



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

MIN/GA12/07

Istanbul, 28 February 2008

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

**MINUTES**

Sofia -Bulgaria  
Friday, 2 November, at 10:00 hrs

**I. OPENING CEREMONY**

*Mr. Georgi Petrov*, President of Association of the Bulgarian Enterprises for International Road Transport and the Roads(AEBTRI), welcomed the participants and guests as host of the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly and thanked H.E. Mr. Peter Mutafchiev, Minister of Transport of Bulgaria, H.E. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, Secretary General of the BSEC Organization and H.E. Mr. Martin Marmy, Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) for their participation in the meeting.

*Mr. Peter Mutafchiev*, Minister of Transport of Bulgaria, extended his greetings to the participants of the meeting and expressed his pleasure that AEBTRI is hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He continued by underlining the strategic importance of the Black Sea region, which enjoys great economic potential. He emphasized that with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU on 1 January 2007, the Black Sea region is considered more thoroughly in the strategic directions of the EU policy. He also emphasized that Bulgaria takes an active part in the process of deepening cooperation in the region including regional facilitation of road transport. *Mr. Mutafchiev* noted that Bulgaria attaches importance to implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, which is started in 2007, and informed that his country also signed the BSEC MoU on Coordinated Development of Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH). He emphasized that these two Memoranda are related and their final goal is to create optimal transport conditions and connections in the region. He stressed that the BSRH Caravan, which is a BSEC initiative supported by the IRU and the road transport associations in the BSEC region, has been a very concrete and useful experience. The Caravan identified actual problems faced by transport operators in the region, which were analysed by transport specialists from the NEA transport research and training company in the Netherlands, separately. This analysis will enable the BSEC decision makers to set regional priorities and introduce adequate procedures and proper infrastructure for road transport in the Black Sea region. The Minister noted that the NEA's analysis confirm that Bulgaria offers good conditions to road transport in comparison with many other BSEC countries. Nevertheless the experts of his Ministry would study all details, closely. He added that realization of several major projects by the Bulgarian government such as the BSRH, Transit Corridor 5, the rehabilitation of Bourgas - Malko Tarnovo road and modernization of Capitan Andreevo border-crossing point would contribute to economic development of the region and improve existing transport connections across Bulgaria. He concluded that the improvement of the quality of services should be a priority for the business world and particularly the road transport industry and its sustainable development.

*H.E. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos*, BSEC Secretary General, warmly welcomed all participants of the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly and expressed his gratitude to the AEBTRI for their kind hospitality. He informed about the recent developments within BSEC Organization. In this regard, he emphasized the outcome of the BSEC 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit that was held in Istanbul on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007. He underlined that all Heads of State and Government adopted a Summit Declaration. *Mr. Chrysanthopoulos* stressed that the Summit Declaration reflects the new period of enhanced relations between BSEC and the EU and underlines the importance of establishing a strategic relationship between the two Organizations. He also informed that at the Ministerial Meeting that preceded the Summit, the European Commission was granted observer status to the BSEC. He commented that since then, it has been participating on a systematic basis as an active Observer at meetings of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials and of our BSEC Working

Groups. He also underlined that the Ankara Declaration of the BSEC Council of Ministers gave precise instructions on the follow up that is required for implementing certain operative paragraphs of the Summit Declaration that concern the areas of energy, trade, transport, environment, relations with the EU and attaining the UN Millennium Development goals. *Mr. Chrysanthopoulos* continued by underlining two important BSEC infrastructure projects: the BSRH and the Motorways of the Sea that also characterize the new project oriented approach of the BSEC Organization. As far as the MoU on the BSRH is concerned, it will become legally in force, as soon as eight parties notify the Secretariat that they have completed the legal procedures required for this purpose. He stressed that BSEC Organization has received no such notification until now, but he called upon the related Ministers to accelerate their internal legal procedures so that the MoU can enter into force as soon as possible, thus respecting the wish of the Heads of State or Government. The same applies to the MoU on the Motorways of the Sea. *Mr. Chrysanthopoulos* concluded underlining that he is satisfied with the speed with which the objectives are being implemented. Finally, he wished everybody all success in the important work of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

*Mr. Vladimir Florea*, BSEC-URTA President, extended his greetings to the participants and distinguished guests of the meeting and expressed his pleasure that the AEBTRI is hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He continued by suggesting a brief summary of the BSRH Caravan Film.

*Mr. Martin Marmy*, IRU Secretary General, expressed his pleasure to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. Expressing continued support of the IRU to the BSEC-URTA and the BSEC Organization, *Mr. Marmy* stressed that the joint organisation of the BSRH Caravan under patronage of the BSEC Secretary General is a proof that we can change the world together! Underlining the importance of the BSRH Caravan project and its contribution to the development of road transport in the BSEC Region, the IRU Secretary General also noted that this project promoted the BSEC to the world very well. The project news appeared in the world media stretching from the UAE and India to Ireland. Moreover, the BSRH Caravan collected invaluable actual data about the exiting physical and non-physical barriers to the road transport around the Black Sea basin, which proved that costs of visas, permits and waiting times lost at the BSEC borders cost to the economy nearly USD 890.000 per day. In the road ahead for an integrated BSEC road transport market, he extended the IRU's full support to the BSEC Organization. He informed the participants that, after successful organisation of the BSRH Caravan, the IRU and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) agreed to organise another joint truck caravan from Tokyo to Istanbul along the Asian Highway in the near future. The caravan will be organized in cooperation with the UNESCAP member countries concerned and having as implementing partner the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and its national road transport associations. In this connection, he presented a short video on the Asian Highway Truck Caravan.

