

Round Table Discussion

“A Challenge or Obstacle for the Future? Climate Change & Environmental Strategy for the Black Sea”

BSEC PERMIS contribution to the Round Table Discussion

Athens, on 19 March 2015

On behalf of the BSEC PERMIS let me convey our best wishes to the organizers of the Round Table Discussion “A Challenge or Obstacle for the Future? Climate Change & Environmental Strategy for the Black Sea”

It is a good opportunity to reflect on what has been done and what could be done more for the environment protection of the Black Sea, of our SEA.

Pursuant to the BSEC objectives, enshrined in the Charter, the Organization is fully committed to implement sustainable regional development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the protection of the environment in the Black Sea region.

The last BSEC Summit (Istanbul, June 2012) reaffirmed the readiness of the 12 Member States to incorporate environmental approaches in the economic and social development programs of the BSEC with particular attention to the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency, development of environmentally friendly energy technologies and use of environmental impact assessments for all significant projects.

Following the Meetings of the Ministers responsible of Environmental Protection of the BSEC Member States (Bucharest, 3 March 2006, Bucharest, 31 May 2011 and Belgrade, 23 April 2012) and the CMFA (Thessaloniki, 26 November 2010) the new BSEC “Economic Agenda 2012” defined the main goals in Environmental Protection (documents can be found on www.bsec-organization.org).

In compliance with the GOAL 5 of the BSEC “Economic Agenda 2012” and the following Council of MFA Decisions, the Working Group on Environmental Protection is in a process of considering a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

Why Climate Change Adaptation Strategy???

The climate change projections for the region suggest that significant changes in the climate during the 21st Century are likely. These projected changes in climate are likely to affect the natural resources of the region, the economic activities of the region and have a myriad of

societal and wellbeing-notations. It is likely that sensitive and vulnerable parts of society of ecosystems will be impacted the most.

National governments in the Black Sea region have already moved towards identification of key vulnerabilities and options for building resilience in the future as indicated in the National Communications on Climate Change (NCCC).

For maximum benefit, national responses need to be supported by regional approaches to adaptation and building resilience in the Black Sea region. Thus, this draft document outlines a strategy for BSEC to support climate change adaptation in the Black Sea region which builds on existing Declarations.

How it started?

The CLIMBIZ project (“Introducing Climate Change in the Environmental Strategy of the Protection for the Black Sea”) aims to support BSEC to operationalize the Action Plan and Declarations previously identified.

To this end CLIMBIZ has carried out a “climate change vulnerability and assessment review” which showed that climate change effects are likely across most of the economic, social and natural resource sectors. A number of highly vulnerable sectors were identified (economic sector - water resources, agriculture and forestry; social sector – poverty; nature resources sector – terrestrial and coastal ecosystems).

The CLIMBIZ vulnerability assessment also identified various cross-cutting themes to help formulate a response to climate change in the Black Sea region.

From this analysis CLIMBIZ identified a number of key strategic elements for building climate adaptation and resilience in the Black Sea region:

- I. Promoting of regional cooperation;
- II. Catalyzing of additional funding;
- III. Galvanizing and raising awareness in stakeholders;
- IV. Championing the development of individual and institutional capabilities;
- V. Targeting of research to key priorities.

How to finance the projects under the Strategy?

Many international climate change finance opportunities (e.g. Adaptation Fund, Global Environmental Facility) are implemented on a country basis. The role of BSEC should be

primarily in acting as a regional voice and knowledge-transfer agent to provide value-added regional dimension to climate change responses in Member States. Systematic inclusion by Member States of this regional role for BSEC in country-led proposals to international climate change finance would facilitate the realization of this strategy.

What is next?

The ESEC WG on Environment protection should complete the discussion on the draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Black Sea region as soon as possible and submit it to the adoption (approval) of the Ministers responsible of environment protection and the BSEC CMFA.

Projects targeted at climate adaptation should be formulated in one or more of the highly vulnerable sectors which are to be identified.

BSEC should act as a regional node for mobilizing a wide-range of partners to formulate and submit climate response projects to appropriate funding instruments.