

**THE BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA
Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership**

Introduction

Twenty years have passed since the Black Sea Economic Cooperation initiative was launched by the *Bosphorus Statement* during the Istanbul Summit on 25 June 1992. The members of BSEC, since its inception, have endorsed multilateral economic cooperation and development in the region through joint efforts, dialogue and good neighborliness, to the benefit of the Member States and their peoples with the aim of promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the BSEC region.

With the adoption of the BSEC Charter (Yalta, 5 June 1998), entered into force on 1 May 1999, BSEC evolved into a full-fledged regional economic entity, becoming the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

In twenty years, BSEC has become the most inclusive and comprehensive organization in the wider Black Sea area. Today, BSEC, consisting of 12 Member States and having 17 Observers and 17 Sectoral Dialogue Partners, is a solid institution with a Permanent International Secretariat and four Related Bodies, namely, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the BSEC Business Council (BSEC BC), the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS).

In line with the principles and objectives defined in the BSEC Charter and with the aim of utilizing more effectively their human, natural and other resources, BSEC has defined common policy approaches of Member States in summit and ministerial declarations, inter-governmental agreements, plans of action and strategy documents and has launched major projects and initiatives which are of interest for the Member States.

On 27 April 2001, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted the BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future as a roadmap outlining the action needed to meet the goals set by the BSEC Charter. In the context of the 20th anniversary of BSEC, the new BSEC Economic Agenda is introduced to face new challenges and opportunities in the global and local environment. This regionally shared strategy highlights the comparative advantages of the

region, priority sectors for investments, the costs and benefits of regional cooperation and the economic role of the region in the context of the European economy.

The document provides a comprehensive vision for the role and strategy of the BSEC Organization in short and medium terms. It defines priorities, approaches and implementation mechanisms in line with the growing significance of BSEC within the framework of the Black Sea Region's geo-strategic location, size, natural and human resources.

The Member States are determined to make use of the great potential of the Organization as a platform of dialogue to play a more proactive, effective and constructive role in promoting the common goal of a peaceful, stable and prosperous BSEC Region to the interest of all stakeholders in the spirit of partnership and entrepreneurship.

For this, a new vision and framework for joint action is needed to give new impetus to economic regeneration in the region for the next ten years.

Taking into account the developments that have taken place since the establishment of the BSEC both inside the Organization itself and in the broader international environment, including the EU enlargement process and the new challenges in the region, the Member States reiterate their commitment to enhance the economic mission of BSEC and implement the BSEC Economic Agenda, in accordance with the following dispositions:

I. GENERAL GUIDELINES OF ACTION

1. Pursuing Sustainable Development:

1.1 Considering the principle of sustainable development within the Black Sea Region and the BSEC Member States, aimed at ensuring the rational balance between economic growth, social responsibility and environmental protection, with the view to further strengthen economic cooperation in the region.

1.2 Recommending continuation of adopting the principles and practice of sustainable development into the national legislation, public policies and institutional mechanisms of the Member States as long term objectives.

1.3 Ensuring the sustainable development of human resources with due consideration to the prevailing demographic trends in the region and their impact on employment, education and training, health and social services, gender equality, child protection, migration and social inclusion.

1.4 Involving civil society and business organizations as well as media and the scientific and academic community, to increase public awareness and understanding about sustainable development.

1.5 Promoting environmentally friendly innovative technologies to support sustainable growth and economic development.

2. Strengthening the Project-oriented Dimension of the BSEC Organization:

2.1 Undertaking further steps towards consolidating the project-oriented dimension of the BSEC activities by implementing the already existing and identifying new projects of common interest for the Member States, and by attaching priority to joint projects, which will reinforce economic cooperation in the region and at the same time may stimulate the interaction among the national economies of the BSEC Countries.

2.2 Facilitating economic development and cooperation in the BSEC Region by means of:

- a) focusing primarily on achievable actions, programmes and joint projects which can be implemented within a reasonable time frame;
- b) implementation of regional or trans-regional projects which contribute directly to the success of economic reforms and democratic transformation;
- c) encouragement of cross-border cooperation aiming at projects and programmes agreed upon by the interested Member States to the benefit of local communities;
- d) enhancing the role of private sector in developing feasible projects in the region;
- e) strengthening the network among research institutions for sharing know-how and experiences on innovative projects.

