



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

DOC/GA05/ACTIV/04

Istanbul, 19 May 2004

## FIFTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Bucharest – ROMANIA  
Thursday, 24 June 2004, at 10:00 hrs

### ACTIVITY REPORT

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

Since the Fourth Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, the International Secretariat pursued a series of contacts, participated in events of importance for the industry, contributed to international gatherings and exerted efforts to promote BSEC-URTA and its objectives.

A summary of these activities are given below by priorities set out by the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

#### **I. BSEC VISA FOR PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS (BVPD)**

**Current Situation:** Facilitation of visas for professional drivers is a leading common problem of all BSEC-URTA Member Associations. In order to achieve a regional inter-governmental agreement on this issue, BSEC-URTA has been working together with the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and BSEC Business Council. There is a draft BSEC Agreement elaborated by the experts from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States. However, the text can not be finalized for signature for a long time due to the lack of enough political will on the part all countries at the same time.

The latest meeting of Ad Hoc Group of Experts will take place in Istanbul on 8-9 June 2004. BSEC-URTA International Secretariat will attend at the meeting as well as representatives of Member Associations from ASMAP (Russian Federation) and UND (Turkey).

#### **9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States (Baku, 31 October 2003)**

The Council held its ninth meeting one day after the Fourth Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Baku. BSEC-URTA Secretary General Mr. Haydar Ozkan and Executive Manager Mr. Adrian Albu attended the meeting.

BSEC-URTA delegation submitted the BSEC-URTA Declaration to the BSEC PERMIS for official circulation to all Member States. BSEC-URTA Secretary General addressed the meeting and expressed the demand of BSEC-URTA Member Associations for quick conclusion of the draft BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Lorry Drivers.

At the meeting, due to receipt of a new modification request by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers decided to forward the draft Agreement to the Ad Hoc Expert Group, for further consideration.



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

**Meeting of BSEC Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Visa Facilitation  
(Istanbul, 22-23 January 2004)**

On behalf of BSEC-URTA, Mr. Adrian Albu attended the meeting of Ad Hoc Group. Mr. Arkadiy Kurshin (ASMAM) and Mr. Reha Uran (UND) also took part in the meeting. They actively expressed concerns and requests of BSEC-URTA at the meeting. The Experts concluded the Draft Agreement and decided to submit it to the Senior Officials of BSEC Member States for consideration by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Ad Hoc Group also asked the Member States to send their additional views, if any, to the BSEC PERMIS on the draft text before next meeting of the Senior Officials.

**Lobbying by BSEC-URTA Member Associations  
(February 2004)**

The International Secretariat informed BSEC-URTA Member Associations about decisions of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts and asked for their action to request their competent national authorities dealing with visa problems, to support the draft Agreement and send positive written comments to BSEC PERMIS.

**Meeting of Committee of Senior Officials of BSEC Member States  
(Istanbul, 18-19 March 2004)**

BSEC-URTA Secretary General and Executive Manager attended the meeting, where the Senior Officials considered the Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Visa Facilitation. However, due to the fact that the Russian delegation requested inclusion of some minor modifications into the draft text, they decided to propose the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to forward it back to the Experts for further consideration.

BSEC-URTA representatives expressed disappointment and emphasized the elapsed time without any fruitful result for the whole transport industry in the region, yet.

**10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States  
(Baku, 30 April 2004)**

BSEC-URTA Executive Manager participated in the meeting. Ministers took note of the progress achieved by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Visa Facilitation for Lorry Drivers in finalizing the text of the Draft Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States and decided that additional Meeting(s) of the said Expert Group is needed in order to agree on the final draft of the Agreement.

Open ended character of this decision was far from meeting the expectations of BSEC-URTA.

**Meeting Between BSEC PERMIS, IRU and BSEC-URTA  
(Istanbul, 13 May 2004)**

IRU Secretary General Mr. Martin Marmy visited Istanbul on the occasion of the 2nd Caspian & Black Sea Transport Conference, where he and BSEC-URTA President Mr. Cetin Nuhoglu gave a



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

speech. On this occasion, they visited BSEC PERMIS and held a meeting with its Secretary General Ambassador Valery Chechelashvili.

