



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

MIN/GA07/05

Athens, 07 June 2005

SEVENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES

Athens - GREECE

Tuesday 07 June 2005, at 10:00 hrs

I. OPENING CEREMONY

Mr. Athanasios Kakkos, President of OFAE, warmly welcomed all participants of the 7th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, and expressed the great pleasure and honor for OFAE to host the Meeting. He pointed out that the foundation of BSEC-URTA was a decisive step for Associations to get closer, giving the opportunity to exchange views, indicate problems, and set common goals in order to support the road transport sector, thus trade in the region. He expressed the belief that positive cooperation will continue and expand to further development of the road transport sector in the region, which is the cross-road between Europe and Asia. He thanked OFAE members - transport companies for their support and contribution to the successful organization of this Meeting, and wished every success to participants in their work.

Mr. Ilir Mataj, President of BSEC-URTA, President of ANALTIR, welcomed distinguished guests General Director of Ministry of Transport of the Hellenic Republic Mrs. Tsaga, IRU General Delegate to CIS Mr. Rounov, SECI PRO Coordinator Mr. Tsorbatzoglou, Representative of TRACECA IGC Secretariat Mr. Belyi, Representative of NEA Mr. Westerkamp, and all participants to the 7th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Athens. He thanked the OFAE President Mr. Kakkos for warm hospitality and OFAE's staff for organization of the Meeting. In his opening speech he talked about the development of BSEC-URTA from first days till now, which goes under the slogan 'Common solutions to the common problems'. He mentioned about the progress made under various BSEC-URTA activities, strengthened cooperation between Member Associations, continuous support of the IRU, close relationship with the BSEC organs. He named the friendly environment among BSEC-URTA Members as the biggest achievement of BSEC-URTA. He wished good work and success for the meeting.

Mr. Igor Rounov, the Head of the IRU Permanent Delegation to CIS, welcomed all participants and wished success to the BSEC-URTA. He stressed that IRU continues supporting the BSEC-URTA. He underlined that, being the linking point between Asia and Europe, the BSEC countries play an important role in global development of the 21st century. Emphasizing, that this region is very important for the IRU as well, he mentioned that the Head of the newly established IRU office in Istanbul Mr. Ozkan will be responsible for connecting of these two bodies. Mr. Rounov told that the meetings of the BSEC-URTA, convening in different capitals of the BSEC countries, give another opportunity for members of the IRU CIS to meet, to face important developments and call upon resolving problems. He recalled that since the last meeting in Tbilisi significant political developments took place, which, hopefully, would be for the benefit of the people, influencing positively transport in the region. In conclusion, he thanked the host country, appreciated their hospitality and the beauty of Athens, the famous place where the European civilization was born, and he expressed the hope that this would help to understand problems, relevant to globalization in the 21st century, the important changes and challenges that will be faced in the future.

Mrs. Evagelia Tsaga, General Director of Ministry of Transport of Greece, conveyed wishes for a good stay in Athens and success to the Meeting from the Minister of Transport of Greece Mr. Mihalis Liapis. She expressed a great pleasure to participate at the opening ceremony of the 7th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, one of the most important and active unions in the transport sector. She stressed that the transport is of vital importance for financial growth of Europe, and the planning of transport infrastructure is a backbone of development and cooperation among countries in the region. The geopolitical location of Greece at the crossroads of three continents made priority the development of poor infrastructure. Mrs. Tsaga stressed that such development on national level is not enough, it should be a regional one, and that's why Greece actively participates in initiatives like BSEC-URTA. She told that the main priority now for Greek transport policy is the development of the pan-European axes X, IV along with Corridor of Thessaloniki-Istanbul, which are of utmost importance for the EU, and Greece does its utmost to promote them. Mrs. Tsaga mentioned another important issue for rationalizing the transport system - the coordinate development of the system 'ports-premises for categorizing and storage-transport operation' with the center at Greek ports, which would promote and develop combined transportation in the Mediterranean, Black Sea, Middle East and Balkans regions. She stressed that the main goal remains the effective function of transport from the aspect of time and cost, by interventions to the structural framework of transport operations, lifting the administrative and financial barriers. She stated that the close cooperation between national states and unions of road transport plays the leading role in all these efforts. In conclusion, she wished every success to the work of the 7th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

Mr. Athanasios Kakkos thanked the speakers and announced a coffee break.

FIRST SESSION

The Chairman opened the first session, expressing his happiness to chair the Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly for the first time, as the BSEC-URTA President. He mentioned that the International Secretariat has already sent all the official documents relevant to the Meeting, and proposed to pass to the item II of the Agenda.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA



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

The Agenda of the Meeting (DOC/GA07/AG/05) was adopted unanimously.

