



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

Doc.: GA53/CC52/REC169/19

RECOMMENDATION 169/2019¹
“Pension Systems in the BSEC Member States”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) recognizes that the pensions for older women and men are the most widespread form of social protection in the world and a key element in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The social welfare sustainability is a tool to prevent and reduce poverty and inequality, helping people to cope with the major risks of life and to better adapt to changing economic, political, demographic and social conditions.
2. In this context, the PABSEC recalls its numerous Recommendations on issues related to social interest: Recommendation on Improving social, economic and civil rights of people with disabilities (77/2004); Improvement of the quality of life in the BSEC Member States (100/2007); Social cohesion within the BSEC Member States: contribution to political stability (103/2008); The impact of globalization on the social policies in the BSEC Member States (106/2008); Social Welfare Reforms in the BSEC Member States (130/2012); Youth Unemployment and Employment policies in the BSEC Region: the need to empower the Young Generation (139/2014); Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Irregular Migrants in the BSEC Member States – Social Aspects (151/2016); Social Protection and Benefits for Young Families in the BSEC Member States (160/2017).
3. The PABSEC, conscious of the efforts made by the governments of the BSEC Member States to enhance the viability of their pension systems, is concerned about the safeguarding of adequate pension levels offering pensioners a decent standard of living.
4. The PABSEC considers that the pensioners require special protection, in accordance with Article 23 of the European Social Charter, where social protection should provide elderly persons with “*adequate resources enabling them to lead a decent life and play an active part in public, social and cultural life*”.

¹ Assembly debate on 21 June (see Doc.: GA53/CC52/REP/19, Report of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee on *Pension Systems in the BSEC Member States*, discussed in Baku, on 19 June 2019; Rapporteur: Mr. Zaza Gabunia, Member of the Committee, Georgia).

5. The PABSEC shares the global approach that focuses on the implementation of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly Goal 1.3: “*implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors (ILO Recommendation No. 202, 2012), and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable*” with its 13 targets. This framework - appropriately tailored to each country’s specific political, legal, economic, social and cultural circumstances - needs to be collaboratively adopted and implemented by the parliaments of the BSEC Region.

6. The PABSEC considers that the parliaments and the parliamentarians are primarily responsible for providing adequate social protection to their citizens. As pillars of democratic society, national parliaments are entrusted with the primary task of enacting laws, rules and regulations that foster good governance within societies. One such task is promoting social wellbeing, protection and security for one of the most vulnerable segments of society: the elderly people in retirement.

7. The PABSEC reaffirms its commitment to ensure that the parliaments of the Member States take individual and collaborative actions towards more efficient initiatives in the field of social protection for elderly people. Such initiatives could promote effective cooperation in concluding bilateral and multilateral social security agreements, to guarantee the social coverage of the mobile workers.

8. The PABSEC appreciates the efforts made by the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) within the framework the “BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership”, adopted in Istanbul in June 2012, which explicitly refers to the promotion of the social well-being as a major BSEC priority.

9. The Assembly believes that the current economic and social circumstances call for concerted efforts, among which regional cooperation in the field of social policies would be of great value. Further cooperation within BSEC in building and promoting social goals will constitute a means of broadening the common values, interests and objectives, in line with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and with the major international instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO social security standards, in particular the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952.

10. Therefore, the PABSEC recommends that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:

At national level

- i. *implement* pension systems which reflect the complexity of today’s work situations and lifestyles;
- ii. *initiate or complete pension reforms* that maintain both the long-term viability of systems (including when facing future financial and economic crises) and pension adequacy;

- iii. *adapt* the retirement age and the level and period of contributions, taking account of increased life expectancy;
- iv. *regard* granting state-guaranteed pensions to elderly people as one of the priorities of the social policies, ensuring that minimum benefits should be sufficient to meet the essential needs of the pensioners;
- v. *bring* national legislation in conformity with international social security standards by acceding to the relevant international legal instruments, particularly those of the Council of Europe and the International Labour Organization;
- vi. *explore* ways to protect the savings of pensioners against the effects of inflation;
- vii. *stimulate* a strong partnership between governments and non-government organizations designed to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated and multipurpose approach to the social welfare needs of the pensioners;

At regional level

- viii. *provide* systematic regional data on social wellbeing and practices in policy responses to retirement system;
- ix. *invite* the Member States to facilitate the exchange of effective guidelines and regulatory procedures in the promotion of the pension policies;
- x. *encourage* regional social policies, including cooperation on social protection issues and promote regional strategies for the implementation of a minimal social protection package;
- xi. *work* within the UN system for a social protection basis or a minimum social protection package, ensuring access to basic social services, accommodation and protection of the poor and vulnerable social segments;
- xii. *align* national legislation and economic policies across the Region, to create a sustainable policy framework for social protection;
- xiii. *recommend* that all the relevant UN departments, funds and programs should contribute to the development of strategies aimed at strengthening social policies;
- xiv. *promote* further cooperation among the BSEC countries in the field of social security, in particular, by concluding bilateral and multilateral social security agreements, to guarantee the social coverage of the mobile workers;
- xv. *recommend* consultations among the BSEC Member States on various platforms and exchange of their relevant experiences and best practices.

11. The PABSEC invites the BSEC Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.