BS/WG/ICT/R(2013)1

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

Istanbul, 25 September 2013

1.   The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies was held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul on 25 September 2013.

2.   The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Mikhayil VARDANIAN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the Organization of BSEC, on behalf of the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office.

3.   The following BSEC Member States attended the Meeting:

Republic of Albania
Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Hellenic Republic
Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

4.   Representative of the BSEC Business Council participated in the Meeting in the capacity of a BSEC Related Body.

5.   The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

a/ Presentation by the Republic of Armenia of an Evaluation Report on the state of cooperation in the BSEC WG on Information and Communication Technologies in 2011-2013;

7.   The Working Group took note of the presentation by the Republic of Armenia, Country-Coordinator, of an Evaluation Report on the state of cooperation in the BSEC WG on Information and Communication Technologies in 2011-2013. The said report is attached as Annex III.

8.   The Working Group expressed appreciation to the Republic of Armenia for its contribution to promotion of ICT cooperation in the BSEC region, as a Country-Coordinator of the BSEC WG on ICT during the period 1 July 2011-30 June 2013, and submission of the Evaluation Report for the said period.

9.   The Working Group welcomed approval of the Republic of Armenia for the post of a Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on ICT for the next period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015.

b/ Follow-up the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

10.   The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS about decisions of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Istanbul, 26 June 2012), the BSEC Economic Agenda: "Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership" and the BSEC Public Communication Strategy, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States at its 26th meeting in Belgrade, on 11 June 2012.

11.   The Working Group elaborated on its future actions in line with the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, documents "BSEC Economic Agenda Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership" and "The Way Forward for an Action Plan on the Implementation of the "Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership", in particular, its Goal 12 titled: "Sustainable information society with advanced Information and Communication Technology infrastructure".

12.   The Working Group invited the Country-Coordinator to prepare a report to the Council regarding the WG's activities, as stipulated in the document "The Way Forward for an Action Plan on the Implementation of the "Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership" to be submitted in December 2013.

13.   The Working Group discussed also the document on the BSEC Public Communication Strategy, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States at its 26th Meeting in Belgrade, on 11 June 2012 and invited the Country-Coordinator in cooperation with the BSEC PERMIS to elaborate by November 2013 on the key messages in the ICT field to be placed at the BSEC web site.

14.   The Working Group expressed the willingness to proceed actively in securing the necessary dynamics of the implementation of the Council Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations, as well as the Ministerial Declarations.

REVIEW OF THE RECENT ICT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

15.   The participants informed the Working Group about development of ICT sectors in their countries.

16.   The delegation of the Republic of Armenia made a presentation about the Armenian IT industry as one of the most dynamic and promising sectors of the economy. It was said that during the last 10 years, the industry demonstrated a sharp increase in the number of newly formed companies, both local startups and branches of foreign companies. The presentation is attached as Annex IV.

17.   The delegation of the Hellenic Republic made a presentation of the main issues of the development of the telecommunications sector in Greece. A new regulated framework regarding the electronic communications sector has come into force last year, aiming at the growth of telecommunications sector under healthy competition rules and a secured consumer environment. Special attention is given to the broadband development. Efforts are made for the implementation of a broadband environment, which can offer new broadband services to all Greek citizens, trying to follow and reach the average of EU performance in this sector.
The high penetration in fixed and mobile voice services, the digital broadcasting and the final switch over from analogues to digital transmission, the increased internet usage, as well as some infrastructure projects, were also mentioned. The presentation is attached as Annex V.

18.   The representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan informed that the 67th session of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution supporting Azerbaijan's initiative on establishment of Eurasian Alliance (Eurasian Connectivity Alliance - EuraCA) and construction of Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM). It was underlined that the initiative envisages enhancing trans-regional cooperation in information and communications technologies, helping governments respond better to the needs and challenges in that sector as well as attracting the private sector interest and facilitating knowledge-sharing in this field.

19.   The representative also informed on 'Azerbaijan International Telecommunications and Information Technologies Exhibition BakuTel-2013' to be held in Baku on 2-5 December 2013.

20.   The participants expressed their common vision that the ICT significantly influence socio-economic developments and that the growth of the ICT sector contributes to the overall economic growth.