At the meeting an agreement was reached to have a BSEC-URTA Resolution on the visa issue, which would duly take into account the outcome of the meeting of Ad Hoc Group of Experts, which will take place in Istanbul on 8-9 June 2004.

## **II. HARMONIZATION OF CHARGES**

**Current Situation:** BSEC-URTA completed its work to prepare a matrix table indicating road user charges and other charges applicable in each BSEC country. All these data were published at the BSEC-URTA web portal in March 2004. Moreover, the International Secretariat appealed to the BSEC Working Group on Transport to take this issue in its working program and make an action plan to remove differences between countries to the advantage of the profession.

This matters is now brought to each BSEC Member State for consideration and comments.

The details of the existing situation will be published in the Black Sea Transport and Logistics Guide of the BSEC-URTA in 2004.

### **Coordination Between BSEC-URTA and BSEC PERMIS (Istanbul, January 2004)**

Executive Managers of BSEC-URTA and BSEC PERMIS held a meeting to exchange views on agenda of the next meeting of BSEC Working Group on Transport, where BSEC-URTA presented its prepared tables and conclusions to the BSEC PERMIS, too.

### **Meeting of BSEC Working Group on Transport (Istanbul, 19- 20 February 2004)**

BSEC-URTA Executive Manager attended the meeting. BSEC-URTA presented its documents and a slide show indicating the road user charges and other charges levied by national and local authorities in the BSEC region, and requested consideration of possibilities to decrease and to uniform these charges. The Working Group thanked to BSEC-URTA for its presentation and decided to ask feed back from competent national authorities of the BSEC Member States on this issue and to continue its consideration during its next meeting to be held in September 2004.

## **III. SIMPLIFICATION OF CUSTOMS FORMALITIES**

**Current Situation:** International Secretariat prepared a Report on Simplification of Border Crossing Procedures for International Road Transport in the BSEC Region, and submitted it to BSEC PERMIS for consideration of the BSEC Working Group on Trade and Economic Development to be held in September 2004.

### **First Meeting of Cross-Border Cooperation Between Southeastern European Customs Administrations (Thessaloniki , 25- 26 February 2004)**

BSEC-URTA was invited to this meeting by the Ministry of Economy of the Hellenic Republic upon kind initiatives of OFAE President Mr. Nicolaras Panagiotis. On behalf of BSEC-URTA, Chairman



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

of UND Executive Committee Mr. Cahit Soysal attended the meeting, who is ex-Director General of Customs of Turkey.

The meeting was held in coordination by European Union Directorate of Customs and Taxation (TAXUD) and under the chairmanship of TAXUD Director General Mr. Robert VERRUE. Participants of the meeting included officials from the European Commission as well as delegations comprising 3 Directors General or their deputies from the Customs Administrations of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey.

Participants emphasized the necessity of cooperation for achieving quicker and more secure border crossings. Mr. Soysal, who made a slide presentation at the meeting, explained about the problems encountered by transport operators at border crossing points and existing bottlenecks. He introduced a package of proposals containing relevant measures that could be taken to remove such bottlenecks.

The meeting and bilateral discussions offered the participants an excellent opportunity to communicate the problems of the transport industry directly to the Directors General of the Customs Administrations. The Declaration adopted at the meeting was published on BSEC-URTA portal. The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat will present the conclusions of this meeting to the BSEC Working Group on Trade and Economic Development to be held in September 2004, too.

#### **IV. BSEC WEIGHT CERTIFICATE**

**Current Situation:** BSEC Member States are composed of some of the CIS countries and Southeast European Countries. CIS countries concluded an inter-governmental agreement on introduction and implementation of a common weight certificate for the weight control of international road transport vehicles.

However, similar efforts are underway for quite a long time within the framework of Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative (SECI). SECI works together with UN/ECE and the latter already drafted necessary texts and legal documents for an international weight certificate. This is planned to be annexed under 1982 Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.

#### **Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport (Istanbul, 19- 20 February 2004)**

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat made a presentation about ongoing efforts within the framework of the CIS and the SECI, and requested the Working Group to consider this issue with a view to interlinking them. The meeting agreed to consider this issue further at its next meeting to be held in September 2004.

