

THE THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Doc.: GA39/CC38/REC127/12

RECOMMENDATION 127/2012¹

Child protection in the BSEC Member States: an assessment of recent developments

1. Children and adolescents comprise one-third of the world's population. As a group they have a particular set of needs and rights, including the right to be safe from all forms of violence and exploitation. However, their rights are regularly abused or neglected and child protection does not reach all children equally.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is mindful that it is the children of today who will build the region's future. Young people with a good education, democratic ideals, skills and a sense of social responsibility will be tomorrow's adults, able to make a constructive contribution to the economic and social development of their communities. The well-being of children can only be achieved in a society which is free of violence, exploitation and exclusion of children. The protection and empowerment of children is essential if the BSEC Member States are to ensure long-term sustainable development and social cohesion, stability and security at national and regional levels.
3. Recalling its Recommendation 41/1999 on *The legal framework for child protection in the BSEC member countries* and Recommendation 110/2009 on *The need to protect children from commercial exploitation in the BSEC Member States*, the Assembly stresses that child protection should be a matter of priority for the region.
4. The assembly also recalls its Recommendations on: *Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries for the Improvement of Education* (10/1995); *Social Guarantees during the Transition Period in the PABSEC Member Countries* (14/1996); *Youth Cooperation in the Black Sea Region* (24/1997); *Organization of the Children and Youth Festival of the BSEC Member States* (48/2000 and 58/2001); *The Fight*

¹ *Rapporteur*: Mrs. Zhala Aliyeva, Chairperson of the Committee – Azerbaijan.

Assembly debate on 24 May 2012 (see Doc.: GA39/CC38/REP/12, Report of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee on Child protection in the BSEC Member States: an assessment of recent developments, discussed in Sofia, on 21 March 2012; Rapporteur: Mr. Nikolay Kolomeytsev, Member of the Committee, Russia).

Text adopted by the Thirty-Ninth General Assembly in Yerevan, on 24 May 2012.

against Poverty in the BSEC Member States (74/2003); Improving Social, Economic and Civil Rights of People with Disabilities (77/2004); and Migration in the BSEC Member States – Social and Cultural Aspects (109/2009), which approached several aspects of child-related issues.

5. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the progress made by the Member States in acceding to the major international legal instruments in the field of child protection, in line with Recommendation 41/1999, and the significant steps taken towards the reform of their child welfare and protection systems by means of improved legislation and by creating the necessary policy frameworks.
6. However, the Assembly expresses its concern over the persisting child protection issues challenging the region, which include lack of preventive measures, early intervention and alternative services, ineffective systems to provide support to children who are victims of violence, dysfunctional juvenile justice systems, and child poverty, particularly among Roma children and children living in rural areas. Equally alarming are the high numbers of institutionalized children, working children, children with disabilities and special needs, street children, children unregistered at birth, refugee children living in inadequate conditions, abandoned children and children ‘left behind’ by their migrant parents, and school drop-outs.
7. In this context, the Assembly deems it necessary to reconfirm its commitment to child protection with a view to verifying today’s challenges and providing a path to tackle solutions. The Assembly firmly believes that the BSEC Member States should renew their political determination to further improve their child protection systems, in accordance with the principles and guidelines provided by the international standards, while enhancing regional cooperation in this field as an important means of identifying and addressing the specific needs of the children of the Black Sea region.
8. **Therefore, the PABSEC recommends** that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:

At the national level:

- i. *ensure* that policies that directly or indirectly affect children are designed, implemented, and monitored taking into account the principle of the best interests of the child enshrined in the in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments;
- ii. *develop* integrated, comprehensive national action plans for children with clear benchmarks, measurable targets, timelines and review and reporting mechanisms on children’s rights;
- iii. *pay special attention* to the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups, including disabled children, migrant children, children from minorities, separated or unaccompanied children and children without parental care;

- iv. *make coherent policy choices* in the areas of poverty reduction, quality education and human rights, in order to reduce incentives for child labour;
- v. *comply* with the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, so as to guarantee the rights of children from migrant families;
- vi. *ensure* the protection of refugees who are minors, in particular unaccompanied children, with special reference to guardianship and adoption;
- vii. *provide* children with easier access to justice and specialized assistance, and ensure that their age is taken into consideration throughout the judicial proceedings by means of special protective measures;
- viii. *ensure* that the institutionalization or detention of children is a measure of last resort;
- ix. *take all necessary measures* to eliminate all forms of violence against all children in all settings – institutions, schools, the home and the community;
- x. *design* appropriate strategies for partnership between governments and NGOs in matters concerning child protection;

At the regional level:

- xi. *encourage and support* a regional civil society coalition to encourage a credible and consistent voice and partner on child protection issues;
- xii. *create* a regional trust fund for children of the Black Sea Region to sponsor new initiatives and key innovations in child protection;
- xiii. *promote* the formation of a policy institute or conglomerate of academic institutions to support the methodology and process of nationwide scale-up of social services;
- xiv. *enhance* cooperation in the field of children's rights and child protection, particularly in addressing problems of transnational character, such as trafficking in human beings and cyber crime, through further use of the Network of the Liaison Officers on Combating Crime;

At the international level:

- xv. *comply* with the requirements of the relevant resolutions adopted by the international organizations aimed at restoring the violated rights of children, including of those expelled from their native lands as a result of armed conflicts.

9. **The PABSEC invites** the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.