



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

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Istanbul, 9 October 2008

## FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

International Conference Center – Room C, Geneva – Switzerland  
Tuesday, 28 October 2008, at 12:30 hrs

### ACTIVITY REPORT

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

Since the Thirteenth Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly held in Moscow, Russian Federation, on 4 June 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 2008 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) *Work with national associations in order to determine authorities in at least 5 BSEC Member States to sign the BSEC Agreement on Simplification Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States in order to enter into force as soon as possible.*

BSEC-URTA Member Associations in the eight BSEC countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine, addressed, by a letter campaign and direct visits, their national authorities competent for visa, in order to assure the political decision for becoming signatory to this BSEC Agreement.

- b) *Coordinate with the IRU lobbying vis-à-vis Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the abovementioned countries for becoming contracting parties to the Agreement.*

On the occasion of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Moscow, on 4 June 2008, the meeting adopted a BSEC-URTA Resolution on the BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States. The Resolution was forwarded to the Albanian Chairmanship-in-office of the BSEC Organization with the request to ensure that the BSEC Agreement will be opened to the signature of interested BSEC Member States in Tirana on the occasion of the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC Member States to be held on 23 October 2008.

The International Secretariat circulated the Resolution to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the BSEC Member States with the request to sign this Agreement as a concrete response to the industry requests for actual facilitation of road transport of goods across the BSEC Member States as foreseen by the MoU signed by all BSEC Member States and entered into force on 20 July 2006.

The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat also requested the UNECE and the IRU to support opening to signature of this important regional agreement and its implementation as soon as possible.



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

- c) *Call on the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods to address the Contracting Parties with the request for signature of the Agreement bearing in mind that facilitation of visas for drivers is part of the MoU and objective of the Timetable for its implementation.*

The Steering Committee did not hold any meeting since the last meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Moscow on 4 June 2008. However, a close cooperation was made with the Turkish Chairmanship of the Steering Committee, which provided strong support for putting in place the existing agreement.

- d) *Work with BSEC PERMIS in order to have a position of the European Commission regarding the compatibility of the Agreement with the EU Aquis and regarding the possibility that Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania to join the Agreement.*

The BSEC Secretary General decided to address the European Commission, which has Observer Status to the BSEC Organization, with the request to define its position on the compatibility of the Agreement with the EU *aquis communautaire*.

- e) *Work with the IRU and the BSEC PERMIS for creation of a BSEC database for professional drivers similar to the Schengen system database, which could be used by national authorities for speeding up the visa issuance procedures.*

This activity will follow signing of the BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers, which is not done, yet.

**2. INTERNATIONAL VEHICLE WEIGHT CERTIFICATE (IVWC)**

- a) *Follow up the entry into force of the new Annex 8 to the UNECE 1982 International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (20<sup>th</sup> May 2008).*

On 20 May 2008, the new Annex 8 (on road transport) to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982, entered into force creating a legal framework for the Contracting Parties to introduce simplified control procedures and replace actual inspections and physical controls at border crossing points by a simple verification of internationally standardised documentation and certificates.

The BSEC-URTA Resolution on the Need for Urgent Implementation of the New Annex 8 to the International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, in the BSEC Region adopted on 4 June 2008 by its 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Moscow, was transmitted to the UNECE with the request that it will convene the Administrative Committee of this Convention (AC.3) in the shortest time possible in order to ensure immediate implementation of its new Annex.

On the occasion of the first meeting of a Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links held in Geneva on 8 September 2008; the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat met with the UNECE Transport Division Expert on Customs Matters Mr. Konstantin Glukhenkiy and inquired information on this matter. It was also mentioned that the BSEC-URTA Member Associations are ready to assume any responsibility and cooperate with the interested national authorities in the BSEC Member States so that the new Annex 8 can be implemented in the region as a priority.

On 7 October 2008, the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30) held its 120<sup>th</sup> Session and among others discussed the status of the 1982 Harmonization Convention and its new Annex 8. In accordance with provisions of Annex 7, Article 4 of the Convention, the WP.30 mandated the UNECE Secretariat to convene the ninth session of the Administrative Committee (AC.3) in the second part of 2009, possibly in conjunction with one of the sessions of the Working Party. The related meeting of the AC.3 is also expected to consider the BSEC-URTA proposals on implementation of the Annex 8.



