



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

MIN/GA13/08

Istanbul, 1 September 2008

THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES

Moscow-Russia

Wednesday, 4 June 2008, at 10:00 hrs

I. OPENING CEREMONY

Mr. Vladimir Florea, BSEC-URTA President, welcomed the participants and guests of the 13th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly and thanked H.E. Mr. Evgeniy Moskvichev, Deputy Minister of Transport of Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Martin Marmy, Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU), Mr. Igor Rounov, General Delegate of the IRU Permanent Delegation to the CIS Region for their participation in the meeting. *The Chairman* extended special thanks to INGOSSTRAKH for hosting the Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

Mr. Evgeniy Moskvichev, Deputy Minister of Transport of Russian Federation, extended his greetings to the participants of the 13th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He emphasized that the Agenda covers very important items for deliberations such as: action plan on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, implementation of the New Annex 8 to the International Convention on Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods, use of the Digital Tachograph and the work of the crews of vehicles engaged in International road transport. He underlined that the position of the Russian Federation on implementation of AETR Convention differs from that of the European Union in the context of application of regulations and reduction of the weekly rest period for multi-manning drivers. The Minister noted that by 1 January 2009, volume of road transport of goods undertaken by the Russian transport operators will rise by 50 %. He also underlined that economic and social growth of the BSEC Region is increasingly linked with transport development in the BSEC Member States. Finally, on behalf of the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation, he wished everybody successful and fruitful work.

Mr. Martin Marmy, IRU Secretary General, expressed his pleasure to attend the 13th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. Expressing continued support of the IRU to the BSEC-URTA, *Mr. Marmy* stressed that BSEC-URTA is a perfect example of how IRU Associations can find effective solutions to their regional problems, by building fruitful public-private partnerships with their governments. *Mr. Marmy* informed the participants that, on the occasion of the successful organisation of 31st IRU World Congress, held in Istanbul on 15-16 May 2008, the Transport Ministers unanimously signed the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration at the Ministerial Conference on the "Revival of the Silk Road". He also determined the most important tasks to be implemented in the future: a) give proper follow-up to the BSEC Agreement on facilitation of visas for professional drivers to be signed in Tirana in autumn 2008; b) contribute to the realisation of an expert study for the BSEC Organisation, which should recommend concrete measures for the implementation of the BSEC MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods by September 2008; c) support fully the BSEC Chairman's objectives and the related BSEC Steering Committee, to organise a high level public-private Round Table to assess the conclusions of the expert study to be released in autumn 2008; d) elaborate a coordinated BSEC strategy for the effective implementation of the new Annex 8 to the 1982 Convention on Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods, which entered into force on 20 May 2008, in order to fight against the increasing neo-protectionism. He also underlined the current pressure exerted by the EU Commission on each AETR contracting party, to modify the current AETR Agreement by amending it in accordance with the provisions of the EU Regulation 561. Expressing the position of the IRU vis-à-vis the AETR, *Mr. Marmy* noted that the road transport industry is in favour of the harmonisation of the AETR with the new EU Social Regulation 561, however, it is vital for the road transport industry in all BSEC and CIS countries that appropriate transitory periods, on the one hand for the harmonisation of the AETR rules and, on the other hand, for the implementation of the Digital Tachograph, are clearly and formally requested by the authorities within the UN bodies such as the Working Group SC1 and also the UNECE Inland Transport Committee. In this regard, he proposed BSEC-URTA to adopt an appropriate resolution on this issue and to call for all competent authorities, through the BSEC-URTA Member Associations, to adopt a common position, which respects the industry concerns, at the next meeting of the SC.1 under the UNECE. *Mr. Marmy* concluded that the IRU counts on continued work with the BSEC-URTA to better integrate the road transport market in the BSEC Region, as a bridge between Europe and Asia.

Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, read the message by H.E. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, BSEC Secretary General, addressed to the participants of the 13th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. In his message *Mr. Chrysanthopoulos* underlined that the IRU Istanbul Declaration "Road, Transport, Driving Peace and Prosperity", signed by 30 ministers at the Ministerial Conference on the "Revival of the Silk Road", highlighted the role of transport in strengthening peace and growth of prosperity as well showed the role of public-private partnership in transport for trade and economic development worldwide. He further expressed his favourable opinion with regards to the growing partnership of the BSEC Organisation with the IRU and BSEC-URTA based on concrete joint projects and actions: BSRH Caravan 2007 and a BSEC study on gradual liberalisation of transport in the BSEC Region. Finally, in his message *Mr. Chrysanthopoulos* wished every success to the participants of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

Mr. Yuri Sukhin, President of the Association of International Road Hauliers in the Russian Federation (ASMAP), informing about the recent developments of the Association, stressed that the number of road transport operations between the Russian Federation and the BSEC Member States doubled in 2007 compared to 2001. *Mr. Sukhin* also attached importance to implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region and Draft Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers. Noting that the European Union already concluded visa facilitation agreements with some BSEC Member States such as Serbia, Russian Federation, Moldova and Ukraine, he emphasized that they are not fully implemented in practice, yet. In this regard, he underlined the importance of cooperation with the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the BSEC Organisation and BSEC-URTA for solving the issues of common concern. *Mr. Sukhin* also stressed that the BSRH Caravan, which was a BSEC initiative supported by the IRU and the road transport associations in the BSEC region, had been a very concrete and useful experience. The Caravan identified actual problems faced by transport operators in the region. Finally, *Mr. Sukhin* extended his kind gratitude to Deputy Minister of Transport of Russian Federation, *Mr. Evgeniy Moskvichev*, for his participation in the meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly.

Mr. Nikolay Galushin, Deputy Director General of INGOSSTRAKH, expressed his pleasure to host the 13th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly. He briefed the participants on main insurance services of his company, which is committed to work together with the road transport industry for further development and facilitation of road transport in the BSEC region.

COFFEE BREAK

FIRST SESSION

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Leonid Dokil, AIRCU Vice President, proposed to include a new item in the Agenda under "Item XVIII. Miscellaneous", about his call for a BSEC-URTA Position on rising fuel prices and the quality of available diesel at the pump and the taxation policy of the States.

The Agenda of the Meeting (DOC/GA13/AG/08) was adopted with the inclusion of this sub-item, unanimously.

III. ADOPTION OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman briefed on the Order of Business.

The Order of Business of the Meeting (DOC/GA13/OB/08) was adopted unanimously.

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

The Chairman invited to consider the Minutes of the 12th General Assembly.

Minutes of the 12th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly (MIN/GA12/07) were adopted unanimously.

V. REPORT OF THE BSEC-URTA MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Chairman reported that a meeting of the Management Council (MC) could not be held prior to the General Assembly meeting due to absence of two Vice-presidents, *Mr. Gia Tsipuria* (GIRCA), who had health problems, and *Mr. Dimitrios Dotsios* (OFAE), who reportedly resigned from his position as the OFAE Secretary General and quit the profession. However, the President emphasized that OFAE should provide BSEC-URTA International Secretariat with a formal confirmation of *Mr. Dotsios'* resignation, yet.

VI. ROAD TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Chairman gave the floor to *Mr. Andrei Golubev*, Head of the Information Systems and Technical Policy Department of Association of International Road Carriers (ASMAP), to make a presentation on the "Road Transport System in Russian Federation".

Mr. Andrei Golubev focused his presentation on organisational structure of ASMAP and its main services and introduced main priorities of the ASMAP training centres. *Mr. Golubev* also informed about the main criteria for admission to the occupation as an international road transport operator in the Russian Federation, such as: a) vehicles should meet international technical standards, provisions of international conventions and agreements; b) managers responsible for international road transport should meet qualification requirements in the corresponding field; c) financial standing.

The Chairman thanked *Mr. Golubev* for his detailed presentation.

VII. RISK MANAGEMENT IN ROAD TRANSPORT

The Chairman invited INGOSSTRAKH representative to make the next presentation, about services of this leading Insurance Company in the Russian Federation and the whole CIS region.

