



BS/EG/CCS/R(2008)1

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC AD HOC EXPERT GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN CUSTOMS SERVICES**

Istanbul, 5-6 February 2008

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Ad Hoc Expert Group on Cooperation in Customs Services was held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul on 5-6 February 2008.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Georgios KOUNADIS, Director, International Economic Relations Directorate, Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Hellenic Republic and Mr. Oleg KUCHUK, Deputy Director, Department of International Customs Cooperation, State Customs Service of Ukraine.
3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - 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 representatives of the Czech Republic and Republic of Poland participated in the Meeting in the capacity of BSEC Observers.
5. The representatives of UNDP also participated in the Meeting.
6. The List of Participants is attached as Annex I to the present Report.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

7. The Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex II to the present Report.

DRAFT STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS FROM THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

8. The participants considered the Draft Statement of the Heads of Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States.

9. After a thorough discussion the participants agreed on the text of the Draft Statement and recommended to adopt it at the forthcoming Meeting of the Heads of Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States to be held in Kyiv on 18 March 2008. The text, as agreed by the participants, is attached as Annex III.

DRAFT MEMORANDUM AMONG THE CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (BSEC) MEMBER STATES REGARDING ORGANIZATION OF PRELIMINARY INFORMATION EXCHANGE ABOUT GOODS AND VEHICLES MOVED THROUGH THE STATE BORDER OF BSEC MEMBER STATES

10. The participants exchanged views on the Draft Memorandum among the customs administrations of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) member states regarding organization of preliminary information exchange about goods and vehicles moved through the state border of BSEC member-states elaborated and presented by Ukraine.

11. BSEC Member States which are also Members of the EU stated that they were not in the position to negotiate the Draft Memorandum taking into account that the European Community has exclusive competence in the customs area to represent its Member States concerning the EU first pillar issues (permanent preliminary exchange of information). Greece is going to submit its observations in written.

12. The representative of Turkey expressed concerns about the technical and legal aspects of the implementation of the said Memorandum and stated that it would not be appropriate to start negotiating on the Draft before resolving those legal and technical concerns.

13. The representative of Moldova informed the Meeting that a similar bilateral Memorandum between Moldova and Ukraine has been negotiated with the expertise of the European Commission and expressed the view that a multilateral Memorandum would be possible to be concluded.

14. The representative of Azerbaijan stated that certain questions which arise from the provisions of Draft Memorandum require further consideration at the expert level.

15. The participants agreed with the proposal of the Russian delegation to request PERMIS to invite a representative of the European Commission (DG TAXUD) to the next Meeting in order to clarify the position of the EU concerning the possibility of establishing such an information exchange according to the above mentioned Memorandum.

16. The participants invited the Member States who did not present their views regarding the Draft Memorandum to do so by informing PERMIS by 6 March 2008.

17. They also agreed to consider the issue at their next Meeting.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELATED TO COOPERATION IN CUSTOMS SERVICES

18. The Ad Hoc Expert Group continued to implement relevant CMFA resolution (Ankara, 25 October 2007) regarding information on legally binding acts as well as on border crossing procedures in the BSEC Member States.

19. The participants welcomed the submission by Romania, Ukraine and Turkey of the completed Questionnaires to PERMIS and the Country-Coordinator.

20. Also in conformity with the provisions of the Ankara Declaration the Ad Hoc Expert Group started to consider the possibility of concluding a legally binding document on exchange of information between customs administrations of the BSEC Member States.

ASSESSMENT OF THE INFORMATION ON LEGALLY BINDING ACTS AS WELL AS ON BORDER-CROSSING PROCEDURES IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES BASED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE PREPARED BY THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR

21. The participants recommended to the Member States, which did not submit the completed Questionnaire, to do so to PERMIS and to the Country-Coordinator in order to elaborate a consolidated paper on the state of play with the accession to multilateral and bilateral conventions and agreements in the field of customs services as well as on cross-border procedures with neighboring countries.

22. Moreover, the Ad Hoc Expert Group encouraged the Member States who are not parties to the international conventions on trade facilitation to become parties to those conventions.

UNDP BORDER MANAGEMENT PROJECT PROPOSAL

23. The participants took note of the presentation made by UNDP Representative on border management and reacted positively to potential collaboration between UNDP and BSEC in this area. The said Presentation is attached as Annex IV to the present Report.

24. It was agreed that a more detailed Concept Note be prepared by UNDP for the next Meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Cooperation in Customs Services.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. Under this Agenda Item the participants were informed about the organizational aspects of the upcoming Meeting of the Heads of Customs Administrations of the BSEC Member States to be held in Kyiv on 18 March 2008.

26. It was agreed that BSEC PERMIS in close cooperation with the Host Country will disseminate to the Member States, as soon as possible, the relevant documents in order to enable the national delegations to participate in the Meeting.

27. The representative of Serbia made a presentation on time measurement practice in Serbia. The presentation is attached as Annex V to the Report.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

28. The exact date and venue of the next Meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group will be communicated to the Member States through BSEC PERMIS in due course.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

29. The Ad Hoc Expert Group adopted the present Report and submitted it for approval to the Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Istanbul on 26-28 February 2008.