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

- b) *Bring the experience and results of CIS countries which implement at this stage a regional INVW to the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC region in order not to duplicate the work and adopt the positive results for the implementation of the IVWC as part of Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention.*

Upon initiative of the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat, the Second Meeting of the Steering Committee of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods, which met in Istanbul on 12 February 2008, acknowledged that implementation of the IVWC under new Annex 8 to the 1982 Harmonization Convention should make use of existing regional experience and positive results gained by the CIS Countries.

- c) *Lobby for organization of a BSEC round table meeting with the participation of the Steering Committee Members, UNECE representative, national authorities in each country responsible with weights and dimensions of trucks' control and the road transport industry, to consider implementation of the IVWC in accordance with new Annex 8 of the UNECE 1982 Harmonization Convention*

The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat proposed to the UNECE to consider organizing a joint Regional Seminar with the participation of all BSEC and CIS countries as well as the European Commission with a view to putting in place the International Vehicle Weight Certificate under new Annex 8, in the BSEC region based on the CIS experience. There is not a progress, yet, in this matter.

### 3. SIMPLIFICATION OF CUSTOMS FORMALITIES

- a) *Lobby for accession and implementation by the BSEC Member States of UNECE conventions and international agreements related to road transport.*

During any international or regional meeting in relation with transport or customs matters, the BSEC-URTA representatives systematically emphasize the importance of acceding to and implementing the UNECE Conventions and International Agreements.

The last meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Moscow on 4 June 2008, was informed by the International Secretariat on the status of UNECE transport related instruments to which BSEC Member States are contracting parties, as of 8 April 2008. That report showed that from 1 January 2008 till 8 April 2008 no accession or ratification took place for BSEC countries. From 8 April till 1 September 2008 only 1 BSEC country, Albania joined the European Combined Transport Network Agreement (AGTC), 1991.

As a result, between 1 January and 1 September 2008, there is only one BSEC country that joined one UNECE Transport related Convention in the whole BSEC region.

The latest situation in conjunction with the number of conventions acceded by each BSEC country is given in the table below:

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

**UNECE ROAD TRANSPORT RELATED AGREEMENTS / CONVENTIONS  
Status as of 1 September 2008**

	Nr.	UNECE Convent. / Road Transport	BSEC Member States											
			AL	AR	AZ	BG	GE	GR	MD	RO	RUS	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		
	20	Taxation Road Passengers Vehicles, 1956								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	
	36	Harmonization Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982	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
<b>BSEC Member State participation to UNECE Road Transport related Conventions</b>			<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>



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

- b) *Participate in the work of the BSEC Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Customs, present the findings and conclusions of the BSRH Caravan and propose related measures for improvement.*

Experts held a meeting in Yalta on 3 October 2008. The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat reported findings and conclusions of the BSRH Caravan at the meeting and emphasized measures that could be taken by the customs administrations to improve the present situation.

The Expert Group will continue its work under newly established BSEC Working Group on Customs. This Working Group will elaborate an Action Plan as the first step. The BSEC-URTA is welcomed to contribute to elaborating such an Action Plan, which has a strategic importance to prioritise future work of the BSEC Member States on customs cooperation in the region.

- c) *Work with the BSEC PERMIS for organizing a BSEC Conference on Border Crossing Cooperation with the participation of the national relevant authorities: Customs, Border Police, Ministry of Transport and road transport industry.*

No action has been taken, yet. However, this subject will be proposed to be included in the Action Plan of the BSEC Working Group on Customs.

**4. HARMONIZATION OF CHARGES**

- a) *Set up proposals for design of a regional database on road user charges, tolls and other charges and fees applicable to hauliers in the BSEC region and present them to the PERMIS till 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007 to be distributed to the Members of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport before their meeting to be held in December 07 – January 08.*

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat elaborated and presented these proposals to the Turkish Chairmanship of the Steering Committee for Facilitation of Road Transport in Ankara, on 7 February 2008.

