



Background

On 25 June 1992, the Heads of State and Government of eleven countries, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, signed in Istanbul the Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement giving birth to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

It came into existence as a unique and promising model of multilateral political and economic initiative aimed at fostering interaction and harmony among the Member States, as well as to ensure peace, stability and prosperity encouraging friendly and good-neighbourly relations in the Black Sea region.

The BSEC Headquarters - the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS) - was established in March 1994 in Istanbul.

With the entry into force of its Charter on 1 May 1999, BSEC acquired international legal identity and was transformed into a full-fledged regional economic organization: Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. With the accession of Serbia in April 2004, the Organization's Member States increased to twelve.

BSEC covers a geography encompassing the territories of the Black Sea Littoral States, the Balkans and the Caucasus with an area of nearly 20 million square kilometers with almost 350 million population.

OUR AREAS OF COOPERATION

➤ Agriculture and Agro-industry

Agriculture and Agro-Industry is one of the areas of cooperation within BSEC. The Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-industry (WGAAI) deals with this topic.

The Working Group considered and endorsed the Priorities for the second medium-term (2016-2018) of the implementation of the "BSEC Economic Agenda 2012" under Goal 6: Food Security and Safety, namely:

- ✓ Improving sustainable rural productivity and enhancing the international competitiveness of the Member States in food and agricultural products, in particular through: facilitating the access to new technologies and know-how, scaling up managerial innovations and harmonization and adoption of quality standards for products,
- ✓ Promoting exchange of information, experience and best practices among the competent authorities, national reference laboratories, agrarian research and education



institutions and the private sector enterprises in the fields of agriculture, agro-industry and food safety in the Member States,

- ✓ Promoting the effective and sustainable use of land resources for the agricultural production in the BSEC Member States,
- ✓ Promoting regional cooperation for the sustainable management of fishery resources.

In 2011, for the first time, a Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the BSEC Member States was held in Moscow in October 2011 and adopted the Joint Declaration. These are mentioned below;

- ✓ Cooperation in the field of food safety among relevant institutions and accredited laboratories of the BSEC Member States,
- ✓ Assessment of the prospects for optimization of cooperation in vine production sphere between the BSEC Member States,
- ✓ Cooperation in selection, reproduction and protection of plants, further enhancement of cooperation among agrarian research and education institutions,
- ✓ Elaboration of efficient measures of control and surveillance for the fishing in the boundary-neighbouring aquatories.

BSEC's activities in the field of agriculture and Agro-Industry are specified in the "BSEC Economic Agenda", a strategic document approved by the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and endorsed by the Heads of State and Government, They include :

- ✓ Intensifying cooperation among the Ministries in charge of Agriculture to increase intra-regional trade in agricultural products,
- ✓ Improving sustainable rural productivity and enhancing the international competitiveness of the Member States in food and agricultural products,
- ✓ Harmonizing labeling standards,
- ✓ Promoting exchange of information, experience and best practices,
- ✓ Promoting the effective and sustainable use of land resources for the agricultural production,
- ✓ Improving the availability of financial services and credits to farmers and processors, as well as developing appropriate insurance systems against risks in agricultural production;
- ✓ Strengthening cooperation in the vine-growing and wine-making sectors, promoting cooperation among the national genetic banks of plants of the Member States to secure biodiversity;
- ✓ Simplifying customs formalities and reducing waiting times at the border crossing points, particularly for fresh fruits and vegetables;



Cooperation with FAO

BSEC participated at the FAO-BSEC Business Council High Level Forum: “Engaging Private Sector in Agri-food Chain Development”, organized in Baku, on 20 February 2014, which underlined the possibilities of increasing cooperation on a very topical area for us, i.e. the involvement of the private sector. Also the Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS attended the 30th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), held in Antalya, Turkey, on 4-6 May 2016. On the sidelines of the Conference, the PERMIS Secretary General was received for a bilateral discussion by the Director General of FAO, H.E. Mr. Jose Graziano da SILVA, with whom he agreed to promote the elaboration of the text of a mutually acceptable draft MoU, concerning concrete ways of cooperation between the two Organizations.

Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office

During the period of January-June 2017 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock is going to organise the meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-industry on 28-29 March 2017 and the Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture on 16-17 May 2017.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION

- A wide range of areas attract the attention and interest of our Working Groups:
- Banking and Finance
- Combating Organized Crime
- Culture
- Customs Matters
- Education
- Emergency Assistance
- Energy
- Environmental Protection
- Exchange of Statistical Data and Information
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Institutional Renewal and Good Governance
- Science and Technology
- SMEs
- Tourism
- Trade and Economic Development



➤ Transport

1st Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

(Moscow, 7 October 2011)

Annex III to BS/AM/R(2011)1

**JOINT DECLARATION
OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

(Moscow, 7 October 2011)