Mrs. Natalia Polunina, Director of Transport Operators Insurance Department of INGOSSTRAKH, noted the role of insurance in risk management and underlined that insurance is a valuable risk-financing tool. *Mrs. Polunina* indicated that a thoughtful risk management plan is the commitment to prevent harm. In conclusion, she prioritised the main services provided by the insurance companies: a) information supply; b) legal consulting services; c) customs consulting services; d) judicial support.

The Chairman thanked both speakers for the fruitful presentations and opened the floor for comments and questions.

After questions and answers, the next item of the Agenda was considered.

VIII. BSEC-URTA REGIONAL OUTLOOK REPORT

Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, presenting the BSEC-URTA Regional Outlook Report for 2007 (REP/GA13/OUTLOOK/08), underlined that according to the information provided by member associations the number of international transport operations decreased in 2007, in comparison with 2006 and gave the examples of Serbia and Ukraine in particular.

Mr. Chairman invited representatives of these Associations to make comments on this situation.

Mr. Nejdó Mandić, President of P.U. Medjunarodni Transport, confirmed the shrinking international road transport market in his country. Taking this opportunity, *Mr. Mandić* wanted to express that difficulties faced by Serbian transport operators to obtain short stay visas (90 days) for their professional drivers is a growing major issue and called for more concentrated efforts to eliminate this barrier in the region.

In the context of general problems faced by the transport operators in the BSEC region, *Ms. Neli Salo*, Deputy Secretary General of Association of Bulgarian Enterprises for International Road Transport and the Road (AEBTRI) took the floor in order to inform the General Assembly about a problem that the Bulgarian transport operators began facing in Turkey, recently. According to reports of the AEBTRI members, the Turkish authorities started stopping the Bulgarian road transport operators to load international transit goods at the Turkish ports. *Ms. Salo* underlined that AEBTRI already contacted UND for its assistance in solving this matter, which replied that the situation stemmed from recent implementation of an old article of the Turkish Customs Law dated in 2003. Expressing disappointment in this context, *Ms. Salo* expressed her hope that UND representatives in the meeting room could provide more clarifications.

In response to this request, *Ms. Mine Kaya*, Chairperson of Executive Committee of the International Transporters Association of Turkey (UND), informed that the new management of the Turkish customs administration has been giving priority to stricter implementation of the Turkish customs laws due to the fact that breach of these rules by foreign transport operators is reported widely. Further to this reply, *Ms. Kaya* drew attention to efforts of the BSEC-URTA for liberalisation of road transport in the BSEC region and reported their disappointment that the Bulgarian authorities, recently, annulled transit liberalisation with Turkey and imposed transit quota to Turkish road transport operators, unilaterally. *Ms. Kaya* called for Bulgarian authorities and AEBTRI to unite all efforts in order to solve these important problems.

Noting that recent implementation of 2003 law in the Turkish ports could also affect the transport operators from other BSEC countries, *Mr. Chairman* requested *Ms. Mine Kaya* to disseminate a copy of the abovementioned Law among the Member Associations as soon as possible.

After the discussions, *Mr. Chairman* thanked *Mr. Albu* for his report and urged all member Associations to attach greater importance to searching for and providing continuous and reliable data with the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat in order to publish updated versions of regional road transport statistics, regularly.

IX. IMPLEMENTATION OF BSEC MoU ON FACILITATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS IN THE BSEC REGION

Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, presented the latest information on the work of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of the Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC region and noted with disappointment that little progress could be achieved since its last meeting.

Mr. Chairman shared concerns of *Mr. Albu* and invited all Member Associations to support efforts of the BSEC-URTA at national level in order to achieve tangible progress in implementing this vital MoU for the road transport industry in the BSEC region.

Mr. Chairman thanked *Mr. Albu* for his report and opened the floor for discussions. Subsequently, he invited the General Assembly to adopt the *BSEC-URTA Resolution on the Urgent Need for Real Implementation of the BSEC Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods as soon as possible (RES/GA13/MoU-F/08)* and *BSEC-URTA Resolution on the BSEC Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States (RES/GA13/BVPD/08)*. *Mr. Chairman* requested the Member Associations in the interested BSEC Member States to ensure that their respective countries will become ready for signing of the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures in Tirana in October 2008.

The BSEC-URTA Resolutions (RES/GA13/MoU-F/08) and (RES/GA13/BVPD/08) were adopted by the General Assembly, unanimously.