- b) *Work with the Steering Committee to unify charges and simplify collecting procedures following existing experience of the EU on this issue.*

The Second Meeting of the Steering Committee decided on 12 February 2008 to provide the Chairmanship of the Steering Committee with data on the existing charging policies in their countries in accordance with a sample matrix-table. Each Member State is expected to fill in and return this table to the Chairmanship, which will consolidate the national tables and presented to next meeting of the Steering Committee for consideration, where an Ad Hoc Group of Experts can also be established to work on this subject, in principle.

**5. DEVELOPMENT OF A BSEC QUOTA SYSTEM IN THE BSEC REGION**

- a) *Work with IRU and BSEC PERMIS for financing a study to be realized by the Industry's experts to identify a set of relevant technical and environmental criteria, similar to other practices in Europe, which should be considered as basis for a regional quota system of permits.*

On 20 June in Istanbul, the BSEC PERMIS received the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat in order to discuss implementation of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport, including the possibility of creating a regional quota system.

On 11 July 2008, the BSEC Secretary General authorised the NEA Transport research and training institute in the Netherlands to carry out an expert study in order to study each operative article of the BSEC MoU and make alternative action proposals in order to reach each objective thereof.

The experts were also requested to take into account reports of meetings of various transport related organs as well as the country positions and concerns as expressed whereof.



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

The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat debriefed the experts in the Netherlands and met them a few times during their visits to Turkey: Istanbul - 22 May 2008, Zoetermeer (NL) – 3 September 2008, Istanbul – 17 September 2008.

On 2 October 2008, NEA delivered a working document to the IRU and the BSEC-URTA for their comments and notes. Based on these remarks and other activities, NEA has finalised its Study.

NEA will present this Study at the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Geneva on 28 October 2008, where Chairman of the Steering Committee will also take part.

The BSEC PERMIS and the Turkish Chairmanship of the Steering Committee, on the other hand, decided to convene a High Level Public-Private Round Table Meeting in the the last week of November 2008, which will consider the Expert Study at regional level.

- b) *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 BSEC Quota System and its distribution criteria.*

The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat intends to coordinate a new campaign with the help of the Member Associations following announcement of the NEA Study and the dates of the BSEC Round Table on this subject.

**IRU-BSEC INTERACTION:**

**1. IRU-BSEC COOPERATION**

- (a) *Continue to support implementation of the MoU between the BSEC Organization and the IRU, which was signed in Sochi on 27 September 2006.*

IRU is invited anymore to all high level meetings of the BSEC Organization by the BSEC PERMIS, systematically. In this context, the IRU General Delegate to the Middle East and Region attended a special BSEC Meeting in Istanbul on 24 June 2008, which marked the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BSEC Organisation. On the occasion the President of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Abdullah Gul also received the IRU General Delegate, who expressed gratitude to the President for his participation in the IRU World Congress held in Istanbul on 15-16 May 2008.

IRU supported the BSEC Secretary General to mandate international experts for a special study on implementation of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods.

Implementation of this important MoU continues to remain as the main area of cooperation between the IRU and the BSEC, which could be coordinated and contributed by the BSEC-URTA.

- (b) *Encourage mutual participation of representatives of the BSEC and IRU Secretariats in their activities and events in 2008, particularly the 31<sup>st</sup> IRU World Congress to be held in Istanbul on 15-16 May 2008.*

Various BSEC representatives attended the last IRU World Congress in Istanbul on 15-16 May 2008.

**2. IRU-BSEC BUSINESS COUNCIL COOPERATION**

- (a) *Encourage mutual participation of representatives of the BSEC BC and IRU Secretariats in their activities and events in 2008, particularly the 31<sup>st</sup> IRU World Congress to be held in Istanbul on 15-16 May 2008.*

A continuous spirit of cooperation and solidarity between the IRU and the BSEC Business Council are continued particularly at the meetings of the BSEC competent organs, where transport policy and strategies are elaborated. However, there is still possibility for further mutual



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

action in order to translate this situation into more concrete and result oriented activities or support for activities of each organization.

**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 is maintained, systematically, on the occasion of each meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

**2. COMPANY PRACTICES**

- (a) Support the IRU's Best Industry Practices report and stimulate regional interest for it.

BSEC-URTA cooperates with the related Member Associations to give complimentary guidance to successful road transport operators, particularly those, which were invited to make presentations at the BSEC-URTA General Assembly meetings, if they are interested to submit their application to enter next issue of the IRU's Best Industry Practices report, if any.