*The Chairman* thanked the IRU Secretary General for his continuous support to the BSEC-URTA and gave the floor to *Mr. Adrian Albu*, BSEC Deputy Secretary General, to present the report on the BSRH Caravan Conclusions (REP/BSRHC/GA12/07).

*Mr. Albu* presented the BSRH Caravan Conclusions, in detail. The report informed about organizational aspects, mission and strategic goals of the Caravan project and included comparative statistical data about the waiting time at the BSEC borders and quality of existing border crossing facilities along the Caravan route.

*The Chairman* thanked *Mr. Albu* for his report and opened the floor to the participants for comments.

*H.E. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos*, BSEC Secretary General, highlighted the basic conclusions of the BSRH Caravan. He underlined the importance of the BSRH Caravan project and its contribution to the development of road transport in the BSEC Region. He seconded the following problems of road transport as top priority: (a) costly and lengthy procedures for issuance of visas to professional drivers; (b) long border waiting times due to poor capacity and administrative procedures. He stressed that long border waiting times is a critical problem that needs practical solutions at the borders including compulsory training of officials.

*Mr. Haydar Ozkan*, BSEC-URTA Secretary General, drew back attention to economic cost of physical and non-physical barriers to goods road transport in the Black Sea area and reminded that this cost is paid by the BSEC citizens. *Mr. Ozkan* presented statistical data about average waiting times at different borders, which could be minimized by harmonizing controls and simplifying procedures.

## **COFFEE BREAK**

## **FIRST SESSION**

### **II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

*The Agenda of the Meeting (DOC/GA12/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/GA12/OB/07) was adopted unanimously.*

### **IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*The Chairman* invited to consider the Minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

*Minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly (MIN/GA11/07) were adopted unanimously.*

## **V. HOST COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS**

*The Chairman* gave the floor to *Mr. Krassimir Kalaidjiev*, Deputy Executive Director, Ministry of Transport of Bulgaria, to make presentation on the conditions for admission to occupation and market access in the Republic of Bulgaria.

*Mr. Krassimir Kalaidjiev* informed about the Bulgarian 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. *Mr. Kalaidjiev* also briefed on the Regulations on common rules for access to the international road haulage market. In response to questions, *the speaker* informed that there are no quantitative restrictions to the transport operators.

*The Chairman* thanked *Mr. Kalaidjiev* for the report and passed to the next presentation of the Bulgarian forwarding company Vectra.

*Vectra Company representative* thanked for the possibility to present their company. She informed about the main priorities of the Vectra forwarding company, which is part of the DSV Group, Denmark's largest and leading supplier of transport - and logistics services. *She* also briefed on strategic goals as well as provided detailed information about the organizational aspects of the company, which is seen as a good example in the Bulgarian road transport market with the quality of its services.

*The Chairman* thanked both speakers for the fruitful presentations and after exchange of ideas by the participants on these presentations, passed to the next item of the Agenda.

## **VI. REPORT OF THE BSEC-URTA MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

*Mr. Vladimir Florea*, BSEC-URTA President, reported that the BSEC-URTA Management Council (MC) held its Seventeenth Meeting in Sofia on 1 November 2007. The meeting was chaired by the President and attended by the Vice-Presidents *Mr. Gia Tsipuria* and *Mr. Dimitrios Dotsios*, the

Secretary General Mr. Haydar Ozkan and the Deputy Secretary General Mr. Adrian Albu. Mr. Florea informed that the Council pursued progress on key objectives of the BSEC-URTA objectives in 2007: (a) ensure successful launch of the BSEC Steering Committee of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods; (b) develop further cooperation with the transport related BSEC NGO's; (c) prepare a Business Plan for a possible BSEC-URTA Joint Venture Company.

He informed that the Management Council decided to propose to the General Assembly to amend the BSEC-URTA Statutes in order to introduce status of Honorary Membership to permit joining of organisations such as Chambers of Commerce in the work of the BSEC-URTA.

*Mr. Vladimir Florea* also welcomed the invitation extended by the INGOSSTRAKH Insurance Company in Russia to host Thirteenth Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly in Moscow in spring 2008.

*The Report of the BSEC-URTA Management Council was adopted unanimously.*

## **VII. BSEC-URTA REGIONAL OUTLOOK REPORT**

*Mr. Adrian Albu*, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, presented the BSEC-URTA Regional Outlook Report for 2007 (REP/GA12/OUTLOOK/07).