III. ADOPTION OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman briefed on the Order of Business, mentioned that it is a very tight one and should be considered in an orderly way.

The Order of Business of the Meeting (DOC/GA07/OB/05) was adopted unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SIXTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairman invited to consider the Minutes of the 6th General Assembly and asked if there are any amendment proposals.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan, Secretary General of BSEC-URTA, proposed a small technical amendment on the p.3 under item 5 'Mutual Recognition of CPCs'.

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly (MIN/GA06/04) were adopted unanimously as amended.

V. HOST COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

The Chairman recalled that the basic objective of BSEC-URTA is to strengthen the collaboration between Member Associations, in particular, by sharing experiences. He informed that OFAE as the host Association has been asked to present briefly the road transport system in Greece and the management system of OFAE. He emphasized that this practice should be the permanent item of the agenda of the General Assembly, and invited Mr. Nikolaras to make a presentation.

Mr. Panagiotis Nikolaras, Vice-President of OFAE, on behalf of OFAE welcomed all participants. He emphasized the atmosphere of mutual understanding, cooperation and friendship that has developed among BSEC countries, especially in the field of transport. He told that for the better future the stable bases should be created for the establishment of an integrated transport market with common rules compatible with those of EU, concerning all aspects of transport. He emphasized the fact that transport is the main and most important component for the financial development of a country. He pointed out that the competition forces the countries to produce services with the lowest cost, which increases the exchanges and leads to relevant development of the transport as well as competition among the different transport modes. He stressed that road transport takes the leading role, and the heavy goods vehicle is at an exceptionally advantageous position towards the other transport modes. Nevertheless, Mr. Nikolaras noted that for some countries the development of road transport is undesired and they push measures to be taken for the restriction of their development. Though in 1992 the EC succeeded the full liberalization of the road goods transports among Member States, the recent report of DGTREN encourages the modal shift from road to the sea, rail and fluvial(?). Mr. Nikolaras expressed the disagreement with that position by adducing serious and cogent arguments, and emphasizing general benefits for a country from the use of road transports. He informed that OFAE addressed its position to the Ministry of Transport & Communications and Ministry of Merchant Marine of Greece, and this intervention was an effective one since Greece had not implemented the said proposal. Mr. Nikolaras talked about activities of OFAE concerning road transportation issues, towards the Ministries of Greece and international sectoral organizations. Also he described in details the contribution of OFAE to training of the drivers and transport operators, for the purpose of which OFAE has organized two training schools, according to the EC directives. These schools are considered as the best in the sector. In conclusion, Mr. Nikolaras conveyed the wishes of success of the President of the Hellenic Chamber Association of Transport, Mr. Michalis Adamadiadis.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Nikolaras for the interesting presentation, and asked to provide it in English in written. He emphasized that this practice should continue, thus it will be possible to benchmark actions of each other concerning training and use all best practices. He invited the representative of the 'Superfast Ferries' which is a provider of combined transportation services in the region, to proceed with their presentation.

Mrs. Foula Anagnostopoulou, Cargo Director of 'Superfast Ferries', on behalf of 'Attica Group' welcomed the participants to Athens and thanked for offering the opportunity to present the activities of their company. In her presentation she informed that the 'Attica Group' provides the disposing of fast modern cruising boats, offering reliable service for both people and trucks. She told that the services of 'Attica Group' are available in 4 seas connecting 6 European countries with lines Greece-Italy, Germany-Finland, Scotland-Belgium, and also lines to Greek islands. Mrs. Anagnostopoulou showed some statistical information on number of passengers and trucks transported in previous years. She also talked about companies 'Superfast Ferries' and 'Blue Ferries' which belong to 'Attica Group', showed the development since 1995. In 2004 the 'Attica Group' was in the top list of companies transporting passengers and trucks. She gave details on every line which operates, mentioning the market share, which increased in years and expected to increase further. Mrs. Anagnostopoulou thanked for invitation and expressed readiness for cooperation.

The Chairman thanked the speaker and stressed that the Greek experience in the transportation sector is a valuable one, and such presentations broaden horizons of BSEC-URTA Members. He invited the representatives of other two Greek companies to share their experience in the sector.

