

RECOMMENDATION 113/2009*

Shaping ecological awareness and behaviour in the BSEC Member States

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is fully aware that environmental protection is an integral part of human welfare and well-being, as well as a necessary precondition for achieving the target of sustainable development, as defined by the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. In their efforts towards this direction, the BSEC Member States are also faced with the need to further develop ecological awareness and behaviour among both the population and decisions-makers.
2. Environmental issues have long been of concern to the PABSEC. The Assembly recalls its Recommendations “Black Sea Environmental Health” (5/1994); Black Sea Environmental Protection: New Challenges (49/2001); Economic aspects of resolving environmental problems in the BSEC Member States (81/2005); Global Climate Change: Consequences for the BSEC Member States (99/2007); as well as the *Final Declaration of the First Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Environmental Protection of the Black Sea* (Istanbul, 1996), jointly organized by PABSEC and PACE, which constituted an important step in reinforcing awareness on the environmental health of the Black Sea region.
3. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that ecological awareness in the BSEC region has increased during the last years and acknowledges the role of regional and international governmental and non-governmental actors in developing numerous programs and projects in the field. In this context, it particularly appreciates the work of the Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution. Nevertheless, it is

* The Assembly debate on 24 November 2009 (see Doc. GA34/CC33/REP/09 – Report on “Shaping ecological awareness and behaviour in the BSEC Member States”, discussed by the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Thirty-Third Meeting in Thessaloniki on 22 October 2009; Rapporteur: Mr. Alexandru Mazare -Romania).

of the opinion that persisting threats to the region's ecosystem and natural resources together with economic growth and rapid changes in BSEC peoples' lifestyles call for radical changes in production and consumption patterns.

4. The Assembly considers that the keys to shaping ecological awareness and behaviour in the BSEC Member States are quality education and information, as well as enhanced public involvement. In this respect, it stresses the importance of intensifying efforts to develop these fields by making use of the opportunities created within the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as well as the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

5. The Assembly also acknowledges the opportunities for cooperation on environmental issues at the regional level, created within the Black Sea Synergy initiative of the European Union and welcomes the launching of the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013 as a useful tool for achieving stronger regional partnerships and cooperation for more sustainable economic and social development of the region.

6. The Assembly appreciates the activities carried out in the field of environmental protection within the BSEC framework through its Working Group on Environmental protection and welcomes the creation of the BSEC Information System for Environmental Protection as an important step towards information exchange and thus towards enhanced cooperation in the field of environment.

7. Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States:

i. *promote* environmental strategies and programs on sustainable consumption and production and ensure their implementation;

ii. *ensure* the necessary infrastructure to enable ecological behaviour of citizens;

iii. *establish* the legal framework for the implementation of the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle;

iv. *provide* economic incentives and technical tools to all stakeholders groups to adjust their current practices to more environmentally sustainable approaches, in all areas and issues;

v. *increase* public awareness on the potential economic gains from more sustainable production and consumption;

vi. *promote* successful stories about application of sustainable measures among the public and decision makers, particularly those generating benefits to local population;

vii. *support* the efforts made by non-governmental organizations in building public awareness by providing them with assistance and training;

viii. *facilitate* public participation in environmental decision-making thus increasing public support to environmental policies;

ix. *cooperate* with the media in addressing environmental issues and further strengthen their capacity in this field;

x. *develop* training schemes targeted at different levels of decision makers regarding environmental issues;

xi. *promote* action-based environmental education by showing to young people alternatives to harmful practices and the positive consequences of pro-environmental action;

xii. *find ways* to personalise the environmental curriculum by giving priority to local concerns and values so as to achieve more positive behavioural outcomes;

xiii. *increase* efforts for the systematic collection of and access to reliable data on pollution, resources use, industrial emissions and environmental impacts of consumption;

xiv. *utilise* the opportunities created by the Black Sea Action Day and the BSEC Day for organizing communication activities and campaigns;

xv. *support* the efforts of BSEC to develop the BSEC Information Exchange Mechanism for Environmental Protection.

8. The Parliamentary Assembly invites the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider its Recommendation.