



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

MIN/GA11/07

Belgrade, 20 April 2007

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES

Belgrade -Serbia

Friday, 20 April, at 10:00 hrs

I. OPENING CEREMONY

Mr. Nedjo Mandic, President of Medjunarodni Transport welcomed the participants and guests as host of the 11th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He expressed his hope that the Belgrade meeting will be a great success for the BSEC-URTA and wished to all the participants a very pleasant stay in Belgrade, Serbia.

Mr. Vladimir Florea, BSEC-URTA President, greeted H.E. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopolous, Secretary General of the BSEC Organization, and thanked him for his participation in the meeting as well as his permanent support to the BSEC-URTA. *Mr. Florea* continued by underlining importance of the Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH) Caravan project, which has just started in Belgrade on 19 April 2007 on the occasion of the meeting of the last meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. He emphasized that BSRH Caravan will promote the future BSRH to the people and assist to all public and private partners to develop and facilitate road transportation around the Black Sea basin. He also emphasized important conclusions of the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, which was held in March 2007 in Istanbul. The Meeting adopted the Timetable for the Implementation of MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region as proposed by BSEC-URTA. In addition, the President informed that the BSEC Visa Experts also held a meeting in Chisinau on 3 April 2007 with a view to concluding the draft agreement on simplification of visa procedures for professional drivers. Subsequently, this Agreement was finalised by the BSEC Ministers of Foreign Affairs, yesterday, and opened to signature of interested Member States. All these developments are very encouraging, said the President, and hoped that they will eventually pave the way to a fully integrated BSEC road transport market in the region.

Mr. Martin Marmy, IRU Secretary General expressed his pleasure to attend the 11th meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He appreciated the role of the BSEC Organization in supporting the road transport industry at a regional level. He underlined that the IRU is ready to help to develop a reliable regional professional driver database, similar in nature to the Schengen practices, which could facilitate implementation of the BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visas for Professional Drivers. He seconded that the Steering Committee set up by the Contracting Parties to the MoU on Facilitation of Road transport of Goods in the BSEC Region adopted an Implementation Timetable last month, which calls for gradual liberalization of transit transport by 2009, bilateral transport by 2012 targeting an integrated transport market in the BSEC region by 2016. He stressed that the Steering Committee proposed to the IRU to co-sponsor in partnership with the BSEC PDF a technical study, which should identify the technical and other criteria under these targets, in particular for developing a model for a regional quota system of permits. After all, he expressed his full satisfaction for the existing cooperation between the IRU and the BSEC Organisation and highlighted his trust in the BSEC Secretary General for his strong leadership and commitment to facilitate road transport in the region. In this connection, he expressed his heartfelt pleasure for the successful launch of the BSRH Caravan, yesterday, which would represent another important milestone in achieving our common objectives for a better future.



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H.E. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, BSEC Secretary General, highlighted his great pleasure to cooperate with the BSEC-URTA. He underlined the importance of the BSRH Caravan project and its contribution to the development of road transport in the BSEC Region. He informed that this was a project not confined within the borders of the region but received great interest from all over the world, in particular the EU, because it also goes along with the EU transport policy. He stressed that this interest and developing cooperation with the EU is very important particularly for reducing main non-physical barriers to the road transport, including the issue of facilitating visas for professional drivers. He commented that the problem of the visa facilitation is critical and it is important that the EU shows its readiness to discuss these questions with the BSEC Organisation in order to find practical solutions. *Mr. Chrysanthopoulos* concluded by reiterating his great pleasure and full satisfaction with respect to the perfect cooperation of his organisation with both the BSEC-URTA and the IRU as private sector organisations, which act quicker and give correct guidance to the politicians.

Mr. Branko Marjanac, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, extended his greetings to the participants of the meeting and expressed his pleasure that the Serbian Association Medjunarodni Transport is hosting the 11th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He stated that the last meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held in Belgrade, yesterday, successfully. He was especially happy that many important developments took place and important activities were accomplished or launched during the Serbian Chairmanship, particularly including signing of the MOU on Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and official launch of the BSRH Caravan. He believed that transport related BSEC MoU provide, now, very important and useful legal framework to the BSEC Governments for facilitation and development of road transport around the Black Sea basin in partnership with the road transport organisations, namely the BSEC-URTA and the IRU.

FIRST SESSION

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Agenda of the Meeting (DOC/GA11/AG/07) was adopted unanimously.

III. ADOPTION OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman briefed on the Order of Business.

The Order of Business of the Meeting (DOC/GA11/OB/07) was adopted unanimously.

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

The Chairman invited to consider the Minutes of the 10th General Assembly.

