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Statement on the Black Sea Synergy Meeting

As for delivery by Deputy Permanent Representative Oleh Herasymenko to the Permanent Council
28 February 2008

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to briefly inform you and the distinguished delegates of the first meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area, which took place in Kyiv on 14 February 2008.

The meeting was aimed at developing a common approach to further cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Black Sea region, taking into account the "Black Sea Synergy Initiative" of the European Union.

The ministers identified the challenges and opportunities in the wider Black Sea area, which could be better addressed at the regional level and where coordination of efforts with various integration and cooperation formats would be appropriate. It was agreed that the priority areas which could benefit from the EU support are, *inter alia*, development and interconnection of transport, energy and communication infrastructure, promotion of a dialogue between energy producers, consumers and transit countries, as well as development of the regional transport cooperation.

It was stressed by the ministers that in achieving these goals the role of the regional organizations such as the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is of utmost importance. In this context, Ukraine as the country currently holding the Chairmanship of the BSEC, called upon the EU to jointly develop a road-map for future cooperation between the two organizations.

The Black Sea Synergy meeting in Kyiv has demonstrated the advantages of deepening cooperation between existing multilateral mechanisms and arrangements in Europe. We believe that such initiatives offer new opportunities and increased stability and prosperity to citizens in the wider Black Sea area and Europe as a whole.

For information of the distinguished delegates, the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area, as well as the Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation on a BSEC-EU enhanced relationship will be distributed through the Conference Services.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Joint Statement

of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area

1. Foreign Ministers of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area met in Kyiv to initiate the Black Sea Synergy cooperation. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Viktor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine.

2. Ministers identified significant challenges and opportunities in the wider Black Sea area, which may require coordinated action at the regional level. They agreed that greater involvement by the European Union can increase the potential of Black Sea regional cooperation. Ministers welcomed the Black Sea Synergy Initiative of the European Union as an important tool to achieve this goal.

3. Participants agreed that the primary task of the Black Sea Synergy is the development of cooperation within the Black Sea region and also between the region as a whole and the European Union. The different aspects of the Synergy will be discussed, agreed upon and implemented by the interested countries in a fully transparent and flexible manner, based on mutual interests.

4. The Black Sea Synergy will benefit from the European Neighbourhood Policy and other EU policies applied in the relationship with countries of the region. EU support to Black Sea regional cooperation is aimed at producing tangible results in a number of priority areas. This includes the development and interconnection of transport, energy and communication infrastructure, responding to increasing trade, investment, traffic and information flows as well as rapidly evolving transit needs. Ministers declared their intention to promote the dialogue between energy producers, consumers and transit countries aimed at ensuring fair access to energy resources and markets, enhancing energy security and environmental sustainability. They will support regional transport cooperation with a view to improving efficiency, safety and security. Ministers agreed that the Black Sea Synergy offers a framework to improve coordination between relevant EU and regional policies as well as wide-ranging programmes such as the development of major trans-national transport axes, the Motorways of the Sea or the Black Sea Ring Highway.

5. The Synergy should contribute to better coordinating specific environmental programmes, notably those focusing on tasks relating to water quality. It should also invigorate the dialogue on Black Sea maritime policies and facilitate efforts to establish regional fisheries management cooperation in order to ensure sustainable use of Black Sea fishery resources. Black Sea regional cooperation should also provide a framework for building capabilities to cooperate in combating climate change and in preventing and managing natural and man-made disasters in the region. Black Sea countries and the European Union will develop region-wide activities to strengthen cooperation in the fields of migration, law enforcement and the fight against organised crime building on the activities of cooperation arrangements already in place, by ensuring added value and avoiding duplication. Increased EU engagement in Black Sea regional cooperation has the potential to bring benefits also in the fields of trade, science and technology, research, culture and education as well as employment and social affairs.

6. Ministers took note of the wish for a possible visa facilitation perspective and the role of enhanced mobility in promoting the development of trade and economic relations.

7. The Black Sea Synergy could benefit from Black Sea partnerships, involving various stakeholders from the EU and the wider Black Sea area.

8. Participants agreed that the Black Sea Synergy would be a useful means to strengthen the democracy and respect for human rights and to foster civil society.

9. Protracted conflicts impede cooperation activities. Therefore participants emphasized the need for their earliest peaceful settlement on the basis of the norms and principles of international law.

10. The Meeting took due regard of the importance of parliamentary activities in promoting regional cooperation.

11. Ministers welcomed the first steps of the Black Sea Cross-Border Cooperation Programme which supports civil society and local level cooperation in Black Sea coastal areas.

