



BS/CT/WG/R(2009)2

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Sofia, 15-16 December 2009

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism was held in Sofia, the Republic of Bulgaria, on 15-16 December 2009, followed by the Seminar entitled “Bulgaria – four seasons, balneology, wellness and spa tourism” held on 16 December 2009.
2. The Message by H.E. Mrs. Rumiana JELEVA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, to the Participants of the Meeting was presented.
3. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Ivo MARINOV, Deputy Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria.
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
5. The representative of the BSEC Business Council attended the Meeting as the BSEC Related Body.
6. The representatives of Arab Republic of Egypt also participated in the Meeting as the BSEC Observer.
7. The representatives of the Danube Tourist Commission and the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry also participated in the Meeting as the Official Guests.
8. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present Report.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

REVIEW AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NATIONAL POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BSEC COUNTRIES

10. The BSEC Business Council informed that it supports any national, regional and international initiatives concerning “green tourism” and will pay specific attention to this issue in Business Forum and Conference "The Synergy of the Black Sea Region in the Scope of the Green Economy" to be organized together with the Bulgarian Chairmanship in spring 2010.

11. The participants decided to defer the discussion until next Meeting of the Working Group.

“THE INTERNATIONAL STANDING SECRETARIAT ON BSEC COOPERATION IN TOURISM” – STATE OF AFFAIRS

12. The representative of the Hellenic Republic made a presentation on the competences of the Standing International Secretariat on Cooperation in Tourism, attached as **Annex III**.

13. The representative of the Hellenic Republic expressed the willingness of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to officially inform the Heads of the National Tourism Authorities of the BSEC Member States, during the forthcoming months, on the official launching of the Secretariat.

14. The representative of the Hellenic Republic invited the Member States to communicate any proposals concerning the conclusion of more competencies of the Secretariat within the framework of the Resolution of the 12th Meeting of the BSEC Council (Komotini, April 2005) through the PERMIS not later than 1 April 2010, bearing in mind that the Secretariat is conceived to be a BSEC affiliated center.

15. The Working Group kindly requested the Hellenic Republic to prepare the final text on the competences of the Standing International Secretariat, upon suggestions by the BSEC Member States and the PERMIS, to be presented to the Ministers in charge of Tourism on the occasion of the Inaugural Meeting of the Standing International Secretariat on Cooperation in Tourism, to be held during the Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office in 2010.

16. Furthermore, the representative of the Hellenic Republic informed the Working Group on their willingness to start preparations of rules of procedures of the Board of Directors of the International Standing Secretariat, to be communicated to the Member States through the PERMIS in due course.

17. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the work done so far by the Hellenic Republic in preparing the launching of the Secretariat.

“A COMMON BSEC TOURISM MARKETING COUNCIL” – EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND FORMULATING CONCLUSIONS

18. The participants decided to defer discussions on this item for the next Meeting upon request of Georgia in its capacity of the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism.

“FORUM ON THE COOPERATION OF THE ASSOCIATIONS OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM AGENCIES OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES” – STATE OF AFFAIRS

19. The representative of the Hellenic Republic will inform the Member States about the organization of the “Second Forum on Cooperation of the Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation” in due course.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND EVENTUAL CONCLUSIONS ON CULTURAL TOURISM ROUTES: “ROUTE OF THE ROSE, ROUTES OF COINAGE, CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE ROMAN EMPERORS, WINE ROUTE, THE SILK ROAD, THE LEGEND OF THE ARGONAUTS, MYTHS OF THE TWO SEAS”

20. The representative of Georgia made the presentation, entitled “The Cave “Golden Fleece” Tourism Development Project”, in which he informed that the project “Golden Fleece” would be finished in the middle of 2010. The detailed version of the presentation will be communicated to the Member States through the PERMIS by 15 January 2010.

21. The PERMIS informed of current state of affairs with regard to the applications by the Member States to join in the proposed projects:

- a) *“The Route of the Rose” - proposed by the Republic of Bulgaria;*
- b) *“The Routes of Coinage” - proposed by the Hellenic Republic;*
- c) *“Cultural Route of the Roman Emperors”, proposed by the Republic of Serbia:*
the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania joined;
- d) *“The Silk Road” - proposed by the Republic of Turkey:*
the Republic of Armenia and Georgia joined; the Republic of Azerbaijan, Romania and the Republic of Serbia expressed willingness to join;
- e) *“Myths of the Two Seas” - proposed by the Republic of Azerbaijan:*
the Hellenic Republic joined;
- f) *“Wine Routes of Azerbaijan” - proposed by the Republic of Azerbaijan;*
- g) *“Wine Routes of Armenia” - proposed by the Republic of Armenia;*
- h) *“Legend of Argonauts” - proposed by Georgia:*
the Hellenic Republic joined.