2.3 Enhancing the project-oriented agenda of BSEC by means of:

- a) creating a greater synergy between the work of BSEC and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, including stimulating the foreign investment;
- b) examining the ways to substantially increase the resources available to the BSEC Project Development Fund (PDF), including through the contributions of Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners and from other available sources;
- c) improvement of the mechanism of country-coordinators, as well as other coordination mechanisms in relevant areas of regional cooperation.

3. Cooperation with International and Regional Organizations and Institutions:

3.1 Promoting fruitful cooperation with the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, in particular to develop practical and goal-oriented projects, in areas of common interest.

3.2 Supporting a closer, balanced and mutually beneficial cooperation between BSEC and the European Union, *inter alia*, by advocating for increased commitment of financial and technical resources to be devoted to the BSEC Region, via such means as closer trade ties and increased inflows of foreign investment.

3.3 Achieving higher efficiency of the BSEC-EU cooperation within the framework of the BSEC-EU regional short-, medium- and long-term projects and initiatives through flexible and pragmatic dialogue within identified priority areas.

3.4 Strengthening the cooperation with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) through regional programs that are destined for countries in the BSEC Region with the aim to support small- and medium-sized enterprises, competition, innovations, to develop human resources and to improve financial markets.

3.5 Developing cooperation of a practical nature between the BSEC and other international and regional organizations and financial institutions and groupings/initiatives such as World Bank, WTO, FAO.

II. PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTION

GOAL 1: Intensifying Intra-regional Trade and Investments

Framework of Action:

1. Ensuring a friendly business environment, especially by providing a stable, predictable, non-discriminatory, and transparent regulatory framework.
2. Setting up an efficient mechanism for the prompt exchange of information and data on intra-regional trade and investments, in high-tech parks as well as in cluster development.
3. Identifying constraints affecting intra-regional trade expansion, particularly policy barriers that enterprises have to overcome, and other barriers that hamper the trade of goods and services among the Member States.
4. Enhancing the role of the private sector in the BSEC trade and investment cooperation.
5. Encouraging the establishment of BSEC Networks of Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations/associations of the BSEC Member States, with the assistance of the BSEC Business Council.
6. Recommending to create BSEC networks in the interested BSEC Member States aimed at promoting intra-regional trade and investments.
7. Facilitating visa procedures for business people of the BSEC Member States, in accordance with the national legislation of each Member State.
8. Promoting human resource development and capacity building aimed at facilitating trade and economic cooperation among the Member States, including steps to improve training in business education, through innovation and social inclusion.
9. Examining the feasibility to set up a Free Trade Area (FTA) if possible.

GOAL 2: Cooperation among the Customs and Border Crossing Administrations

Framework of Action:

1. Continuing the on-going process of harmonization of customs and border crossing procedures in conformity with the national legislations, with the aim of facilitating the movement of goods and people across national boundaries.
2. Exchanging, where and when possible, preliminary information on vehicles and goods crossing the borders of the BSEC Member States.
3. Promoting cooperation among the customs authorities of the BSEC Member States in line with the World Customs Organization requirements, including application of innovative technologies in this regard.

4. Encouraging cooperation among the customs laboratories on unification methods for analysis of goods and their classification.
5. Inviting the interested Member States to accede to the BSEC Agreements on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businesspeople and for the Professional Lorry Drivers of the Member States, signed by the Republic of Albania, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Moldova and Republic of Turkey, which reiterated their support for implementation of the mentioned agreements.

