



## **Guidelines for BSEC Ministerial Declaration Writing**<sup>1</sup>

### ***General Research and Advisory Delegate Information***

As soon as you receive your country assignment, you should begin your research. You may divide your research into three categories:

- Research on the history of the BSEC Organisation, on the structure and functioning of its bodies, on the role that it plays in Regional Politics, especially in relation to the European Union.
- Research on your assigned country's background, its political and economic system, political structure and current political affairs, its culture and values.
- Research on your assigned country's policies with regard to the certain topic, on country's viewpoints in all relevant issues.

Bear in mind that many of your sources may be biased. If possible, try to find independent confirmation of the information you have obtained, from more than one source. Moreover, when gathering information it is important to distinguish between opinions and facts. Facts are used to support opinions. Whenever possible use facts to support your arguments. Eventually, you will be presenting an opinion and must defend it against other opinions, thus it is crucial for you to be familiar with different viewpoints and opinions on your topic. Become familiar with arguments that are different from the one your country is likely to take on your topic. Remember, it is up to you to decide which particular points you want to focus on in your own arguments and this decision needs to be guided by your

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<sup>1</sup> This document was inspired by and based on the "Guideline for Communique Writing" of ThessISMUN ([www.thessismun.org](http://www.thessismun.org)).

country's position. Bear in mind that you should speak in the name of the country that you are representing. **Study already adopted decisions on your topic to find out what issues tend to be discussed when your topic is debated.**

Here are some common Internet resources to help you get started:

- Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation official website. <http://www.bsec-organization.org/Pages/homepage.aspx>
- European Commission Transport Policy on the Motorways of the Sea. [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/maritime/motorways\\_sea/motorways\\_sea\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/maritime/motorways_sea/motorways_sea_en.htm)
- International Centre for Black Sea Studies. <http://www.icbss.org/>
- The Permanent Missions of the United Nations member states. <http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml>
- The USA Department of State as well as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office websites contain *country profiles* sections. [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) and [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)
- The Central Intelligence Agency (World Factbook) website, contains reports on economic, political and social conditions of most of the countries in the world. [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)
- The International Crisis Group website. [www.icg.org](http://www.icg.org)

Finally, if you have tried these different resources and still face difficulties finding information, you may ask for help from the **RhodesMRC Board**.

***Furthermore it is of critical importance to:***

- Review the RhodesMRC Rules of Procedures for the Council of Ministers. These rules are intended to create a level playing field allowing each delegate/country to accomplish their individual goals in speaking about their policies while maximizing opportunities for the group to reach consensus on the issue.

- Remember it is not your opinion you are illustrating and defending, but the country's you are representing. The Secretary General of the Council, along with the Deputy Secretary General, will be responsible for the implementation of the official policy of each state by its representative in the Council. Delegates that diverge from their assigned country's official policy will be advised towards the correction of their policy and provided with the appropriate material on this extent by the Secretary General of the Council.
- Be aware of different political perspectives.
- Attain a good knowledge of your allies and your opposition. In order to adequately represent your country during the model, you will need to interact with delegates from other countries. Knowing their positions on your topic will help you predict their arguments during debate. This will be very useful in helping you decide in advance where it might be useful to seek cooperation or compromise.
- Congratulate the members of your delegation (and fellow delegates representing different countries and viewpoints) on their contributions to the council sessions.

### ***Ministerial Declaration Writing and Submission***

Ministerial Declarations are official documents that have been passed by the Council of Ministers aiming to address a particular problem or issue. Ministerial Declarations are actions of the BSEC submitted in draft form under the sponsorship of the delegations working in a council. Primarily, Declarations address the general concern, as well as particular worries, to a given situation and recommended action to be taken by the members of the BSEC. Ministerial Declarations are (only) considered to be binding for the member states, since they are adopted by consensus based on good faith and a strong concern for the common good.

