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ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

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**WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION
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OF THE PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
TO THE 13TH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
(LJUBLJANA, 5-6 DECEMBER 2005)**

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On behalf of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS) I extend most profound gratitude for the kind invitation to attend the Thirteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Composition-wise our two organizations are closely related. All 12 BSEC participating states are OSCE Members. Out of 13 BSEC Observer States 10 are members of the OSCE.

Both organizations work for common objectives: regional stability and security, strengthening of multilateral and bilateral cooperation among participating countries, their democratic and sustainable development.

Founded in 1992, BSEC is by now a full-fledged international Organization with a solid legal framework and comprehensive infrastructure.

BSEC has 4 related bodies – Parliamentary Assembly (PABSEC), BSEC Business Council (BSEC BC), Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) and International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS).

Since BSEC inception the situation in the Black Sea region has changed radically. The Region has attained an increased geo-strategic importance, based on its rich natural and human resources, technological potential, culture and traditions, as well as a broad consumer market.

From the very beginning BSEC was supposed to concentrate on fostering economic ties among its members. The main areas of cooperation were meant to be trade and development; banking and finance; communications; energy; transport; agriculture and agro-industry; healthcare and pharmaceuticals.

As time went on some other fields of interaction gained prominence on the BSEC agenda, namely: environment protection; emergency assistance; tourism; science and technology; education; collaboration between customs; institutional renewal and good governance; strengthening peace and stability in the region by “soft” security measures.

In October 1998 “Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in Particular in its Organized Forms” was signed, which cited the struggle against terrorism as number one area of cooperation of the Contracting Parties.

In March 2002 Additional Protocol to the above mentioned Agreement was agreed upon, establishing a Network of Liaison Officers with the aim to further cooperation, coordination and information exchange between the BSEC Member States in the field of combating crime.

And in December 2004 the Second Additional Protocol to the Agreement of 1998 was signed, this time in particular on combating terrorism.

On 25 June 2004 in Istanbul the Special Session of the Council of the BSEC Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted a Statement on the BSEC Contribution to Security and Stability which denounced and condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to continue exploring ways and means of enhancing its contribution to security and stability in the region.

The latest development in this field was the Conference of BSEC Member States on Collaboration in Prevention and Combating Economic Frauds, organized by the Republic of Moldova, our previous Chairman-in-Office, in September this year.

Our current Chairman – Romania makes a particular emphasis on mobilizing the BSEC Member States to act to eliminate threats of terrorism, organized crime, illegal weapons, drugs and human trafficking, which come from the broader zone of Black Sea and adjacent areas.

BSEC is enhancing integration with other international and regional organizations, including special agencies within the UN system. The BSEC Member States view their regional cooperation as part of the integration process in Europe. Particular importance is attached to building of a comprehensive partnership relations with the European Union. We are open for interaction with the OSCE as a lasting and reliable partner.

Every success to the 13th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Ambassador Andrey URNOV,
Deputy Secretary General
BSEC PERMIS