

*2021 SPECA Economic Forum  
Sustainable Transport and Trade for a Green and Inclusive Economy  
after the Pandemic*

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,

I am particularly honored to represent Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization at this *SPECA Economic Forum* discussing a highly topical theme – green development, and the role of transport and trade in achieving it.

Allow me to mention from the very beginning that fostering cooperation between its 13 Member States in areas related to the *Sustainable Developments Goals*, with a special focus on transport and trade sectors, has been a top priority for the BSEC work.

I take this opportunity to briefly share with the distinguished participants in this Forum the main relevant preoccupations of our organization in these sectors.

In addition to the development of the transport infrastructure in the BSEC Region, our organization's constant efforts in the transport sector are aimed at harmonizing and simplifying procedures, formalities and the necessary documentation, introduction of more automation and digitalization in the procedures concerning the transport of goods and services.

Much attention is given to the Trade Facilitation, promotion of Single Window and Joint Control procedures in order to reduce waiting time at border crossing points and to facilitate customs checks. Data harmonization and ensuring interoperability of Single Window systems in the region is another challenge that we are addressing.

The above is more necessary and urgent today because of the Coronavirus pandemic, which has impacted all our countries, in particular, the road transport industry. There is an urgent need to cope with supply chain disruptions caused, *inter alia*, by dramatic increases in demand, ongoing and unnecessary Covid-19

restrictions, handling all these so that to ensure sustainability in the respective sectors.

In promoting the sustainable trade in the BSEC Region, the initiatives and projects under consideration focus on:

- ◆ identifying constraints affecting intra-regional trade expansion, particularly policy barriers that enterprises have to overcome in the trade of goods and services;
- ◆ promoting cooperation among custom authorities and border crossing administrations with a view to facilitating transit-traffic by co-ordinated border management.

Special attention is given to benefitting from ICT technics in supporting trade and transport by reducing bureaucracy and red-tape, through:

- ◆ gradual liberalization of transport;
- ◆ simplifying documentation for border-crossing and harmonization customs procedures;
- ◆ implementation of innovative tools like *Single Window*;
- ◆ promotion of Joint Control procedures in order to reduce waiting time at border crossing points and to facilitate customs checks.

On 30 June this year, our decision-making body – the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs – adopted the “Framework for BSEC E-commerce Cooperation” and, taking into account the important role that E-commerce plays in increasing cross-border trade and investments, invited the Member States to take necessary measures aimed at the enhancement of cooperation in accordance with the Framework.

I will conclude, by emphasizing that beyond being a vehicle for economic cooperation in the Black Sea region, the BSEC also works for offering an effective platform of cooperation for achieving the implementation of the UN *Sustainable Developments Goals*.