X. NEW ANNEX 8 TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON HARMONISATION OF FRONTIERS CONTROLS OF GOODS 1982

Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, briefed on the main objectives of the International Convention on Harmonisation of Frontiers Controls of Goods 1982 and informed that New Annex 8 to the 1982 Convention entered into force on 20 May 2008. *Mr. Albu* underlined the main operational aspects of the new Annex 8 for border crossing facilitation such as: a) facilitation of driver visas; b) access to information about procedures; c) priority treatment of special cargo; d) harmonisation of technical controls of vehicles; e) creation of the international vehicle weight certificate; f) movement of controls away from borders; g) improvement of border facilities for vehicles, cargo and drivers. *Mr. Albu* requested concentrated and coordinated efforts from the Member Associations in order to work for implementation of the new Annex 8 to the International Convention on Harmonisation of Frontiers Controls of Goods 1982 as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chairman thanked *Mr. Albu* for his report and opened the floor for discussion. After exchange of ideas, *he* invited the General Assembly to adopt the *BSEC-URTA Resolution on the Need for Urgent Implementation of the New Annex 8 to the International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods in the BSEC Region (RES/GA13/H1982/08)*, which requested the UNECE to convene the Administrative Committee to this Convention (AC.3) as soon as possible in order to permit immediate implementation of this Annex with the support of the BSEC Member States and called for the related BSEC Steering Committee to work for implementing this important new Annex in the BSEC region, immediately.

The *BSEC-URTA Resolution on the Need for Urgent Implementation of the New Annex 8 to the International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods in the BSEC Region (RES/GA13/H1982/08)* was adopted by the General Assembly, unanimously.

The Chairman announced the coffee break.

XI. THE DIGITAL TACHOGRAPH AND THE WORK OF CREWS OF VEHICLES ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT

Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Deputy Secretary General, presented brief information on the recent developments with respect to compulsory introduction of the digital tachograph on the commercial heavy goods vehicles in the non-EU Contracting Parties to the AETR Agreement on 16 June 2010 and expressed concerns about a lot of technical problems in this regard.

After very substantial deliberations and detailed exchange of ideas on this agenda item, *Mr. Chairman* thanked the participants for their active participation and contributions and invited the General Assembly to adopt *the BSEC-URTA Resolution on the Compulsory Introduction of the Digital Tachograph in the non-EU Contracting Parties to the AETR and the Transfer of Related EU Rules and Regulations to the AETR (RES/GA13/AETR/08)*, which called for postponing the date of introduction of the digital tachograph and requested the UNECE to help building capacity in the non-EU Contracting parties.

Mr. Chairman, in this context, also thanked the ASMAPP representatives for their extremely useful comments and the IRU for its substantial work in this regard. *Mr. Chairman* expressed his hope that all these efforts would allow attainment of a common position among the concerned countries at the level of competent UNECE bodies, which would meet in autumn 2008.

The BSEC-URTA Resolution on the Compulsory Introduction of the Digital Tachograph in the non-EU Contracting Parties to the AETR and the Transfer of Related EU Rules and Regulations to the AETR (RES/GA13/AETR/08) was adopted by the General Assembly, unanimously.

XII. 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 Sofia on 2nd November 2007 (DOC/GA13/ACTIV/08). *He* summarised particularly those activities, which served short term priorities of the BSEC-URTA as approved by the BSEC-URTA Management Council, previously.

The Chairman thanked the BSEC-URTA Secretary General for his report and thanked the International Secretariat for its successful work since the last meeting of the General Assembly.

XIII. NEW EURO-ASIAN LAND TRANSPORT INITIATIVE (NELTI)

Mr. Igor Rounov, IRU General Delegate to the CIS Region, presented the New Euro-Asian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI), which underlined that the main aim of the project is revival of the Euro-Asian transport linkages along the historic Great Silk Road. The NELTI Project, which is supported by many international organisations and governments, is another step in long efforts of the IRU to re-open the Silk Road between Europe and Asia. Emphasizing expected outputs and benefits from implementation of the NELTI Project, *Mr. Rounov* noted that this project would produce tangible results at regional level, bring together public and private interest, help to build a better future for everyone. In conclusion, he showed a special video on the NELTI Project.