12. Participants stressed the need for proper funding of priority regional cooperation programmes. Co-financing should apply as a general rule. In this context, the regional activities of the International Financial Institutions, most notably the EBRD, the EIB and the BSTDB, could offer new possibilities along with financing coming from the EU and from countries of the Black Sea area.

13. The Ministers recognised the important role played by regional organisations and initiatives, particularly by the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Ministers noted with satisfaction that the European Commission has obtained observer status in BSEC and has engaged in practical interaction with it in several fields. Black Sea Synergy will take due account of the work in BSEC and will at the same time remain open to all appropriate cooperation possibilities provided by other regional bodies and initiatives, including those in the Danube region, a key area to strengthen connections between the EU and the Black Sea countries.

14. Participants considered that this Black Sea Synergy Meeting is the beginning of a long-term regional cooperation endeavour offering new opportunities and increased stability and prosperity to citizens in the wider Black Sea area and the whole of Europe.

Ministers expressed their gratitude to Ukraine for the excellent preparation and organisation of the Meeting.

Kyiv, 14 February 2008

**DECLARATION
OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE MEMBER STATES OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION ON
A BSEC-EU ENHANCED RELATIONSHIP**

**(Special Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs,
Kyiv, 14 February 2008)**

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) – the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine – met in Kyiv, on 14 February 2008. We discussed the perspectives for the development of a mutually beneficial cooperation between BSEC and the EU, respecting the interests of both sides.

Taking guidance from the political assessments and executive dispositions of the Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the BSEC Member States on the occasion of the BSEC Fifteenth Anniversary Summit held in Istanbul, on 25 June 2007, we reaffirm our commitment to the Organization and its Charter as an indispensable foundation for peace, stability, security and prosperity in the wider Black Sea area.

We consider BSEC-EU interaction as an integral part of overall European economic, scientific and environmental cooperation. Our aim is to achieve proper synergies by coordinating the efforts with various integration and cooperation formats, international organizations and institutions, in particular financial ones, acting in the BSEC area.

BSEC is an inclusive, treaty-based, full-fledged, project oriented regional economic organization, possessing mature institutional structures, well established operational rules and procedures. We all share the conviction that our multilateral economic cooperation contributes to enhancing peace, stability, security and prosperity to the benefit of our region. The Organization has also contributed to developing a sense of regional ownership and identity among our peoples. We are committed to further consolidate its role as an active and reliable partner in international and regional affairs.

We believe that the earliest peaceful settlement of the existing protracted conflicts in the BSEC region, on the basis of the norms and principles of international law will contribute to the enhancement of regional cooperation.

The BSEC-EU interaction is a forward-looking and promising framework, which can contribute to shaping the foundations of an enhanced regional relationship.

BSEC continues to be committed to develop new legal instruments and mechanisms for multilateral economic cooperation in a regional format, which can effectively benefit the citizens of the area.

We believe that interaction between BSEC and the EU should further be institutionalized and result-oriented, through the identification of common tools and the development of synergies. It is necessary to undertake joint efforts to support development and cooperation in the wider Black Sea area, through various cooperation programmes and partnerships.

We also believe that the joint BSEC-EU action in the wider Black Sea area should be comprehensive and inclusive, so that its benefits encompass all BSEC Member States.

BSEC is looking for closer cooperation and coordination with the EU in the areas of mutual interest, ensuring complementarity, synergies and avoiding duplication of work.

We also express the wish to establish a BSEC-EU enhanced relationship, within which Ministerial Meetings in different formats could be held.

We invite the EU to join the efforts of BSEC in particular in the priority areas of the development and interconnection of transport infrastructure in the region (Black Sea Ring Highway and development of the Motorways of the Sea of the BSEC region), in enhancing energy security and environmental sustainability in the region, in combating all forms of organized crime, terrorism, in preventing and managing natural and man-made disasters, in upgrading communication and information technologies in the region and in facilitating the movement of peoples, including representatives of the business communities and lorry drivers, between the EU and BSEC countries. BSEC is interested in using the EU experience in promoting regional cooperation *inter alia* through the creation of clusters with the view to unite efforts of industry, universities and research centers. With this aim, BSEC suggests to develop together with the EU a respective “road map” for cooperation and establish special ad hoc joint working groups for practical implementation. BSEC is also interested in starting talks at an expert level, to identify means and ways of cooperation in the areas of common interest.

We express our gratitude to the Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the people of Ukraine for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of this important Meeting, held back-to-back with the Ministerial Meeting for launching the Black Sea Synergy process.