

**SOFIA JOINT DECLARATION ON GREENING TRANSPORT IN BSEC REGION**

*Through enhanced BSEC regional co-operation towards a safe and sustainable transport*

**(16 April 2014, Sofia, Bulgaria)**

We, the Ministers of Transport of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Member States gathering in Sofia on 16 April 2014, under the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC to discuss the ways and means of strengthening our co-operation in the field of transport,

**Stating** that peace, stability and sustainable development in the BSEC Region are of vital importance and directly linked to the general welfare of the people of the Region,

**Taking note on** the necessity to implement the Joint Declarations adopted at previous Meetings of Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States,

**Recognizing** that an enhanced BSEC regional transport cooperation will ensure sustainable economic growth within the BSEC region and will foster trade relations between Europe and Asia,

**Bearing in mind** that green and safe transport in the Region plays significant role in triggering economic growth and achieving sustainable development goals,

**Taking into account** that transport greenhouse gas emissions threaten our health, negatively affect our local environmental quality and have a significant and growing impact on climate change,

**Taking also into account** that transport infrastructures and operations are often vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, with increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storm surges,

**Underlining** that countries should move towards sustainable low-carbon economies and that international co-operation will be crucial in areas such as development and diffusion of clean and innovative technologies to reach an efficient and environmentally friendly transport in the Region,

**Affirming** our responsibility for building an integrated and connected transport system for the BSEC Region,

**Acknowledging** the importance for the BSEC to support its Member States in their efforts to develop policies oriented to green growth and assist them to establish further measures for achievement of sustainable transport, including analysis enabling policies identification, share of best practices etc.,

**Bearing in mind** the benefits of further development of close co-operation of BSEC with other international organizations and institutions, such as UNECE, UNESCAP, TRACECA, with BASPA, BINSAs, BRASS, BSEC-URTA as transport related Sectoral Dialogue Partners, as well as IRF and IRU, in the development and facilitation of international transport in the BSEC Region,

**Taking into account** the importance of close co-operation and coordination of activities between BSEC and the EU, as well as other international organizations and institutions such as the ECO, CIS and EurAsEC,

**Stressing** the need for the institutional and administrative reforms to effectively facilitate and harmonize the frontier controls of goods, containers, passengers and vehicles to significantly reduce border waiting times, by implementing the key UN multilateral trade and transport facilitation instruments, such as the UNECE Harmonization and TIR Conventions.

**Welcoming** the Decision of the BSEC CMFA to authorize cooperation among participating countries for launching the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) part of Annex 8 to the UNECE Harmonization Convention, under a BSEC Pilot Project,

**Have agreed to:**

**Strengthen** our efforts to implement green growth strategies as part of our response to the current economic crisis, acknowledging that “green” and “growth” can go hand-in-hand,

**Ensure** close co-ordination of green growth measures with labour market and human capital formation policies,

**Encourage** regional green policy reforms, aimed at avoiding measures that might have negative impacts on the environment,

**Recognise** that special efforts need to be made at the international level for co-operation in the field of development and transfer of green transport technologies, through promoting relevant activities, fostering market mechanisms, as well as facilitating, streamlining and accelerating financing for green transport,

**Urge** BSEC Member States to sustain closer co-operation among themselves in other relevant international institutions, including the related UN agencies, in order to reflect and substantiate the common regional vision of greening transport in BSEC region,

**Develop** suitable regional policy instruments, appropriate financial incentives, institutional capacity, and governance strategies to promote sustainable low carbon land transport as part of the international framework for both mitigation and adaptation to climate change,

**Exert** joint efforts to promote sustainable and efficient transport activities, which will give priority to higher safety standards,

**Reduce** the negative economic impact of traffic congestion,

**Promote** more effective low carbon transport strategies supported by suitable financing, capacity building and other required mechanisms to enable the timely transfer of low carbon technologies,

**Elaborate** joint priority projects of regional importance for green transport, and consider the possibility of their implementation through existing BSEC mechanisms, Public-Private Partnerships, other funding schemes with the support of the EU and other international organizations and financial institutions, as an effective tool to attract private investment in establishing greener, more efficient and sustainable transport infrastructure, that will enable, primarily, the use of environmentally friendly modes of transport and give a boost to multimodal transport,

**Encourage** to continue elaborating on the MoU for the Development of the Multimodal Ferry Lines in the BSEC Region, with the view of its finalization and signing by the interested BSEC Member States,

**Encourage** the exchange of best practices, as well as knowledge sharing on green transport among the BSEC Member States,

**Take** necessary actions for implementing the key UN multilateral trade and transport facilitation instruments, such as UNECE Harmonization Convention and TIR Convention,

**Support** the implementation of the BSEC Pilot Project on the introduction of the IVWC in the BSEC region among the interested BSEC Member States,

**Present** this Declaration to the CMFA of the BSEC Member States for due consideration.

The Ministers expressed their deep gratitude to the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria for their hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the meeting in Sofia.