#### **Meeting Between BSEC PERMIS, IRU and BSEC-URTA (Istanbul, 13 May 2004)**

Parties agreed that BSEC-URTA could adopt a new Resolution on this issue at its next meeting in Bucharest on 24 June 2004.



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

## **V. COMBINED TRANSPORTATION**

**Current Situation:** International Secretariat had completed a comprehensive study of the existing ro-ro and ro-la services in the BSEC region, which is already published in BSEC-URTA web portal. The same information will be published in the Black Sea Transport and Logistics Guide, too.

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat plans to make a regional survey by a standart questionnaire to identify the performance of existing services and the areas of improvement.

### **Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport (Istanbul, 19- 20 February 2004)**

One of the agenda items of this meeting was "Operation and Interaction of Different Modes of Transport".

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat prepared a report to the meeting under this item. The Working Group noted the report with interest and asked the proposals and comments of Member States to decide upon next action. In addition, the Working Group welcomed the BSEC-URTA web portal and invited Member States to make use of it as much as possible.

## **VI. TRAINING**

**Current Situation:** Training is another priority field of activity for BSEC-URTA International Secretariat together with the visa issue.

The activities resulted two major developments so far: (a) Mutual recognition of CPC diplomas in the BSEC region, (b) Joint project of distant professional learning.

### **1. Issue of Mutual Recognition of CPC**

**Summary:** Mutual recognition of certificates and diplomas proving professional competence is a demand of BSEC-URTA Member Associations, which was agreed upon during the Second Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Tirana on 29 November 2002.

International Secretariat exchanged views and worked together with the IRU, and brought its request to the consideration of BSEC Working Group on Transport in October 2003 together with a draft text of agreement elaborated by the IRU.

Passing through all the necessary procedures of approval, BSEC will convene the first meeting of Ad Hoc Group of Experts with the task of preparing a draft inter-governmental BSEC agreement in Istanbul on 1-2 July 2004, where BSEC-URTA will attend together with the Head of IRU Academy Mr. Bruno Dingemans.

### **Lobbying by BSEC-URTA Member Associations (January 2004)**

The International Secretariat asked BSEC-URTA Member Associations to request their competent national authorities to support elaborating an inter-governmental BSEC Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas, Certificates and Other Evidence of Formal Qualification for Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Transport Operator in the BSEC Region.



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

**Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Transport  
(Istanbul, 19- 20 February 2004)**

The participants expressed their support to the request of BSEC-URTA and agreed to address the Committee of Senior Officials with a recommendation to establish a relevant Ad Hoc Group of Experts to elaborate the Agreement, if feasible. Being part of the Ukrainian delegation in the meeting, the representative of AIRCU, Mrs. Inna Izzotova strongly supported the proposal, lobbied for the said agreement and influenced the decision of meeting on this issue, positively.

**Meeting of Committee of Senior Officials of BSEC Member States  
(Baku, 28- 29 April 2004)**

Senior Officials considered the report of the Meeting of BSEC Working Group on Transport held in Istanbul on 19- 20 February 2004 and decided to address the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States with the proposal to establish an Ad-Hoc Expert Group in charge of elaborating a Draft Agreement among the Member States.

**10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States  
(Baku, 30 April 2004)**

The Council agreed to establish an Ad-Hoc Expert Group in charge of elaborating a Draft Agreement among the Member States on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas, Certificates and Other Evidence of Formal Qualification of Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Transport Operator.

**2. AITA-ARTRI-UND Joint Distant Professional Learning Program Development Project**

**Summary:** Acknowledging the importance and benefits of distant professional training for the industry and on the occasion of a bilateral contact, the Presidents of ARTRI and UND had decided to develop a joint distant professional learning system together. Later AITA also expressed its interest to join the project.

Within the framework of BSEC-URTA cooperation, they opened their project to the participation of any interested BSEC-URTA Member Associations, and they have declared their decision at the Fourth Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly held in Baku on 30 October 2003.

Upon request of the three Member Associations, BSEC-URTA took certain initiatives to coordinate the project tasks and timetable as well as to promote it to international organizations, especially the BSEC, BSTDB, IRU and the World Bank.

**Meeting of Steering Committee of the BSEC Project Development Fund  
(Istanbul, 2-3 December 2003)**

BSEC-URTA Secretary General and Executive Manager attended this meeting. At the meeting, upon application of BSEC-URTA, the AITA-ARTRI-UND project was considered for possible funding support at the pre-feasibility stage.

