

STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR LEONIDAS CHRYSANTHOPOULOS,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)
PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)
AT THE
72st SESSION OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(Geneva, 23 February 2010)

Mr. Chairman,

Let me brief the Committee about the current BSEC transport developments which are related, in particular, to the development of road and maritime infrastructure, as well as to facilitation of road transport of goods. Three main BSEC transport projects in the mentioned fields constitute also the BSEC's regional contribution to the extension of Trans-European Networks and the development of Euro-Asian transport links.

The dynamics of work of the BSEC Member States in this field is quite impressive.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE. For two and half years 6 meetings related to the implementation of the *MoU on the Coordinated Development of the BSRH* were held. This work is carried out in the Steering Committee at the level of high transport officials of the participating states. I would like to remind you that the BSRH main route is approximately 7000 km and it will connect all the BSEC Member States.

The basic documents for implementation of the MoU (terminology, the BSRH Action Plan, Regulations for BSRH JPTS, web-site etc.) were elaborated in a short term, the Joint Permanent International Secretariat was established in Thessaloniki and work on alignment of the BSRH route came to a final stage. The negotiations between the interested states are going on and hopefully the work alignment will be accomplished shortly.

This however does not prevent BSEC Member States from executing construction of their highways. For example, Turkey has constructed its part from the border of Georgia and is expected to reach Istanbul during the year.

With finalization of the main route the next stage – prefeasibility study of the project - will start. I should mention that the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank is active participant in this work and some powerful non-BSEC organizations.

PORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND MARITIME LINKS. For two years 6 meetings were held for the implementation of another BSEC Project - Development of the Motorways of the Sea.

I should acknowledge that the process of negotiations on the MoS is not easy. And the problem is not in absence of initiatives but in contrary – in their quantity. The main documents for the implementation of the MoU have been almost finalized. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc WG on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea is scheduled for 4-5 March 2010, in Constanta (Romania) and we hope that new positive results will be achieved.

FACILITATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS. On 16 February 2010, seven BSEC Member States, namely Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Turkey launched a new BSEC Pilot Project on Transit Permit within - a BSEC Regional license similar in nature with the ECMT license. The BSEC Permit is a historical milestone in the facilitation of road transport of goods and for the gradual liberalization of transport market in the region. I hope to bring the positive outcome of this pilot project to this Committee at its meeting next year.

The Pilot Project is a part of the BSEC work on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods. The issues of accession to the UNECE international transport agreements, facilitation of visa procedures for the professional drivers, harmonization of charging policies etc. are on the agenda of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. Much of the BSEC success in the development of transport cooperation belongs to its fruitful cooperation with other transport organizations – UNECE, UNDP, CEI, CIS TC, TRACECA, IRU, IRF and transport business associations - BASPA¹, BINSAs², BRASS³ and BSEC-URTA⁴.

Last year I was pleased to exchange “thank you” letters with H.E. Mr. Ján KUBIŠ, the UNECE Executive Secretary, related to the successful organization by the UNECE and BSEC of joint events, namely:

- The BSEC-UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of Annex 8 to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (Harmonization Convention) on 18 June 2009 in Geneva.

And,

- The Interregional Workshop on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) held on 11 November 2009, at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul. The Workshop was followed by the Third Expert Group Meeting on EATL.

Last April, I held a meeting in Istanbul with the United Nations Secretary General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and briefed him on the activities of BSEC and the wonderful cooperation that it has with UNECE.

I would also avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the International Road Transport Union and the Union of Road Transport Association in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA) for their closest cooperation with the BSEC.

- 2007 - the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan of 12 trucks from the BSEC countries, transporting goods between the BSEC countries along a 7,500 km route with objective to promote the BSRH and BSEC to its people.
- 2008 - the Caravan findings and conclusions as well as the NEA Study on the implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region were presented to the BSEC Member States.

¹ Black and Azov Seas Ports Association

² Black Sea International Shipowners Association

³ Black Sea Region Association of Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers

⁴ Union of Road Transport Association in the BSEC Region

- 2010 - Launching the BSEC Pilot Project on Transit Permit.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, within the limits of time I cannot discover all the activities with our partner-organizations, but two examples mentioned above are a vivid witness of benefits which cooperation between the different organizations brings to the region.

The next meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Transport will be held in Sofia (Bulgaria) on April 15, 2010.

To conclude, I would like once again to express gratitude to H.E. Mr. Ján KUBIŠ, Ms. Eva MOLNAR, Mr. Michalis ADAMANTIADIS and the staff of the UNECE Transport Division for high level of established cooperation.

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