

**136th SESSION OF THE UNECE WORKING PARTY
ON CUSTOMS QUESTIONS AFFECTING TRANSPORT
Geneva, 4-7 February 2014**

Agenda item 4. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party

STATEMENT

by Mr. Yevgen Koziy, Project Coordinator,
Permanent International Secretariat,
Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to intervene at this meeting on behalf of H.E. Mr. Victor Tvircun, Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, as the BSEC- UNECE transport cooperation has a long history since 1996 and at present it is based on the Cooperation Agreement between UNECE and BSEC of 2 July 2001. The state of the BSEC cooperation with other international organizations is a permanent subject of consideration by the BSEC relevant organs and its principal organ – the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States.

At the 29th meeting, which was held on 12 December 2013 in Yerevan, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States appreciated the lasting contribution of UNECE to the mutually beneficial cooperation with BSEC in transport area as well as adopted some important decisions which are directly linked to this cooperation.

In particular, the Council decided to authorize establishment of the Fast Track Cooperation (special mechanism of cooperation for interested countries) on the Pilot Project on introduction of the International Vehicle Weight Certificate in the BSEC Region with participation of Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. The Russian Federation also expressed its interest to join the project at a later stage. This is an example of application by the regional organization of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods to the needs of the region. The participants of the Pilot Project are at the preparatory stage. Their next meeting was scheduled to take place on 6 March 2014 at the BSEC Headquarters.

This action represents only part of the BSEC overall activities within the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods which go in line with Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention. The Steering Committee works on the issues of gradual liberalization of international road transport of goods; accession to international agreements; harmonization of charging policies; facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers and other issues.

The recent success story related to this area is implementation of the project “BSEC Permit System”, kind of the ECMT license, which is being implemented by Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. The Project started in 2010 as a Pilot one and since 2012 it has a permanent status.

One more important decision of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States was to invite the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly to kindly consider the possibility of elaborating a research on the existing legal mechanism in the sphere of international passenger and freight carriages in the BSEC Region as a contribution to the joint efforts on implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda. This invitation will be brought for consideration of the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee at its 42nd meeting on 11-12 March 2014 in Tirana. We expect that the research, once it has been approved and developed, will include analysis of the existing legal instruments of BSEC, UNECE and other organizations and relevant recommendations of the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly will be made for the governments of the BSEC Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

The above mentioned actions became available to the following factors: a/ increased BSEC institutional capacity; b/ its strengthening through development of cooperation with other international organizations and c/ development of public-private partnerships with professional organizations.

a/ The BSEC transport cooperation received dynamics with growth of its institutional capacity in 2007, when three new directions – on development of Black Sea Ring Highway, Development of Motorways of the Sea and Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods were established in accordance with relevant Memoranda. Now these directions have their own organs and secretariats. The integrated approach is secured through the BSEC Working Group on Transport and meetings of ministers of transport which take place annually¹.

In addition, in 2008 the Ad hoc Expert Group with the task to explore the opportunities for cooperation among the customs services of the BSEC Member States (2005) was transformed to the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters and in 2013 a Task Force on studying possibilities regarding cooperation on intermodal transportation in the Black Sea region was established.

b/ The BSEC Organization developed fruitful cooperation with UNECE, UNDP, OSCE, CEI, TRACECA, Danube Commission, IRU, IRF, BSEC-URTA, BASPA and other international organizations. Development of this cooperation, application of existing international legal instruments, first of all, adopted under the UNECE auspices, and application of best international practices in the field of transport substantially increased the BSEC institutional capacity through complementing joint efforts and avoiding duplication.

In this regards proper attention is paid also to the OSCE-UNECE Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings. At the Joint BSEC-OSCE Workshop on “Best practices at border crossings – a trade and transport facilitation perspective” and the Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters², which were held, respectively, on 3 and 4 April 2013 at the BSEC Headquarters, the participants highlighted key messages of the OSCE-UNECE Handbook and identified possible actions for border crossing facilitation among the BSEC Member States. Particular attention was paid to an effective implementation of international legal instruments,

¹ The next Meeting of Ministers of Transport will be held on 15-16 April 2014 in Sofia within the framework of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-office in the BSEC Organization.

² Next meeting of the WG will be held on 26-27 March 2014 at the BSEC Headquarters

tools and standards, including the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention, the UNECE International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods and other legal instruments.

c/ With regard to the development of public-private partnerships with professional international associations I am very pleased to inform you about the growing partnership of BSEC with IRU and BSEC Union of Road Transport Associations (BSEC-URTA) which is based on concrete joint projects and actions with regard to road transport. Behind this cooperation I can recall such projects as the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan 2007, project “BSEC Permit System”, Pilot Project on introduction of the International Vehicle Weight Certificate in the BSEC Region, Model Highway Initiative and many other endeavours³.

At its recent 33rd meeting, which was held on 28 January 2014 in Istanbul, the Management Council of the BSEC-URTA expressed readiness of the Union to contribute to preparing by PABSEC of the mentioned research on transport legal basis. The representatives of IRU and BSEC-URTA suggested also the possibility of making other researches with involvement of well-known Research@Study institutions to facilitate elaboration by the BSEC Member States of a strategic approach to the BSEC transport cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, I consider that coordinating and complementing their activities the international organizations strengthen their capacity in order to resolve complex problems related to facilitation of transportation. In parallel to its work BSEC, as a project-oriented organization, will continue exploring new areas where it is desirable and realistic to develop and deepen multilateral cooperation in a regional format in the transport sphere, which carries particular prominence for our Organization. In this work we rely on fruitful cooperation with other international organizations.

In this regard, I would like to refer to the importance of work of the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport, whose objective, in particular, is to harmonize and simplify border crossing procedures for the various modes of inland transport. BSEC will gladly contribute into its work.

I also believe that a new impetus to BSEC transport cooperation and its interaction with other international organizations will be given at a meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Transport in Sofia on 16 April 2014 within a Program of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office in BSEC.

Thanking you for your kind attention, I wish you fruitful deliberations with a concrete and successful outcome.

³ BSEC, IRU and BSEC URTA co-sponsored a Study on the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods which was done by the NEA Research@Study. The Study was presented at the Round Table with participation of the public and private road sector on 10 February 2009 in Istanbul and, in fact, it represents a strategic policy advice on facilitation of road transport of goods.