Mr. Alithis Stratikis, CEO of the Financial Director of 'Cosmopolous Trans', thanked the OFAE for the invitation to present activities of the company. He informed that the 'Cosmopolous Trans' is a 100% Greek company for international road transport of goods and storage sector; it was established at 1986 as a high prestige, security and accuracy company in transport, which, starting with 1 truck began introducing itself to the international road transport sector and developing fast. Mr. Stratikis informed that main strategies of the company are to regularly invest in the infrastructure of trucks, electronic equipment and personal; the company continuously increases and renews the fleet of its vehicles and tries always to be at the peak of technology. Selection of new trucks is being done according to EU directives, and characterized by a high safety level,

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

maximum volume for goods and environmental friendliness. Mr. Stratikis told that recently the company moved to the new premises, with both offices and storage houses of the company, constructed based on the most modern methods of construction with high security and safety levels; offices are created to have very functional working environment, and located very close to the national road. He underlined that the company invests on the human capital, it selects and trains personnel based on accumulated experience. He particularly underlined that the company continuously grows since 1986, in 20 years turnover is increased 20 times, as a result of a hard and systematic work. Mr. Stratikis stated that the company's politics for the future is a warranty of our quality. Mr. Stratikis thanked the audience for attention and wished the success to their work.

Mr. Theodoros Camperos, President and Management Director of 'Camperos Trans', greeted participants and presented the activities of his company. He informed that the group of companies was established at 1999, its main activities are transport and logistics for Greek and foreign customers. He informed that via the provision of integrated services with accuracy and high quality the company is a leader in the transport sector of Greece; it covers the domestic market and introduces itself at the international market. Mr. Camperos stressed that Greece remains a very strong regional market, and expressed his belief that it should be further developed. He mentioned that policies at the market change every year, the storage of goods becomes an important factor in minimizing the cost. He expressed the opinion that the logistics develops as reliable and effective market, and the international access is the keyword to the development of the company; the aim is to access the clients faster than competitors. He explained that the company owns 75 large and 15 small trucks and invests to have more. The turnover of the company since 1999 has been rising stably. Mr. Camperos expressed his assurance that the company will continue developing fast, taking the advantage of the accumulated experience, capacity of the industrial sector and the company's market share. He thanked the audience for the attention.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for the excellent presentations, which were very useful for all participants. He congratulated the Greek companies for their achievement. The Chairman passed to another issue.

VII. BSEC-URTA REGIONAL OUTLOOK REPORT

Mrs. Evgeniya Camurcu presented the relevant report (REP/OUTLOOK/GA07/05).

The Chairman stressed that the current work of the Secretariat is very valuable and all Member Associations should contribute more actively to it by providing more data. He invited to make comments.

Mr. Mikhail Nizov, Vice-President of ASMAP, congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent presentation, and expressed the belief that Member Associations should participate further more actively and continuously provide data for such a database. He emphasized the importance of this for the competitiveness of road transport with other alternative transport modes. He underlined that there aren't many organizations which follow-up such international data, and this gives even more importance to the work done by International Secretariat. He told that such data is very valuable, and in Russia they try to collect it using new technologies, in which they continuously invest since 2000. He proposed to exploit technologies to control the flow of transport, especially at the border points, and estimate waiting times through automatized processes. He emphasized that such databases can lead to a better standardization of activities and provide a better platform for better exchange of information between Members.

Mr. Klaas Westerkamp, Managing Director of NEA Turkey, added that NEA is currently doing a study for the EC about cost of transport flows between the EU and surrounding countries. He informed that this study will be finalized this year, and results can be provided to the BSEC-URTA Secretariat in order to give some more support in developing its activities.

The Chairman mentioned that NEA has been contributing to facilitation of the transport system of the region via such projects, and cooperation with NEA can contribute to the solution of problems in the BSEC region.

Mr. Cetin Nuhoglu, Honorary President of BSEC-URTA, President of UND, thanked the Secretariat for the valuable information. He stressed that this is a very important work and there is a need to investigate the provided information in more details. He particularly noted the situation at TR-BG border, where, certainly, longer waiting times were observed. Also he questioned that the increase in foreign trade between BSEC countries together with decrease in waiting times reflects the real situation. However, he stressed the usefulness of such a study, which can indicate problems and reflect developments. Regarding the sea transport, Mr. Nuhoglu informed that 22% of the international fleet are ships with Greek flag, and, in particular, the Greek company 'Superfast Ferries' is the major power in this sector. He told that the BSEC region is located at the crossroads between Eastern and Western countries, and tries to cover needs of their foreign trade sectors, thus he expressed the belief that there is a high need to develop the combined transport sector further, to improve its performance. He proposed to set sea connections with France, Spain and other Mediterranean countries, and stressed the willingness of Turkey to closely collaborate with those countries in the field of combined transportation.

