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**Recommendations from the**

**Joint UNECE - BSEC Seminar on Trade Facilitation and Single Window Interoperability**

**(21 September 2017)**

The participants in the joint UNECE-BSEC seminar on Single Window Interoperability, which took place at the headquarters of Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) in Istanbul on 21 September deliberated on the implementation of projects on the establishment of Single Window systems for export, import and transit clearance. Within the framework of adopting and implementing a regional BSEC Trade Facilitation Strategy, the participants agreed on the following recommendations to BSEC member State Governments, the business community and the BSEC Permanent Secretariat:

1. Carry out a survey on the stage of development of a Single Window system in each BSEC Member State and what is done in terms of achieving Single Window interoperability with similar systems in the other countries.
2. Continue the exchange of experience and mutual assistance in the development of national Single Window systems, learning from other countries lessons, working on step-by-step implementation of national and sectorial (e.g. maritime) Single Window systems, as well as Port Community Systems in the BSEC region. Take into account the need to create conditions enabling interoperability among the National Single Window systems in the region.
3. Further implement the recommendations of the first UNECE-BSEC seminar from 25 September 2014 on trade facilitation and the Single Window as regards the development of Single Window and Port Community Systems. Make use of new instruments supporting Single Window implementation such as UNECE Recommendation 36, UNCEFACT Technical Note on Terminology for Single Window and other electronic platforms, and the WCO Compendium on Building Single Window Environment.
4. Identify and analyse the primary drivers and needs for Single Window Interoperability in the BSEC region, e.g. significant trade volumes, ongoing Single Window projects in the countries and within broader economic and political unions;
5. Promote bilateral initiatives facilitating information exchange as building blocks for regional interoperability among Single Window systems, promote mutual recognition of trust services, draft a model Memorandum of Understanding on Single Window interoperability.
6. Focus Single Window interoperability on the four pillars defined in UN/CEFACT Recommendation 36: (a) align data and document exchange with international standards; (b) develop interoperability on several levels – semantic, business processes, data harmonization; (c) develop the legal basis for trust and interoperability; and (d) elaborate on forms of governance of Single Window interoperability in the BSEC region.
7. Examine the type of business processes and information to be exchanged between SWs; existing semantic frameworks, and possible areas for improvement (e.g. through harmonization of processes, data, etc.);
8. If not already existing, develop agreements/arrangements that address organizational, legal, technical and semantic issues related to SW interoperability. Bilateral and plurilateral agreements on information exchange involving Single Window systems in the region should be inclusive, allowing for as easy as possible involvement of other countries in the region.
9. Further build political will for Single Window interoperability; notably clarify in each country which agency would be involved in managing this SW interoperability.
10. Promote Business Process analysis, modelling and re-engineering as a basis for building the interagency exchange in the Single Window systems, as well as the interoperability among these systems.
11. Set a scope for establishing the legal background for SW interoperability.
12. In the strategic planning for national Single Window projects and Single Window interoperability, focus on priority areas, e.g. electronic Customs declaration and cross-border information exchange, specific licenses and certificates, and then build progressively.
13. Utilize experience and achievements in the exchange of information among Customs services in the countries in the process of building SW interoperability.
14. Engage authorities other than Customs; integrate interfaces between Customs and other agencies in the countries and across borders
15. Possible approaches to SW interoperability may include work on mutual recognition of electronic signatures, admissibility of electronic documents in courts, etc.
16. The participants invited the Governments of the BSEC Member States to consider financing work on the technical aspects of SW interoperability as well as on the development of the legal basis (agreements) of mutual recognition of electronic signatures and documents, as well as their admissibility in courts in the jurisdictions of the countries. Invite financial institutions in the region, such as the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), to engage in the Single Window initiatives on national and regional levels.
17. Explore further possibilities and models of public-private collaborative solutions supporting Single Window systems in the region.
18. Consider the most appropriate model(s) of governance for the proposed interoperability, at the various stages of planning, implementation and ongoing operations, which would be financially and administratively sustainable;
19. Explore ways of measuring progress and reporting to the BSEC working groups on Single Window development and Single Window interoperability, using such instruments as UNECE Recommendation 42.