

RECOMMENDATION 63/2002*

on the Third General Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals' Association

1. The Third General Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals' Association, held on 29-30 April 2002 in Baku under the auspices of the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly, and upon invitation by the Mayor of Baku, has marked an important step forward in fostering close cooperation among and between the Capital-Cities of the Black Sea Member-States, as a constructive contribution to strengthening neighbouring relations, economic integration, prosperity and stability in the region, to addressing vital issues of local governance, involvement of the citizens in to overall management of the local administration, elaboration and implementation of comprehensive economic and social programs with a direct and positive impact on the overall sustainable development of our countries.
2. The Baku Meeting provided an excellent opportunity to make a fruitful exchange of views on the subject of crucial importance for the local authorities related to improving the quality of life in the Capital-Cities and identifying pragmatic ways and means in order to promote economic strategies, social programs and institutional framework for meeting these challenges.

At the same time, the meeting of the Governors and Mayors with the Prime-Minister, participation by the First Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly and by the Deputy Prime-Minister in the work of the General Assembly clearly illustrated the attention given by the Azerbaijani High Officials to this event as well as to the actions undertaken by the Parliamentary Assembly with a view of involving new actors in the multinational cooperation process in the Black Sea region.

3. Addressing the opening of the General Assembly, Mr. Yashar Aliyev, PABSEC Vice-President, Head of the Azerbaijani PABSEC Delegation and Mr. George Petricu, PABSEC Secretary General, underlined the growing role of the Parliamentary Assembly in promoting the principles and goals of the BSEC organisation, the dynamic development of cooperation among the Capital-Cities, the specific and constructive actions by the Black Sea Capitals' Association to unite the efforts of the local authorities aimed at achieving a higher degree of regional cooperation and further integration into the European democratic institutions. Within this context it was stressed the particular importance attached by the Parliamentary Assembly to the main subject dealt with by the Baku Meeting – improving the quality of life - to the intensive activities by the Governors and Mayors in the fields of transportation, infrastructure, housing, urban planning and rehabilitation, social and cultural facilities, prevention of environmental degradation and expansion of cooperation with relevant European structures.

* *Text adopted by the General Assembly on 13 June 2002 in Tbilisi.
Rapporteur: Mr. Yashar Aliyev, PABSEC Vice-President*

4. **The Parliamentary Assembly:**
 - i. **welcomes** the results of the Third General Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals' Association, the adoption of the Baku Declaration, whereby the Governors and Mayors underlined the significance of the Tenth Anniversary of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, of the consistent support provided by the Parliamentary Assembly to the ongoing process of expanding cooperation among the Black Sea Capitals and of the commitment of the Black Sea Capitals' Association to play an increasing role in protecting the fundamental rights of the citizens, in offering equal opportunities in all sectors and the levels of social life, working out relevant programs towards that end;
 - ii. **stresses** the importance of the program of actions agreed upon by the Governors and Mayors concerning the main direction of their future activities in bringing prosperity and democracy, mainly through:
 - a) *economic strategies:* development of Small and Medium Enterprises generating new jobs and reducing unemployment as an important cause of negative phenomena such as frustration, crime, lack of social cohesion, isolation and marginalisation; developing housing projects, first of all, for the disadvantaged segments of the population; attracting investments for the local projects; building up a modern and efficient transport infrastructure and public utilities; securing high technical standards in construction given the frequent disastrous earthquakes;
 - b) *social programs:* improving public welfare, cultural projects fighting against social exclusion, protection of children, women, people with handicaps, elderly, refugees and migrant workers;
 - c) *institutional framework:* promoting human rights, tolerance and respect for cultural and religious differences, observing ethical standards in local governance in order to fight corruption, trafficking in people, implementing democracy at the closest possible level to the citizens;
 - iii. **expresses** its confidence that the First Black Sea Capitals Festival, on 24-31 August 2002, in Ankara, will go down as a major cultural event aimed at deepening friendly cooperation among and between the Black Sea Capitals;
 - iv. **appreciates** that the setting up by the Ankara Municipality of the special web-site of the Black Sea Capitals' Association opens up new and real opportunities for rapid and efficient communications among the Capital-Cities.
5. **The Parliamentary Assembly**, therefore, recommends the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member-States to provide full support to the endeavours undertaken by the Capital-Cities Administration and the Black Sea Capitals' Association as a significant component of the regional cooperation process.
6. **The Assembly** invites the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.