## **VIII. IMPLEMENTATION OF BSEC TIMETABLE FOR FACILITATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS**

*Mr. Adrian Albu*, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, informed that the International Secretariat prepared a draft Timetable for implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, which was adopted by the Steering Committee of this MoU. The Timetable prioritised main objectives of the MoU as follows: (a) gradual liberalization of transit and bilateral international road transport of goods; (b) development of a regional multilateral quota system as a practical tool of achieving liberalisation; (c) development of RO-RO and RO-LA transport services in the BSEC region; (d) monitoring border waiting times, in cooperation with the IRU; (e) expansion of key UN transport conventions and agreements; (f) introduction of the IVWC according to Annex 8 to the 1982 International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods; (g) rationalization and gradual harmonization of the charging policies for the international road transport of goods in the BSEC region; (h) establishment of an information system to provide foreign transport operators on tolls and charges; (i) facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers.

*Mr. Albu* also informed that the Steering Committee encouraged the IRU and the BSEC Organization to co-finance an expert study on possible creation of a BSEC multilateral quota system to achieve gradual liberalisation of bilateral and transit road transport of goods in the BSEC region.

*IRU Secretary General* re-confirmed IRU's support to such an expert study as requested by the BSEC Organization and the BSEC-URTA.

*The Chairman* thanked *Mr. Albu* for his report and supported conduct of said expert study, which should indicate problems and solutions for implementing the MoU. He noted that the BSEC-URTA, as an international organization of road transport associations in the BSEC region, is extremely concerned about the major border crossing difficulties at the external borders with the European Union. In this regard and in compliance with decision of the Management Council in the previous day, he proposed the General Assembly to adopt a Resolution on Border Crossing Difficulties at External Frontiers of the European Union. He informed that the International Secretariat, upon instruction of the Management Council, prepared a draft text, which is already circulated to the participants, and asked if there are any amendment proposals. He concluded that this Resolution, if adopted, would be disseminated to all Ministers of Transport in the BSEC region as well as all concerned international organizations and other national authorities.

Amendment proposals on the Draft Resolution on Border Crossing Difficulties at External Frontiers of the European Union were considered.

*The Chairman* thanked the participants for their comments and proposals.

*The BSEC-URTA Resolution on Border Crossing Difficulties at External Frontiers of the European Union (RES/GA12/BWT/07) was adopted by the General Assembly, unanimously..*

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

## **SECOND SITTING (BSEC-URTA MEMBERS ONLY)**

### **IX. APPROVAL OF THE BSEC-URTA BUDGET FOR 2008**

*The Chairman presented the draft BSEC-URTA Budget for 2008 to consideration and approval of the General Assembly.*

*The BSEC-URTA Budget for 2008 (DOC/GA12/BUDG/07) was adopted unanimously.*

Upon recommendation of the BSEC-URTA Management Council, the BSEC-URTA General Assembly also considered amending the BSEC-URTA Statutes in a favourable way, in order to create status of Honorary Membership within the organization.

*The BSEC-URTA Statutes were amended according to document (STATUTES/GA12/07/Amendments), unanimously.*

### **X. BSEC-URTA ACTIVITY REPORT**

*Mr. Haydar Ozkan presented a brief report about activities of the International Secretariat since the last meeting of the General Assembly in Belgrade on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007 (DOC/GA12/ACTIV/07).*

*The Chairman thanked the BSEC-URTA Secretary General for his report and successful work of the International Secretariat.*

### **XI. BSEC-URTA WORKING PROGRAMME FOR 2008**

*BSEC-URTA Secretary General reminded participants about the vision and strategic objectives of the BSEC-URTA for 2008. The General Assembly endorsed the organizational vision and strategic objectives.*

*The Secretary General, then, presented proposed Working Programme of the BSEC-URTA for the next year.*

*BSEC-URTA Working Programme for 2008 (DOC/GA12/WP/07) was adopted, unanimously.*

### **XII. NEXT MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*The Chairman acknowledged with gratitude the invitation of the INGOSSTRAKH to host 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Assembly in Moscow in June 2008. 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 INGOSSTRAKH, officially.*

*The invitation kindly extended by the INGOSSTRAKH was adopted, unanimously.*

### **XIII. BSEC-URTA CALENDAR FOR 2008 – FIRST HALF**

*The BSEC-URTA Calendar (DOC/GA12/CAL/07) was adopted, unanimously.*

### **XIV. ELECTION OF BSEC-URTA VICE-PRESIDENTS FOR 2008**

The Chairman informed about nomination of Mr. Dimitrios Dotsios (OFAE) and Mr. Gia Tshipuria for the position of the BSEC-URTA Vice-Presidents for 2008.

*Mr. Dotsios and Mr. Tsipuria were elected as the BSEC-URTA Vice-Presidents for 2008, unanimously.*

#### **XIV. DECISIONS OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*The Chairman* informed that the Secretariat will prepare summary of decisions of the meeting as well as draft amendments to the BSEC-URTA Statutes, which will be submitted to signature of the participants after the meeting.

#### **XV. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

*The Chairman*, in his closing remarks, thanked all the participants and guests of honour for their participation and active contributions to the work of the General Assembly. On behalf of all participants, *the Chairman* also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the AEBTRI for excellent arrangements and generous hospitality extended to all the BSEC-URTA Member Associations.

*The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly was closed, officially.*

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