



UNION OF ROAD TRANSPORT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION REGION
(BSEC-URTA)

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Istanbul, 30 April 2009

FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Metropol Hotel, Yerevan – ARMENIA
Tuesday, 12 May 2009, at 10:0 hrs

ACTIVITY REPORT

(Information Paper Prepared by the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat)

Since the Fourteenth Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 28 October 2008, the International Secretariat participated in events of importance for the industry, contributed to international gatherings and worked for promotion of the BSEC-URTA and its objectives.

A summary of these activities developed under the strategic objectives for 2009 and its working program is given below by priorities set out by the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

FACILITATION:

1. BSEC VISA FOR PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS (BVPD)

- a) *Cooperate with related Member Associations in order to ensure that their respectful countries join the BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States, which was signed by Albania, Armenia, Moldova and Turkey in Tirana, on 23 October 2008.*

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat requested the Member Associations to contact their competent authorities in order to encourage their government to sign and join the abovementioned visa agreement, which is open to signature of those Member States, which have not done, yet.

Currently, the Agreement is signed by only four countries: Albania, Armenia, Moldova and Turkey.

In response to abovementioned request of the Secretariat; the BSEC-URTA Member Associations in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Serbia and Ukraine reported that they took certain action vis-à-vis their competent authorities by either addressing letters or making visits or both.

On the other hand, the BSEC Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, at its 20th meeting in Yerevan on 16 April 2009, also invited the interested Member States to sign this Agreement.

- b) *Follow up with related Member Associations that the signatory countries complete their internal procedures for ratification of this agreement as soon as possible.*

In accordance with Article 9, paragraph 1(ii), the Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date on which four BSEC Member States have signed and ratified or approved the Agreement and deposited the instrument of ratification or approval with the BSEC PERMIS.

On 23 April 2009, the Republic of Turkey deposited with BSEC PERMIS its instrument of ratification of the agreement. The internal ratification procedures continue for the remaining signatory countries, yet.

- c) *Work together with the BSEC PERMIS and the IRU in order to plan in advance and prepare as appropriate, the possible implementation phase of this Agreement upon its entry into force.*

No action has been taken under this matter, yet.

- d) *Work for identifying a joint working strategy with the BSEC PERMIS and the IRU in order to obtain support of the European Commission for joining of the BSEC Member States, which are also the EU Members, in this Agreement.*

On the occasion of the Meeting of the Senior Officials of BSEC Member States in Yerevan, Armenia on 15 April 2009, the International Secretariat has addressed the representative of the European Commission (EC) with a question regarding the position of the EC vis-à-vis participation of the three EU countries members of the BSEC Organization to the mentioned Agreement.

Unfortunately, the EC representative could not make a clear comment in either direction.

The International Secretariat continues working with the PERMIS in order to obtain a clear position of the EC in this regard.

2. INTERNATIONAL VEHICLE WEIGHT CERTIFICATE (IVWC)

- a) *Follow up work of competent UNECE organs in charge for creation of the IVWC.*

Under this issue, there is no concrete action undertaken by the UNECE organs, yet.

- b) *Support IRU and UNECE activities, which aim implementation of the new Annex 8 to the UNECE 1982-International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.*

However, upon persistent requests by the BSEC-URTA during the meetings of the transport related BSEC organs; UNECE and BSEC agreed to organise a special joint seminar in Geneva on 18 June 2009 in the sidelines of the 122nd session of the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), which will be held on 16-19 June 2009.

It is expected that this Seminar will lead to important conclusions by both UNECE and BSEC for implementation of the new Annex 8 to the UN Convention on Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods.

- c) *Call on coordinated action of the BSEC Member States for quick implementation of this important facilitation tool, also by bearing in mind the related CIS experience, at the meetings of the Steering Committee of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods (SC.F).*

On the occasion of the Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States on 27 March 2009, BSEC-URTA addressed the BSEC Transport Ministers with the request of their special attention to the implementation of new Annex 8 as a top priority.

3. SIMPLIFICATION OF CUSTOMS FORMALITIES

- a) *Support work of the newly created BSEC Working Group on Customs in order to elaborate a regional Action Plan, which takes into account common regional objectives as laid out in the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC region (MoU-F).*

The International Secretariat took an active part in the work of this Working Group and contributed substantially to elaboration of an Action Plan, which constitutes its actual work program, today.

- b) *Lobby for accession to and implementation by the BSEC Member States of UNECE conventions related to road transport and WCO international agreements on development of standards and technical support for the harmonization of procedures governing the movement of people and goods.*

The International Secretariat emphasises importance of these international legal instruments on the occasion of all transport related BSEC meetings and activities, particularly during meetings of the SC.F.