Mr. Athanasios Kakkos, on behalf of OFAE apologized for not providing the data to the International Secretariat, due to some reasons, and promised to send the relevant information soon.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan thanked all distinguished speakers and OFAE for their excellent cooperation with International Secretariat. He encouraged the companies to apply to the IRU Best Practices report. He addressed to 'Superfast Ferries' with call to recognize the potential of BSEC region, the market of which is minimum 3 million trips per year. Regarding the Outlook Report, he agreed with Mr. Nuhoglu that there are some strange figures, and there is a need to monitor more border crossing points in the system. He mentioned that with the further support of Members in providing the regional data in the next General Assembly Meeting the more realistic data on border crossings can be presented.

Mr. Leonid Kostuchenko, President of AIRCU, informed that AIRCU works very actively with border authorities of Ukraine and they have managed to resolve various practical problems. He informed that as of the 1st of June in Ukraine the new 'single window' system has been launched. He mentioned that though AIRCU gets reliable information from its members, they are not

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

equally informed by colleagues outside borders. Mr. Kostuchenko stressed the need to discuss problems with colleagues from other countries since this is translated in long waiting times, and such problems must be resolved urgently. Also, mentioning that the Greek system of transportation is a very good example, he asked OFAE to provide more information concerning its structure and their activities.

The Chairman closed the first session and announced the lunch break.

SECOND SESSION

The Chairman opened the second session and invited the President of OFAE to give an answer to Ukrainian colleague.

Mr. Athanasios Kakkos told that since Greece is the only country in the BSEC region, which is member of the EU. As a result, they must abide by the EU directives. He proposed to provide the relevant directives and the English version of Mr. Nikolaras's speech. He expressed his readiness to give more information regarding training and anything else that might be interesting.

The Chairman thanked for the intention to share the information and invited to talk about waiting times at borders.

Mr. Panagiotis Nikolaras informed that Greece faces number of problems with all neighboring countries, namely FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Bulgaria. He stressed the intention of Greece to make border crossing procedures simpler and faster, especially for perishable goods transportation. He gave an example of border crossing procedures at Macedonian and Serbian borders, which are very different and problematic for perishable goods transportation. He asked for assistance of the BSEC-URTA to achieve special express lanes for such goods. Mr. Nikolaras also mentioned that transit procedures should be different from procedures for imported goods. He also described a problem at the Serbian border related with the phytosanitary control, and asked for assistance of the BSEC-URTA to overcome it. He addressed to the Bulgarian colleagues with the request to assist in establishing channel at the border for vehicles with a single custom clearance point, as proposed by OFAE at the recent Balkan meeting at Alexandropolis.

Mr. Florinel Andrei, Secretary General of ARTRI, informed that ARTRI together with the IRU and National Customs Administration convened a study regarding the organization of a 'green lane' in Romania, which then was realized in February 2005. This practice gave a possibility to reduce waiting times to 8-10 minutes at BG and HUN borders. He stressed that the bureaucracy can be reduced, and proposed to use this experience in other countries as a new way to make control and verification at the borders. He proposed to provide English translation of the related ministerial directive to the International Secretariat for further distribution.

Mr. Yanis Tsorbatzoglou, SECI PRO Coordinator, made some comments to the speech of Mr. Nikolaras. He informed that the TTFSE-2 program of the World Bank is starting soon, and the issue of transit corridors has been included there. In relation to the introduction of paperless environment, he informed that EUROPRO recommendations on the electronic exchange of information at the border crossing have been accepted by the EC, and will be introduced in the Green Paper by the Commission. Also, he mentioned that although the phytosanitary control at the borders is still a continuing problem for transport, there has been a significant progress, for which he congratulated Bulgaria and Romania for their efforts. He also told that for the possibility to work as a single border and avoid double checks, it takes time to change the mentality of control and cooperation between authorities. Mr. Tsorbatzoglou underlined the issue on actions regarding combating systematic corruption, and proposed to the BSEC-URTA to stress the issue of the corruption and difficulties that it creates for the trade environment in the region.

Mrs. Neli Salo, Deputy Secretary General of AEBTRI, commented on the data on border crossing between SCG and BG. She informed that the problem at that border crossing point for Bulgarian hauliers is the radioactivity control for all kinds of goods transported by them through Serbian territory. She gave some information regarding this control, and informed that AEBTRI contacted the Ministry of Transport and Chamber of Commerce of Serbia and learned that this is an official and legal collection of money. She informed also that AEBTRI asked the support from IRU, and she also asked the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat to contact Serbian authorities and help resolving this problem.

Mr. Gennadie Taulean, Head of Information Department of AITA, informed that transport of Moldova has become mostly oriented to Europe, and there are visa problems for western European countries.

The Chairman stressed that since BSEC-URTA's objective is to find common solutions to the common problems, Members should inform the Secretariat about such problems, thus helping to understand which way to follow.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan emphasized that the aim of the report was to identify problems in the region in an objective manner. He asked ASMAP to intervene about problem at Estonian border.

