

RECOMMENDATION 86/2005*

“Cultural, Educational and Social Aspects of EU enlargement: consequences for the Black Sea region”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is fully aware of the significance of the European Union enlargement and its cultural, educational and social aspects.
2. The Assembly welcomes the process of enlargement because it is able to provide to BSEC members states the opportunity to develop closer relations with the European Union, expand and stabilize their relations, ensure their security and provide prosperity. On the other hand, while the Assembly realizes that the European integration will undoubtedly benefit BSEC member states under the same perspective it believes that each BSEC member country should seek to protect its own educational, cultural and social identity.
3. The signing of the Accession Treaty to join the EU by Bulgaria and Romania on 25 April 2005 with the target date for entry as 1 January 2007, opening of the European Union accession negotiations with Turkey scheduled for 3 October 2005, signing in February 2005 of the Moldova-EU and Ukraine Action Plans for the period 2005-2007, as well as conclusion on 10 May 2005 of the Agreement between EU and Russia on “Road Map for Common Spaces” prove the rightness of the consistent approach followed by the Assembly in the recent years to emphasize the issue of BSEC-EU relations on its agenda.

* *Rapporteur: Mr. Vladimir Badalyan, Vice- Chairman of the Committee (Armenia)*

The Assembly debate on 24th November 2005 (see Doc. GA26/CC25/REP/05 – Report on “Cultural, Educational and Social Aspects of EU enlargement: consequences for the Black Sea region”, discussed by the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Twenty Fifth Meeting in Thessaloniki on 5 October 2005 – Rapporteur: Mr. Anastasios SPILIOPOULOS- Greece)

4. The Assembly fully recognises the difficulties faced by the administrations involved and underlines that new legislation, structures and policies have to be developed for the protection of cultural identity and cultural heritage. Within this framework, the Assembly recalls its Recommendations 70/2003 on *“The Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC region”* and 16/1994 on *“Protection of Cultural Heritage of the PABSEC Member Countries”*, stressing the imperative need for comprehensive legal and economic actions with a view to preserve the cultural identity, diversity and rich heritage of the region.

5. The Assembly recalls also that the issue of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states for the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in the region lies within the scope of the 1993 Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information.

6. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation underlines the need to observe the universally recognised legal norms related to education, to accede to and implement international and European conventions, following the examples of other BSEC member states. The Assembly recalls its Recommendations, 10/1995 on *“Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries for the Improvement of Education”*, 31/1998 on *“The Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Diplomas by the BSEC Member Countries”* and 56/2001 on *“The Black Sea Universities Network: Contribution to the BSEC Academic Cooperation.”*

7. It is obvious that the political and economic reforms alone are not sufficient. The link between the economy and social protection must be maintained to ensure public consensus and political reforms since in the long run it is people who are both the initiators and targets of these reforms. In this perspective, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation draws the attention to BSEC member states to its Recommendation 14/1996 on *“Social Protection Measures during the Transition Period in the PABSEC Member Countries”*, 73/2003 *“Black Sea region within the context of the enlargement of the European Union”* and 74/2003 *“The Fight against poverty in the BSEC Member States”*.

8. **Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends** the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC member states:

A. In the field of Education:

- i) **to improve**, educational programs through expansion of human rights and freedoms, elements of ecological education and application of modern information technologies;
- ii) **to ensure** the right of national minorities to education and upbringing in their mother tongue;
- iii) **to rationalize** the system of primary and secondary specialized education and to harmonize with the requirements of the labor market of the BSEC Member States as well as the EU standards;
- iv) **to elaborate** on the state educational indexes;
- v) **to bring** higher education system in the BSEC member states into accordance with the principles of the Bologna process;
- vi) **to participate** in the European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC) and to implement basic provisions of the Lisbon European Council;
- vii) **to applicate** the European Credit Transfer System in higher educational establishments of the BSEC members states;

- viii) **to develop** bilateral and multilateral programmes between the higher educational establishments of Black Sea region and Europe by creating the appropriate conditions for their realization;
- ix) **to facilitate** closer cooperation in the fields of science and technology with other international organisations in order to implement large-scale regional research projects and to generate new synergies in particular with the activities carried out under EU programmes;
- x) **to welcome** the activities of the International Centre of Black Sea Studies and the Black Sea University Network in promoting the academic mobility and cooperation among universities in the Black Sea region;
- xi) **to consider** historical and cultural heritage, tradition and individualities of each member state in the framework of the creation of the common educational space between BSEC and the European Union Member States;

B. In the field of Culture:

- xii) **to encourage** broad cooperation between the BSEC member states in the field of culture;
- xiii) **to assist** in cultural development and preservation of the cultural heritage in the general context of global tendencies and of the European policy;
- xiv) **to cooperate** in the field of culture with the European Union, its members and third countries as well as competent international organizations, UNESCO, etc;
- xv) **to take** specific actions aiming to support cultural activities of the BSEC member states such as:
 - to set up* a PABSEC database and online Forum addressing the twinned villages, towns and cities in the Black Sea Region, to reflect their relevant activities;
 - to create* on the PABSEC website an information exchange section reflecting the cultural events of interest to the Black Sea Region;
- xvi) **to consider** a study on unemployment to be drawn up within the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee, (targeting mainly young and elderly people, in order to capitalize on the common experience and expertise in the field;
- xvii) **to use** on the opportunity of intercultural dialogue between the BSEC, the European Union and the CIS Member States in order to prevent and resolve the conflicts;

C. In the field of Social Affairs:

- xviii) **to implement** programmes in the field of protection of social rights, in line with the European Social Charter and other European and International legal instruments;
- xix) **to create** a network of social rehabilitation centres;
- xx) **to improve** the effectiveness of the territorial agencies for social services, the State Labour Inspection and the State Employment Services;
- xxi) **to carry out** the work for harmonization of the Labour Code and social insurance legislation of the BSEC Member States with the EU legislation;
- xxiii) **to establish** complex centres of social services;

9. **The Parliamentary Assembly** invites the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider its Recommendation.