Minutes of the 10th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly (MIN/GA10/06) were adopted unanimously.

V. HOST COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

The Chairman gave the floor to Ms. Tatjana Jovanovic, Secretary General of Medjunarodni Transport, to present the MT Management System and Road Transport Best practices in the Republic of Serbia.

Ms. Jovanovic informed about the Serbian legislation on international road transport including conditions of access to market and admission to profession including the criteria of professional competence, financial standing, good repute and other relevant technical requirements. She explained how the ECMT licenses are distributed to the Serbian hauliers and the main advantages of this system. *Ms. Tatjana Jovanovic* also gave statistical data about number of trips made by national transport companies in 2006. Finally, she briefed on MT's strategic goals, organization, membership, services and cooperation with governmental and non-governmental institutions. She stressed that the Association has 613 active members, which represents the majority of companies engaged in international transport of goods by road. In response to questions, *Ms. Jovanovic* informed that there are no quantitative restrictions to the new transport operators entering the market. Furthermore, professional training is not compulsory in Serbia.

VI. REPORT OF THE BSEC-URTA MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Mr. Vladimir Florea, BSEC-URTA President, reported that BSEC-URTA Management Council (MC) held its last meeting in Istanbul on 1 February 2007. The meeting was chaired by the BSEC-URTA President and attended by the BSEC-URTA Vice-Presidents Mr. Gia Tsipura and Mr. Dimitrios Dotzios, BSEC-URTA Honorary president Mr. Cetin Nuhoglu and the BSEC-URTA Secretary General Mr. Haydar Ozkan. Mr. Florea informed that the Council prioritised main BSEC-URTA objectives for 2007 as follows: (a) contribute to successful launch of the BSEC Steering Committee of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods; (b) reinforce cooperation with the transport related BSEC NGO's; (c) assess the need and opportunities for possible creation of a BSEC-URTA commercial company.

The Council agreed that the following facilitation issues will be critical to follow up in 2007: (a) finalisation of the BSEC Agreement on facilitation of visas for professional drivers; (b) creation of a BSEC Regional Quota System; (c) realisation of an International Vehicle Weight Certificate.

The Council stressed that any time delay in realising these issues costs significant amount of money to the industry every day.

In this connection, the Council decided that AITA should present the structure, rules and application of the CIS Vehicle Weight certificate, as a living best practice, at the 11th meeting of the General Assembly, in detail.

The Chairman opened the floor to the participants for comments.

Mr. Leonid Dokil, AIRCU Vice-President, underlined the following problems of road transport as top priority: (a) facilitation of visas for drivers; (b) work and rest conditions of professional drivers; (c) border waiting times. He drew attention to the fact that these problems damage the quality of service and competitiveness of the road transport industry, significantly.

Mr. Martin Marmy, IRU Secretary General, seconded *Mr. Dokil* stressing that these problems are very important nowadays. As his first proposal, a common framework should be drafted. He commented that border waiting times should be paid by clients, not by transport operators. In this context, rest and driving periods should be appreciated on social regulations and be paid accordingly. In conclusion, he called upon the BSEC-URTA Member Associations to be more active, emphasizing that these problems, especially the problem of visa facilitation, should be highlighted on the governmental level.

The Chairman expressed his readiness to unite all efforts in order to solve these important problems.



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VII. BSEC-URTA REGIONAL OUTLOOK REPORT

Mr. Haydar Ozkan, BSEC-URTA Secretary General, presented the BSEC-URTA Regional Outlook Report for 2007 (REP/GA11/OUTLOOK/07).

The meeting noted with satisfaction that the foreign trade volume of the BSEC countries increases much faster than the world average and there is even a higher increase in the volume of foreign trade between the BSEC Member States.

VIII. BSEC-URTA ACTIVITY REPORT

Mr. Haydar Ozkan briefly presented his report about activities of the International Secretariat since the last meeting of the General Assembly in November 2006 (DOC/GA11/ACTIV/07).

IX. BLACK SEA RING HIGHWAY CARAVAN

Ms. Lobna Al Lamii, Project Officer of the IRU Permanent Delegation to the Middle East and Region, made a presentation about the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan, in general. The presentation informed the General Assembly about mission of the Caravan: (a) promote future Black Sea Ring Highway to the BSEC people; (b) examine existing road infrastructure along the agreed Black Sea Ring Highway route; (c) collect transport related data about non-physical conditions *en route* such as border waiting times, customs procedures and controls, road user charges and driver visa requirements. *Ms. Al Lamii* thanked the BSEC-URTA Member Associations for their active support and cooperation, without which the BSRH Caravan could not have been realised. She also counted on continued support of each Association within the framework of national ceremonies and preparations as the Caravan transits each country.

