

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR LEONIDAS CHRYSANTHOPOULOS,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)
PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)
AT THE
UNECE – BSEC CONFERENCE ON
IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY IN THE BSEC REGION**

(Ioannina, Greece, 18 November 2010)

Mr. Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE
Mr. Tsiokas, Deputy Minister of Transport of the Hellenic Republic,
Mr. Varatsas, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Ioannina,
Distinguished Participants from the Member-States and from the private
Sector,

I would like to welcome you all here today in the historic city of Ioannina to participate in the Conference on Improving Road Safety in the BSEC region, jointly organized by UNECE and BSEC. Road safety is an issue that concerns us all and improvements in this area would decrease the loss of human life, increase significantly the quality of life of our peoples, while at the same time facilitate the road transport of goods and promote tourism by vehicles, particularly in the BSEC area where also major road infrastructure projects are being or planned to be constructed.

The importance that BSEC attributes to road safety can be seen in the contents of the Sofia Joint Declaration on Strengthening the Cooperation in the Field of Transport in the BSEC region that was adopted by the BSEC Ministers of Transport on April 15. In the preamble of that Declaration there is a relevant paragraph mentioning the following: “Acknowledging the significance of the UNGA Resolution 64/255 of 2

March 2010, for the BSEC region, proclaiming the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety with a goal to reduce the forecasted levels of road fatalities world wide by increasing activities at the national, regional and global levels.” Road safety is also mentioned in one of the operative paragraphs. Never has BSEC acted so fast in implementing a UN Resolution. The Resolution was adopted in March, the Declaration in April and in November we are organizing the Conference on Road Safety. This also demonstrates the close cooperation that exists between BSEC and the UN with which BSEC enjoys observer status.

Among the main objectives of the Conference is to provide a platform for experts from the BSEC region to discuss measures for improving road safety and sharing best practices. I also believe that emphasis should also be given to the health of drivers. It is our objective the conclusions that we will draw from this Conference to be submitted to the BSEC Working Group on Transport for further consideration and more important for their implementation by the BSEC Member-States for the benefit of our peoples. The results of this meeting will be submitted next week to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Thessaloniki for endorsement.

UNECE has prepared a Draft Ioannina Declaration covering the issues of road safety that will be discussed at this conference. The Declaration may become an important instrument of implementation and therefore I propose that we adopt it.

Finally our thanks and gratitude to Mr. Dimitrios Varatsas, President of the Chamber of Ioannina for hosting this Conference.
