

**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT UNION
BSEC TRANSPORT MINISTERIAL MEETING**

*DELIVERED BY MR HAYDAR ÖZKAN,
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SOFIA, 16 APRIL 2014

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour and pleasure to represent the International Road Transport Union (IRU) at this BSEC Sofia Transport Ministerial Meeting, which very soon will adopt the Sofia Declaration on Greening Transport in the BSEC region.

This document will by nature define the BSEC priorities in the field of ensuring environmentally friendly transport in the region.

We are very pleased to see in the draft text that the BSEC among others recognized very well the fundamental linkage between making transport more environmentally friendly and reducing border waiting times through implementing key UN trade and transport facilitation conventions, notably the 1982 International Agreement on Harmonization of the Frontier Controls of Goods and the TIR Convention.

Today, procedures, particularly at the borders, constitute major barriers to trade, tourism and road transport, and require targeted measures in order to maximize the use of scarce political, financial and administrative resources.

While road transport vehicles and crews waste time at borders, consumers, society and the environment ultimately, pay the bill for such barriers that reduce efficiency of the global economy and delay much-needed economic development in less favoured regions of the world.

Keeping these in mind, allow me to recall that the IRU's New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI) Project, which monitored actual commercial cargo deliveries by road between Asia and Europe, revealed in 2010 that the downtime at the borders along Northern, Central and Southern Routes accounts for upto 40% of all journey time while red tape makes up as much as 30% of all journey costs except the diesel.

Moreover, according to an independent research in 2007, one day of delay at the borders result to a nearly 1% decrease in merchandise exports volume of the source country. This impact is seven times bigger for the trade of time sensitive goods.

These facts are clear indicators that, being an economic cooperation organisation, BSEC can realise its objectives mainly by ensuring sustainable, safer and more efficient transport, including and perhaps foremost the road transport, in the BSEC region.

As concluding remarks, the IRU fully supports your invaluable work towards greening transport and is ready to give necessary support to the BSEC and its interested Member States, like in the past and based on the BSEC-IRU MoU signed in Sochi in 2006.

Further to our active involvement with and concrete support for numerous projects and joint activities together with PERMIS, Member States and the BSEC-URTA in the past such as 2007 Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan project, 2009 Scientific Study on implementation of the BSEC MoU-F, 2010 BSEC Permit Pilot Project, 2013 Baku-Tbilisi-Trabzon Model Highway Initiative pre-feasibility study; you can count that IRU will be ready to remain as your partner for future projects and activities such as and notably the BSEC Pilot Project on Introduction of the IVWC among interested Member States under the UNECE Harmonization Convention as well as putting in place along the BSRH network much needed IT risk management tools and improved main and ancillary infrastructures, for instance the TIR EPD Green Lanes.

Let me now conclude by expressing our heartfelt gratitude to the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-office and the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria, personally to HE Danail Papazov and his Deputy Mr Anton Ginev as well as their able team, for the excellent arrangements and hospitality extended to all Participants. Being in Sofia, I am also very happy to acknowledge the perfect cooperation of IRU with our Bulgarian Member Association, AEBTRI chaired by Mr Georgi Petarneichev, which historically contributes much to the IRU's work at all levels. Our thanks also go to the BSEC PERMIS, and notably HE Ambassador Victor Tvircun and his Project Co-ordinator Mr Evgeni Kozii, for our long term, if I may say, strategic partnership and mutual willingness for working together based on our common objectives and through concrete and result oriented joint projects in partnership with interested Member States.

Thank you for your attention.

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