

RECOMMENDATION 136/2013¹

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage - challenge of linking cultural and tourist routes in the countries of the Black Sea region

1. The parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation stresses that the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the BSEC Member States constitutes an invaluable resource for their sustainable cultural, economic and social development. With its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and wealth of natural resources, the Black Sea region offers huge opportunities for leisure, tourism and authentic travel experiences. This potential can be productively harnessed by adopting an innovative approach to cultural tourism.
2. The Assembly believes that in a period of economic crisis, tourism is an increasingly important platform of cooperation for the BSEC Member States and underlines its potential role in post-crisis recovery in terms of jobs, infrastructure, trade and development. At the same time, tourism provides an important means of enhancing culture and creating income that can support and strengthen cultural heritage, cultural production and creativity.
3. In this framework, the Assembly recalls the numerous Reports and Recommendations that it has adopted on issues pertaining to culture and tourism, such as:
 - Recommendation 3/1994 on *Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science, and Information*;
 - Recommendation 6/1994 on *Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the PABSEC Member Countries*;

¹ *Rapporteur*: Mr. Ioan VULPESCU, Chairman of the Committee – Romania

Assembly debate on 18 December 2013 (see Doc.: GA42/CC41/REP/13, Report of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee on *Tangible and intangible cultural heritage - challenge of linking cultural and tourist routes in the countries of the Black Sea region*, discussed in Tbilisi, on 17 December 2013; *Rapporteur*: Mrs. Olena NETETSKA, PABSEC Vice-President in Charge of Financial Matters, Member of the Committee, Ukraine).

Text adopted by the Forty-Second General Assembly in Tbilisi on 18 December 2013.

- Recommendation 18/1996 on *Guidelines on the Program for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Black Sea Region*;
 - Recommendation 32/1999 on *The Development of Tourism in the Black Sea Region*;
 - Recommendation 70/2003 on *The Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region*;
 - Recommendation 80/2004 on *Preservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage of the BSEC Member States*;
 - Recommendation 75/2004 on *Sustainable Development of the Tourism Industry*;
 - Recommendation 83/2005 on *Cooperation in the Sphere of Cultural Tourism in the Black Sea Region*;
 - Recommendation 86/2005 on *Cultural, Educational, and Social Aspects of EU Enlargement: Consequences for the Black Sea Region*;
 - Recommendation 89/2006 on *Dialog among Cultures as a Means to Build Trust among the Nations*;
 - Recommendation 93/2006 on *The Process of Globalization and the Potential Threat to Cultural Diversity*; and
 - Recommendation 119/2010 on *Cultural Cooperation in the BSEC Region: Experiences, Opportunities, and Challenges*.
4. The Assembly notes that, at present, cultural tourism in the BSEC region is developing quite intensively, but rather unevenly. The larger cities — particularly capital cities and historical centers — continue to remain the main tourist attractions. Despite the important progress made recently, many parts of the region continue to face problems related to the development of the tourism sector in general and cultural tourism in particular. Another area of concern is the general financial climate during the ongoing economic crisis, resulting in the decreased funding of cultural heritage-related projects and in lower budgetary allocations for the functioning of museums and other cultural institutions.
 5. The Assembly recognizes that cultural routes have a strong tourism potential that has been largely unexplored. Promoting lesser known destinations, most of them in rural areas, they help to combat the tourist concentration in few sites and mitigate seasonality. Crossing several countries, cultural routes are also a good means to promote the variety and complexity of the BSEC region's cultural tourism offer. At the same time, the development of cultural routes can strengthen the regional identity by recognizing the BSEC region's common heritage and promoting cultural links and dialog, both within the region and with other regions.
 6. In this context, the Assembly commends and supports the work on the development of cultural routes projects in the BSEC region that has been carried out by the BSEC within the framework of the Working Groups on Culture and on Cooperation in Tourism. The Assembly also believes that more concerted efforts are needed to expedite the implementation of these projects and establish the foundation for the development of a network of cultural routes in the region.

7. **Therefore, the PABSEC recommends** that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:
- i. *harmonize* the legislative and institutional framework on tourism in line with the requirements for the sustainable development of the sector and improve regulations on transnational recognition of qualifications in tourism;
 - ii. *lay the groundwork* for developing a successful synergy between the cultural sector and the tourism sector by establishing an adequate policy framework that would ensure effective partnership between stakeholders in both sectors;
 - iii. *build* partnerships between the public and private sector in order to attract investment and improve the quality of the overall cultural tourism experience;
 - iv. *develop* capacity-building activities in tourism and culture management, that will improve the quality of tourism while preserving and enhancing the values of heritage;
 - v. *promote* the restoration, upgrading, modernization and valorization of tourism properties and provide integrated services designed to address the needs of special groups of visitors (such as people with disabilities, the elderly, and professional groups among others);
 - vi. *improve* the national legislation on the conservation and restoration of architectural monuments in order to maintain their character and prevent their alteration;
 - vii. *proritize* the protection of cultural heritage at risk within the region, including continuing actions to counter illicit traffic in cultural properties;
 - viii. *enhance* cooperation on strategies and mechanisms to promote and protect the intangible cultural heritage of the region;
 - ix. *promote* culinary tourism by developing policies to promote quality food, food labeling standards, the use of local products and high quality of service;
 - x. *encourage* local authorities and inhabitants to take responsibility for and to actively participate in the protection and promotion of their heritage and assist them in managing their tourism projects for maximum benefit while limiting any negative impact on their traditions, culture and environment;
 - xi. *expand and intensify* cultural exchanges among the member states in order to increase interactive interest in regional cultural attractions;
 - xii. *collaborate* in exploring possible means of technical assistance from international organizations to support cultural tourism, business development and investment, and cultural tourism awareness programs in the region in order to improve domestic tourism and stimulate entrepreneurial development;
 - xiii. *continue* efforts for facilitation of visa regimes between the member states;

- xiv. *enhance* cooperation among the Member States on the promotion of cultural routes by:
 - a. expediting the process to create an institutional framework for cultural routes projects;
 - b. considering the establishment of a regional network of national and international experts with the mandate to develop a conceptual and operational strategy identify, preserve, sustainably use and promote cultural routes, and to formulate an Action Plan for its practical implementation through integrated regional policies and actions;
 - c. contributing to the promotion of cultural routes projects by using modern dissemination technologies that would increase their visibility;
 - d. organizing thematic events (workshops, conferences, exhibitions) related to cultural routes projects on a regular basis, such as within the framework of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-office;
 - e. utilizing the potential of the relevant programs and frameworks of other international and regional organizations and initiatives, financial institutions and countries outside the region to promote the implementation of cultural routes projects.

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