



BS/CT/WG/R(2008)1

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

Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 10-11 March 2008

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism was held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, on 10-11 March 2008.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Olha BOHONSKA, Vice-Consul of the Consulate General of Ukraine in Istanbul.
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
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of BSEC (PABSEC) and BSEC Business Council also participated in the Meeting as the BSEC Related Bodies.
5. The representative of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) also participated as a Guest.

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, 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

7. The representative of BSEC PERMIS informed the participants on the implementation of the Resolution of the 15th Council (Moscow, 1 November 2006) with reference to the activities of the Working Groups.

8. The Working Group assessed positively the Evaluation Report, as presented by the Country-Coordinator, on the activities of the Working Group and submitted it to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Kyiv on 15-16 April 2008.

PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF IDEAS AND PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM AMONG BSEC MEMBER STATES (FOLLOW-UP OF ELABORATION OF THE PROPOSALS OF THE NATIONAL DELEGATIONS AGREED AT THE MEETING OF WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM HELD IN ISTANBUL, OCTOBER 2007):

a) State of affairs with regard to creating a brochure and a web-site on Tourism in BSEC Member States;

9. The Working Group instructed the BSEC PERMIS to put the links of the web-sites of the official tourism authorities of the BSEC Member States to the official BSEC web-site and to the Business Council web-site, as proposed by the Secretary General of the BSEC Business Council.

10. The representatives of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey provided with their respective web-sites:

- Azerbaijan Ministry of Culture and Tourism: www.azerbaijan.tourism.az;
- Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism: www.bulgariatravel.org;
- Russian Federal State Agency for Tourism: www.russiatourism.ru;
- Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism: www.kulturturizm.gov.tr.

b) Assessment on possibilities for providing Visa Facilitation for Tourism among BSEC Member States;

11. The participants stressed the importance of visa facilitation for tourism activities in the BSEC Member States and decided to explore ways for cooperation in this field.

c) Exchange of views on participation at Tourist Events and Fairs held in BSEC Member States;

12. The participants exchanged information on tourist events and fairs organized in their countries.

13. The representative of the Republic of Serbia informed on the following events:
 - International Tourism Fair (Belgrade, 28 February – 2 March 2008);
 - International Press Institute – World Media Congress (May 2008);
 - Eurovision Song Contest (22-24 May 2008);
 - City Break 2008 (9-11 June 2008);
 - Danube Tourist Commission General Assembly (December 2008);
 - Danube Shipping Conference (December 2008);
 - Danube Bicycle Conference (December 2008).

14. The representative of the Hellenic Republic informed on the following events:
 - Intourmarket (Russia, Moscow);
 - MITT (March 2008);
 - Tourism Fair MITF (May 2008);
 - Fair of INVETEX (St. Petersburg, October 2008);
 - International Fair of Tourism (Serbia, Belgrade, February or March 2008);
 - “Citibreak” Fair (June 2008);
 - International Fair “Holiday and Spa Expo” which was held in Sofia on 21-23 February 2008.

15. The representative of Romania informed on the following events:
 - a. National Tourism Fair (Bucharest, 27-30 March 2008);
 - b. International Tourism Fair (Bucharest, 23-26 October 2008).

16. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria informed the participants about the Tourism Forum to be held in Varna on 1-4 November 2008 and Hotel, Restaurants and Equipment Fair in Sofia on 17-27 October 2008.

17. The representative of the Russian Federation informed about the Exhibition “INTOURMARKET 2008” (Moscow, 15-18 March 2008), relevant information on which can be found on www.inmexpo.ru.

18. The participants took note of the information on IV International Conference of the BSEC Member States “Development of Resort and Tourist Infrastructure in the Black Sea Region” (Gelendjik, 2-4 October 2008) and recommended to include it in the Calendar of the BSEC Events of the respective BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

19. The representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan informed the participants about the Azerbaijan VII International Tourism Fair to be held in Baku on 16-18 April 2008.

20. The representative of the Republic of Turkey informed that the “East-Mediterranean International Tourism Fair (EMITT)” was held in Istanbul on 14-17 February 2008.