BRIDGING DIGITAL DIVIDE: PRESENTATION OF THE ICT PROJECTS HAVING REGIONAL IMPACT

21.   The representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan presented updated information on the implementation of TASIM Project.

FOLLOW UP THE BSEC PDF PROJECT "TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER NETWORK": DISCUSSION ON ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BSEC INCUBATORS ASSOCIATION

22.   The Enterprise Incubator Foundation made a presentation about progress achieved in elaboration a PDF project a "Technology Transfer Network for BSEC" with PDF financing and in partnership with Timisoara Software Business Incubator (Timisoara, Romania) and INERGO IT S.A. (Thessaloniki, Greece). It was noted that following the accomplishment of the PDF project the ICT incubators in the BSEC countries were encouraged to establish the BSEC Incubators Association.

23.   The Working Group discussed the Concept Paper on Establishment of BSEC Incubators Association, prepared by the Country-Coordinator on the proposed Association, and agreed on the following draft decision to be presented for consideration and approval at the High-level Meeting on Information and Communication Technologies to be held on 5 October 2013 in Yerevan:

"High Officials took note of the proposal to establish the BSEC ICT Incubator Association. High Officials invited the ICT incubators and similar entities of the BSEC Member States to elaborate on their proposals to be considered as practical steps towards this end"

COOPERATION WITH THE BSEC PARTNERS:

a/ Follow-up the Program for the BSEC Member States in Seoul on 26-30 September 2011;

24.   The Working Group noted that following the "Korea-BSEC ICT Cooperation Program" for the BSEC Member States on 26-30 September 2011 in Seoul the Government of the Republic of Korea offered its good services for organizing a series of the ICT workshops in the BSEC Member States. The workshops, which attracted representatives of the public and private sector, were aimed at sharing the Korean experience in the area of e-society and IT sector development, in particular, on e-government establishment, e-government and IT development strategy, GIDC (Government Integration Data Center), Administrative Information Sharing System, Mobile Application etc.

25.   The Working Group welcomed the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the BSEC Member States to take part in the Second Korea-BSEC ICT Cooperation Program to be held on 21-25 October 2013 in Seoul and encouraged the Member States to

take an active part in this endeavor. The Note of the MFA of the Republic of Korea is attached as Annex VI.

26.   The Working Group highly appreciated the efforts of the Republic of Korea in promoting and deepening ICT cooperation in the BSEC region through concrete actions.

b/ The BSEC-France-BRAF Seminar "New Audiovisual Broadcasting Technologies and the New Economic Models arising from them" (Istanbul, 3 December 2012)

27.   The Working Group took note of the outcome of the BSEC-France-BRAF Seminar "New Audiovisual Broadcasting Technologies and the New Economic Models Arising from Them", held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul on 3 December 2012 and suggested that the Seminar provided a good base for evaluation of present international trends on the analogue to digital switchover, its perspectives and possible cooperation in the field.

28.   The Working Group took also note of the outcome of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Forum of the Black Sea Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities held on 6 September 2013 in Kyiv.

CONSIDERATION OF AN ACTION PLAN OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR 2013-2015

29.   The Working Group discussed, amended and adopted the Action Plan for the period of 1 July 2013-30 June 2015, presented by the Republic of Armenia as a Country-Coordinator. The text of the Action Plan, as amended by the Working Group, is attached as Annex VII to the present Report.

PREPARING A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ON 5 OCTOBER 2013 IN YEREVAN

30.   The Delegation of the Republic of Armenia provided detailed information about organizational arrangements for a High-level Meeting on Information and Communication Technologies to be held on 5 October 2013 in Yerevan and called upon the Member States which have not done so, to inform about the composition of their delegations.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BSEC PERMIS AND MEMBER STATES

31.   The Working Group took note of the PERMIS proposals regarding the improvement of the communications between the BSEC PERMIS and BSEC Member States. The BSEC PERMIS was instructed to submit detailed technical description and requirements of the proposed communication system by 20 October 2013. It was decided to continue consideration of the issue at the next meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

32.   No issue was raised under this Agenda item.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

33.   The date and the venue of the next Meeting will be communicated in due time through the BSEC PERMIS, after consultations with the Chairman-in-Office.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

34.   The present Report was adopted for submission to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials to be held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul on 22-23 October 2013.