Mr. Mikhail Nizov confirmed that such long waiting times at Estonian border stems from the industry itself, choosing this particular gate, although capacity of which is only 2 % of the total goods transportation, and which is not suitable to meet such heavy traffic.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan expressed gladness that the report raised the interest of members. He noted that interventions of OFAE and AEBTRI indicate problems at Serbian borders, and proposed that, using the data from report and further information from Associations, BSEC-URTA can try to contribute to solution of the problem by cooperation with the BSEC, especially with the BSEC WG on Transport, by direct initiative vis-à-vis the Serbian authorities and the IRU. He expressed the hope that some progress can be achieved as a result. He thanked Mr. Tsorbatzoglou for the interesting information, and stressed that the cooperation between SECI and BSEC-URTA is worth to be closer.

Mr. Igor Rounov congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent report, which will contribute to elimination of all kinds of non-tariff administrative barriers. He informed about the similar work in the CIS regarding administrative barriers, which already

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

recorded significant progress on the ministerial level. He told that they approached the CIS governments by demonstrating the huge economic losses which those barriers cause, by systematizing them, collecting and analyzing data. This data clearly reflected the situation, it was presented to certain bodies, and special working groups on the high level were established. Now a more comprehensive scheme is being prepared, which will give additional stimulus for the governments to take strong decisions against those barriers. He proposed to the BSEC-URTA to use the same scheme and try to persuade the governments in the BSEC region. Mr. Rounov also explained how they try to fight with corruption in the CIS via internet.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Rounov for the information and passed to the next item of the Agenda.

VI. REPORT OF THE BSEC-URTA MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Chairman very briefly told about the 9th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA Management Council (MC) held on 6 June and thanked the OFAE for its organization. The Chairman informed that the MC considered all the working documents of the General Assembly, discussed financial matters, in particular, the contribution fees to the BSEC-URTA budget. He informed that AIRCA delays its payment, and will be asked to provide an official answer on this delay. Another subject was the results of the Meeting of the ECMT Ministers of Transport; the MC appreciated the increase of quotas for 2006 and contribution of the BSEC-URTA Members for this achievement. The Chairman also informed that it was decided to make an application to the BSEC to renew the BSEC-URTA's status of the sectoral dialogue partnership for another 2 years. Concerning the election of the Secretary General for 2006-2010, the MC appreciated the high contribution of Mr. Ozkan to the very positive course of the organization during past 4 years, and decided to recommend appointing him again for another period. However, Mr. Mataj informed the Member Associations that they can nominate any other persons for this position, freely, if they so wished to do. Also, the Chairman informed that the MC approved the relocation of the office of the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat and instructed it to take appropriate actions. The Chairman informed about the invitation from AITA to held next meeting in Moldova and the decision of the MC to recommend its acceptance.

VIII. BSEC-URTA ACTIVITY REPORT

The Chairman announced the next item of the agenda and invited Secretary General to report about activities of the International Secretariat since the last General Assembly meeting.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan briefly presented the report about activities of the International Secretariat since the last meeting of the General Assembly in June 2004 (DOC/GA06/ACTIV/04) under certain groups according to the BSEC-URTA working program.

1. Visa for Professional Drivers

Mr. Haydar Ozkan told about efforts to achieve a legal governmental agreement for facilitation of visa for drivers. He told that the draft BSEC Agreement was welcomed by the EC, and UNECE is also informed about it. He stressed that the text was a product of series of thorough meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and now at a stage of final approval and opening for the signatures. However, it cannot be adopted, yet, since the Ukrainian side has amendment proposals. Mr. Ozkan expressed his hope that till Chisinau meeting, some progress could be achieved, which highly depends on good efforts of distinguished colleagues from Ukraine.

2. International Weight Certificate

Mr. Haydar Ozkan informed that UNECE achieved a consensus among 44 UN Member Countries to adopt the new annex 8 of the Convention 1982, where the International Weight Certificate is also included, and EC asked a mandate from the Council of Ministers of the EU to ratify the adoption of this new annex. He gave the floor to representatives of UND and SECI.

Mr. Reha Uran, Vice-Chairman of the UND Executive Committee, gave brief information about the project since its beginning. He recalled that SECI RRTC supported by UNECE prepared IVWC and approved it in June 2001, developed a code of practices to facilitate its implementation, and considered that IVWC should be available in the electronic format. IVWC has been included to the draft Annex 8 to the 1982 International Convention. He called upon cooperation between SECI and BSEC countries with a view to accepting the new Annex 8 and joining to the Convention of those countries that are not contracting parties, yet. He stressed that further success can be possible with the involvement and support of the EU Council and the IRU. Mr. Uran emphasized that this should be one of the most important projects to bring the SECI, BSEC and CIS regions closer.

