

**THE SIXTEENTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE PABSEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**RECOMMENDATION 45/2000\***  
**ON “DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS IN THE BLACK SEA**  
**REGION”**

1. Communications sector has undergone an unprecedented revolution driving the information society and having tremendous implications on each aspect of man's civilisation, being that economic, political, social or cultural. The new technologies facilitate the free movement of ideas, capital, and goods, create opportunities and present challenges.

2. To meet the challenges, the BSEC Member States shall carry out a coherent and pragmatic strategy with the view to equally participate in the information society and the global communications developments. At the same time they should ensure that the communications revolution be harnessed to the interest of social progress and democracy.

Regional co-operation is a factor for successful implementation of any measures aiming to develop communications in the Black Sea. At the same time, the development of communications in the Black Sea region shall be in the core of regional cooperation, given the fact that developed and modern communications is a precondition for the successful implementation of regional projects. Especially the realisation of regional networks, such as the Trans-Asia-Europe, the Black Sea Submarine Fiber Optic Cables etc., facilitates integration among the BSEC countries.

3. The Assembly supports the *Action Plan for the Development of Communications in the Black Sea*, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organisation of BSEC on 27 April 2000 in Chisinau, which provides the framework for the elaboration of regional communications projects.

4. A clear and stable legislative framework should become a priority within the process of the development of communications and the elaboration of regional projects. To this end, the Assembly is determined to closely work with the National Parliaments of the Member Countries, and it is committed to assist in the implementation of the *BSEC Action Plan*, primarily by supporting measures to reduce and gradually eliminate barriers related to the legal, regulatory and procedural aspects of communications development.

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\* Rapporteur: Mr. Barbu PITSIGOI (Romania)

Assembly debate on 29 November 2000 (see Doc. GA16/EC15/REP/00, Report of the Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee on “DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION”, discussed in Bucharest on 13 September 2000; Rapporteur: Mr. Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijan).

*Text adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Yerevan on 29 November 2000*

5. It is the strong belief of the Assembly that the implementation of regional communications programs requires direct involvement of governments, parliaments, the business community and the assistance of international institutions and organisations. Therefore, all the dimensions of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation must intensively cooperate and promote interaction.

6. The Assembly is aware that the legal framework for the future communications programs among the BSEC Member States should meet the requirements of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) - World Trade Organisation WTO rules and the European Union legislation facilitating their integration into the European and world economy.

**I. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore recommends** the National Parliaments and the Governments of the BSEC Member States:

**A. In the field of policy**

i. *to elaborate* development policies and programs in the fields of basic telecommunications, electronic communications (Internet), broadcasting and cable TV providing the infrastructure for the strengthening of the information society;

ii. *to accelerate* the ongoing process of liberalisation of existing networks and services and to open up to competition infrastructures still in the monopoly by scheduling communications commitments, if they have not done so, specifying a clear program for full liberalisation progressively removing foreign ownership restrictions;

iii. *to constructively address* the economic, cultural, social and environmental impact of liberalisation of communications infrastructure and services in view of a growing borderless world for communications;

iv. *to advocate* policies that enable convergence of the telecommunications, information technology and multimedia industries and promote interconnection of networks in a competitive environment in order promote innovation, reduce costs and increase investment;

v. *to take measures* needed to ensure open, transparent, objective, and non-discriminatory procedures which encourage the business community to participate in developing advanced telecommunications services;

vi. *to stimulate* technological innovation and *modernise* research and development (R&D) policies.

**B. In the field of regulation and legal framework**

i. **to provide** a clear and stable legal framework for the development of communications along three main axes:

- *liberalisation* in order to stimulate competition in services and infrastructure
- *harmonisation* in order to support the evolution of a common regulatory framework for access to telecommunications networks and services as well as providing a framework for the development of harmonised standards
- *fair competition* through the application of the WTO/GATS rules to the sector

ii. **to establish** the requisite organisational framework (introduction of an independent regulatory authority and rules governing connections and licensing) and to separate regulatory with operational bodies;

iii. **to ensure** that the regulatory framework continues to meet a range of public interest objectives especially regarding universal access so as to avoid exclusion from information society, to secure personal data protection and democracy;

iv. **to harmonise** their legislation in accordance with the rules of the GATS/WTO and the European Union legislation so that major differences in the liberalisation of national markets do not become entrenched, thereby hampering the implementation of regional projects and in order to facilitate the European integration strategy of the member countries;

v. **to regularly exchange** information on the activities undertaken in the field of communications legislation, its improvement, harmonisation and application.

### **C. In the field of regional cooperation and communications applications**

i. **to elaborate** a common strategy for the development of communications in the region taking into consideration the priorities and concerns of the individual Black Sea states, the provisions of the BSEC Action Plan for the Development of the Communications and the rapidly developing global trends;

ii. with this aim **to provide support** to the joint actions undertaken by the Organisation of BSEC, its Parliamentary Assembly, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, the BSEC Business Council and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies in the identification, promotion and implementation of short and long term communications projects of common interest in the region;

iii. **to stimulate** cross-border cooperation, inter-operation of regional infrastructure (fixed, mobile, satellite) and to participate in regional and international networks especially in the Trans-European Networks with the aim of facilitating communications among the Black Sea countries and beyond them with the rest of the world while fostering integration in the Black Sea;

iv. **to co-operate** in the exchange of information and expertise, technical assistance, application of new and emerging communications technologies to the specific needs of the region, harmonising of procedures and training of personnel with the aim to promote technical cooperation in the region;

v. **to promote** the interests of the Black Sea countries and the region in international organisations (e.g. International Telecommunications Union)

vi. **to stipulate** communication applications in domains of public interest, especially:

i) in the business and economic domain, primarily on -electronic- commerce, financial/banking sector and services for Small and Medium Enterprises

ii) in transportation and mobility

iii) in environmental protection, emergency services and in Maritime Rescue - Coordination Centres at the Black Sea and the rivers around it

iv) in region-wide information networks for schools, universities and training centres

v) in teleworking and Research and Development (R&D) activities

vi) in health information services and telemedicine so as to increase access and quality of data for prevention, diagnosis, and therapy and provide citizens with effective health care in isolated places or emergencies.

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