The Chairman thanked *Ms. Lobna Al Lamii* for her presentation and opened the floor for comments.

Mr. Eduart Kasa, Head of TIR Department of ANALTIR, informed that a Steering Committee was formed in his country to make the preparations for successful organisation of a national ceremony in Albania. The Committee is composed by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Customs authorities and ANALTIR. He informed that the National Ceremony in Albania will be organized with participation of representatives from the Consulates and Embassies of the BSEC countries as well as local authorities. He added that the ANALTIR agreed with the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat to make all necessary expenses related with the Caravan, which would be reimbursed later.

At a *tour-de-table*, each and every Member Association informed the General Assembly about its preparations. Member Associations mainly faced difficulties to find the national truck and fulfil the necessary visa formalities due to the short time notice. However, they all agreed and underlined the importance of such a project to make better known the problems of the industry in the region.

Mr. Martin Marmy, IRU Secretary General, expressed his gratitude to the Member Associations for the well-organized BSRH Caravan and requested each Member Association to continue doing its utmost to promote the Caravan to the competent national authorities at the highest level.

The Chairman thanked all Member Associations for their constructive comments and instructed the Secretariat to provide written clarification to the Member Associations about reimbursement of Caravan related expenses incurred by each Member Association.



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X. ESTABLISHMENT OF A BSEC-URTA COMMERCIAL COMPANY

Mr. Haydar Özkan, BSEC-URTA Secretary General, presented results of the BSEC-URTA Questionnaire with respect to possible creation of a BSEC-URTA Commercial Company. Seven Associations sent their questionnaires so far. Out of seven, 5 Associations support creation of such a company while two Associations, namely ASMAP and AIRCU, are against. Those Associations in favour of this initiative also confirmed their readiness to make capital contributions at different levels.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Haydar Özkan for his report and opened the floor for comments.

Mr. Martin Marmy, IRU Secretary General, supported the idea of establishing a BSEC-URTA Commercial Company and underlined that the main objectives of the company should be to develop commercial services and activities and to make the road transport more competitive. He emphasized that since the company is commercial, it must target to have profits. So it is critical to separate commercial activities and activities of the association. Finally, he concluded that the Associations cannot and therefore should not use the company to achieve non-commercial goals.

The Chairman stressed that quite many Associations have not reported their views by replying the related questionnaires, yet. Therefore, he suggested that the BSEC-URTA Vice-President *Mr. Dimitrios Dotzios* should prepare a follow up report for consideration of the next meeting of the General Assembly in Sofia.

XI. AITA PRESENTATION ON CIS VEHICLE WEIGHT CERTIFICATE

Mr. Ghenadie Taulean, Head of Information Department of AITA, made a detailed presentation about the CIS Vehicle Weight Certificate. He emphasized that the main objectives of the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) is to facilitate border crossing procedures and to avoid repetitive weight measurements of goods road vehicles *en route* in the participating countries. He explained that it is a valid option for the non-CIS BSEC Member States to join this CIS agreement in order to enjoy its benefits, immediately, instead of waiting for finalisation and realisation of a similar system at the global level.

The Chairman thanked *Mr. Ghenadie Taulean* for his presentation and expressed his commitment to work together with the BSEC-URTA and its Member Associations for promoting the CIS International Vehicle Weight Certificate at the regional level.

XII. NEXT MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairman acknowledged with gratitude the invitation of the Association of Bulgarian Enterprises for International Road Transport and The Road (AEBTRI) to host 12th meeting of the General Assembly in Sofia in October 2007. He informed that, subject to approval of the General Assembly, the exact date of the next meeting should be communicated by the Secretariat in consultation with the AEBTRI, officially.

The invitation kindly extended by the AEBTRI was adopted, unanimously.

XIII. BSEC-URTA CALENDAR FOR 2007- Second half

The BSEC-URTA Calendar (DOC/GA11/CAL/07) was adopted, unanimously.



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

The Chairman informed that the Secretariat will prepare summary of decisions of the meeting, which will be submitted to signature of the participants after the meeting.

XV. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman, concluding the 11th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, thanked Medjunarodni Transport for its generous hospitality as well as for the substantial work and efforts behind successful organisation and official launch of the BSRH Caravan. He also thanked all the BSEC-URTA Member Associations for their invaluable efforts to make the BSRH Caravan a big success. He expressed his pride that the BSEC-URTA family showed to our partners that we are united and working together for a better future. Finally, he thanked all participants for their important contributions to the lively deliberations and their support to the Chair in successful conduct of the meeting.

The 11th meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly was closed, officially, which was followed by the family photo.

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