Mr. Yanis Tsorbatzoglou underlined that it is a perfect example of the initiative that has started in a different environment and keep developing under BSEC umbrella. He thanked the International Secretariat, the IRU for their efforts, and especially the EC.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan told that Secretariat checked that all BSEC states are parties of this Convention, except Turkey, Moldova and Albania; corresponding associations were asked to take extra efforts.

Mr. Reha Uran gave information about the ratification process in Turkey, the Convention is signed by the President of Turkey and now it waits before the Council of Ministers. He suggested to Moldova and Albania to act similarly and fast for its ratification by their respectful countries, too.

3. Cooperation Agreement between BSEC and IRU

Mr. Haydar Ozkan informed that a draft text of Agreement is already prepared and has to be signed by the BSEC PERMIS and IRU General Secretariat. He stressed that such agreement may facilitate the efforts for progress in the regional level.

4. Simplification of Custom Formalities

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

Mr. Haydar Ozkan told that BSEC-URTA supported Tbilisi, to organize a meeting between customs authorities of the BSEC Member States. On the other hand, the representatives of International Secretariat, upon the invitation of OFAE in January 2005, participated in a meeting of the Southeast Europe Customs Directors General and the EU. At the BSEC Meeting in April, the Ministers also instructed BSEC PERMIS to check the opportunity to organize the meeting between customs administrations of the BSEC Member States. He told that the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat will follow this issue, closely. Mr. Ozkan welcomed the representative of TRACECA and invited him to give information about TRACECA projects, such as 'single window' project.

Mr. Yaroslav Belyi, Road Transport Expert of TRACECA IGC, greeted all the participants, and presented various activities of the TRACECA, which is a programme on development of the international corridor Europe-the Caucasus-Asia. He told about evolution of the TRACECA Programme, its main objectives and its Member States. He informed that within TRACECA Programme more than 50 projects have been implemented for development of international road, rail and sea transport, construction of the relevant infrastructure and supply of equipment; and main priorities in the field of road transport are harmonization of border crossing procedures, unification of transit fees and tariffs and creation of a common legal basis. Mr. Belyi gave detailed information about 'single window' project for border crossing and showed the demo version of its realization. He welcomed the information from Ukraine regarding the project realization, and called upon realization of the same scheme in all countries. He invited for cooperation on various projects such as combined transportation.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Belyi for presentation, welcoming such cooperation and stressing that examples of TRACECA has to be followed in the future.

The Chairman closed the second session and announced a coffee break.

THIRD SESSION

The Chairman shared the unfortunate news about the loss of AITA Secretary General of AITA Mr. Alexandru Ciobu. Being aware of the important contribution of Mr. Ciobu to the BSEC-URTA, Mr. Mataj expressed his deepest condolence to his family and colleagues and invited all participants to rise for a moment of silence in memory of Alexandru Ciobu.

5. Project Development and Information

Mr. Haydar Ozkan continued with the BSEC-URTA Activity Report and informed that AITA-ARTRI-UND Joint Distant Learning Project continued. He also informed that BSEC Secretary General wrote an official letter to the World Bank asking for the consideration of this successful project for the further financial support. Mr. Ozkan informed that the International Secretariat checks websites for new calls for proposals, which may be of interest for all or part of the BSEC-URTA Member Associations. In this regard, he informed that there is a recent project announcement about the cross border cooperation between Turkey and Greece. Mr. Ozkan invited the representative of ICBSS to talk about its activities and areas of possible cooperation in the road transport sector.

Ms. Daphne Valambous, ICBSS Research Fellow, thanked for the opportunity to brief about activities of the ICBSS. She told that ICBSS is a BSEC related body, it examines practical ways for widening and deepening cooperation among BSEC States, identifies fields that could promote economic cooperation, sustainable development and improve living standards in the region. ICBSS carries a bridging function with the EU, international organizations and research centers. She told that though ICBSS does not have activities regarding transport, yet, it is very interested in exploring the possibilities for cooperative projects in this field.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan thanked for the presentation and underlined that ICBSS and BSEC-URTA have to check possibilities to benefit from each other, which may lead to new projects for BSEC region. He stressed that ICBSS may agree that the common efforts may be done to collect various regional data in order to analyze tendencies in the region. He invited Mr. Westerkamp from NEA to talk about NEA's experience in distance learning projects.