GOAL 3: Establishment of an Efficient Transport Network

Framework of Action:

1. Promoting sustainable transport systems which meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the people of the Black Sea Region, in order to reduce regional disparities and to link the BSEC Region's transport infrastructure to European and Asian Networks.
2. Accelerating the efforts at the national level and within the BSEC framework in order to further proceed with the implementation of the BSEC projects in the field of transport, especially the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC Region.
3. Implementing, where appropriate, innovative transport solutions for enhancing the transport efficiency in the BSEC Region.
4. Sharing experiences among the Member States in applying the legal mechanism in the sphere of passenger and freight carriages in the BSEC Region.
5. Promoting the harmonized information support systems in the transport systems of the BSEC Member States.
6. Elaborating joint transport projects of regional impact within the framework of BSEC mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and with the participation of other regional and international organizations, including the EU and International Financial Institutions.
7. Considering the possibility of elaborating a regional integrated maritime policy in the field of Maritime Transport, Ports, Shipbuilding and Ship Repairing in the BSEC Region as an important factor for sustainable economic growth.
8. Developing modern competitive Ro-Ro, ferry and cruise lines in the Black Sea Region benefitting from international experiences, best practices, and the newest equipment and technologies on shipping safety.
9. Considering the development of co-operation in the civil aviation sector.
10. Permanently integrating the environmental dimension into the transport policies in the region.
11. Improving the road safety in the BSEC Region in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).

GOAL 4: Sustainable Energy and Development of the Black Sea Energy Market

Framework of Action:

1. Enhancing cooperation among the BSEC Member States in the energy sector, including through the elaboration of common approaches and projects, where possible.

2. Elaborating and adopting the necessary regulatory framework for the creation of an integrated Black Sea energy market, with due consideration to relevant BSEC documents on energy issues and national priorities of the BSEC Member States.
3. Achieving efficiency in the use of energy resources through closer cooperation and coordination between energy producers and consumers of the BSEC Region.
4. Developing a competitive regional energy market through supporting investments in energy infrastructure, with the view to increase energy security, interconnectivity and further diversify energy sources and routes.
5. Taking gradual steps to materialize the vision of transforming the BSEC Region into a model for clean energy by the year 2050.
6. Encouraging cooperation among the Member States to define a Green Energy Strategy with the view to promoting renewable energy sources, clean technologies and energy efficiency.
7. Further promoting the development of the projects on interconnection of electric power systems of the BSEC Member States.
8. Enhancing further cooperation with the EU and other relevant international organizations and institutions in the field of energy production and consumption.
9. Engaging in exchange of experience and best practices, including through the organization of joint educational programmes among the energy authorities in BSEC Member States.

GOAL 5: Environmental Protection and Conservation

Framework of Action:

1. Incorporating the ecosystem-based approach in the economic and social development programmes of the Member States, to ensure a sustainable development in the Black Sea Region.
2. Using strategic environmental impact assessments, where applicable, for all major projects.
3. Developing innovative, environmentally friendly and resource saving technologies.
4. Developing economic and financial instruments as incentives for environmental protection.
5. Developing and approximating legislation on environmental protection in the Member States.
6. Encouraging the establishment of the BSEC Information Exchange Mechanism for Environmental Protection.
7. Promoting the cooperation among the Member States concerning the implementation of models of environmental risks assessment.
8. Supporting the development of plans for the mitigation and adaptation measures to address the impact of climate change.
9. Preventing and reducing pollution affecting the marine ecosystem, tackling of pollution sources, including reducing transport-related one with a view to ensuring that there will be no significant effects or risks to marine ecosystem and human health.
10. Establishing a network of protected areas throughout the BSEC Region and ensuring their coordinated management.

11. Undertaking concrete measures related to biodiversity conservation, integrated coastal zone and river management, protection of habitats, wildlife migratory routes and integrity of unique landscapes.
12. Strengthening the cooperation with international organizations and institutions, such as UNECE, UNCSD, UNEP, UNDP, UN FAO, UNESCO and the World Bank.
13. Enhancing the cooperation between BSEC and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, in order to avoid duplication of activities, as well as with the programmes and initiatives for the Mediterranean, Caspian and the Danube basins, with the view to develop region oriented projects of mutual interest.

