

RECOMMENDATION 131/2013*

Development of Cooperation in Salvage and Rescue (SAR) at Sea among the BSEC Member States

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) recognizes that the need to improve the response time and coordination capabilities for search and rescue (SAR) operations within the Black Sea region not only derives from national and international requirements, but also from the increasing volume of shipping activity in the region. Statistical projections indicate that any potential increase in the number of maritime emergencies and the number of people at risk, and correspondingly in the number of SAR operations, will require preventive management strategies by the Black Sea SAR Authorities.
2. The PABSEC values the strengthening of regional cooperation among the BSEC Member States in responding to maritime emergencies and applauds the establishment of regional infrastructure networks.
3. The PABSEC appreciates and supports the activities of the Working Group established in accordance with the Article 7 of the *Agreement among the Governments of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters*.
4. The PABSEC recognizes that improvements to the organization of maritime SAR systems are also closely linked to the coordination of operations to protect the marine environment from dangerous vessel spills. In this eventuality, SAR units will inevitably have an important role to play in counter-pollution operations.
5. The PABSEC endorses the general consensus that Black Sea SAR training courses will improve cooperation in providing a timely and effective response to maritime emergencies in the Black Sea region. Training courses should have a region-specific approach and be

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Assembly debate on 10 July 2013 (see Doc.:GA41/EC40/REP/13, Report of the Economic, Commercial, Technological, and Environmental Affairs Committee, *Development of Cooperation in Salvage and Rescue (SAR) at Sea among the BSEC Member States*, discussed in Yalta on 11 April 2013.

Text adopted by the 41st General Assembly in Sofia on 10 July 2013.

designed to harmonize SAR mission coordination in the Black Sea region, to reinforce the framework for joint operations, and to promote effective and interactive collaboration in successful maritime rescue operations that protect human life. An anticipated follow-up measure is the formulation of a contingency plan for SAR operations in the region.

6. The PABSEC approves of the financing mechanism under which funds for the relevant training courses are established under the common agreements between the BSEC Member States. Such funds can be suitably used for the arrangement and provision of the Black Sea SAR training courses in recognized common training centers, with the support of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in terms of logistics and methodology.
7. Taking into consideration that each BSEC Member has created the national system of prevention and response to marine pollution and search and rescue operations to assist vessels in distress in the appropriate search and rescue regions, and that bilateral agreements on mutual assistance in case of accidents at sea are concluded among the BSEC Member States, PABSEC supports the strategy of merging the efforts of the BSEC Member States to create a unified system of prevention and liquidation of consequences of marine pollution and search and rescue operations to assist vessels in distress in the Black Sea region.
8. The PABSEC recalls its previous Reports and Recommendations:
 - Report and Recommendation 1/1994 on *Improvement of Customs Regulations among the BSEC Member Countries*;
 - Report and Recommendation 12/1996 on *Cooperation in Transportation among the BSEC Participating States*;
 - Report and Recommendation 20/1997 on *Improvement of Customs Regulations of the BSEC Participating States*;
 - Report and Recommendation 45/2000 on *Development of Communications in the Black Sea Region*;
 - Report and Recommendation 84/2005 on *Development of the Transport Infrastructure in the Black Sea Region*;
 - Report and Recommendation 107/2009 on *Development of the Sea Transport in the Black Sea Region: Problems and Prospects*; and
 - Report and Recommendation 117/2010 on *The Condition of the Marine Environment in the Black Sea Region*.
9. The PABSEC welcomes the worthy contribution of international SAR organizations in coordinating crisis management and disaster management efforts, particularly the European Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Industrial Accidents Convention.
10. **Therefore, the PABSEC recommends** that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:

- i) *establish* information exchange mechanisms between the various appropriate national authorities of the BSEC Member States to disseminate practical, medical, technical, and scientific knowledge and expertise;
- ii) *provide* clear and specific information on the national authority that is responsible for the coordination of SAR operations;
- iii) *establish* an information system in the Black Sea region concerning the generation of false alerts in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS);
- iv) *facilitate* the organization of communication systems using a suitable Inmarsat land earth station (LES);
- v) *encourage* close cooperation between all the Member States and their respective military facilities and civil aeronautical authorities;
- vi) *establish* a network for communications by harnessing available internet technologies such as the European Commission's Severe Accident Research NETwork of Excellence (SARNET);
- vii) *consider* the establishment of the interstate integrated information system for supplying the BSEC Member States with operational information on surface conditions in the Black Sea region and the necessary databases;
- viii) *actively promote* joint conferences between the BSEC Member States to disseminate information on search and rescue operations among the resident population in the target areas;
- ix) *prioritize* the implementation of extensive joint SAR training courses in the Black Sea region to safeguard the welfare of human life at sea;
- x) *inform* school children on maritime search and rescue in general and on SAR operations in particular;
- xi) *improve* the efficiency and effectiveness of search-and-rescue operations by adopting the latest revival techniques;
- xii) *promote* the organization of international exercises on maritime salvage to generate interest in marine conservation and SAR initiatives;
- xiii) *strive* for the application of international standards in terms of equipment and warning signs related to SAR operations and the enactment of maritime search and rescue laws;
- xiv) *maintain* an inventory valuation of available physical salvage assets;
- xv) *conduct* tabletop exercises to test the preparedness of physical and organizational institutions involved in SAR operations;
- xvi) *develop* expertise in maritime search and rescue operations and provide informed input to the planning and response networks;
- xvii) *enable* further study of related legal, regulatory, and policy issues;
- xviii) *endeavour* to roles distribution among the BSEC Member States in search and rescue operations in the Black Sea region in order to avoid duplication of efforts, unnecessary expenditure and to release of funds for modern equipment of the BSEC Member States search and rescue services;

- xix) *encourage* the use of volunteer organizations for humanitarian marine rescue by emphasizing their role, the value of their contribution, and the importance of competent trainees to ensure timely and effective rescue operations.
- xx) *establish* more effective and closer collaboration with international SAR organizations, such the European Commission's MIC, NATO's EADRCC, and the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention.

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