Between 1 October 2008 and 11 March 2009:-

- Moldova joined the 1982 International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods so that all the BSEC Member States have become Contracting Parties to this Convention as of today;
- Albania has become contracting party to the following three UNECE Conventions:
 - Convention on Customs Treatment of Pallets, 1960
 - Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles engaged in Intern. Passenger Transport, 1956
 - Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles for Private use in International Traffic, 1956

The latest situation in conjunction with the number of Conventions acceded by each BSEC country is given in a comparative table on the next page.

- c) *Support the BSEC PERMIS and the Working Group on Customs to consider developing a regional website, where information could be published about customs procedures and charges in the BSEC Member States with respect to international road transport of goods.*

The International Secretariat has informed the 3rd Meeting of the SC.F in Istanbul on 11 February 2009, on its readiness to contribute to developing of a regional web site, where information on road transport could be published including custom procedures and charges.

UNECE ROAD TRANSPORT RELATED AGREEMENTS / CONVENTIONS
Status as of 11 March 2009

	Nr.	UNECE Convent. / Road Transport	BSEC Member States												
			AL	AR	AZ	BG	GE	GR	MD	RO	RU	SRB	TR	UA	
Infrastr	1	Construction Traffic Arteries 1950				X		X		X		X	X		
	2	E Road Network 1975	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	3	E Comb. Tr. Network, 1991	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Road traffic and road safety	4	Road Traffic, 1949	X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
	5	Road Traffic, 1968	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
	6	Prot. Road Signs & Signals, 1949				X		X		X	X	X			
	7	Road Signs & Signals, 1968	X			X	X	X		X	X			X	
	8	Suppl. 1968 Conv. Road Traffic, 1971	X			X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
	9	Suppl. 1968 Road Signs & Signals, 1971	X			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
	10	Weights and Dimens, 1950						X				X			
	11	Suppl. 1949 Conv & Protocol, 1950						X				X			
	12	Road Markings, 1957	X			X				X		X	X		
	13	Protocol Road Markings 1973	X			X	X	X			X	X		X	
	14	Issue & Validity of Driving Permits				X						X			
	Vehic	15	Vehicle Regulations, 1958			X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
		16	Tech. Inspect. Vehicles, 1997	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X
		17	Global Vehicles Reg., 1998			X				X	X	X		X	
Other legal instruments	18	Work of Crews Intl. Road Transport(AETR) 1970	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	19	Tax Priv Road Vehic, 1956	X						X	X		X			
	20	Taxation Road Passengers Vehicles, 1956	X							X		X			
	21	Tax Road Goods Vehic 1956								X		X			
	22	Contract Road Goods Transport(CMR) 1956	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	23	Protocol to CMR, 1978	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X	
	24	Contract Passengers and Lugg. Road Trans(CVR)1973										X		X	
	25	Protocol to CVR, 1978										X			
	26	Econ. Reg. Road Trans1954						X							
	Border crossing facilitation	27	Touring Facilities, 1954				X		X		X	X	X	X	
28		Protocol Touring Facilities, 54				X		X		X	X	X	X		
29		Temp. Imp. Priv. Road Vehicles, 1954	X			X				X	X	X	X		
30		TIR Convention, 1959	X			X		X		X	X		X		
31		TIR Convention, 1975	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
32		Temp. Imp. Commercial Vehicles, 1956			X	X		X		X		X	X		
33		Customs Cont Conv, 1956				X		X		X		X			
34		Customs Cont Conv, 1972		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
35		Customs Treatment Pallets, 1960	X			X				X		X	X		
36		Harmonization Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
37		Customs Pool Cont, 1994													
Danger. goods	38	Dang. Goods by Roads(ADR) 1957	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
	39	Protocol to ADR, 1993	X			X		X	X	X	X				
	40	Liab. Dang. Goods-CRTD1989													
	41	Perishab. Foodstuff-ATP, 1970	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
BSEC Member State participation to UNECE Road Transport related Conventions			23	8	12	29	14	29	15	32	24	32	19	17	

4. HARMONIZATION OF CHARGES

- a) *Promote the idea of creating an official BSEC information system on road transport, which could be integrated with the abovementioned idea of a regional website, where country data could be published on road user charges and any other applicable charges and fees in the region.*

During the last Meeting of the SC.F, the International Secretariat has lobbied for creation of an official BSEC information system on road transport. The representative of the IRU informed the participants that IRU portal has a dedicated area to such information.

The SC.F called for IRU-BSEC cooperation on this matter. The International Secretariat will follow up this request by the SC.F in order to ensure such a regional information system in the future.