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

- a) **Exchange of views on national policies and best practice that could be of interest to each and every of Member State, such as information concerning the incentives for tourist investments provided by the BSEC national legislations;**

21. The delegation of the Republic of Serbia made presentations entitled “Serbia – the Next Big Destination” and “New Strategic Projects in Serbian Tourism”.

22. The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan made a presentation entitled “Mice Industry in Azerbaijan Republic”.

23. The delegation of Romania made a presentation entitled “Cultural and Religious Tourism in Romania”.

- b) **Exchange of views and conceiving best application of European experience in tourism field with retrospective view on project “Action for Sustainable European Tourism”;**

24. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic in its capacity as Country-Coordinator of the WG on Cooperation in Tourism informed briefly on the Report of the Tourism Sustainability Group entitled “Action for More Sustainable European Tourism”.

25. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria made the presentation entitled “Bulgarian National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism/ 2008-2013”.

ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHING OF CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES REPRESENTATIVES OF TOURISM INDUSTRIES AND OF PROFESSIONAL AGENCIES:

- a) **Discussion and setting a date and venue for a joint meeting of the Working Group and tourist operators/travel agencies representatives;**

26. The Working Group stressed the importance to further develop cooperation between Governmental Authorities and private sector thus attracting the attention of national tour operators for cooperation within BSEC framework and decided to continue deliberations at its next meeting.

- b) **Exchange of views and eventually setting-up a conceptual framework for the establishment of the Federation of Association of BSEC Travel Agencies;**

27. The Country-Coordinator proposed to hold a Forum on the “Establishment of a Network of the Associations of the Travel Agencies of the BSEC Member States” in Athens in the beginning of July 2008, to be organized by the Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic and

the Hellenic Association of the Tourism and Travel Agencies. The presentation on this issue is attached as Annex IV.

28. The Working Group invited the Country-Coordinator to provide more detailed information in advance.

29. The participants recommended the respective BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office to include the Forum in its Calendar of the BSEC Events.

30. Several Member States provided information on the structure of their National Associations of Travel Agencies upon the request of the Country-Coordinator.

COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM PROMOTION OF THE BSEC REGION:

a) General overview;

31. There was no discussion on the issue.

b) Exchange of views and preliminary discussion on creating a common branding of the Black Sea region as tourist destination;

32. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria made a presentation on the issue of creating a common branding of the Black Sea region.

33. The participants appreciated the presentation of the Republic of Bulgaria and decided to continue deliberations on the issue at the next meeting of the Working Group.

MARITIME AND NAUTICAL TOURISM COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES: PROGRESS EVALUATION ON RELEVANT ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITH AIM TO ENHANCE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION

34. The Working Group agreed to encourage the participation in the next WG meeting of representatives of the Member States' public sector responsible for maritime and nautical tourism.

35. The participants agreed to invite a representative of the International Association for Tourism Promotion "Danube" to the next meeting of the Working Group.

COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM

36. The participants assessed the importance of cooperation in the field of education and training in tourism and decided to continue deliberations at the next meeting of the Working Group.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON COOPERATION WITH EU AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

37. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the issue of the project of the Council of Europe “Kyiv Initiative: Wine Routes” and requested PERMIS to explore the possibilities of the BSEC eventual cooperation with the Council of Europe on the issue.

PRESENTATION BY BSEC BUSINESS COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER (REC) OF A 20-DAY LONG TRAINING OPPORTUNITY ON SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC POLICIES AND BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR TOURISM OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSPEOPLE FROM THE TOURISM SECTOR

38. The participants took note of the presentation of the representative of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) on the “Seminar Series: Partnerships for Sustainable Development” to be held in Istanbul on 16-25 June 2008 and in Venice on 29 September – 8 October 2008, attached as Annex V.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

39. In view of expiration of the term-in-office of the Hellenic Republic as Country-Coordinator, on 1 November 2008, the Working Group encouraged the Member States to communicate their intention with respect to the WG’s coordination.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

40. 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.