



BS/CT/WG/R(94)1

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

Izmir, 25-27 October 1994

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Cooperation in Tourism was held on 25-27 October 1994 in Izmir, Turkey.
2. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Yaşar Yakış, Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.
3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Republic of Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The representatives of Egypt, Israel and the Slovak Republic as well as of the BSEC Council attended the Meeting as Observers.
5. The Meeting was also attended by the representative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as a guest.

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

6. H.E. Şahin Ulusoy, the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, made an inaugural speech. The text of the speech is attached as Annex II.
7. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted with amendments. The agenda is attached as Annex III.
8. Parallel to the Meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, a Meeting of the Experts of Technical Cooperation in the Field of Tourism was also held in conformity with the recommendation adopted at the Fourth MMFA on the subject of cooperation among the authorities in charge of technical cooperation in the Participating States.

EXPLORATION OF AREAS OF COOPERATION

a) Sustainable tourism development and diversification of the products destined for tourism through joint activities

9. Under this subitem of the agenda, a preliminary exchange of views was held among the delegations of the Participating States and the WG decided to keep this subject on the agenda of its future meetings.
10. The WG found it advisable to hold a seminar to discuss solely the subject of sustainable tourism development in further detail..

b) Facilitation of tourist movement among the BSEC Participating States

11. The discussions on this subject were held on the basis of the working paper prepared by the Republic of Turkey. The WG emphasized the importance of cooperative efforts for increasing tourism within the BSEC region and invited the Governments of the BSEC Participating States to consider taking unilateral initiatives or to enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements and arrangements to simplify and standardize the formalities governing the issuance of passports, visas and other supporting documents specially for groups traveling in organized tours, without prejudice to their international obligations.
12. The WG emphasized that the facilitation of tourist movement should not be confined to administrative matters, but should cover all issues pertaining to tourist movement from one country to another. In addition, it was agreed to exchange experience gained in various areas, including tourist movement.
13. The WG agreed to appeal to the Governments of the Participating States to consider the possibility of abolishing visas and taxes related to tourist movement without prejudice to their international obligations.

14. The WG decided to instruct the Secretariat to coordinate the work to be carried out under this item with the work being carried out by the other Working Groups operating in similar fields.

15. The WG called upon the Participating States to fully utilize the comparative advantages in various areas of tourism.

c) Joint promotion activities for attracting tourists from outside the BSEC region

16. The WG discussed the ideas contained in the working paper submitted by Turkey on the subject and stressed the significance of joint promotion activities as a useful means of reinforcing the flow of tourists from outside the BSEC region. The WG concluded that the main objectives of such a cooperative action might be, inter alia:

- to prepare a long-term program based on the market targets and the market strategy;
- to increase the independence of tourism from seasonal imbalances and to improve its geographical distribution;
- to promote investment activities into the tourism sector;
- to promote local tourism opportunities in order to meet special requirements of potential tourist market segments.

17. The WG further concluded that, in more detail, the following joint actions might be considered:

- to prepare and distribute promotional material for the consumer and the professional industry and to encourage writers and publishers to prepare such materials, with the prior consent of the BSEC Participating States, for the region as a whole;
- to advertise in consumer oriented media;
- to prepare audio-visual presentation material;
- to advertise in travel trade publications aimed at tour operators and selected organizations;
- to participate in tourism trade fairs with a joint BSEC stand;
- to organize workshops for the professional industry;
- to invite and host visits by tour operators and members of the travel media;

- to establish a regional travel association.

18. The WG decided to instruct the Secretariat to prepare a background paper on the basis of contributions to be made by the Participating States with a view to facilitating further elaboration of the items contained in paragraphs 16 and 17 above.

d) Review of the existing legislative framework regarding the incentives for foreign investment in the Participating States

19. The WG held a preliminary exchange of information on the existing legislative framework regarding the incentives for foreign investment in the BSEC Participating States.

20. The WG decided to further elaborate this subject in its future meetings and instructed the Secretariat to facilitate the interaction on this subject with the ad hoc Working Group of Experts on Promotion and Protection of Investments.

21. The WG decided to instruct the BSEC Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information within the State Institute of Statistics of Turkey to draw up a questionnaire in order to compile information on the legislative framework of the Participating States pertaining to the incentives for foreign investment in the field of tourism and to circulate it to the Participating States through the Permanent International Secretariat, to compile the answers and keep them at the disposal of the Participating States in an updated form.

e) Proposals for realizing technical cooperation among the Participating States as well as with third countries

22. The WG has referred the consideration of this agenda item to the Meeting of Experts of Technical Cooperation in the Field of Tourism which was convened concurrently for this specific purpose.

23. The WG took note of the Report of the Meeting of Experts of Technical Cooperation in the Field of Tourism and decided to submit it to the Fifth MMFA for consideration and action.

f) Review of the tourism infra- and superstructure projects which can be launched through the financial support of international financial institutions

24. Within the WG, a first exchange of views took place on this subject. The WG instructed the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat to initiate contacts with international institutions, in particular the BSEC Trade and Development Bank, when it becomes operational, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with the aim of identifying possible assistance for BSEC projects in the fields of

tourism infra- and superstructure. The WG welcomed the initiative that the BSEC Council offered to make on this subject.

g) Surveys concerning the natural, cultural and historical heritage in the BSEC region

25. The WG emphasized the importance of the protection of the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Participating States for tourism.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. Upon the initiative of the representative of Egypt, the WG emphasized the importance of the exchange of experience between the BSEC and regional organizations in the field of tourism.

27. The WG underlined the need for the exchange of information between universities and other educational establishments in view of the increasing need for skilled personnel in the field of tourism.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

28. The participants expressed their sincere thanks and gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Meeting and for the excellent arrangements as well as the warm hospitality extended to them during their stay in Izmir.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

29. The WG decided to invite the countries which may wish to host the next meeting of the WG on Cooperation in Tourism to notify the Secretariat accordingly.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

30. The WG adopted the present Report for submission to the Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