GOAL 6: Food Security and Safety

Framework of Action:

1. Intensifying cooperation among the Ministries in charge of Agriculture and the relevant governmental agencies of the Member States to give an impetus to the growth of intra-regional trade in agricultural products.
2. 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.
3. Harmonizing the labelling standards, including through the promotion of traditional food and certified agricultural products, as an important part of food quality and food safety, taking into account the obligations of the Member States stemming from their membership in other regional and international organizations and agreements.
4. 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.
5. Promoting the effective and sustainable use of land resources for the agricultural production in the BSEC Member States.
6. Improving the availability of financial services and credits to farmers and processors, as well as developing appropriate insurance systems against risks in agricultural production.
7. Strengthening and promoting cooperation between the vine-growing and wine-making sectors, including through the joint organization of, and participation in wine exhibitions and fairs.
8. Promoting cooperation among the national genetic banks of plants of the Member States for protecting, storing and improving the genetic resources of plants in order to include them in the national programs of selection and to secure biodiversity.
9. Examining ways for simplifying customs formalities and reducing waiting times at the border crossing points, particularly for fresh fruits and vegetables.

10. Exploring possibilities to amend national legislations of the interested BSEC Member States with a view to having a common vision on reducing the gap between production prices and consumer prices at the international market.
11. Ensuring increased food production, price stabilization as well as adequate agricultural income, through provision of seeds, technology and finance for the intensification of production, the enhancement of intra-regional trade and the participation of producers of the BSEC Member States in the world market.
12. Promoting regional cooperation for the sustainable management of fishery resources.
13. Strengthening cooperation among the reference laboratories, veterinary services and disease control agencies of the BSEC Member States.
14. Enhancing dialogue on bio-technology methods, taking into consideration the issue of genetically modified food products and radiation control of food.
15. Exchanging experience and good practices regarding the sustainable forest management and forests' certification.

GOAL 7: Health Care and Pharmaceuticals

Framework of Action:

1. Strengthening cooperation in the sphere of public health and in preventing the spread of infectious diseases.
2. Further elaborating the Epidemiological Surveillance and Response Network and establishing a system of regular exchange of information on registered infection diseases among the BSEC Member States.
3. Exchanging experience in carrying out emergency immunization campaigns and work with hard-to-reach-groups of population.
4. Developing cooperation in the field of sanitary protection, according to the national legislation, and exerting efforts to make the "Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Sanitary Protection of the Territories of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation" operational.

GOAL 8: Development of Tourism and Protection of Cultural Heritage

Framework of Action:

1. Promoting the BSEC Region as one of the leading tourist destinations of the world.
2. Further strengthening cooperation of the Member States in the field of tourism, including enhancing dialogue on facilitation of visa procedures.
3. Ensuring sustainable tourism development by adopting green growth strategies that will enable economic expansion while preserving natural and cultural heritage.
4. Promoting new tourist packages for the BSEC Region.
5. Promoting the joint marketing campaign of the BSEC Member States, *inter alia* by participating in international tourism exhibitions, fairs and festivals.

6. Establishing an interdisciplinary network of scientists and experts, in order to promote research on the common cultural heritage of the Black Sea Region.
7. Creating a virtual library reflecting the cultural heritage and identity in the Black Sea Region.
8. Establishing a network among the tourism professionals, travel agencies and associations of the Member States.
9. Developing and implementing joint projects and programmes in the field of maritime, winter sports, health, spa and wellness business tourism.
10. Promoting the restoration of major architectural monuments which are symbols of national and regional culture.
11. Building networks of cooperation and developing joint projects in the field of modern culture (literature, theatre, dance, music and visual arts).
12. Promoting cultural and creative industries and strengthening the role that they play in the cooperation among the BSEC Member States.
13. Encouraging Cultural tourism/Cultural routes projects in the Black Sea Region and their implementation.
14. Promoting restoration and care projects of the architectural heritage on the territory of the BSEC Member States.
15. Developing cooperation in combating illicit trafficking of cultural property belonging to the archaeological, historical, ethnographical heritage and the arts, *inter alia* through exchange of information to facilitate the return of lost or illegally exported cultural values within the existing legislation.
16. Examining the option for creating the web portal of internship possibilities in the BSEC Member States for students and graduates interested to pursue their careers in tourism and hospitality sectors.

