

**DECLARATION OF THE ASSEMBLY**  
**ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT**  
**OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION**  
**OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

1. We, the members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), gathered in Baky, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 27 November 2012 on the occasion of the Fortieth PABSEC General Assembly, solemnly welcome the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, which will be marked on 26 February 2013.
2. We affirm our belief in the concept of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which is based on good will and a mutual commitment to strengthen constructive cooperation in the region in order to meet the common goals and principles of the Declaration of the Istanbul Summit, the Bosphorus Statement, and the Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.
3. We reaffirm our determination to further promote the development of interparliamentary cooperation and dialogue in the BSEC region with the aim of ensuring the coordination of the national parliaments in resolving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, as well as attaining the global aim of achieving a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.
4. We declare our full support for the action taken by the BSEC to develop closer economic cooperation in the region and, in this regard, we welcome the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of the BSEC on 26 June 2012, which emphasizes the importance of parliamentary contribution to all BSEC activities.
5. We state that in the course of the past 20 years the PABSEC has undisputedly demonstrated the necessity and expediency of its existence and activities as a

body that ensures fruitful cooperation and effective communication between the parliamentarians of our countries. We believe that the central challenge facing us today is to ensure that – within the framework of good-neighborly relations, cordiality and partnership between the countries – the integration processes in the region represents a positive factor in the effort to bring together all the peoples in the region and to work towards achieving their prosperity.

6. By virtue of the activities of the PABSEC, there is stable cooperation between the parliamentarians of the twelve BSEC Member States, which enables them to have ongoing and open discussions on various issues of concern to our peoples.
7. For twenty years, the PABSEC has accomplished considerable work on the implementation of the priority tasks and objectives of the regional cooperation; on the approximation of the national laws and sharing of legislative experience; and on the development and application of principles, rules and procedures of international and national laws in specific areas, with the aim to better achieve the desired goals and measurable results at the national, regional, and global levels.
8. Within the framework of the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee, the PABSEC has adopted Recommendations in the following priority areas: improving customs regulations; promoting environmental health and environmental protection of the Black Sea; facilitating the development of the banking, trade, and business sectors; enhancing cooperation in the sphere of transport; development of tourism; promoting and protecting investments; development of small and medium enterprises; development of communications; enhancement of economic integration in the BSEC region; the role of new technologies; shaping a European Economic Space; facilitating the movement of people and goods across borders; accelerating the fight against economic crime; alternative energy resources; improving the prospects of fisheries; cooperation in the field of energy; development of sea transport; management of water resources; food security; safe and effective use of genetically modified organisms; improvement of the taxation system; and the role of public-private partnerships for sustainable economic development.
9. In the framework of the PABSEC Legal and Political Affairs Committee, the Assembly has elaborated on and adopted the key Recommendations on: legislative harmonization; enhancement of democratic institutions; simplifying visa regimes; eliminating consequences of natural calamities and man-made disasters; the fight against organized crime; harmonization of foreign trade regimes; providing a resolution to the problem of double taxation; combating human trafficking; transport systems integration; reinforcing the rule of law and political stability; globalization; enhancing good governance; strengthening the institution of the Ombudsman; the role of local authorities and civil society in strengthening the regional cooperation; addressing the global climate change;

the role of parliaments in fight against international terrorism; the rational management of natural resources; regulation of civil aviation; the role of parliaments in the legislative support for accelerating scientific and technological progress; and enhancement of cybersecurity.

10. In the framework of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee, the Assembly adopted the Recommendations on such important issues as: ratifying and implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Field of Culture, Education, Science and Information; the joint research program on the History of the Black Sea Basin; protection of cultural heritage; improvement of the education system; mutual recognition of diplomas and reform of higher education; the rights and social protection of refugees and displaced persons; youth cooperation; cooperation of academic circles; protection of children; cooperation in the field of public health; the role of mass media in promoting cooperation; the role of culture in the development of the region; the fight against poverty; cooperation in the field of cultural tourism; nurturing dialogue among cultures; improvement of quality of life; promoting social cohesion; shaping ecological awareness; protection of women against violence; lifelong learning, and reforming social security systems.
11. Giving due consideration to the recent developments related to climate change on the planet and the new challenges in the field of environmental safety, we emphasize that one of the priorities within the cooperation framework of the PABSEC is the preservation of the environment of the Black Sea region. The joint effort of the BSEC Member States is the only effective measure to prevent environmental and technological disasters that are dangerous not only on a regional scale, but also at the global level.
12. We acknowledge that, in today's world, mutually beneficial cooperation in the economic sphere is not possible without a more careful study of our peoples' cultural traditions and mutual respect for our peoples and their heritage. The PABSEC calls for a study of the cultural heritage of all the peoples in the region and its promotion in the international arena. This goal should be facilitated by actively promoting cooperation in the field of science and higher education, since a well-educated young generation is key to the sustainable development of the BSEC Member States.
13. We affirm our commitment to work together to address the key issues in the BSEC region by addressing weaknesses in the framework of regional cooperation, drawing attention to the need for greater coordination in the growing number of bilateral and multilateral initiatives aimed at fully harnessing the potential of the Member States, as well as giving these initiatives more innovative and sustainable character. At the same time, we note with concern that unresolved conflicts and the consequent negative effects threaten sustainable development and hinder the process of regional integration.

14. In this regard, we call on the leaders of the Member States of the Organization of the BSEC for closer and more productive cooperation that produces measurable positive results for the economic development of our countries. Such cooperation can be effected through implementation of existing mutually beneficial joint projects aimed at strengthening multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region and also through the creation of new collaborative projects.
15. We recognize that more productive and closer coordination between the PABSEC and the Organization of the BSEC, the BSEC Business Council, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies is a priority. We believe that stronger coordination among these bodies is the most effective means of achieving the proactive participation that is essential if our countries and our peoples are to successfully meet the challenges ahead.
16. We resolve to make every effort to ensure that the PABSEC evolves into a more effective instrument for addressing the priority tasks by equipping it with the necessary resources and tools to implement the adopted Decisions and Recommendations.
17. In this regard, we express our confidence that the PABSEC International Secretariat will make optimum use of all available resources in accordance with the rules and procedures agreed upon by the General Assembly, in the interests of all the BSEC Member States, by concentrating on the tasks that conform to the common priorities of our countries.
18. We emphasize our interest in further strengthening and expanding cooperation with international parliamentary assemblies, with special attention to the development of ongoing relations with the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (IPA EurAsEC), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia (PAUBR), the Parliamentary Dimension of the Central European Initiative (PD CEI), Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO), the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (PUOIC); and we stress the need to establish new relationships with other international and regional organizations.
19. Taking the advantage of this historic opportunity, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Turkish Parliament for their continued and invaluable support and assistance in the work of the PABSEC International Secretariat in Istanbul. We express our sincere hope that the Turkish authorities will continue to take the necessary efforts in order to ensure its proper and smooth functioning.

20. We solemnly declare once again that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is an essential forum for the parliaments of the BSEC region, through which we seek to realize our shared aspirations for the promotion of the mutually beneficial cooperation. We urge all countries and peoples of the region to become the creators and crafters of our common future.