- (b) Encourage the host Associations to allow representatives of their member companies with good examples to present themselves on the occasion of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly meetings.

The practice is maintained, systematically, on the occasion of each meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATION:**

**1. SYSTEMATIC PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

- (a) Search for available calls for proposals and calls for expression of interest under the European and international programs and funds, which relate to the road transport and may create benefits for the interested Member Associations or their members, if awarded.

There is no concrete activity on this subject since last meeting of the General Assembly, yet.

**2. 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 BSEC-URTA web portal is updated, regularly, and Member Associations can have access to all BSEC-URTA working documents, studies and reports as well as photo galleries of the BSEC-URTA meetings and activities online.

- (b) Publish an electronic transport and logistics guide, including a directory of transport operators and service providers in the BSEC region, by compiling the information made available by the Member Associations and the information obtained from various other sources.

No new action has been taken under this matter, yet.



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

**3. REGIONAL TRANSPORT STATISTICS**

- (a) Issue two updated versions of the BSEC-URTA Regional Outlook Report according to the information provided by the Member Associations and the information obtained from various other sources.

The practice is continued, systematically, by release of the semi-annual updated versions. However, access to information, particularly about border waiting times and updated road transport statistics at national level, is problematic and requires more efficient cooperation of the Member Associations.

**LOBBYING AND PROMOTION:**

**1. COOPERATION BETWEEN TRANSPORT RELATED BSEC NGOS**

- (a) Organise a joint meeting among the transport related BSEC NGOs at presidential level.

Organisation of such a meeting was impossible, yet, due to difficulty of reaching a common date and venue for all concerned Presidents.

This difficulty also indicates to the need for more political commitment of all sides if their common wish is to ensure a successful cooperation and coordination between all interested NGOs in the region.

- (b) Make a joint visit to the BSEC Secretary General for annual coordination and mutual exchange of information on 2008 priorities of the BSEC transport industry.

No concrete action has been undertaken, yet.

- (c) Encourage or support establishment of new BSEC NGOs.

No concrete action has been undertaken, yet.

- (d) Support the IRU to organise new truck caravans in 2008 in cooperation with the UN regional commissions and national associations.

IRU postponed organisation of these truck caravans to 2009.

**2. COOPERATION WITH BSEC PERMIS AND BSEC BC**

- (a) Organize mutual working visits and debriefings on activities and policy priorities of the BSEC-URTA.

BSEC-URTA International Secretariat visited the BSEC PERMIS on various occasions for coordination and informative purposes since the last meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

Implementation of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods and in this context, conduct of a special study by international experts, was the main agenda item for most of these direct contacts and visits.

**COMBINED TRANSPORTATION:**

**1. IMPROVEMENT OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES**





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

- (a) Make a joint project application together with interested transport related BSEC NGOs under the BSEC PDF, about developing a BSEC web site on existing Ro-Ro services in the BSEC region and studying areas of public-private cooperation to improve the quality and reliability of existing services in support of implementing the BSEC MoU on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the Black Sea region.

The International Secretariat prepared a draft project application forming November 2007.

An application file was prepared by then, which still waits for final approval and co-signatures of the BASPA, BINSAs and BRASS representatives.

**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING:**

**1. BSEC-URTA SURVEY ON PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

- (a) Monitor existing training services and activities of the BSEC-URTA Member Associations, periodically, and ensure sharing of related information among all interested sides.

A specific questionnaire was prepared and the preliminary results were already presented to the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

- (b) Help the interested BSEC-URTA Member Associations to identify areas of cooperation in the field of improving their professional training services.

None of the Member Associations made an inquiry to the International Secretariat on this matter, yet.

- (c) Support recognition by the competent national authorities, of the IRU Academy certificates and diplomas issued by concerned BSEC-URTA Member Associations.

No concrete action was requested by the Member Associations, yet.

**2. MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF CPC CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS**

- (a) Ask support of the BSEC PERMIS to reinforce the process of elaborating a draft BSEC Agreement on mutual recognition of CPC certificates and diplomas, which was frozen since last year due to lack of interest or support of the BSEC Member States.

No progress was achieved in this context, yet.

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