



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

**Permanent International Secretariat**

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

**(BSEC Headquarters, 4 November 2016)**

1. The Informal Meeting of the BSEC Working Group (WG) on Customs Matters was held at the BSEC Headquarters, on 4 November 2016.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Didem DİRLİK SONGÜR, Head of Department for Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey and Mr. Vladan LAZOVIC, Minister Counsellor, Special Representative of the Serbian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.
3. The following BSEC Member States attended the Meeting:  
  
Republic of Armenia  
Republic of Azerbaijan  
Russian Federation  
Republic of Serbia  
Republic of Turkey
4. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I**.

**AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

5. The Agenda of the Meeting was discussed 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 AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS ADOPTED BY THE HEADS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

6. The BSEC PERMIS informed the participants on the state of implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the 16<sup>th</sup> BSEC Council Meeting (Belgrade, 19 April 2007), the 34<sup>th</sup> BSEC Council Meeting (Sochi, 1 July 2016) and the Baku Declaration of the Heads of Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States “Initiatives of Customs Administrations in Trade Facilitation” (Baku, 26 November 2014).

7. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS and expressed its commitment to take appropriate measures in order to secure proper implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council.

**AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS MATTERS FOR THE PERIOD 2016-2018**

8. The Republic of Turkey, in its capacity as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Customs Matters, presented the Draft Plan of Action of the Working Group for the period of 2016-2018.

9. The Working Group discussed, amended and adopted the Draft Plan of Action of the Working Group on Customs Matters for the period of 2016-2018. The Plan of Action is attached as **Annex III**.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: HARMONIZATION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES**

10. The Delegations of the Republic of Turkey, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Serbia presented information on measures taken at national level for the harmonization and simplification of customs procedures and, in particular, on the projects which are in the area of implementation of the Single Window concept through ICT solutions in their respective Customs Administrations.

11. The representative of the Republic of Turkey emphasized that the Turkish Customs Administration has been focusing on developing its IT systems and on promoting the use of modern tools and technology to support Customs processes. During 2015 and 2016, several projects were signed to promote the use of automated systems in all levels of customs administration, among which an eTIR Pilot Project, conducted by the Turkish and Iranian Customs Administrations; an eTIR Pilot Project with the Georgian Customs Administration to test Customs to Customs information exchange; an agreement with the Customs Administration of Ukraine to implement another eTIR pilot project.

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

13. The Working Group underlined the value of implementing of regulations in the area of trade facilitation, trade supply chain security, harmonization and simplification of customs

procedures under the auspices both the World Customs Organization and the World Trade Organization.

14. The Working Group discussed the issue of publication and availability of export, import and transit information and, with reference to the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (Article 1.1), invited the interested BSEC Member States to provide the links of the website where this information is published, to the BSEC PERMIS until 1 March 2017.

15. 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 draft “Manual on import, export and transit procedures in the BSEC Member States” and submit it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Working Group.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 5: EXCHANGING EXPERIENCE ON METHODOLOGY OF TIME RELEASE STUDY**

16. The participants exchanged views on the issue.

17. The Delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey presented information on the methodology of Time Release Study (TRS) projects accomplished and on the outcomes of the TRS undertaken in their respective countries.

18. The Working Group agreed to recommend to the Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States to constantly endeavour to reduce the average release time of goods for import, export and national/international transit and to elaborate and submit to the BSEC PERMIS project proposals in order to provide joint studies applying the TRS methodology to assess the performance of the import and export clearance processes.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6: STRATEGIES AND POLICIES OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES IN ENHANCING INTEGRITY OF OFFICIALS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS IN THE BSEC REGION**

19. The participants exchanged views on enhancing integrity and anti-corruption issues in Customs area.

20. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey informed of the adoption of an Anti-corruption Strategy and of the establishment of an Ethics Committee, in the process of the implementation of the Strategy, which monitors the practices of all Customs staff in terms of anti-corruption and promotion of integrity.

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

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7: IMPROVING CUSTOMS OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMS CONTROL IN RESPECT OF GOODS FOR PERSONAL USE MOVED IN INTERNATIONAL E-COMMERCE**

22. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS and decided to continue consideration of this issue at its next meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEM 8: PARTICIPATION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

23. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS and requested the BSEC PERMIS to continue its efforts aimed at developing cooperation with other relevant international organizations and institutions.

24. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey, informed that Turkey has ratified the new World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) which has the potential to boost the international trade, and requested the BSEC PERMIS to include the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in the List of International Conventions on Customs Matters to which the Member States are parties.

25. The List of International Conventions on Customs Matters to which the Member States are parties is attached as **Annex IV**.

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

## **AGENDA ITEM 9: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA 2012: 1ST YEAR OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MEDIUM TERM (2016-2018)**

27. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS and invited the Member States to make their proposals on projects/deliverables to be implemented within each priority goals approved by the Resolution of the 33<sup>rd</sup> BSEC Council Meeting, namely:

a) Continuing the on-going process of harmonization of customs and border crossing procedures in conformity with the national legislations, with the aim of facilitating the movement of goods and people across national boundaries.

b) Promoting cooperation among the customs authorities of the BSEC Member States in line with the WCO requirements, including application of innovative technologies in this regard.

c) Exchanging, where and when possible, preliminary information on vehicles and goods crossing the borders of the BSEC Member States.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10: IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENTS AND MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING**

28. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the issue.

29. The participants had a preliminary exchange of views on the possibility of concluding an agreement between BSEC and the World Customs Organization (WCO) and agreed to continue consideration of this issue at the next meeting of the Working Group.

## **AGENDA ITEM 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

30. No issue was raised under this Agenda Item.

**AGENDA ITEM 12: DATE AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

31. The date and venue of the next meeting will be communicated to the BSEC Member States through BSEC PERMIS.

**AGENDA ITEM 13: ADOPTION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING**

32. The participants adopted the present Conclusions of the Meeting to be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for their consideration.

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