GOAL 9: Support for the Sustainable Development of the SME Sector:

Framework of Action:

1. Increasing the competitiveness of the SMEs by creating fair conditions at both national and regional levels and undertaking regular surveys on SMEs' needs, priorities and problems in the BSEC Region.
2. Developing BSEC programs aimed at promoting favourable conditions for local businesses and foreign investments; facilitating networking, exchange of experiences and know-how; organizing training for young entrepreneurs.
3. Promoting and supporting access to finance to SMEs which produce green products and services.
4. Improving the access of SMEs from the BSEC Member States to other markets, in particular by stimulating the export capacity of SMEs and promoting cross-border cooperation and business partnership with neighbouring countries.
5. Focusing on high technology, innovation, clusters, industrial-technology and software parks and business incubators as concrete instruments to facilitate SME start-ups in the Member States

and to encourage entrepreneurship, competitiveness and cooperation with large companies in the BSEC Region.

6. Developing a support system for innovation and technology at BSEC region, with the view to promoting cooperation among SMEs and the university environment, or research and development institutions.
7. Promoting the e-business system in the BSEC Region and the use of the BSEC Innovation Data Bank, to be updated under the coordination of the BSEC PERMIS.
8. Aggregating an information network of regional and Member States financial resources available to SMEs, accessible through the BSEC Innovation Data Bank.
9. Promoting business to business contacts through “BSEC SME Expert Exchange” programme.
10. Finalizing the establishment of the BSEC Quality Award for SMEs.

GOAL 10: Closer Cooperation in the field of Banking and Finance

Framework of Action:

1. Making good use by the BSEC Member States, individually as well as on a collective basis, of the existing framework of the BSTDB and other International Financial Institutions active in the BSEC Region.
2. Expanding, where possible, dialogue on issues related to banking and financial sector regulations, supervision and exchange of information among the BSEC Member States.
3. Exploring opportunities for regional cooperation and coordination in combating crime in banking and financial services.
4. Seeking cooperation and support from national institutes and other relevant international bodies in order to provide training of personnel on good practices and evolving standards in the field of banking and finance, through thematic workshops and seminars.

GOAL 11: Strengthening Regional Cooperation in Scientific Research and Technology

Framework of Action:

1. Focusing on human resources, capacity building, research infrastructure and innovation as areas of action.
2. Developing a registry of national innovation related structures of the BSEC Member States and creating the conditions for their effective interaction.
3. Encouraging joint research and training programmes among the Scientific Institutions and Universities in the Member States in line with their priorities.
4. Identifying innovative ways for combining allocated public and private funds, including through public-private partnerships, and facilitating the access to other available financial resources.
5. Facilitating closer cooperation in the fields of science and technology among the BSEC Member States, the BSEC Related Bodies and with other partners and international organizations

in order to encourage co-funding schemes for formulating and implementing regional research projects.

GOAL 12: Sustainable information society with advanced Information and Communication Technology infrastructure.

Framework of Action:

1. Developing joint projects for improvement and growth of Information and Communication Technologies tools and applications.
2. Taking joint measures to provide a safer cyber-space in the BSEC Region and exchanging experiences and best practices on combating cyber-crime.
3. Encouraging connection of the BSEC Region's telecommunication infrastructure to the Trans-European telecommunications networks.
4. Supporting efforts by the BSEC Member States to establish and develop relevant Information and Communication Technologies infrastructure with a view to addressing regional connectivity challenges and promoting viable projects in this sector having regional impact.
5. Encouraging cooperation among the BSEC Member States and with the relevant international organizations with regard to developing communication technologies in the postal service and introducing advanced postal processing, modernization and automation of procedures.
6. Encouraging establishment of companies in the BSEC Member States with the view to creating high added value and providing complex engineering solutions and services, local IT products competitive in international markets.
7. Encouraging the private sector in developing the use of Information and Communications Technologies in the BSEC Member States by promoting investments in new technologies and networking, where possible.
8. Promoting cooperation among the Information and Communication Technology companies, techno parks and incubators of the BSEC Member States.
9. Considering opportunities for the strategic development and interaction of infrastructure networks, either fixed, mobile or satellite in the Black Sea area, in the framework of global telecommunications.

GOAL 13: Harmonization and Exchange of Economic and Social Statistical Data and Information

Framework of Action:

1. Enhancing the exchange of accurate, comparable and timely statistical data and providing support for publication of periodic reports on the economic performance of the BSEC Member States.
2. Reactivating and strengthening the work of the existing Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information, as an Affiliated Center of BSEC.