Mr. Chairman thanked *Mr. Rounov* for his presentation and the special video and expressed his sincere support to this exciting project and invited all Member Associations to contribute to its successful implementation.

XIV. FINANCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

Mr. Haydar Ozkan, BSEC-URTA Secretary General recalled that in February 2008 two elected auditors performed an internal audit of the BSEC-URTA accounts for 2007 and briefed the General Assembly about their main conclusions (REP/AUDIT/GA13/08).

Ms. Mine Kaya, Chairperson of Executive Committee of International Transporters Association of Turkey (UND), thanked for the information provided and reminded exceptional financial support of UND to the BSEC-URTA budgets from its foundation. Expressing their pleasure to see that the Organisation has reached a mature level in the last six years, she informed that the UND decided to request revision of the contributions of the BSEC-URTA Member Associations in order to bring down the UND's contribution to the same level like the other Member Associations starting from 2009.

Mr. Chairman thanked *Ms. Kaya* for exceptional support of UND to the BSEC-URTA, historically, and stated that UND's request is duly noted by the General Assembly as requested. Eventually, *he* invited the General Assembly to adopt the Audit Report on Implementation of the BSEC-URTA Budget for 2007 and the BSEC-URTA Accounts for 2007.

The Audit Report on Implementation of the BSEC-URTA Budget for 2007 and the BSEC-URTA Accounts for 2007 were adopted, unanimously.

The Chairman proposed to elect new auditors for 2008-2009.

Mr. Eduard Kasa from ANALTIR (Albania) and Mr. Ghenadie Taulean from AITA (Moldova) were elected as the BSEC-URTA Auditors for 2008-2009, unanimously.

XV. NEXT MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairman acknowledged with gratitude the invitation of the ANALTIR to host 14th meeting of the General Assembly in Tirana in October 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 ANALTIR, officially.

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

XVI. BSEC-URTA CALENDAR FOR 2008 – SECOND HALF

The BSEC-URTA Calendar (DOC/GA13/CAL/08) was adopted, unanimously.

XVII. DECISIONS OF THE THIRTEENTH 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.

XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Chairman opened the floor for any other business. *He* reminded that AIRCU's proposal at the outset of the meeting with respect to considering adoption of a BSEC-URTA Position on rising fuel prices, quality of available diesel at the pump and the taxation policy of the States.

Mr. Haydar Ozkan proposed to establish a Drafting Group composed of representatives from AIRCU, UND and UNTRR in order to prepare a common BSEC-URTA Position on this subject, which could be drafted with the coordination of the International Secretariat and could be approved by the Member Associations by correspondence at a later stage.

Mr. Chairman seconded the *Secretary General's* proposal and requested the General Assembly to support this proposal with the condition that the Drafting Group should prepare and present its text to consideration and written approval of the Member Associations by 20 June 2008.

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted, unanimously.

Under any other items again, *Mr. Haydar Ozkan* requested the floor in order to inform the participants also about the First BSEC-URTA Football Tournament, which was organised in Istanbul on 17 May 2008 and showed a short video of this special event.

Mr. Chairman thanked the *Secretary General* for successful organisation of this event and emphasized its contribution to closer and friendly relations between the BSEC-URTA Member Associations. Taking into account this valuable aspect of organising social events at regional level, *he* proposed to organise together with the IRU CIS Liaison Committee a Regional Driver Contest with participation of drivers from the CIS and BSEC-URTA regions.

The General Assembly supported this proposal of the Chair and requested the IRU CIS Liaison Committee to consider it in a favourable way and mandated the International Secretariat to take any necessary action subject to approval of this proposal of the Chair by the IRU CIS Liaison Committee in the future.

XIX. 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 INGOSSTRAKH for excellent arrangements and generous hospitality extended to all the BSEC-URTA Member Associations.

The Chairman presented a token of thanks to Mrs. Polunina on behalf of the BSEC-URTA Member Associations, Observers and all the other participants *and officially closed the Thirteenth Meeting of BSEC-URTA General Assembly.*

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