

RECOMMENDATION 132/2013¹

PABSEC in the Wider Black Sea Region: 20 Years of Regional Cooperation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) prioritizes the need to enhance cooperation in the wider Black Sea region by harnessing the full potential of available resources with the aim to transform the Black Sea region into an area of peace, stability, prosperity, sharing good neighborly relations, mutual respect and dialogue.
2. Looking back on the twenty years of experience, the PABSEC recognizes that there is much to be proud of. Through collective commitments, concerted efforts and converged policies the BSEC member states have continued to tackle issues of prime importance, resulting in expanding networks of friends, partners and allies. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation process has achieved remarkable improvement in regional relations: direct formal or informal contacts have raised mutual confidence and trust, paving the way towards overcoming existing prejudices.
3. The PABSEC acknowledges that over the last twenty years, the BSEC has become an effective platform for promoting enabling mutual partnerships to fulfill their goals and has assumed an important constructive role in developing a new model of regional cooperation that promotes development and prosperity. The BSEC has attained measurable progress in addressing many important issues. A large number of mutually beneficial projects have been elaborated within the BSEC framework towards greater regional integration. When fully functional, these projects will have a profound impact on local economies and societies and also will be of global significance creating new complementarities and enhancing and stimulating cooperation and coordination in the wider Black Sea region.
4. The PABSEC applauds the role of the mutually supportive intergovernmental, inter-parliamentary, banking, business and academic dimensions of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. This collaborative framework constitutes a viable mechanism for meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century and serves as an effective tool for increasing dynamism and practical interaction in the wider Black Sea region.

¹ Assembly debate on 11 July 2013 (see Doc.: GA41/LC41/REP/13, Report of the Legal and Political Affairs Committee “PABSEC in the Wider Black Sea Region: Twenty Years of Regional Cooperation” discussed in Brussels on 25 April 2013; Rapporteur: Mr. Enver Yilmaz, PABSEC Vice-President, Turkey)

5. The PABSEC notes that the national parliaments of the BSEC member states have continually and repeatedly stressed their commitment to promoting and consolidating social and cultural development of the region through cooperative interaction; to achieving a higher degree of regional cooperation promoting democratic values, human rights and the rule of law; and to raising awareness and fostering greater understanding among peoples in the region.
6. To this end, the PABSEC commends the implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership, representing the shared conviction and strong commitment of the member states to set up a roadmap in order to reach efficient solutions to problematic concerns. Mutually supportive efforts of the member states further enhance economic cooperation in the region and establish the foundation of stability, social cohesion, and overall progress.
7. The PABSEC realizes that despite having achieved a great deal already, the BSEC must continue to explore and innovate in order to play an even more positive role in the regional and global arena. For the Black Sea region to fully benefit from its diversity of opportunities, collective effort at all levels is needed to provide a common framework of cooperation that supports economic growth and prosperity.
8. 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. These initiatives have resulted in the realization of stated goals and measurable results at the national, regional, and global levels. In order to effectively address the problems inhibiting cooperation, the PABSEC continues to provide a robust yet flexible framework of cooperation between and among the parliaments of the member states.
9. The PABSEC voices its deep concern over the prevailing unstable political climate and unresolved conflicts that undermine normal flow of multilateral cooperation and hinder the region from enjoying the full benefits of the economic cooperation process. Even countries which are not directly involved in conflicts are negatively impacted by the economic, social and political consequences of regional instability. An effective solution to deal with the range of regional problems is closely linked to efforts to establish lasting peace and stability in the region by political means, thereby countering the logic of force leading to a political impasse.
10. The PABSEC is of the opinion that the parliaments and governments of the BSEC member states must strive to harness their full potential in a collaborative effort to boost economic integration in the Black Sea region. Efficient exploitation of all available resources is aimed at consolidating the process of establishing peace, security and political stability through greater synergy between the member states for the successful realization of their common objectives.
11. The PABSEC appreciates the role of the international community and, particularly, that of the European Union and its constructive support to enhancing cooperation in the wider Black Sea region. Keeping in mind the common vision of the regional cooperation as a part of the global integration process, the PABSEC has to intensified

its relations with international parliamentary institutions, so as to become more active in seeking new mechanisms for international support for the existing initiatives within the BSEC framework.

12. The PABSEC asserts that parliamentarians of the BSEC member states can and must promote the realization of the tremendous national potential for good neighbourly relations, and for unity and cooperation between the states and the peoples in the region. They are obliged to jointly devote themselves to safeguarding peace, stability and prosperity. They are further obligated to promote stronger partnerships for prosperity by establishing a relationship under which disputes among or within the member states are peacefully and honorably resolved, based on the norms and principles of international law.
13. The PABSEC states that in order to reach its overarching objective of creating a harmonious Black Sea region, the parliaments and governments of each member state must obtain the maximum support from their peoples. There is a need to build a stronger foundation of public and non-government support in the wider Black Sea region and to strengthen the regional identity through 'people-to-people' initiatives and programs.
14. To effectively meeting the challenges of the new millennium, the PABSEC has to strengthen its role and reinforce its commitment to become an active player within the wider Black Sea Region in general and in each member state in particular. To this end, it is necessary for the PABSEC to initiate a series of recommendations for the necessary enhancements that will enable it to revitalize and strengthen the role, authority, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Assembly and its International Secretariat.
15. **Therefore, the Assembly recommends** that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC member states:
 - i. *renew* their commitment to economic cooperation in the region as a foundation for consolidating peace, security and political stability;
 - ii. *endorse* the implementation of the provisions related to greater economic cooperation that are embodied in the BSEC Summit Declarations, Declarations of the PABSEC, as well as the Resolutions of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs;
 - iii. *strive* to support and facilitate implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Istanbul Summit on 26 June 2012;
 - iv. *ensure that* political declarations are translated into a clear and specific commitment to the outlined goals and a clearly defined set of realistic measures for their attainment, in order to unlock the region's full potential for regional integration;
 - v. *effectively deploy* existing bilateral and multilateral instruments that are related to deepening of economic cooperation in the wider Black Sea region on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and common interests and accountabilities;

- vi. *ensure* full involvement of the BSEC, PABSEC, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), the BSEC Business Council and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) in the process of identifying solutions for further formulation and implementation of necessary policies based on trust, mutual confidence, and a higher level of political collaboration;
 - vii. *undertake* an in-depth review of the vision, policies and strategies for consolidation of peace and prosperity in order to formulate new and comprehensive approaches to address topical problems and challenges based on an understanding of the region's history and specificity of its role in international relations;
 - viii. *promote* the role of civil society in the Black Sea cooperation process in order to ensure effective social involvement at national and regional levels and to attract qualitative contribution to the endeavors undertaken within the region;
 - ix. *build* a stronger foundation of public and non-government support in the wider Black Sea region to reinforce the regional identity;
 - x. *strengthen* support for the cooperation between the BSEC and the EU and the PABSEC and the European Parliament;
 - xi. *enhance* relations and develop working contacts with European, regional or sub-regional structures to promote mutual exchange of information and to enrich regional cooperation by promoting innovative strategies on a reciprocal basis.
16. **The Assembly invites** the BSEC Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.