



**ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

**Permanent International Secretariat**

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**Istanbul, 15 November 2012**

**BS/WG/CM/R(2012)2**

**REPORT OF THE  
MEETING OF THE BSEC  
WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

**Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 15 November 2012**

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group (WG) on Customs Matters was held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, on 15 November 2012.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Hülya ERBAY, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey.
3. The following Member States of BSEC attended the Meeting:
  - Republic of Albania
  - Republic of Armenia
  - Republic of Azerbaijan
  - Republic of Bulgaria
  - Hellenic Republic
  - Republic of Moldova
  - Romania
  - Russian Federation
  - Republic of Serbia
  - Republic of Turkey
  - Ukraine
4. The following BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner also participated in the Meeting:
  - Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA)
5. The following Guest attended the Meeting:
  - Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Secretariat

The List of Participants is attached as Annex I.

6. The Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex II.

### **STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELATED TO CUSTOMS MATTERS**

7. The WG took note of the information provided by BSEC PERMIS on the status of implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council.

8. Within this context, the WG was informed especially on the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States held in Belgrade on 11 June 2012.

9. At this Meeting, the Council reappointed the Republic of Turkey as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Customs Matters as of 1 July 2012 for a period of two years. The Council also adopted the Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Customs Matters (*Articles 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of the Report of the Twenty Sixth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States*).

10. The WG invited those Member States who have not yet appointed their representatives to the WG, to do so as soon as possible.

11. The WG took note of the proposal by Ukraine to organize the “Second Workshop on Cooperation among the Customs Laboratories of the BSEC Member States” during its incoming Chairmanship-in-Office in the first half of 2013.

12. The proposal on the subject of the Workshop will be submitted by Ukraine through the BSEC PERMIS for the further consideration by the BSEC Member States.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE “BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA: TOWARDS AN ENHANCED BSEC PARTNERSHIP”**

13. The WG took note of the information provided by BSEC PERMIS on the status of implementation of the provisions of the “BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership”.

14. Within this regard, Turkey informed the WG that the provisions of the BSEC Economic Agenda “*Cooperation among Customs and Border Crossing Administrations*” were taken into consideration and they were included in the Plan of Action of the WG on Customs Matters for the period of 2012-2014.

### **CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT ACTION PLAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

15. The Republic of Turkey elaborated and presented a two-year Draft Plan of Action for the activities of the Working Group.

16. The WG discussed, amended and adopted the Plan of Action. In this regard, the WG expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Turkey for elaboration of the Plan of Action of the WG on Customs Matters for the period of 2012-2014. The text of the Plan of Action is attached as Annex III.

17. In connection with the BSEC-OSCE Joint Conference/Seminar on the “Best Practices at Border Crossings” to be held in April 2013, included in the Plan of Action, the representative of the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities made a presentation on OSCE - UNECE Handbook on Best Practices at Border Crossings. The presentation is attached as Annex IV.

18. The representative of the Hellenic Republic proposed the participation of a representative of the European Commission in the future meetings of BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters, on a permanent basis, in order to provide their know-how and expertise.

19. The BSEC PERMIS informed that in accordance with the established procedure, the BSEC Related Bodies, Observers, Sectoral Dialogue Partners and related international organizations and institutions are invited to all meetings of the WG on Customs Matters.

20. The Hellenic Republic also proposed to explore the possibility of adopting a Multilateral MoU between customs administrations of the BSEC Member States on the one hand and the EC on the other hand.

21. The WG requested the Hellenic Republic to provide further information on contents of the suggested MoU.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBILITY TO ESTABLISH A MECHANISM OF EXCHANGE OF PRELIMINARY INFORMATION AMONG THE INTERESTED CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

22. The discussion on this issue has been initiated by the Heads of Customs Administrations of the interested BSEC Member States at their meeting in Kyiv on 18 March 2008. It was stressed that the idea of establishment of cooperation in the field of exchange of preliminary information on goods and vehicles, moved through the border of the BSEC Member States, seemed an effective instrument to combat customs fraud and ensure proper implementation of customs legislation.

