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**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 10-11 September 2007

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection was held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, on 10-11 September 2007.

2. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:

Republic of Albania
Republic of Armenia
Hellenic Republic
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Turkey

3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the United States of America and the European Commission in the capacity as BSEC Observers.

4. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of BSEC (PABSEC) and the BSEC Business Council also participated in the Meeting.

The list of participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

5. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Izamettin EKER, Chief of the Division for Regional Cooperation and Bilateral Relations, Department of Foreign Relations and EU, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Republic of Turkey.

6. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed, amended and adopted. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.

PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSEC ACTION PLAN FOR COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ITS WORK PROGRAM

7. PERMIS presented information on the state of affairs with respect to the implementation of the BSEC Action Plan for Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection since the last Working Group Meeting (Belgrade, 14-15 March 2007).
8. It has been emphasized that the activities included in the Work Program to be carried out by the Working Group during the mandate of the Republic of Turkey of the Country – Coordinator (November 2005 – October 2007) were fulfilled and that the Work Program should be amended, in the future, with the activities to be proposed by the next Country-Coordinator to be appointed by the BSEC Council.
9. Furthermore, the participants provided information with respect to activities carried out for the implementation of the Action Plan.
10. The Working Group called upon the Member States to send updated lists of ongoing and planned activities carried out in view of implementing the Action Plan, at their utmost convenience.
11. The Working Group amended the Work Program for the Implementation of the Action Plan. The updated Work Program, as amended, is attached as **Annex III**.

STATE OF AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INFORMATION EXCHANGE MECHANISM FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMONG THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

12. PERMIS presented information with respect to the implementation of the decision of the BSEC Council (Belgrade, 19 April 2007) regarding the establishment of the BSEC Information Exchange Mechanism for Environmental Protection.
13. With respect to the initial “BSEC Information System” to be created by PERMIS (by the end of October 2007) based on the contributions of the BSEC Member States (part a. of the Council’s relevant decision), it was mentioned that, so far, only Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Turkey communicated the necessary information.
14. PERMIS reminded the obligation of the Member States regarding the implementation of the “Resolutions, decisions and recommendations” adopted by the BSEC Council and stressed the fact that the existing situation would be reflected in the next Progress Report of the Secretary General to be submitted to the Council.
15. The participants agreed to communicate the relevant information (in electronic version) latest by end September 2007, enabling PERMIS to upgrade its website and create the initial “BSEC Information System”.
16. Furthermore, the Working Group called upon the Member States to proceed with the implementation of the part b. of the Council’s decision and agreed to continue deliberation on the matter, with an aim of submitting recommendations to the Council with respect to: the content of the

BSEC Information Exchange Mechanism for the Environmental Protection; the general framework; the measures to be taken at national and multilateral level for its establishment.

17. The participants shared the view that the discussions regarding the BSEC Information Exchange Mechanism for Environmental Protection may continue in the framework of workshops at experts' level to be organized by the next Chairmanships-in-Office, with the support of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group. The Working Group at a later stage should consider the recommendations made by the experts.

18. Furthermore, opinions were expressed that the European Commission could be involved in this process.

CONSIDERATION OF PDF APPLICATIONS

19. The Working Group took note of the fact that, since the last meeting, no project application was submitted for consideration.

20. Some delegations expressed the opinion that the long and bureaucratic procedures along with the small financial support provided by the Project Development Fund (PDF) are not motivating for the applicants.

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS AND PROJECT IDEAS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMONG THE BSEC MEMBER STATES AND BETWEEN BSEC AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

21. The Working Group took note with interest of the project idea "Black Sea Oil Spill and Slick Detection via Satellite" submitted by "Turksat International Satellite Operator" for the implementation in the BSEC framework.

22. The delegations recommended to the initiator to submit an elaborated and technically detailed project proposal to be considered by the Working Group at its next meeting.

23. The participants exchanged views and ideas on possible regional projects to be elaborated by the Working Group and submitted to the European Union as proposals for an enhanced BSEC – EU cooperation and agreed to communicate to PERMIS their proposals for consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting.

DISCUSSION ON THE EVALUATION REPORT OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PREPARED BY THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE WORKING GROUP

24. The Working Group considered in a positive way the preliminary Evaluation Report of the Country-Coordinator regarding the activities carried out during its mandate (2005-2007) and made recommendations and amendments to it. The amended Evaluation Report will be submitted for consideration to the Committee of Senior Officials (27 September 2007).

25. The Working Group appreciated the work done by the Republic of Turkey in its capacity of the Country-Coordinator.

DISCUSSION ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE WORKING GROUP (NOVEMBER 2007 – OCTOBER 2009)

26. The Working Group took note of the application submitted by Romania to assume responsibility of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group as of 1 November 2007 for the period 2007-2009 and expressed its support to it.

27. It recommended to the newly appointed Country-Coordinator to continue implementation of the BSEC Action Plan for Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection.

ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION (PRESENTATIONS BY BSC SECRETARIAT, ICPDR, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DABLAS ETC.)

28. The participants took note with interest of the presentation made by the representative of the European Commission on the policies applied in the Black Sea region and the various financial instruments used for their implementation.

29. During the discussion that followed the wish was expressed for an enhanced cooperation between BSEC and EU and for the participation of the European Commission in the Working Group meetings on regular basis.

PREPARATION OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

30. The Working Group exchanged views with respect to the preparation of the Mid-term Ministerial Meeting to be organized according to Work Program for the implementation of the BSEC Action Plan for Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection.

31. To that end, the participants agreed to explore, at its next meeting, possibilities for the organization of the said Ministerial Meeting in Fall 2008 or Spring 2009 and to prepare a Report on the progress in the implementation of the four-year Plan to be submitted to the Mid-term Ministerial Meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

32. The participants welcomed the initiative of the United States Government to organize and financially support the Joint BSEC-US Symposium “Environmental Protection for Economic Growth. An International Exchange of Best Practices” to be held in Istanbul on 12-13 September 2007 and expressed the hope that this event will substantially contribute to enhance cooperation

among governments, private sector, local communities and NGOs for sustainable development in the region.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

33. The Participants expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey for the hospitality extended to them during the Meeting and the excellent organization of the event.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

34. The exact date and venue of the next Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection will be communicated to the BSEC Member States through BSEC PERMIS in due course.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

35. The Working Group adopted the present Report for submission to the Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Istanbul on 27 September 2007.