- b) *Follow up work of the SC.F aimed at harmonizing charges and simplifying collection procedures*

No action has been taken under this matter, yet.

5. GRADUAL LIBERALIZATION OF BILATERAL AND TRANSIT ROAD TRANSPORT

- a) *Follow up conclusions of the BSEC Round Table Meeting organised by the SC.F in Istanbul in February 2009, in order to consider recommendations of international experts on alternative ways and activities to implement the MoU-F.*

The BSEC Public-Private Roundtable on implementation of the MoU-F was held at the premises of the PERMIS in Istanbul on 10 February 2009, with the participation of the representatives of the BSEC Member States, UNECE, IRU, BSEC-URTA, its Member Associations as well as NEA, which undertook the subject expert study as mentioned above. At the meeting, the NEA representative presented the abovementioned study, which included alternative projects and activities to address each of all operative articles of the MoU-F.

Representatives of the Member States exchanged views on the alternative proposals but particularly extensive discussion took place on the matter of how to liberalize the bilateral road transport of goods in the BSEC region, gradually:

- use bilateral road transport agreements on a systematic manner,
- create a BSEC Permit, which could be printed and distributed by the PERMIS and good for transit movement of trucks between the interested member states,
- develop a regional license system similar in nature to the ECMT licenses.

These alternative proposals are not necessarily for selection but they should be implemented among the interested Member States, simultaneously.

The SC.F on 11 February 2009 endorsed these proposals and requested Member States to confirm to the BSEC PERMIS about their interest with the given three alternatives within two months.

It was decided that after this period is over, the PERMIS should convene an extraordinary meeting of the SC.F in order to make an evaluation, make decisions for certain action by the PERMIS and set up project groups, if necessary, under each of these alternatives.

In order to facilitate this road map, SC.F mandated PERMIS to prepare in consultation with the IRU and BSEC-URTA, a template of the possible BSEC Permit and its suggested usage guidelines.

An extraordinary meeting of the SC.F will take place on 22-23 June 2009 in Istanbul.

- b) *Taking into account abovementioned conclusions and expressed country positions, work together with the SC.F, the BSEC PERMIS and the IRU in order to find a common methodology and means, which would lead the interested BSEC Member States to gradual regional liberalization of bilateral and transit road transport in the BSEC region.*

The International Secretariat elaborated together with the IRU and BSEC PERMIS, a draft template of the "BSEC Permit" and its suggested usage guidelines, which will be considered and hopefully adopted by the SC.F at its next meeting as mentioned above.

- c) *Promote to the SC.F and the BSEC PERMIS, the idea of allowing interested non-BSEC countries to join in such regional methodology or means with a view to creating mutual benefits.*

The International Secretariat held consultations with the Secretary General of the BSEC Organization and the Executive Manager on Transport on this subject. In principle, the idea of allowing interested non-BSEC countries to join a possible future regional system of licenses is considered appropriate as many neighbouring countries to the BSEC region already enjoy an Observer Status or a Sectoral Dialogue Partner Status with the BSEC Organization.

- d) *Coordinate efforts of the BSEC-URTA Member Associations in order to ensure that their national authorities adopt a common supportive position regarding the future of the ECMT Quota System and its distribution criteria, which will be revised in 2010.*

No action has been taken under this matter, yet.

6. BSEC-URTA FACILITATION PROGRAM

- a) *Support regional projects and activities involving three or more BSEC-URTA Member Associations or BSEC Member Countries, in principle, the BSEC, the IRU and interested leading international and regional organizations, which are aimed at promoting or supporting the abovementioned BSEC-URTA objectives as regards the facilitation of road transport in the BSEC region.*

This objective was introduced on the occasion of the 14th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Geneva on 28 October 2008 and the International Secretariat did not identify any specific project or activity, yet, which could be supported by the allocated BSEC-URTA resources.

IRU-BSEC INTERACTION:

1. IRU-BSEC COOPERATION

- a) *Continue contributing to implementation of the MoU between the BSEC Organization and the IRU.*

Bearing in mind the excellent level of cooperation between the BSEC and IRU, the International Secretariat did not feel the necessity to take any new action on this matter, yet.

- b) *Coordinate participation of the BSEC Secretary General or his delegates to take part in the events organised by the IRU and BSEC-URTA and vice versa.*

No additional action has been taken under this matter, yet, except informing and inviting the BSEC Secretary General to the major events and activities organised by the IRU or BSEC-URTA.

