



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, Secretary General of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 14, 2011

We welcome the Secretary General of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, to the Permanent Council for his first – but we hope not last – visit, and we thank him for his comprehensive and informative presentation. The commitment among BSEC countries to cooperate on economic and energy issues will contribute greatly to stable and sustainable multilateral relations among those countries. It is clear that a comprehensive, cross-dimensional approach is necessary to address some of the most important issues in the region.

We welcome BSEC's 2010 Ministerial Decision on a commitment to combat the negative effects of climate change in the wider Black Sea area. We support in particular the specific resolution to "develop regional policy approaches on mitigating climate change with respect to the capabilities of the countries concerned and at the same time ensuring energy security and a sustainable development process providing for growth, employment and welfare." We would very much appreciate your suggestions for cooperation with the OSCE in this regard. In these tough economic times, it is crucial that international organizations work together to make the most efficient use of scarce resources. We are also interested in exploring how the Russian Chairmanship of BSEC might be a vehicle for inter-organizational cooperation in the coming months.

We fully support the ongoing projects of the member states of BSEC, namely the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorways of the Sea. We appreciate the innovative steps the group is taking towards streamlining transport facilitation through infrastructure. The projects aimed at trade facilitation mentioned in your statement -- the Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Program, the Permit system, and the simplification of visa procedures, to name just a few -- are welcome steps towards a more integrated Black Sea region. While we have not yet established joint projects under the recently signed Memorandum of Intent between the Government of the United States of America and BSEC on Science and Technology, we look forward to bringing our scientists together to address on issues such as clean energy and environmental research.

We understand that in some regions, 70 percent of the cost of goods is directly related to transport inefficiencies, compared to just 6 percent in Western Europe. The efforts of BSEC in the area of trade facilitation and transport management play an important role in reducing this disparity. Efficiency in border and transport management goes hand in hand with increased border safety and security, another priority for the OSCE region generally. Additionally, we agree that the human dimension of sustainable development needs to be

addressed simultaneously, both with regard to migration management as well as protection of the most vulnerable in society.

The United States also commends BSEC for its programs aimed at fighting organized crime, trafficking in persons, and governmental corruption. These programs demonstrate concerns the BSEC shares with the OSCE, and both organizations could benefit from sharing best practices. BSEC's focus on energy cooperation in an effort to ensure the stability and security of energy supplies is of utmost importance both to the United States and to the OSCE as a whole. We fully back the efforts towards the integration of the energy markets of BSEC and the EU by developing a joint BSEC-EU Plan of Action.

BSEC has clearly shown how cooperation among international organizations can work to the advantage of all who participate and we hope to enhance this type of practical cooperation between our two organizations in the future.

Thank you, Ambassador, for your presence and your report.
Thank you, Chair.