

**JOINT STATEMENT<sup>1</sup>**  
**of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the BSEC Member States on the occasion**  
**of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Summit of the PABSEC**  
**Istanbul, 16 May 2018**

We, the leaders of the parliaments of 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, have met in Istanbul, on 16 May 2018, on the occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), and declare that:

1. The strong political will and overwhelming support from the parliaments of the BSEC Member States, with which the PABSEC was established 25 years ago, continues to be consolidated based on the shared interests of good-neighbourliness and for the benefit of the peoples of the Black Sea Region.
2. We highly value the positive experience accumulated during the existence of the Assembly, and reaffirm our full commitment to the spirit and principles enshrined in the Declaration on the Establishment of the PABSEC (1993) and the subsequent statutory documents on the basis of which our cooperation enhances, interaction deepens and friendly ties are maintained. The principles laid down in the Declaration continue to be relevant today and we declare our full commitment to them.
3. Today, we have a particular responsibility to do our utmost to ensure that the present and the future of the peoples of the wider Black Sea region meet their expectations and aspirations. The Black Sea region is an important region in the world with its great potential to become a region of peace, prosperity and stability. The efforts for finding flexible compromises and identifying common interests have always been the basis of the “PABSEC spirit”. The Black Sea is the symbol, which unites and should bring peoples and countries closer together rather than divide them.
4. We declare our willingness to continue providing extensive assistance to the further development of multilateral cooperation in the Region and greater coordination of activities in order to more efficiently be involved in the service of peace, cooperation and economic prosperity for all the peoples in the Region on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> *Adopted unanimously in Istanbul on 16 May 2018*

5. We acknowledge that important and rapid changes are taking place in the world, and there are many complex issues, the solution of which requires mutual efforts and cooperation. We reaffirm the importance of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the need to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as well as targets adopted at the UN General Assembly in 2015. The Agenda of the Assembly is broad and diverse. More than 160 recommendations on the issues of current concern for the Region have been adopted. We invite all parliaments to take further steps to jointly implement these and future recommendations that will help implement SDGs and related targets in our region.
6. We welcome the ongoing multidisciplinary, practical and result-oriented cooperation among the BSEC family of institutions at the intergovernmental (Organization of the BSEC), financial (Black Sea Trade and Development Bank), business (BSEC Business Council), academic (International Centre for Black Sea Studies) levels and with the participation of BSEC Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners. We believe that the promotion of dialogue and coordination among all participants of the BSEC process contributes to building a harmonious environment for common prosperity.
7. The objective of the PABSEC is to become one of the important international parliamentary assemblies. We welcome the increasing of contacts with regional and international parliamentary structures and believe that this will give an additional impetus to the work of the Assembly.
8. We feel pride that the interaction among the countries in the Region is a crucial component of the European and also global process of promoting the principles of cooperation. The most valuable asset of the Black Sea region is the peoples living here with different cultures and traditions. Therefore, it is necessary to make every effort to strengthen peace and stability in the Region for the benefit of the peoples and countries of the Region.
9. We express our sincere gratitude to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for the successful organization of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Summit of the PABSEC in Istanbul, the birthplace of the Assembly, and for the traditional hospitality extended to us.

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*During the adoption of the Document, the Republic of Turkey expressed special opinion (attached).*

## **Opinion by the Republic of Turkey**

The Republic of Turkey, as a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, emphasizes its commitment to the establishment of a sustainable, lasting and just peace in the Middle East. Turkey believes that peace is only possible by the realization of a two-state solution with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders and compliant with legitimate international decisions and thinks that unilateral steps taken in the Palestinian Territories against international law and the established parameters will deeply damage the grounds for peace in the Middle East. Turkey strongly condemns the massacre carried out by Israel as a result of disproportionate use of force towards innocent Palestinians participating in peaceful demonstrations and calls for restraint in the region.