23. At its meeting in Bucharest on 8 June 2011, the Council instructed the Working Group on Customs Matters “to continue the consideration of the issue of the possibility of establishing a mechanism of exchange of preliminary information among the customs administrations of the interested Member States on the basis of the Model Draft Protocol on the Exchange of Information on the Movement of Goods and Conveyance as elaborated by the Russian Federation”.

24. The Working Group on Customs Matters continued consideration of this issue. In particular, the participants emphasized the importance of exchange of information among the Customs Administrations of the interested Member States and exchanged their views on ways and means to promote this practice within the framework of BSEC.

25. The Republic of Turkey informed the Working Group on its ongoing projects and presented the progress achieved since the last meeting of the Working Group (Istanbul, 15-16 March 2012). The Working Group noted that technical preparations are ongoing between the Customs Authorities of Turkey and Georgia, and a Pilot Project will start between Turkey and Ukraine. Turkey also informed the WG on its accession to the EU - EFTA Common Transit Convention.

#### **PARTICIPATION OF THE MEMBER STATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

26. The WG discussed and amended the consolidated table regarding the “Participation of the Member States in the International Conventions on Customs Matters”. The table is attached as Annex V.

27. The WG agreed to consider this agenda item on the permanent basis.

### **USE OF X-RAY TECHNOLOGY TO SCAN COMMERCIAL VEHICLES WHILE CROSSING THE BORDERS OF THE MEMBER STATES**

28. The WG took note of the presentation delivered by IRU/BSEC-URTA about the “Scientific Study on External Ionising Radiation Exposure during Vehicle Radiographic Inspections”. The presentation made by the BSEC-URTA is attached as Annex VI.

29. On this subject, the Republic of Turkey informed that, as included in the Plan of Action of the WG on Customs Matters for the period of 2012-2014, the “Workshop on the Provision, Maintenance and Use of X-ray Technology at Borders and Ports of BSEC Member Countries” would be held in İzmir, on 17-18 December 2012.

30. In this context, the WG took note of the initiative of the Republic of Turkey and invited the Member States to attend this event.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSEC PUBLIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

31. The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS representative regarding the newly adopted BSEC Public Communication Strategy and the outcome of the Meeting of the Communication Officers held in Istanbul on 15 October 2012.

32. The BSEC PERMIS informed the participants that the text of the BSEC Public Communication Strategy has been added to the new Manual prepared by the PERMIS for the Country-Coordinators of the Working Groups.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

33. The WG took note of the information provided by the BSEC-URTA on finalization by Egnatia Odos - the Technical Secretariat for the BSEC Ring Highway of the prefeasibility study on implementation of the Model Highway Initiative for the motorway trunk Baku-Tbilisi-Trabzon, and on the readiness of the Governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to sign a joint statement in this regard.

34. The WG took note of the presentation made by the BSEC-URTA on the Contribution of the IRU TIR-IT tools to secure and facilitate trade in the BSEC region and recommended the Member States who have not yet used these tools, to consider their application.

35. The WG noted that there are Customs Administrations which implement the TIR EPD Green Lanes concept and recommended application of the concept on the main border crossing points where possible. The presentation made by the BSEC-URTA is attached as Annex VII.

36. The WG took note of the BSEC-URTA presentation on a Pilot Project on Implementation of the UNECE International Vehicle Weight Certificate in the BSEC Region, to be announced by the implementing partners UNDP, IRU and BSEC-URTA on 28 November 2012 during the forthcoming Meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Transport to be held in Izmir on 28 November 2012. The presentation made by the BSEC-URTA is attached as Annex VIII.

37. The WG invited the BSEC Member States to participate in the Pilot Project.

**DATE AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

38. The date and venue of the next Meeting of the WG will be communicated to the BSEC Member States through the BSEC PERMIS.

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**

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

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