



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Doc. GA21/CC20/REC70/03

RECOMMENDATION 70/2003*
ON
THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BSEC REGION

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is fully aware about the significance of the cultural dimension of development. The Assembly reaffirms that culture, in the broad sense associated with human development, is an essential resource capable of improving the quality of life and ensuring sustainable development. At the same time one of the aims of development is the social and cultural fulfilment of the individual. Thus sustainable development and the flourishing of culture are interdependent.
2. The “*BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future*”, representing the strategy on short and long-term cooperation in the region, highlights the need for the adoption of a regional strategy for sustainable development. In this sense culture, which interacts with development in many different ways both as the means and the ends of development, has a big potential to contribute to sustainable development and must be integrated into the development strategies. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines that integration of the cultural policies into the development strategies of the BSEC member states will strengthen regional development.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that the dialogue between cultures and international cultural cooperation has an important role to play in better understanding among the peoples inhabiting the region, thus improving the way of living together and creating a ground for political and economic cooperation aimed at development of the region. Within this framework the Assembly recalls *the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information* signed in 1993 and *Recommendation 3/1994 on the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information*.

* *Rapporteur: Mr. Shaitdin Aliyev (Azerbaijan).*

The Assembly debate on 12 June 2003 (see Doc. GA21/CC20/ REP/03 – Report on “The Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region” discussed by the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Twentieth Meeting in Kyiv on 16 April 2003; Rapporteur: Mr. Grigorios Kirkos - Greece).

Text adopted by the Twenty First General Assembly in Chisinau on 12 June 2003.

4. The issue of integrating the cultural dimension into the concept of human and sustainable development is one of the main aims of the United Nations, particularly its inter-governmental agency – UNESCO and the UN Development Program, the European Union and the Council of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly shares the four main objectives put forward by the UNESCO's culture and development agenda: acknowledging the cultural dimension of development; affirming and enriching cultural identities; broadening participation in cultural life; and promoting international cultural cooperation.
5. Cultural creativity is a source of human progress, and cultural diversity, being a treasure of humankind, is an essential factor for development. The Parliamentary Assembly expresses its belief that traditional cultures, in all their richness, can make an important contribution to development. They should be regarded as a potential source of wisdom since they contain values of solidarity and creativity that are actually vital for the development process. At the same time the Assembly notes with concern that certain practices can hinder development if they undermine human rights or marginalise women or other targeted groups of people from the development process.
6. Most of the countries of the BSEC region are undergoing political, economic and social transition to the free market economy and democracy. Culture has proved to be one of the spheres worst affected by the economic and spiritual crisis in the countries of transition. Radical changes in the field of culture are taking place on the background of economic difficulties and the main challenge for the cultural policy is the survival of culture itself.
7. Culture in the national cultural policies of the transition countries is considered to be a tool that will help to bring democratic development of the countries and re-assert their cultural identities within the region and as an integral part of European cultural identity. In the present period of transition, culture may become a main propellant of democratic processes and mainstay of civil society. Culture can influence the success of development positively affecting the situation in human right, gender equality, poverty, environmental sustainability, social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and other associated fields. It gives direct economic benefit as well, as a major source of jobs. In this respect the Assembly is concerned with the fact that limited resources – technical and financial – however, hinder the full implementation of these objectives. Societies have to come to the understanding that spending on culture is not an expense, but an investment.
8. Considerable societal changes during the last decade led to the development of a new model of cultural policy, which is still being elaborated. The Assembly considers that the cultural policy must become a key element of the general strategy of development within the region and in the broader European space.
9. **Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends** the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States:

A. In the field of legislation and cultural policy

- i.* **to work** out or improve legislation on culture which will clearly state the main principles, objectives and responsibilities of the national cultural policy;

- ii. *to elaborate* cultural policies or review the existing ones in such a way that they become one of the key components of endogenous and sustainable development strategy;
- iii. *to harmonise*, whenever necessary, national legislation in the field of culture with international and European standards, and to bring the national cultural policy in line with the UNESCO principles on how cultural policies could be integrated into the development strategies;
- iv. *to adopt* and to put into practice a broader vision of national cultural policy, responding to persistent problems, as well as to the new needs, in accordance with the actual conditions in each country.

B. In the field of interaction of culture with social and economic development

- i. *to implement* cultural policies in coordination with policy in other areas, particularly as regards their interaction with social and economic policies, aiming to improve social integration and the quality of life of all members of society without discrimination;
- ii. *to give* particular attention to the implementation of existing international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights and make an inventory of cultural rights by evaluating existing instruments which relate to cultural rights;
- iii. *to place* particular emphasis in the cultural policies on promoting and strengthening ways and means of providing broader access to culture for all sectors of the population, combating exclusion and marginalisation. Vigorous policies in the area of popular culture and strong promotion of the community participation can serve for democratisation of culture and social integration;
- iv. *to give* recognition to women's achievements in culture and development and ensure their participation in the formulation and implementation of cultural policies at all levels, thus fostering gender equality;
- v. *to take* into account the needs and aspirations of the young - whose new cultural practices in particular should be supported, as well as the elderly who are all too often left out of cultural life;
- vi. *to develop* cultural heritage which can be a tool for economic and social development – generating employment and income, fostering cooperation, promoting education. To this end to reinforce policy and practice to safeguard the cultural heritage. To include and ensure the protection of buildings, sites, ensembles and landscapes of cultural value in urban and regional development plans, programs and policies;
- vii. *to promote* cultural industries, particularly tourism, which provides big opportunities for economic growth. To develop facilities for travel and tourism in those countries in which there is much room for improvement in these field;

- viii. *to maintain* or increase investments at the national level in cultural development and commit, where appropriate, a certain percentage of the government budget for this purpose, in accordance with overall development objectives, priorities and plans;
- ix. *to give* special consideration to the working people – the main productive force of society in the field of material, cultural, intellectual and spiritual production. To consider indispensable to popularise by all the available means and to affirm as the main civil valour the moral value of the free, creative, highly qualified and highly productive labour in all the spheres of human activities for the welfare of the society as a whole and for the welfare of every individual. To consider important reflection of the way of life, professional and moral problems, civil stand of the widest section of the society – the working people in the literary works, theatrical performances, fine arts and mass media.

C. In the field of international cooperation

- i. *to call* the BSEC member states which are not party to the *Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information* to join the document;
 - ii. *to conclude* bilateral and multilateral cultural cooperation agreements, building a region of inter-cultural communication and understanding, in which the diversity of cultural values, ethics and behaviours fosters a genuine culture of peace;
 - iii. *to cooperate* with UNESCO in incorporating the cultural dimension into the international development strategy;
 - iv. *to invite* funds and programs of different international organisations, the specialised financial institutions and the national and regional financing bodies to increase the financial assistance they provide for development projects with a significant cultural component.
10. **The Parliamentary Assembly** invites the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.

