

EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Room B, Centre de Conférences Varembé (CCV)
Geneva - Switzerland
Wednesday, 03 November 2010, at 15:00 hrs

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BSEC-URTA PRIORITIES IN 2010

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

I. State of affaires related with the signing and ratification of the BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of BSEC Member States

Since the 17th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Tbilisi on 22 June 2010 no additional BSEC Member State expressed its readiness to become signatory to the BSEC Agreement for Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers Nationals of BSEC Member States.

As of today, the status of the BSEC Member States as signatories to the BSEC Agreement for Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States is as follows:

Country	Signature	Date of deposit of instrument of ratification, approval or accession	Entry into Force	Reservations, Statements, objections
Albania	23 October 2008	1 March 2010	-	-
Armenia	23 October 2008		-	-
Azerbaijan			-	-
Bulgaria			-	-
Georgia			-	-
Greece			-	-
Moldova	23 October 2008		-	-
Romania			-	-
Russia			-	-
Serbia			-	-
Turkey	23 October 2008	23 April 2009	-	-
Ukraine			-	-

II. The Pilot Project of the BSEC Permit

The BSEC Permit entered into force among Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Turkey as of 16 February 2010.

The BSEC PERMIS printed 1,400 BSEC Permits and distributed 200 copies to each of the Participating Member States in November 2009. Each Permit is valid until 31 January 2011. The competent authorities of each Participating Member State delivered according to their own criteria, these BSEC Permits to their national transport operators.

The BSEC Permit is used for a single round trip only and the empty or loaded trucks holding such a BSEC Permit are allowed during a single round trip to transit through the territories of all Participating Member States without having to present any other bilateral transit permit.

Throughout 2010, the BSEC PERMIS together with the IRU and the BSEC-URTA monitors the usage of the BSEC Permits since its inception, takes note of any bottlenecks and makes a detailed statistical analysis of the actual usage.

Representatives of Participating States will meet in Istanbul, Turkey on 26 October 2010 in order to review this analysis and discuss to continue or discontinue the BSEC Permit in 2011.

This meeting was encouraged and facilitated together by the BSEC-URTA and the IRU Secretariats.

Although the actual results of this meeting will be available by the time of 18th meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat expects that the Participating States will not only decide to continue the BSEC Permit in 2011 but also agree to develop it further by including bilateral road goods transport under a BSEC Permit.

Independent of the results of the abovementioned meeting of the Participating States, the Steering Committee of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods is expected to discuss the decisions of the Participating States as some BSEC Member States, notably the Russian Federation and Greece, have strongly criticised the creation of the BSEC Permit even among the interested Member States and on a voluntary basis only.

The usage statistics as of 14 October 2010 are presented in the Table below.

STATISTICS ON THE USAGE OF THE BSEC PERMIT AS OF 14 OCTOBER 2010

Country	Beginning Date of National Distribution	Fee (if applicable)	Amount of BSEC Permits used as of 14 October 2010	Remainder
<i>Albania</i>	<i>16.03.2010</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>Armenia</i>	<i>Not yet</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Georgia</i>	<i>21.04.2010</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>194</i>
<i>Moldova</i>	<i>15.05.2010</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Romania</i>	<i>Not yet</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Serbia*</i>	<i>19.03.2010</i>	<i>15,20 €</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Turkey</i>	<i>18.02.2010</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>73</i>
Total			354	1046

* Serbia charges an issuance tax of € 15.00 indifferent of the amount of permits issued to a transport operator at a single occasion. In addition, for each permit issued, an additional fee of 0.20 € is collected.

III. Establishment of a Regional License System similar in nature to the ECMT License

On 9 September 2009 in Istanbul, during the 4th Meeting of the BSEC Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods, the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Turkey stated that they are ready to support the creation of a regional license system similar to the ECMT License.

These interested parties decided to create an Ad Hoc Project Group which would work under the coordination of the BSEC PERMIS and report about its activities and results of its work to the next meetings of the Steering Committee on a regular basis.

However, at the meetings of various transport bodies throughout 2010, some BSEC Member States, notably the Russian Federation stated that such Ad Hoc Groups can only be created by the Council of Ministers within the framework of the BSEC Organization.

As a result this Ad Hoc Group could not be convened by the BSEC PERMIS.

Although it may still be possible for the interested Member States to hold working meetings on this subject on an informal basis; it is expected that the interested Member States will prefer to concentrate firstly on continuing and developing the BSEC Permit as defined above.

IV. International Vehicle Weight Certificate under new Annex 8 to the International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982

The International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 establishes commonly agreed requirements for coordinated border management and reduction of border formalities as well as the number and duration of all types of border controls of goods.

53 countries (including the 12 BSEC Member States) and the European Community are Contracting Parties to this Convention.

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 standardized documentation and certificates.

New Annex 8 covers: facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers standardized weighing operations and vehicle weight certificate, minimum infrastructure requirements for efficient border crossing points and provisions to monitor the border crossing performance.

As far as creation and implementation of the International Vehicle Weight Certificate as part of Annex 8 is concerned, it is observed that there is not a consistent and concrete interest among the Contracting Parties or a systematic guidance by the UNECE Secretariat, which seem to be the determining factors to achieve a concrete progress in this direction.

However, it is still possible to underline that the existing cooperation among some CIS countries namely Byelorussia, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova on this subject matter could set a useful example not only the Contracting Parties in general but particularly for the BSEC countries.

The rules of procedure and templates of the IVWC developed by the CIS Countries are similar with IVWC developed under the Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention. The BSEC countries could benefit from the experience of the above mentioned countries and simplify the implementation process of the IVWC.

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