

DECLARATION
***on the Fifth Anniversary of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea
Economic Cooperation - PABSEC***

The Presidents of the parliaments of the Member Countries of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation : Republic of Albania, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine, who gathered in Bucharest on the occasion of the Eleventh PABSEC General Assembly on 23-25 June 1998,

- re-affirming their commitment to the principles and objectives embodied in the Declaration on the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly, adopted on 26 February 1993 in Istanbul, in particular the promotion of pluralistic democracy, based on respect for human rights; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice;*
- welcoming the signing of the Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation - BSEC;*
- expressing the will of the parliaments of the member countries to provide full support to the Black Sea cooperation process, as a major tool towards the achievement of prosperity and stability in the region, as well as a significant contribution to the emerging new European architecture;*

hereby agree on the present Declaration adopted by the General Assembly:

1. The Parliamentary Assembly has come a long way in a short period of time. The five years have amply demonstrated that the Parliamentary Assembly occupies a unique place, offering not only a democratic forum for inter-parliamentary dialogue, but also maintaining an essential link between governments and peoples through their elected representatives.

The PABSEC Fifth Anniversary takes place at a crucial stage in the development of the Organisation. The growing global economic interdependence, the positive recent political and economic changes in the region, the re-establishment of the legendary Silk Road, the region's vital role as a trade link between Europe, Central Asia, Middle East and the Mediterranean open new opportunities for cooperation and development of linkages both within the region and with the

outside world, testifying to tremendous strategic importance of the Black Sea region in the coming years.

At the same time the trend towards increasing democratisation gives the national parliaments greater leverage on the member countries' policies on the Black Sea process through legislative means.

2. *The transformation of the BSEC into a regional economic organisation is opening broad perspectives to the regional integration process, strengthening its institutional and legal status and enhancing its prestige on the international arena. Fully aware of its responsibilities, the Parliamentary Assembly reiterates its commitment to speed up the ratification process of the Charter.*

The Parliamentary Assembly re-states its full support to the actions undertaken by the BSEC in order to forge closer economic cooperation in the area and to deepen the relations with the European Union and other European institutions so that no dividing lines are drawn on the European continent.

The Parliamentary Assembly has taken the lead in elaborating a concrete pattern of PABSEC-BSEC interaction. PABSEC and BSEC are natural dimensions of the same process. This reality was clearly reflected in the Moscow Declaration of the Heads of State or Government which designed practical guiding principles for the reinforcement of this cooperation.

3. *The forging of stronger economic ties constitutes the central pillar of the Organisation, which will be significantly reinforced by the implementation of major multilateral projects such as:*
 - *the harmonisation of the legislation of the member countries by putting into place laws and regulations - particularly in the fields of foreign trade regimes, banking and finance, investment protection and visa formalities - leading to the expansion of multilateral economic cooperation and the establishment of the BSEC Free Trade Area, duly observing the obligations vis-à-vis the European Union, the World Trade Organisation and other international agreements;*
 - *the integration of the member countries' transportation networks into the Trans-European Transport Network connected to Central Asia and the Middle East;*
 - *the interconnection of the power distribution and telecommunications systems of the member countries;*
 - *the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea;*
 - *the promotion of the joint policies combating organised crime, smuggling and illegal drug trafficking.*
4. *The successful implementation of the goals of the Charter depends largely on the degree of cooperation among the PABSEC, BSEC, BSEC Business Council, Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the Regional Centers, on their ability to work together on major concrete projects, leading to the rapprochement of the*

countries in the region, to their sustainable development and to the acceleration of their integration into the European and global structures.

At the same time, the cooperation among the Governors and Mayors of the Black Sea Capitals, initiated by the Parliamentary Assembly, and the potential and creative energy of the academic community and the young people should be better utilised within the Organisation.

5. *Close cooperation with relevant regional parliamentary and governmental organisations is of considerable importance for the attainment of the Organisation's goals. These contacts should be focused to a greater degree on practical projects, speeding up the Pan-European integration and enriching the vision of the future new Europe.*
6. *Lasting peace and stability constitute a basic prerequisite for the implementation of the whole process. Therefore, parliamentary diplomacy should be part and parcel of the joint efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the Black Sea region, thus fostering the climate of understanding, good neighbourhood and peace.*

Signed in Bucharest on 24 June 1998.

ALBANIA	<i>Mr. Skender Gjinushi</i>
ARMENIA	<i>Mr. Khosrov Haroutyunian.</i>
AZERBAIJAN	<i>Mr. Aslan Abbasov*</i>
BULGARIA	<i>Mr. Yordan Sokolov.</i>
GEORGIA	<i>Mr. Giorgi Gachechiladze *</i>
GREECE	<i>Mrs. Maria Arsenis*</i>
MOLDOVA	<i>Mr. Dumitru Diakov</i>
ROMANIA	<i>Mr. Petre Roman.</i>
ROMANIA	<i>Mr. Ion Diaconescu.</i>
RUSSIA	<i>Mr. Gennady Seleznev</i>
RUSSIA	<i>Mr. Yegor Stroyev</i>
TURKEY	<i>Mr. Hikmet Cetin</i>
UKRAINE	<i>Mr. Olexander Chrodeyev*</i>

* On behalf of the President of the Parliament