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) met in Moscow on 7 October 2011, within the framework of the Russian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office to assess the cooperation in the field of agriculture and agro-industry of the Member States and to identify the potential mechanisms of further strengthening the cooperation in this area;

Bearing in mind that BSEC, throughout its nineteen years of existence, has endeavoured to bring its Members together guided by common ideas, goals and principles;

Taking into account that the BSEC region, with its unique geographical location, possesses a strategic importance in connecting Europe and Asia;

Being determined to make every effort for progress in cooperation between our relevant national institutions and to create a favourable environment for initiating joint projects and programmes of common interest;

Taking into consideration the continuously growing trade in agricultural products in the BSEC region;

Recognizing that the role of the national relevant institutions should evolve to take into account the changes which have occurred during recent years, including the increasing importance of securing the international trade supply of agricultural goods;

Being conscious that it is necessary to ensure a correct balance between trade facilitation of agricultural goods and the measures to safeguard the population of the Member States against the non-qualitative products;



Emphasizing the need to conduct a target-oriented training of the national experts in the field of food safety, including in joint cooperation with international and regional organizations and initiatives;

Acknowledging the necessity to intensify efforts for the facilitation of movements of agricultural goods within the BSEC region by simplifying customs formalities and reducing waiting times at the border crossing points, particularly fresh fruit and vegetables;

Being confident that agriculture and agro-industry are major assets for sustainable social and economic development and the BSEC Member States, based on their rich and long-lasting tradition, are willing to devote particular attention for the further development and strengthening of these fields, both at national level and in the Organization as a whole;

Believing that after nineteen years of experience, BSEC shall take concrete steps and achieve tangible results in the areas of agriculture and agro-industry, which in turn should open up them potential of the region;

Have agreed upon:

1. **Intensification** of joint efforts to promote cooperation among the Ministries of Agriculture of the BSEC Member States, in order to help to reduce regional disparities and to give an impetus to the regional trade in agricultural products;
2. **Cooperation** with relevant international organizations and structures in order to coordinate the activities in agriculture and agro-industry matters, while fully reflecting the interests of the Member States, through devising joint action plans and instituting appropriate coordination mechanisms which would yield fruitful results for the region;
3. **Cooperation** of the BSEC Member States in vine-growing and wine-making sectors and joint organization of and participation in the wine exhibitions and fairs.
4. **Cooperation** among the BSEC Member States' national genetic banks of plants for protecting, storing and exploring the genetic resources of plants in order to include the latter into national programs of selection and to secure biodiversity. Consideration of opportunities to elaborate an agreement on bio-technology methods.
5. **Organization** of workshops and seminars in the BSEC Member States in order to build-up favorable conditions for the public-private cooperation on issues related to agriculture.
6. **Exchange** of experience and best practices among agrarian research and education institutions, dealing with similar issues in agriculture and agro-industry in the BSEC Member States.



7. **Consideration** of the relevant BSEC PDF applications, implementation of regional projects in the field of production and processing of agricultural products as well as in other related areas.
8. **Cooperation** in selection, reproduction and protection of plants, further enhancement of cooperation among the veterinary, phyto-sanitary and plant quarantine services of the BSEC Member States, elaboration of joint regional programs for effective management and control of the plant quarantine disease.
9. **Review** of the opportunities for simplification of export and import procedures for agricultural products among the BSEC Member States, particularly for the fresh fruit and vegetables.
10. **Development** of cooperation and exchange of information and experience in the field of food safety among central competent authorities, national reference laboratories and the private sector enterprises of the BSEC Member States.
11. **Promotion** of the active dialogue with other international organisations, regional co-operation initiatives and programmes in the field of agriculture.
12. **Consultation** on the elaboration of harmonizing the labelling standards for food products, as an important part of food quality and food safety, taking into account the obligations arising for BSEC Member States in the framework of their membership in other regional and international organizations and agreements.

The Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government and People of the Russian Federation for their warm hospitality and the outstanding organization of the Meeting.



The 25th Anniversary Summit of BSEC

Turkey will assume the Chairmanship-in-Office as of 1 January 2017. During our Chairmanship, we are willing to maintain and enhance project oriented and result-based approach in several areas of cooperation.

The 25th Anniversary Summit of BSEC will be celebrated in Istanbul in June 2017, with the participation of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States.

The Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry will be held at BSEC Headquarter in Istanbul, Turkey on 28-29 March 2017.

The Senior Officer Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry and the 2nd Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the BSEC Member States will be held in Istanbul, Turkey on 16-17 May 2017.

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Information on Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

For detailed information on Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), please contact websites mentioned below;

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC):

<http://www.bsec-organization.org/Pages/homepage.aspx>

Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation:

<http://www.pabsec.org/?hl=tr>

The 2nd Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the BSEC Member States:

<http://agribsec.tarim.gov.tr/>

Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/default.tr.mfa>

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