The Steering Committee expressed its high appreciation for the project proposal submitted by BSEC-URTA, which has already been welcomed by the BSEC Working Group on Transport (Baku, 1-2 October 2003) as well as for the very useful presentation from its representatives on the proposed project. Moreover the Steering Committee studied the timetable for the processing of the respective application, and expressed the hope for its prompt approval.



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

**Meeting of AITA-ARTRI-UND Joint Project Team  
(Bucharest, 10- 11 December 2003)**

With the coordination of BSEC-URTA, a Joint Project Team (JPT) of AITA, ARTRI and UND convened at ARTRI headquarters and established a concrete time-table and made distribution of responsibilities for development of the joint project.

**Meeting of Committee of Senior Officials of BSEC Member States  
(Istanbul, 18-19 March 2004)**

Senior Officials decided to submit BSEC-URTA's project proposal to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for approval.

**10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States  
(Baku, 30 April 2004)**

The Council approved the project application of BSEC URTA and invited the Steering Committee to consider the financing of the project for pre-feasibility.

**VII. INTERNATIONAL FUNDS SURVEY**

**Current Situation:** This survey was completed and its result was submitted to the Member Associations at the Third Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Istanbul on 6 June 2003. No new development occurred or action taken after this date.

**VIII. BSEC-URTA PUBLICATIONS**

**Current Situation:** Due to the financial constraints, BSEC-URTA delayed its initial plan of publishing a transport journal on a permanent basis. However, upon recommendation of AEBTRI in the Fourth Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly, it was decided to allocate 2 pages in periodical publications of Member Associations for BSEC-URTA. These pages will be designed and their content will be given by the International Secretariat. At the Fourth Meeting, the Assembly also approved publishing of a Black Sea Transport and Logistics Guide by the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat, for which there are efforts underway. The Guide is planned to be published in September 2004.

**(Istanbul, January- June 2004)**

The International Secretariat prepared a content list and asked for the active cooperation of Member Associations to compile the planned content of the Black Sea Transport and Logistics Guide. In order to minimize any cost factors on account of BSEC-URTA budget, entered into agreement with "3e Consultancy" company, which will undertake the design and preparation of the Guide for printing against a standart fee of € 4.000, 50 % of which will be payable after completion of the work and collection of any advertisement revenues.

Romanian Member Association ARTRI agreed to publish the Guide for the printing costs only. IRU expressed its support to this publication and expressed readiness to promote it through its web site. International Secretariat have provided electronic brochures in the mother tongue for the Member Associations to promote the Guide on their web site, in their publications, etc..



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

**IX. BSEC TRANSPORT PORTAL and TRANSPORT INFORMATION CLEARING CENTER**

**Current Situation:** International Secretariat plans to develop its web portal so that it can turn to a regional point of information sharing and clearing for the professional fleet operators, Member Associations and the BSEC organs as well as the Ministries of Transport of the BSEC Member States. At this stage BSEC Working Group on Transport, BSEC PERMIS and BSEC Business Council are very supportive to let BSEC-URTA achieve its goals. However, unexpected and miserable loss of the master of BSEC-URTA web portal, Mr. Rovshan Aghayev, on 11 April 2004, caused to forced delays in planned activities of the International Secretariat under this heading.

**X. INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM ON IMPROVED DISTRIBUTION OF QUOTA PERMITS TO HAULIERS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION**

**Current Situation:** Upon approval of the Fourth Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly, it was agreed to organize an international event in Bucharest in June 2004 on the occasion of BSEC-URTA's next General Assembly meeting. Upon request of the host Member Association, ARTRI, International Secretariat started organizing an International Transport Forum together with BSEC Business Council on a very hot issue for the Romanian industry, "Improved Distribution of Quota Permits to the Hauliers in the Black Sea Region".

In addition to BSEC Business Council, IRU gave its active support to organization of this meeting, which enabled participation of representatives from ECMT and the European Commission in Bucharest.

ARTRI Delegations visited the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat twice in the past six months to ensure a successful organization of this event as well as the Fifth Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Bucharest on 23-24 June 2004.

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