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Istanbul, 16 November 2015

28th MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Elite World Istanbul Hotel
Istanbul, Turkey
Thursday, 3 December 2015, at 11:00 hrs

MUTUAL RECOGNITION BY BSEC MEMBER STATES OF DIPLOMAS, CERTIFICATES OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND OTHER EVIDENCES OF FORMER QUALIFICATION OF PROFESSIONALS ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT

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

Training is crucial to provide a qualified workforce for the road transport industry and enhance transport safety, quality and productivity as well as to enhance the image of the industry in the society.

The issue of Mutual Recognition by BSEC Member States of Diplomas, Certificates and Other Evidence of Formal Qualification for Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Transport Operator is a long lasting wish of BSEC-URTA Member Associations.

At its Third Meeting in Istanbul on 6th June 2003, the BSEC-URTA General Assembly decided to take necessary initiatives with BSEC PERMIS and the IRU in order to ensure consideration by the competent BSEC organs of the possibility of mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualification for road haulage operator and road passenger transport operator.

The BSEC-URTA Member Associations unanimously agreed that this would facilitate for the persons practicing these professions the right to freedom of establishment in national and international transport operations.

Having considered the fact that each and every BSEC-URTA Member Associations is practically involved in professional training through their well established Training Centers in all the BSEC Member States, it is the opinion of road haulage industry in BSEC region that mutual recognition by the official authorities of such diplomas could contribute to strengthening of uniform international standards for vocational training in the BSEC region.

The standards developed by the IRU Member Associations under the leadership of the IRU Academy are today being used as a baseline by schools and national authorities alike to develop their training and examinations. International authorities such as the World Bank, the ECMT and the EC are supporting and encouraging these efforts.

However, multilateral or bilateral recognition of even IRU Academy Diplomas between related countries is still a major issue, today. Taking note of the fact that CPC Diploma issued by a national accredited training institute is necessary to enter the profession in all BSEC countries; its multilateral recognition is an important issue if a diploma holder wants to invest in another country in the BSEC region. Whereas, establishment of concrete international recognition would strengthen the image of each National Accredited Training Institute – ATI and can motivate graduates and new students, who will have a bigger opportunity of access to foreign employment markets, respect and recognition.

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat has played an active role in ensuring an efficient cooperation between IRU Academy, BSEC-URTA and BSEC as concerns the issue of mutual recognition in the BSEC region. IRU Academy gave its full support to realize the abovementioned goals and helped BSEC-URTA and BSEC PERMIS by elaborating a draft multilateral agreement on this issue.

BSEC PERMIS offered its active guidance and cooperation to BSEC-URTA in placing this item on the agenda of meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport, which convened in Baku on 1-2 October 2003.

Highlighting the importance of setting international standards in professional training and welcoming the readiness of IRU to give its utmost support to the BSEC in order to achieve this goal in the BSEC region, the Working Group on Transport had decided to propose the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States to establish in this regard a relevant Ad hoc Group of Experts, which was endorsed by the Council in its meeting in Baku on 30 April 2004.

The Meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas/Certificates and Other Evidence of Formal Qualification for Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Transport Operator was held in Istanbul, in the BSEC Premises, on 6 July 2005.

General statements on the compliance of the said Draft with the international commitments and the national legislations on the BSEC Countries were made by some of the delegations of the BSEC Member States.

The delegations of the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine expressed their readiness and willingness to continue the negotiations on the Draft Agreement.

Given the commitments deriving from Hellenic EU membership and Romanian status of accession country, the Ad Hoc Expert Group recommended to the Committee of Senior Officials to explore the possibility of mandating the BSEC Chairmanship (Romania) to enter, with the assistance of the PERMIS, into consultations with the European Commission in order to reach compatibility of the Agreement in question with respective European legislation. Due to the lack of interest and action the Draft Agreement was not opened for signature later then.

On 16-17 March 2015 in Paris the ECMT Group on Road Transport approved the consolidated text of the ECMT Quality Charter which recognises IRU Academy training standards as key benchmarks that meet ECMT requirements on professional qualification, notably its certificates and diplomas for drivers and managers. The Charter focuses on social, legal, technical, environmental and practical applications and will become effective on 1 January 2016.

During the 27 Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Bucharest on 9 May 2015 Member Associations considered the approval of the ECMT Quality Charter as a momentum for reopening debates in the BSEC Organization towards multilateral Mutual Recognition by BSEC Member States of Diplomas, Certificates and Other Evidence of Formal Qualification for Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Transport Operator and instructed the International Secretariat to address the BSEC Working Group in this regard.

On 5-6 October 2015, the BSEC Working Group on Transport in Istanbul was addressed by the BSEC-URTA Delegation concerning the above mentioned issue with the proposal to re-activate the BSEC Ad Hoc Expert Group which had concluded the Draft Agreement in 2005.

The Working Group agreed that a meeting of the BSEC Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas/Certificates and Other Evidence of Formal Qualification for Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Transport Operator should be convened in the first semester of 2016 under the Russian Federation Chairmanship of the BSEC Organization.

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