22. The representative of the Russian Federation informed on their willingness to join some of the projects. The final decision will be undertaken by the Russian authorities and communicated to the Member States not later than by the end of September 2010.

23. The PERMIS invited the Member States to inform it in due course on their final decisions to join the abovementioned projects, taking into account that the list of applicants will be finalized at the next Meeting of the Working Group to be held in 2010.

“CREATING A BRANDING OF THE BLACK SEA REGION”- EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND SETTING UP CONCLUSIONS

24. The Working Group decided to defer this issue for the next Meeting to give opportunity to the Member States to communicate their comments to the non-paper “Creating a Branding of the Black Sea Region”, attached as **Annex IV**.

MARITIME AND NAUTICAL TOURISM COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES - PROGRESS EVALUATION

25. The Working Group appreciated the presentation made by Professor Gerhard SKOFF, President of the Danube Tourist Commission, on the activities of the Commission, attached as **Annex V**.

26. The representative of the Hellenic Republic made a presentation on maritime tourism in Greece, attached as **Annex VI**, and kindly invited the Member States to provide necessary information concerning the legal framework on maritime and nautical ports.

27. The Hellenic delegation proposed that the Working Group could cooperate in order to proceed to the creation of a network of marinas of the BSEC Member States with the aim of promoting cooperation in the field of tourism. To this end, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants of the Working Group concerning the available facilities provided in the tourist ports of the BSEC Member States.

28. The Working Group kindly invited the President of the Danube Tourist Commission to communicate through the PERMIS a questionnaire on the issues pertaining to maritime and nautical tourism.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (CoE) “WINE CULTURAL TOURISM EXCHANGE PROJECT” - FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION ON BSEC – CoE COOPERATION ON THE PROJECT

29. The participants decided to defer this issue till the next Meeting of the Working Group.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON PARTICIPATION AT TOURIST EVENTS AND FAIRS HELD IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

30. The representative of the Russian Federation confirmed its readiness to coordinate the activities of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism starting from 1 January 2011.

31. Furthermore, the Russian side informed about its willingness to hold the Fifth International Conference for the BSEC Member States, entitled “Development of the tourism infrastructure in

the Black Sea Region”, in Krasnodar region in October 2010, as well as to organize workshops on tourism personnel training, investments in tourism and on maritime and nautical tourism.

32. The delegation of the Russian Federation invited the BSEC Member States to participate in the Fifth International Tourist Fair “Intourmarket” to be held in Moscow on 13-16 March 2010. The Russian side also proposed to arrange thematic meetings for the BSEC Member States within the framework of the Tourist Fair upon the suggestions and proposals by the Member States.

33. The representatives of the Republic of Bulgaria and the BSEC Business Council invited the Member States to participate in Conference on the wine sector and wine culture in the wider Black Sea area during VINARIA 2010 (International Exhibition of Vine-Growing and Wine Producing and Wine Festival) to be held in Plovdiv on 15-16 March 2010.

34. The representative of the Republic of Serbia invited the Member States to International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IHRA) Congress to be held in Belgrade, on 18-21 January 2010, while pointing out that the Congress will provide opportunity for the Member States for exchange of views with the representatives of the business community on investment opportunity in tourism.

35. Furthermore, the representative of the Republic of Serbia invited the Member States to participate at the 32nd International Tourism Fair to be held in Belgrade on 24-28 February 2010.

36. The PERMIS kindly requested the Member States, who have not done so yet, to inform on tourist events in their respective countries.

37. The Working Group took note of the decision of the BSEC Business Council to have a desk on each BSEC tourist fair in order to disseminate tourist statistical data brochures.

INITIAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE PREPARATION OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING

38. The PERMIS invited the Member States willing to organize a Ministerial Meeting in 2010 to communicate information in due course.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TOURISM OF THE MEMBER STATES (IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TOURISM OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES - RHODES DECLARATION, 31 MARCH 2005)

39. The representative of the PERMIS informed the participants on ways and dynamism of the implementation of the Resolution of the 15th BSEC Council (Moscow, 1 November 2006) with reference to the activities of the Working Group.

40. The participants acknowledged information on the issue provided by the PERMIS and expressed willingness to proceed with necessary steps needed to secure the dynamism of the

implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council and the Declarations and Joint Statements of the Ministers responsible for Tourism.

41. The participants invited the Country-Coordinator to prepare the Evaluation Report on the activities of the Working Group and submit it to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, in March 2010.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

42. The PERMIS invited the Member States interested to join the UNDP project “Alliances for Cultural Tourism in Black Sea Region”, attached as **Annex VII**, to notify the PERMIS.

43. The delegation of Romania encouraged the Danube Tourist Commission to apply for a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status in the BSEC Organization.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

44. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria for the hospitality extended to them in Sofia and the excellent organization of the Meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

45. The Working Group adopted the present Report and submitted it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the BSEC Member States.
