

**SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Hotel Radisson BLU Iberia, Tbilisi – GEORGIA  
Tuesday, 22 June 2010, at 10:00 hrs

**ECO-IRU SILK ROAD TRUCK CARAVAN PROJECT**

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

**I. ABOUT THE ECO**

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the Member States. In 1992, the Organization was expanded to include seven new members, namely: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan. ECO has embarked on several projects in priority sectors of its cooperation including energy, trade, transportation, agriculture and drug control.

The ECO and the IRU signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Istanbul on 15 May 2008 on the occasion of the 31<sup>st</sup> IRU World Congress. This MoU draws a structured framework of cooperation between two organisations in order to promote the TIR system in the ECO region, develop and implement joint projects and activities to facilitate the road transport in this region.

Cooperation between the IRU and the ECO is coordinated by the IRU Permanent Delegation to the Middle East and Region in Istanbul, Turkey, where the premises of the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat are also located.

**II. THE ECO-IRU SILK ROAD TRUCK CARAVAN PROJECT**

According to the information obtained from the ECO Secretariat, the ECO, upon proposal of one of its Member States, namely Pakistan, made a decision to organise a regional Truck Caravan with a view to monitoring the conditions regarding international road transport of goods across the region.

On the occasion of a bilateral visit to the IRU Permanent Delegation to the Middle East and Region in Istanbul on 10 February 2010, the ECO Secretariat became aware of the joint experience of the IRU and the BSEC-URTA to organise the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan in 2007.

Upon proposal of the ECO Secretariat and with the initiatives of the IRU Permanent Delegation, the competent ECO organs approved to realise the proposal of Pakistan in partnership with the IRU. These organs also decided to allocate \$ 150.000 for realisation of the project.

The ECO also invited the ECO Trade and Development Bank to make financial contribution to the project budget, which will be decided upon in July 2010.

The IRU mandated its Permanent Delegation in Istanbul to plan and carry out the ECO-IRU Silk Road Truck Caravan project in partnership with the concerned IRU National Associations.

In this connection, the IRU requested the BSEC-URTA to support the organisation of this Project, which also involves (ABADA) Azerbaijan and (TOBB, UND) Turkey, being members of both the BSEC and the ECO Organisations.

**III. RESPONSIBILITIES AND BENEFITS FOR THE BSEC-URTA**

The ECO-IRU Silk Road Truck Caravan is expected to take start in Islamabad, Pakistan on 14 August 2010.

The IRU and the ECO expect the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat to provide the Caravan Leader, who will plan the itinerary and time-table as well as accompany the Caravan during its approximately 42-day journey in 10 ECO countries.

The BSEC-URTA will not be expected to make a direct financial contribution to the Project Budget as a Sponsor but it will be ready to incur working expenses under the Silk Road Program of its Budget for 2010, related only with the Caravan Leader to be provided.

The BSEC-URTA International Secretariat had appointed its Deputy Secretary General in 2007 as the Caravan Leader of the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan.

On the other hand, it is likely that the involvement of the BSEC-URTA in the ECO-IRU Silk Road Truck Caravan Project will offer certain benefits, which, among others, could include the followings:-

- Fulfil the BSEC-URTA strategic objectives within existing budgetary means,
- Support the role of Azerbaijan and Turkey to bridge the BSEC region with the ECO region,
- Promote the BSEC and the BSEC-URTA in the ECO region,
- Stimulate interest among the IRU National Associations in the ECO region to the work and activities of the BSEC-URTA,
- Contribute to facilitation of road transport across the Silk Road from Asia via the BSEC region to Europe.

Upon proposal of the Management Council, the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly will make a decision to mandate the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat to support the ECO-IRU Silk Road Truck Caravan Project, in Tbilisi, Georgia on 22 June 2010.

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