

BS/WG/EP/R(2009)1

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

Istanbul, 27 - 28 January 2009

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection was held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul on 27-28 January 2009.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, Director, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Romania, and Mrs. Larisa KHARATOVA, Chief Specialist, Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia.
3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following Member States:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the United States of America, the Black Sea Commission and the European Commission in the capacity of BSEC Observers.

5. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC, the BSEC Business Council and the International Center for Black Sea Studies also participated in the Meeting.

6. The representatives of the UNDP, FAO and CEI-ES participated in the Meeting as Guests.

The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

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

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES (BUCHAREST, 3 MARCH 2006)

8. PERMIS presented information on the status of implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council and the Follow-up of the Joint Declaration adopted by the Ministers in Charge of Environmental Protection (Bucharest, March 2006).

9. The Working Group took note that nine Member States, namely, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Turkey, had transmitted their contributions to the initial BSEC Information System for the Environmental Protection. Further to the relevant decision of the BSEC Council (Kyiv, April 2008) the Group urged the Member States which had not done so yet to send their contributions to the BSEC website.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS OF THE BSEC ACTION PLAN FOR COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ITS WORK PROGRAM FOR 2007-2009

10. The Working Group took note of the information presented by PERMIS on the state of affairs with respect to the implementation of the BSEC Action Plan for Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection and its Work Program for 2007-2009 since the last Working Group Meeting (Istanbul, 18-19 March 2008).

11. Taking into consideration that, so far, only seven Member States, namely, Armenia, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Russia, Romania and Turkey had submitted the lists of ongoing and planned activities carried out in view of implementing the BSEC Action Plan the Working Group urged the Member States which had not done so yet to transmit the required information. It was also agreed that the Member States will present information on the implementation progress of the projects, named in the above-said lists, at the next Meeting of the Working Group.

12. The Working Group took note of the list of national representatives of the Member States appointed by them as contact points in the Group, anticipated by the relevant BSEC Council decision (Belgrade, 19 April 2007), and the list of focal points mentioned in the BSEC Action Plan, prepared by PERMIS. The said Lists are attached as Annex III.

13. Romania in its capacity of the Country-Coordinator informed that it would transmit its additional proposals to the Work Program (Plan of Action) of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection (2007-2009).

INFORMATION ON THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AND THE PROGRESS TOWARDS PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT WITH MORE STRICT REGULATIONS IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

14. The participants took note of the information on the new developments in the national environmental legislation and the progress towards protecting the environment with more strict regulations presented by the Hellenic Republic, Romania and the Republic of Serbia.

15. It was agreed to continue exchange of such information on the regular basis as it is envisaged by the Terms of Reference of the Working Group and the BSEC Action Plan.

DISCUSSION ON THE MODALITIES OF ESTABLISHING AN INFORMATION EXCHANGE MECHANISM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

16. The Working Group took note that so far only eight Member States, namely, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Turkey, had transmitted their replies to the Questionnaire on establishment of the information exchange mechanism among the BSEC countries, elaborated by the Country-Coordinator (Romania). The Group asked the Member States which had not responded yet to send their replies by 31 March 2009.

17. With the aim to promote further deliberations on the modalities of establishment of the said information exchange mechanism Romania expressed its readiness to prepare the second Questionnaire on the issue.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUND AND REGIONAL PROJECTS

18. The Working Group took note of the information provided by PERMIS regarding the project funding instruments of BSEC - the existing Project Development Fund (BSEC-PDF) and the Hellenic Development Fund (BSEC-HDF) becoming operational in the near future.

19. It was noted that with regard to PDF and in view of the recent adoption of the new Manual of Operations, no new applications could be endorsed by BSEC till introduction,

expectedly in mid-2009, of a revised Application Format conforming to the new regulations.

20. PERMIS informed the participants on the Final report and deliverables of the PDF project **“Improvement of the scientific background for assuring sustainable development in the Black Sea coastal zone – pre-feasibility study”** approved at the last Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Project Development Fund (Istanbul, 23 January 2009). The Report and the project’s executive summary are attached for the Member States’ consideration as Annex IV.

21. Furthermore, the Working Group took note that two PDF Applications: **“Revitalization of urban ecosystems through vascular plants: assessment of technogenic pollution impact – Garden City”** and **“Study of the capabilities and requirements of the operational monitoring of air pollution levels”**, were approved by the PDF Steering Committee (Istanbul, 17 September 2008). The Grant contracts to the amount of 15,000 USD each for the said projects have been signed recently with BSEC PERMIS.

22. Romania briefed the participants on the EU Joint Operational Program “Black Sea 2007-2013” and informed on its intention to submit a new proposal for regional cooperation by the next Meeting of the Working Group.

CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE SPHERE OF PREVENTING CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

23. The participants exchanged views on the possibilities of strengthening the cooperation on the issue of preventing climate change and its consequences and agreed to present information on the measures undertaken in the Member States in this respect at the next Meeting of the Group.

ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION (PRESENTATIONS BY UNDP, FAO, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, CEI-ES)

24. The Working Group welcomed the project idea for “Introducing Climate Change in the Environmental Strategy for the Protection of the Black Sea” presented by the UNDP and requested the latter to submit a detailed project proposal to be considered at the next Meeting of the Working Group. The presentation is attached as Annex V.

25. The participants took note with interest of the presentations made by the representatives of the FAO and CEI-ES on sustainable management of forest and watershed resources, fisheries, initiatives in climate and environment. The presentations are attached as Annex VI.

26. The representative of the European Commission made a presentation titled “EU and the Black Sea: Environment”. The said presentation is attached as Annex VII.

27. It was agreed to explore the possibilities for further cooperation between BSEC and the above named organizations.

CONSIDERATION OF THE WORKING PAPER ON THE POSSIBLE MEANS OF STRENGTHENING THE COOPERATION OF THE BSEC WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH ISSUES OF THE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION OF THE BLACK SEA MARINE ENVIRONMENT, PREPARED BY THE ICBSS

28. The Working Group commended the ICBSS for the professional elaboration of the “Working Paper on the Possible Means of Strengthening the Cooperation of the BSEC with International Organizations Dealing with Issues of Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea Marine Environment” and appreciated the contribution of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (BSC) to the said Working Paper.

29. The Working Group considered, amended and agreed in principle the aforementioned Working Paper, pending the receipt of the contributions of FAO and BSC. The updated version of the Draft Working Paper will be submitted to the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials for consideration.

PREPARATION OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES (YEREVAN, 10 APRIL 2009)

30. Armenia in its capacity of the Chairman-in-Office and the host country informed the participants that in the near future it would forward the invitations to the Ministerial Meeting and the pertaining documents.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. No issues were raised under this Agenda Item.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

32. The next Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection will be held in Yerevan on 8-9 April 2009.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

33. The Working Group adopted the present Report for submission to the Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Yerevan on 27-28 April 2009.