 2017.
2. The Meeting was attended by the following BSEC Member States:

Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey
3. The following BSEC Related Body also participated in the Meeting:

Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC (PABSEC)
4. The following BSEC Observer attended the Meeting:

United States of America
5. The following BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner also participated in the Meeting:

Union of Road Transport Association in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region (BSEC-URTA)
6. The representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) participated in the Meeting as a Guest.
7. The List of Participants in the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.
8. The Meeting was chaired by Mrs. Didem DİRLİK SONGÜR, Head of Department for Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey.

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AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

AGENDA ITEM 2: STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELATED TO CUSTOMS MATTERS

10. The BSEC PERMIS representative informed on the state of implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the 16th BSEC Council (Belgrade, 19 April 2007) and the 35th Meeting of the BSEC Council (Belgrade, 13 December 2016).

11. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS and expressed their commitment to take necessary measures in order to secure proper implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council.

12. The BSEC PERMIS also invited the Member States to update the list of representatives to the Working Group on a long term basis. The Member States, which have not appointed their representatives yet were kindly invited to do so, informing the BSEC PERMIS accordingly. The current list of representatives of the Member States to the Working Group on Customs Matters, as updated, is attached as **Annex III**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: RECONSIDERATION OF THE TEXT OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS MATTERS (BSEC HEADQUARTERS, 4 NOVEMBER 2016)

13. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS in relation to this item.

14. The participants reconsidered and amended the text of the Conclusions of the Informal Meeting held on 4 November 2016, and agreed to submit it to the forthcoming Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials for approval. The text of the Conclusions, as agreed, is attached as **Annex IV**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT REGIONAL TRADE FACILITATION STRATEGY FOR THE BSEC REGION

15. The representative of the BSEC PERMIS provided the participants with the background information on the Draft Strategy as well as on recent efforts of the Member States to finalize it.

16. The participants discussed, amended and agreed upon the text of the Draft Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy for the BSEC Region, with minor exceptions and, decided to submit it to the forthcoming Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Economic Development for its finalization and submission to the BSEC Council for approval. The text of the Draft Strategy, as agreed, is attached as **Annex V**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: HARMONIZATION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

17. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey presented information on measures taken at national level for the harmonization and simplification of customs procedures. It was stressed that the Turkish customs authorities are modernizing their tools and technology focusing on developing IT systems.

18. Information on the second phase of the first eTIR Pilot Project with Iran concerning C2B2C data exchange, as well as on the second Project with Georgia dealing with C2C data exchange, the Single Window System in Turkey, consisting of two parts – e-document and e-application, the work done on implementation of the pre-declaration system for TIR Carnet Holders (TIRCUS) was also provided by the Turkish Delegation.

19. The participants invited the Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States to continue to share their experience in harmonization and simplification of customs procedures at the next meetings of the Working Group.

20. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS that so far only few BSEC Member States provided the links of their websites with available information to be used for elaboration of the draft “*Manual on import, export and transit procedures in the BSEC Member States*”.

21. The interested Member States were invited to provide the BSEC PERMIS with the links of the websites where their export, import and transit information is available, until 1 July 2017.

22. Furthermore, the participants invited the BSEC PERMIS, in cooperation with the Country-Coordinator, based on information provided by the BSEC Member States, to elaborate the above mentioned draft *Manual* and submit it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Working Group.

23. The representative of the Republic of Turkey, in its capacity of the Country Coordinator of the Working Group on Customs Matters, expressed readiness to collaborate with the BSEC PERMIS in preparation of such a draft Manual.

AGENDA ITEM 6: OUTCOME OF THE SEMINAR ON AUTOMATION OF TRANSIT PROCEDURES & ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF DATA WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF TRADE FACILITATION (Istanbul, 19-20 April 2017)

24. The participants took note of the information provided by the Delegation of the Republic of Turkey on the *Seminar on Automation of Transit Procedures & Electronic Exchange of Data Within the Context of Trade Facilitation* held in Istanbul on 19-20 April 2017, and expressed their appreciation to the BSEC PERMIS, Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey, BSEC-URTA and TOBB for co-organizing this event.

25. The participants discussed the issue of cooperation among the BSEC Member States in the relevant sphere and decided to continue the consideration of this issue in future meetings, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the above-mentioned Seminar.

26. The participants invited the BSEC PERMIS to circulate the Summary Proceedings of the above-mentioned Seminar among the Member States.

27. The participants expressed their wish to see broader participation from the BSEC Member States in the activities which will be organized in the framework of BSEC.

AGENDA ITEM 7: EXCHANGING EXPERIENCE ON METHODOLOGY OF TIME RELEASE STUDY

28. The delegations of the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan presented information on the methodology of Time Release Study (TRS) projects accomplished and on the outcomes of the TRSs undertaken in their respective countries.

29. The participants agreed upon the usefulness of the exchange of information and cooperation, and decided to continue their discussion on the issue during the forthcoming meetings of the Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM 8: STRATEGIES AND POLICIES OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES IN ENHANCING INTEGRITY OF OFFICIALS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS IN THE BSEC REGION

30. The participants exchanged views on the issue.

31. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey, Romania and the Republic of Azerbaijan informed the participants on the recent developments related to the issue in their respective countries.

32. The participants invited the Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States to continue sharing information on their integrity strategies and policies.

AGENDA ITEM 9: IMPROVING CUSTOMS OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMS CONTROL IN RESPECT OF GOODS FOR PERSONAL USE MOVED IN INTERNATIONAL E-COMMERCE

33. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey informed the participants on the works done in Turkey to facilitate the customs operations regarding personal use of e-commerce.

34. The participants decided to continue consideration of this issue at the forthcoming meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 10: RECONSIDERATION OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL ON CONDUCTING BENCHMARKING EXERCISES AMONG THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

35. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS in respect to this item and exchanged their views on the issue.

AGENDA ITEM 11: PARTICIPATION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON CUSTOMS MATTERS

36. The Delegation of Romania informed that Romania has ratified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in 2015, and requested the BSEC PERMIS to include this information into the List of International Conventions on Customs Matters to which the Member States are parties.

37. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey informed that there are other BSEC Member States which also ratified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and invited the BSEC PERMIS to include relevant information into the above-mentioned list.

38. The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan informed the participants that necessary internal procedures are currently being implemented in relation to the accession of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul Convention).

39. The List of International Conventions on Customs Matters to which the Member States are parties, as updated, is attached as **Annex VI**.

40. The Member States were invited to continue to inform the BSEC PERMIS on changes of their status of participation in the International Conventions on Customs Matters.

AGENDA ITEM 12: COOPERATION BETWEEN BSEC AND THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION (WCO)

41. The participants took note of the information provided by the representative of the BSEC PERMIS.

42. The participants exchanged views on the possibility of concluding a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between BSEC and the World Customs Organization (WCO) and invited the BSEC PERMIS to proceed accordingly.

AGENDA ITEM 13: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

43. No issue was raised under this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 14: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

44. The date and venue of the next Meeting of the Working Group on Customs Matters will be communicated to the Member States through the diplomatic channels.

45. The representative of the BSEC PERMIS informed the participants that the next Meeting of the Working Group on Customs Matters is planned to be organized back-to-back with a Seminar on Single Window.

AGENDA ITEM 15: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

46. The participants agreed upon the Conclusions of the Meeting to be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.