Mr. Klaas Westerkamp, Managing Director of NEA Turkey, talked about distance learning and its importance for road transport sector. He stressed that CPC is a must for transport operators and drivers in some countries, but in large countries it is difficult to provide training and facilities for training for everyone, and distance learning is a solution. He told about distance learning projects realized by NEA with financial support of the World Bank, IRU Academy and National Associations involved, and told about objectives of these projects. He emphasized that NEA is very well prepared to assist BSEC-URTA in its initiatives.

6. Combined Transportation and Regional Survey

Mr. Haydar Ozkan reminded that BSEC-URTA International Secretariat conducted a Survey with the assistance of the Member Associations in providing answers to questionnaires. He invited Mrs. Evgeniya Camurcu to report about the results.

Mrs. Evgeniya Camurcu reported about results of the Survey on Combined Transportation in the BSEC Region (REP/GA07/COMB/05).

Mr. Haydar Ozkan stressed that the International Secretariat tried to make an objective analysis of the existing limited data. He summarized that the top problem in Mediterranean Sea is the price level while the users in the Black Sea are not satisfied with quality and comfort of the facilities provided. He proposed using results of the Survey to approach service providers with a view to improving facilities at terminals.

The General Assembly approved the Report (REP/GA07/COMB/05) unanimously.

IX. ACTIVITIES OF BSEC-URTA WORKING PARTIES

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

1. Working Party on Systematic Follow-up of Istanbul 2004 International Road Transport Conference on Globalization

The Chairman reminded that, following the decisions of the 6th GA, two Working Parties were organized, which had their meetings. He invited Mrs. Neli Salo to report about results of the meeting of the WP.1.

Mrs. Neli Salo reported about the work of the Working Party on Systematic Follow-up of Istanbul 2004 International Road Transport Conference on Globalization (REP/WP1/GA07/05).

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Salo and all members of the WP.1 for their work. He invited to watch video of the Istanbul 2004 Conference.

Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Executive Manager, informed that at the 8th meeting of the BSEC-URTA Management Council the Secretary General of ARTRI Mr. Andrei agreed to hold such a conference in Bucharest 2006.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan stressed that to ensure the continuity of the follow up process the WP.1 proposed to organize similar Conferences every 2 years on the occasion of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, to have expert follow up meetings on the eve of each General Assembly, and to organize a permanent Steering Committee of the Conference.

The Chairman highlighted the importance of having such high level conferences. He noted the willing of the ARTRI to host such an event. He proposed to pass to the next item and invited Mr. Matsnev to make presentation on activities of the WP.2.

2. Working Party on Elaboration of Arguments for Use of BSEC National Authorities at the ECMT Meetings

Mr. Mikhail Matsnev, Deputy Head of Department of Information Systems, Technical Policy and Services of ASMAP, briefly reported about the activities of the WP.2 (REP/WP2/GA07/05) and underlined main results of its work: use of the criteria to allocate the basic quota; weighing of the criteria; attempts to elaborate a common view on the important transport sector issue; demonstration of the common voice of the BSEC-URTA Member Associations.

The Chairman thanked all members of the WP.2, congratulated them for their excellent work and elaboration of arguments which were submitted to the ECMT, IRU, BSEC, and different National Authorities. The result of their work became obvious at the Moscow Meeting. He invited Mr. Albu to present results of the Moscow session of the ECMT Council of Ministers.

X. RESULTS OF THE 89th SESSION OF THE ECMT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Mr. Adrian Albu made a presentation on this issue (DOC/GA07/ECMT/05).

Mr. Igor Rounov told that upon the request of the ECMT Secretariat, IRU tried to influence the situation; it organized a special meeting of CIS Road Transport Council devoted to this issue and assisted in organization of the ECMT Meeting in Moscow. BSEC-URTA's appeal was used as a basis to IRU CIS's appeal to CIS Member States urging governments to reconsider their position and to adopt sensible approaches on the future of the system. Mr. Rounov stressed that this good example of the IRU and the BSEC-URTA cooperation contributed to a successful outcome of the Moscow Meeting, comparing to a possible disaster.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan highlighted the importance of the work of the WP.2 on creation and achievement of the common position, promotion by the BSEC-URTA and the IRU vis-à-vis the ECMT, and congratulated the active involvement of the Associations vis-à-vis national governments. He said that, now, there are good perspectives towards a better regulated road transport market.

Mr. Panagiotis Nikolaras congratulated the WP.2 for its active work, but mentioned about the problem related with improper usage of ECMT licenses. The licenses should be sealed when entering or exiting a particular country; however, in Greece there are many cases of illegal use of licenses. Mr. Nikolaras stressed that such incidents have to be eliminated by reinforcement of controls, and must result with even decreasing the number of licenses or even their total elimination. He stated that the proper use of licenses means the proper use of transport network.