Draft Ministerial Declarations are Ministerial Declarations as they are drafted and passed in Council sessions that are taking place during the RhodesMRC Conference. The Ministerial Declarations have to be adopted in absolute consensus.

It is important to acknowledge that in drafting a Ministerial Declaration wording will influence its acceptance among fellow delegates. The draft Ministerial Declarations should be clear and concise. Consequently, the better the substance of a Draft Ministerial Declaration is the higher the success of achieving consensus in the council session. The main aim of Ministerial Declaration writing is to put down ideas in a clear and concise manner in accordance with the provided format.

**A regular Ministerial Declaration of the BSEC has the following pattern:**

#### **Draft Declaration**

**The Heading**, identifying the type of the meeting (Ministerial or Heads of State and Government Summit) in which the Declaration is introduced.

**Numbering:** the sequel number of each Draft Declaration, presented by the Chairman-in-Office along with the submission of the Declaration by the Sponsor, i.e. Draft Ministerial Declaration. **BS/ENM/MD/A1(07-09-2011)**, which indicates the **first [1]** Draft Ministerial Declaration **[MD]**, on topic Area **A [A]**, submitted in the **BSEC** Meeting of the Council of Ministers of **Energy [BS/ENM]**, on the **7<sup>th</sup> of September 2011**. Respectively, in case there is a Draft Ministerial Declaration submitted in the Council of Ministers of **Transport [TM]**, it should be numbered as follows: **BS/TM/MD/A1(07-09-2011)**.

#### **Sample of a Draft Ministerial Declaration**

Draft BSEC Ministerial Declaration

on/upon/with/concerning...*[title of the Declaration]*

Rhodes, Greece, 21 October, 2011

1. *We, the Ministers of ... of the BSEC Member States, having gathered in Rhodes on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2011, to discuss...*

2. *At our meeting today...*
3. *We are committed to the continuing success of the...*
4. *We welcome the adoption...*
5. *We fully support the negotiations...*
6. *We strongly condemn terrorism...*
7. *In response to the call by the government of ...*
8. *We welcome the initiative...*
9. *We express our concerns about ...*
10. *We express / our deep appreciation...*
11. *We fully agree with the statements...*
12. *We recognize the need/ the importance...*
13. *We reaffirm our determination...*
14. *We reiterate our commitment to the...*

*Each clause is numbered (1-...). All the clauses end with dot. Each clause may contain more than one sentence.*

### **Amendments**

After Draft Ministerial Declarations have been submitted to the Council for discussion, they may be modified through changes known as amendments, suggested by the delegates of the Council, representing adjusted perspectives or proposals on the topic under discussion. Phrasing and purpose of the amendment should complement the Draft Ministerial Declaration.

There are two types of amendments as outlined in the **Rules of Procedure** as well:

1. **Non Substantive Amendments**, correcting grammatical, spelling or formatting mistakes will be automatically adopted without vote from the Council, at the discretion of the Chairman-in-Office.
2. **Substantive Amendments**, which are due to change the substantial meaning of the Ministerial Declaration shall be unanimously adopted by the Council.

### ***Reports of the Meetings of the Council of Ministers***

All Declarations having been adopted by consensus during the various Meetings of the Council of Ministers (Energy, Transport) are notified, through a Report to the next scheduled Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. This Report should not be confused with the Declaration of the Council. The Reports have a procedural/informative character, aiming to update the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs with the latest developments and decision, concerning specific issues and areas of cooperation of the BSEC Member States.

This Report summarizes the most important minutes of the Meeting and is adopted by consensus. A Draft Report is prepared by the Chairmanship of the Council and is distributed to the Members of the Council. Although consensus is needed for the adoption of this Report, introducing such a Report is supposed to be a non-debatable procedural matter. The Chairman-in-Office will decide whether the Report is going to be distributed to the Council or He/She will automatically approve its adoption, depending on the available time between the adoption of the Draft Declaration and the Adjournment of the Session.