2. IRU-BSEC BUSINESS COUNCIL COOPERATION

- a) *Coordinate participation of the Secretary General of BSEC Business Council in the IRU and BSEC-URTA events and on a reciprocal basis of the IRU and BSEC-URTA representatives in the BSEC BC events.*

The BSEC BC appointed a new Secretary General, who will assume her new function as of 1 May 2009. The International Secretariat will be offering close cooperation to the incoming Secretary General and express readiness to further bilateral cooperation as soon as possible. This said, the BSEC BC invites IRU and BSEC-URTA to attend its events, systematically.

RE-OPENING OF THE SILK ROAD:

1. BSEC-URTA SILK ROAD PROGRAM

- a) *Support regional projects and activities involving three or more BSEC-URTA Member Associations or BSEC Member Countries, in principle, the BSEC, the IRU and interested leading international and regional organizations, which are aimed at promoting or supporting the re-opening of the historic Silk Road across the BSEC region.*

This objective was introduced on the occasion of the 14th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Geneva on 28 October 2008 and the International Secretariat did not identify any specific project or activity, yet, which could be supported by the allocated BSEC-URTA resources.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING:

1. IMPROVEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SERVICES

- a) *Assist interested Member Associations to develop or diversify professional training services according to experiences of other training institutes in the BSEC region, which are accredited by the IRU Academy.*

The International Secretariat has not received from the Member Association, yet, any requests for action or assistance on this subject.

2. COOPERATION AT THE BSEC LEVEL

- a) *Encourage the BSEC Member States to revitalize any efforts for mutual recognition of diplomas and certificates issued for professional training of drivers and transport managers in the BSEC region, which meet international standards set for such training products and services particularly in terms of quality and content.*

No new action has been taken under this matter.

COMBINED TRANSPORTATION:

1. IMPROVEMENT OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- a) *Support entry into force and implementation of the BSEC MoU on Motorways of the Sea.*

The first Meeting of the BSEC Ad Hoc Working Group was held in Constanta on 29 January 2009. The meeting did not resolve all essential issues with conceptual nature, which related to the implementation of this MoU. Hence, another meeting was scheduled to be in Novorossiysk on 2-3 June 2009.

- b) *Support specific cooperation with the sister BSEC NGOs BASPA, BINSAs and BRASS, for elaboration and implementation of joint activities, studies or projects, which are aimed at developing and improving ro-ro services from the user perspective, who are the BSEC transport operators, mainly.*

All BSEC NGOs are committed to cooperate and work together for developing and improving Ro-Ro services in the Black Sea.

In this context, the transport related sister BSEC NGOs provided information support to a new NEA study on the Black Sea Ports, which was required by certain BSEC Member States, which works for improvement of maritime transport and combined transport infrastructure and services as well as developing new maritime links.

LOBBYING AND PROMOTION:

1. COOPERATION BETWEEN TRANSPORT RELATED BSEC NGOS

- a) *Subject to continued mutual interest and determination, implement the MoU signed in Antalya on the 24 November 2006 by the BSEC-URTA and the transport related BSEC NGOs: BINSNA, BRASS and BASPA.*

There is an open dialogue between the BSEC-URTA and subject sister NGOs whenever necessary.

- b) *Support third parties, which would like to create new regional NGOs in the BSEC region according to similar format and experiences of the BSEC-URTA.*

The International Secretariat did not receive any specific request for information or assistance from interested parties since the last meeting of the General Assembly.

2. COOPERATION WITH BSEC PERMIS AND BSEC BC

- a) *Organize mutual working visits whenever necessary and annual debriefings on activities and policy priorities of the BSEC-URTA.*

There is a very high and fruitful frequency of working visits and meetings held between the International Secretariat and the BSEC PERMIS as well as BSEC BC, which ensures mutually satisfactory progress in the outcome of the transport related meetings and projects, particularly related with implementation of the BSEC MoU-F.

GOOD EXAMPLES:

1. ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

- a) *Encourage the host Associations to present about their organizational structure, operations, services and activities as well as their best practices on the occasion of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly meetings.*

The practice continues on the occasion of every meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

INFORMATION SHARING:

1. BSEC-URTA WEB PORTAL

- a) *Publish the BSEC-URTA official documents on the portal and keep it updated with professional news and regional developments.*

The International Secretariat publishes all its official documents on the internet and keeps its portal updated.

2. REGIONAL TRANSPORT STATISTICS

- a) *Update the BSEC-URTA Regional Outlook Report according to information provided by the Member Associations about industry performance and market developments as well as any other information obtained from various other sources particularly with respect to foreign trade and border crossing waiting times.*

The International Secretariat updates its Regional Outlook Report each semester and presents it to next meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

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