Mr. Leonid Kostuchenko mentioned that still the issues about 6 week period and cabotage are not very clear. He proposed that BSEC-URTA should represent industry of the region in the meetings of ECMT Ministers of Transport. Since Ministers of Transport are decision makers, and BSEC-URTA can only submit proposals, he stressed that under the guidance of the International Secretariat the WP should continue collecting information and new data for the new arguments.

Mr. Cetin Nuhoglu mentioned that before there was no opportunity to intervene effectively at the ECMT Meetings, but now thanks to the efforts and the hard work of the WP, the intervention and initiative of the International Secretariat, a very successful result is obtained, which indicates the strength of the BSEC-URTA and its joint voice with the IRU. He stressed that this has to be the way of work in the future – jointly, in coordination and good cooperation and with consensus.

The Chairman thanked all the speakers and proceeded with the next item on the Agenda.

XI. FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Audit Report on Implementation of the BSEC-URTA Budget for 2004

The Chairman informed about activities of the BSEC-URTA Auditors and invited Ms. Asandei to present the relevant report.

Ms. Cornelia Asandei presented the report of the BSEC-URTA Auditors (REP/GA07/AUDIT/05).



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

The Chairman thanked Ms. Asandei for the report and noted that expenses of the BSEC-URTA are not limited by the amount mentioned, there are accumulated efforts by all countries in different forms that cannot be reflected in tables. He thanked Auditors for their work and mentioned that the systematic audits will be carried out, regularly, in the future.

2. Elections of BSEC-URTA Auditors for 2005

Mr. Mikhail Nizov, Vice-President of ASMAP, and Mr. Dimitrios Dotsios, Secretary General of OFAE, were elected for the post of BSEC-URTA Auditors for 2005.

The Chairman thanked the UND President for his efforts on promotion of the BSEC-URTA interests and for the financial support.

XII. NEXT MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairman informed about the invitation from the Moldovan Association to host the next meeting of the General Assembly. He also recalled that Moldova will be undertaking the BSEC Chairmanship -in-Office in the next semester.

Mr. Gennadie Taulean confirmed that AITA would like to host next meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly and will try to make everything possible in order to realize it successfully.

Invitation from AITA to host the next Meeting of the General Assembly in Chisinau on 24 October 2005 was approved, unanimously.

XIII. BSEC-URTA CALENDAR FOR 2005 - First Half

The Chairman informed about the calendar of BSEC-URTA's activities, as prepared by the Secretariat (DOC/GA07/CAL/05).

XIV. DECISIONS OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairman informed that the Secretariat is responsible to prepare decisions of the meeting, which will be submitted to signature later.

XV. MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Igor Rounov informed that in 2006 in Odessa IRU together with ASMAP Ukraine will have a Conference on passenger transport, devoted to the problems of the sector in the CIS region, and the BSEC-URTA is welcomed to contribute to it.

Mr. Haydar Özkan told that it is an important decision of AIRCU and it is with the scope of the BSEC-URTA Statutes to give active support to organization of transport events by the active Associations. He proposed to the General Assembly to express its strong support to this event.

Mr. Cetin Nuhoglu proposed to include in the working program, the cooperation with 'Superfast Ferries' for active usage of Igoumenitsa port for trips to France and other countries, as well as ports in Varna and Durrës, where RoRo lines can be established to Ancona port in Italy, in order to lessen the congestion at the land borders. He highlighted the good examples of Romania and Bulgaria with reduced waiting times at their borders. He wished that these best practices can be expanded to all the borders by cooperation. Mr. Nuhoglu also noted that the cooperation with the BSEC and the BSEC related bodies has to be strengthened. The BSEC-URTA should contribute more to the regional development and must be more active. He welcomed the cooperation with SECI and TRACECA and emphasized that these platforms must be developed. He also extended his deepest thanks to IRU Permanent Delegation to the CIS for its cooperation.

XVI. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman, concluding the 7th Meeting of the General Assembly, thanked the OFAE President and staff for their hospitality and organization of the event. He noted that the Agenda was a heavy but an interesting one, and important decisions were taken. He appreciated the high contribution of guests from Greek Ministry of Transport, IRU Moscow, SECI, TRACECA, NEA, and stressed that the exchange of experience is very important and beneficial for our common future. He thanked all delegates for their contributions and work under a common understanding and spirit of solidarity. The Chairman presented a token of thanks to the OFAE President.

Mr. Athanasios Kakos thanked the Chairman and all delegates for honoring his Association and participation at the Meeting.

The Chairman thanked everyone and officially closed the Seventh Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

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