

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Doc. GA19/CC18/REC61/02

**RECOMMENDATION 61/2002\***  
**ON**  
**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND**  
**CULTURAL LIFE**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation reaffirms its belief that advancement of women and achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights, a condition for social justice and a prerequisite for genuine democracy. Empowerment of women and improvement of women's social, economic and political status are essential for the attainment of sustainable development in all areas of life.
2. In this respect, the Parliamentary Assembly fully shares the fundamental principles set forth in the universal human rights instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman, etc., ensuring the equality of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes adoption by the PABSEC Member Countries of relevant legislation and establishment of institutional framework, and at the same time emphasises that the main concern today is the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality. The "glass ceiling" is continuing to bar women's advancement in business, government and politics.
4. The situation is worsened with the profound political and economic changes taking place in the transition countries during the last decade, having strong impact on the status of women, where feminisation of poverty is a significant problem. In the plight of poverty, women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs. The Parliamentary Assembly is convinced that in the countries that are undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation, the skills of women, if better utilised, could constitute a major contribution to the economic life.

---

\* *Rapporteur: Mr. Malkhaz Baramidze (Georgia).*

*The Assembly debate on 13 June 2002 (see Doc. GA19/CC18/ REP/02 – Report on “Woman’s Participation in the Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Life” discussed by the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Eighteenth Meeting in Sofia on 27 March 2002; Rapporteur: Mrs. Lilia Grygorovytch).*

*Text adopted by the Nineteenth General Assembly in Tbilisi on 13 June 2002.*

5. Women's access to decision-making is extremely limited both at national and international levels. Although women make up at least half of the electorate in all the countries and have the right to vote and hold office, as well as despite the widespread movement towards democratisation in the BSEC Member Countries, women are largely underrepresented at all levels of legislative and executive bodies. This fact, by itself raises a real issue of true democratic representation and constitutes an inadmissible, serious democratic deficit. Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible.
6. **Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends** the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States:

**A. At the legislative level**

- i. **to take** new decisive legal measures in order to eliminate discrimination against women in the political, economic, social and cultural life by any person, organisation or enterprise;
- ii. **to enact** effective legislation covering the legal gaps related to equality between men and women, thereby fostering and strengthening democratic transformation in the Member Countries;
- iii. **to harmonise** the national legislation with the existing European and international standards, within the EU integration process;
- iv. **to strengthen** the national institutional framework, securing advancement of women at the highest possible level of State bodies, providing the opportunity to influence the decision-making process, guaranteeing them the *de facto* enjoyment of human rights and freedoms on the basis of equality with men;
- v. **to undertake** legislative and administrative reforms to give women equal rights with men to economic resources, including access to ownership and control over the land and other forms of property and natural resources;
- vi. **to develop** national legislation with an implementation and enforcement mechanism, guaranteeing the minimum level of pay to all employed persons, securing the subsistence minimum, which must include possibility to healthy physical existence and to basic needs for social, cultural and civil life.

**B. In the labour market and economic field**

- i. **to take** all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment, ensuring the free choice of profession and employment, the same rights to the same employment opportunities, the right to promotion, the right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, the right to social security;
- ii. **to eliminate** discriminatory practices by employers on the basis of marriage or maternity, age, disabilities etc. with respect to hiring, retention and promotion, and vocational training of women in all sectors;
- iii. **to work out and implement** specific programs for women on technical assistance, advisory services, training, retraining and career-development connected with the entry to the market economy, ensuring that all women have

equal access to the labour market, managerial, entrepreneurial, technical and leadership training;

- iv. **to promote** gender-sensitive policies to empower women as equal partners with men in technical, managerial and entrepreneurial fields and to promote women's small businesses, and other employment opportunities.

**C. In the field of political decision-making**

- i. **to remove** all direct and indirect barriers and to ensure larger woman's election to the National Parliaments, participation in Governments and other public institutions;
- ii. **to encourage** women's involvement in the activities of political parties, non-governmental organisations, academic and business communities;
- iii. **to support** endeavours by the national-level women's organisations aimed at increasing women's participation in the political decision-making process in the management of economic, social and cultural activities;
- iv. **to increase** the number of women in the composition of the national delegations to regional and international organisations, including the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the PABSEC and other BSEC Related Bodies.

**D. In the field of media, education, research and international cooperation**

- i. **to ensure** that media promotes the presentation of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women - key actors, contributors to and beneficiaries of the process of development;
  - ii. **to promote** gender equality through women's studies in the research field and implementation of education and training programs for young women, enhancing and broadening their employment opportunities;
  - iii. **to encourage** organisation of bilateral visits, joint events and exchange of experience of women, including parliamentarians, in order to strengthen the regional cooperation in the process of advancement of women;
  - iv. **to support** implementation of specific projects on women's advancement, worked out by the United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, European inter-parliamentary assemblies, as well as non-governmental organisations.
7. **The Parliamentary Assembly** invites the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.