GOAL 14: Higher Standards in Education and Training

Framework of Action:

1. Supporting the exchange of information and experiences with regard to the modernization of the educational systems in the BSEC Member States aimed at increasing sustainable growth and the establishment of knowledge based societies.
2. Promoting the scientific research for Sustainable Development of the BSEC Region.
3. Building stronger regional synergy between the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States and their business and academic communities.
4. Enhancing cooperation in the field of vocational training among the BSEC Member States.
5. Enhancing the exchange of information in the field of higher education through an Educational Portal of BSEC.
6. Sharing experiences in quality assurance and developing a qualifications framework in higher education.
7. Sharing best practices in the development of policies for recognizing the results of previous formal, informal or self education.
8. Promoting lifelong learning opportunities through joint programmes among the relevant institutions in the BSEC Member States.
9. Supporting joint university research projects and post-graduate programmes.
10. Encouraging the mobility of academic staff and students among the BSEC Member States, including through bilateral and multilateral agreements and scholarships among higher education institutions.
11. Promoting legal and institutional framework for issuing dual diplomas on Black Sea studies.
12. Developing the partnership with initiatives by the United Nations and other international organizations devoted to university cooperation on sustainability.
13. Enhancing the BSEC Member States cooperation with technologically advanced countries, *inter alia* through organizing exchange programmes among national academies of sciences and universities.
14. Promoting and supporting the development of joint academic programmes among the academies of sciences and universities of the BSEC Region.

GOAL 15: Good Governance and the Rule of Law: Strengthening the capacity of the Member States in conducting civil service and public administration reforms in line with the best governance and administration practices.

Framework of Action:

1. Supporting the efforts of the BSEC Member States towards improving national legislations in the sphere of civil service and public administration in line with the best practices.
2. Encouraging the BSEC Member States to promote civil society participation in providing good governance through their involvement in processes of securing integrity, transparency and fight against corruption.

3. Sharing best practices among the BSEC Member States aimed at improving public finance and human resources management.
4. Supporting the efforts of the BSEC Member States with regard to innovation and e-government.
5. Facilitating the exchange of experiences, best practices, success stories and lessons learnt in the field of administrative and institutional reform among the BSEC Member States.
6. Conducting studies, with the support of relevant international organizations, in the field of good governance, public sector efficiency and institutional renewal in BSEC Member States.
7. Initiating training of civil servants in innovative practices, with a view to improving the quality and delivery of public services and the simplification of the administrative procedures.

GOAL 16: Combating Organized Crime, Illegal Trafficking of Drugs and Weapons, Terrorism, Corruption and Money Laundering.

Framework of Action:

1. Strengthening the cooperation among the BSEC Member States in combating organized crime activities, such as the trafficking of human beings, drugs, weapons and radioactive materials, corruption, smuggling of motor vehicles and cyber-crime as well as the money laundering and illicit financial activities.
2. Supporting the work of the BSEC Network of Liaison Officers on Combating Crime.
3. Elaborating the Annual Review of the trends of transnational crime in the BSEC Region, with the aim to identify, prevent and combat organised crime.
4. Examining the possibility of concluding cooperation agreements among the BSEC Member States in countering illegal immigration and human trafficking, with special emphasis on mutual legal assistance and extradition.
5. Strengthening cooperation among the border law enforcement and immigration agencies of the BSEC Member States with the aim to achieve integrated border management by, *inter alia*, establishing and maintaining direct channels of communication.
6. Elaborating a BSEC Action Plan on preventing and combating corruption, with the aim of establishing a network for sharing information and best practices among the relevant agencies of the Member States and between them and civil society.
7. Enhancing cooperation with other international organizations on combating organized crime, corruption and terrorism and using their expertise and the expertise of the networks of law enforcement agencies involved in these fields.

GOAL 17: Cooperation in Emergency Situations

Framework of Action:

1. Enhancing coordination among the BSEC Member States in preventing and eliminating the consequences of natural and man-made disasters and on providing humanitarian assistance and help on protection of environment in case of emergency situations or imminent threat thereof.

2. Strengthening cooperation among the BSEC Member States on developing and use of modern technologies to predict natural and man-made disasters through means of space monitoring.
3. Strengthening cooperation in implementing the Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC Member States on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters and its Additional Protocol.
4. Promoting cooperation among the seismologists in the BSEC Region with a view to diminishing seismic risks, enhancing early warning, elaborating recommendations for rescue operations, and developing regional risk assessment programmes.
5. Drafting of seismic risk maps for the big cities and densely populated areas of the Member States.
6. Encouraging the establishment of BSEC expert bodies to deal with massive forest fires and floods.
7. Promoting organization of regional trainings, seminars and scientific conferences aimed at the achievement of better application of joint efforts in case of emergency and increase of awareness about the best practices used in emergency situations with a special attention to the Liaison Officers of the relevant BSEC Network.
8. Establishing relations with international organizations and institutions in the field of emergency response.
9. Submitting emergency response plans to protect the marine ecosystem and organisms against possible sea accidents.

III. STRENGTHENING THE ORGANIZATION

1. Improving the Functioning of the Organization:

- 1.1 Allocation of increased attention, material and human resources by the Member States to BSEC for a stronger, more proactive, result-oriented and viable Organization.
- 1.2 Consolidating the budget of the Permanent International Secretariat by allocating significantly greater financial resources in the annual budgets for project development.
- 1.3 Closely monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations approved by the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Declarations adopted at the meetings of the Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and sectoral ministers of the Member States and evaluating the existing challenges and the possible steps that could be taken to support and facilitate the implementation process, where applicable.
- 1.4 Improving the effectiveness, efficiency and consistency of the work of the BSEC Working Groups through ensuring continuity in the participation of country experts in charge of BSEC issues in the Working Group meetings as representatives of the Member States on a long-term basis.

1.5 Enhancing the coordination and interaction with the BSEC Related Bodies, namely Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC, BSEC Business Council, Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, International Centre for Black Sea Studies.

1.6 Increasing the efficiency and productivity of the BSEC Business Council, as a catalyst for new regional initiatives to promote trade, investment and financial cooperation and to provide an interaction with the business communities.

1.7 Ensuring the more active involvement of the business community in BSEC activities with regard to the implementation of joint projects, including by inviting representatives of private companies to meetings of the relevant working bodies of the BSEC.

1.8 Enhancing the visibility of the Organization through implementation of the new BSEC Public Communication Strategy and elaboration of relevant concept papers in line with the global and regional trends.

1.9 Further enhancing the international stature of BSEC, through *inter alia*:

- a) Encouraging more active involvement and contributions from Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners to the activities of the Organization;
- b) Continuing and extending the practice of formulating and displaying joint views at international fora regarding matters of common interest to the Member States.
- c) Developing a new phase of cooperation with other initiatives and organizations.

1.10 Improving the relevance and functioning of BSEC in the region and worldwide, in particular by developing multi-annual plans of action that reflect the priorities of the new Economic Agenda and transforming these objectives into specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time tabled results and activities.

1.11 Creating a program management unit within PERMIS which will provide technical assistance to PERMIS staff on the development, planning, managing and financing of projects.

2. Enlarging the Contractual Foundation of BSEC:

2.1 Considering further steps towards enlarging the contractual foundation of BSEC with new legal instruments including specific provisions for implementation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, especially in priority areas of cooperation, in conformity with other international obligations of the Member States.

3. Incorporating Regional Cooperation within the framework of BSEC in the domestic and foreign policy agenda of the Member States:

3.1 Promoting the regional identity and increased visibility of BSEC by the Member States in their own countries.

3.2 Elaborating ways and workable mechanisms for a smoother implementation of resolutions, decisions and recommendations of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

4. Developing the consultation practice among the Member States on issues of common interest:

4.1 Making more use of the BSEC Troika mechanism and of informal consultations, prior to the formal meetings of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Committee of Senior

Officials, or Working Groups, in order to encourage and develop *inter alia* a constructive informal dialogue among the BSEC Member States, thus ensuring the more efficient work of the Organization.

4.2 Facilitating regional confidence building dialogue to enhance the prospects of regional economic cooperation and promote mutually beneficial and good neighbourly relations between Member States.

4.3 Developing non-formal approaches by the BSEC Member States towards the substantive issues of economic cooperation within the framework of the informal meetings of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Committee of Senior Officials of BSEC and other brainstorming formats.