

**RECOMMENDATION 100/2007\***  
**ON**  
**Improvement of the quality of life in the BSEC member states**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is fully aware that at present, there is an increasing demand for improvement of the quality of life among the BSEC member states including poverty reduction, rise of employment rates, effective health care and social security.
2. The Assembly fully recognises the difficulties faced especially during the transition period, by the BSEC member states to cope with the challenges caused by this period and underlines that new legislation, structures and policies have to be fully implemented for the improvement of the social protection of Black Sea member states. Within this framework, the Assembly recalls its Recommendations 12/1996 on “*Social Guarantees during the Transition Period in the PABSEC member states*”.
3. It is obvious that the political and economic reforms alone are not sufficient. The link between the economy and social protection must be maintained to ensure public consensus and political reforms. In this perspective, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation draws the attention to BSEC member states to its Recommendation 73/2003 “*Black Sea region within the context of the enlargement of the European Union*” and 74/2003 “*The Fight against poverty in the BSEC Member States*”.
4. Due to the process of the European Union enlargement the Assembly recalls Recommendation 86/2005 on “*Cultural, Educational and Social Aspects of the European Enlargement: consequences for the Black Sea Region*” that emphasizes on the importance of social policy in the BSEC Member States.
5. Nevertheless, during the last years the quality of life among the BSEC Member States has gone through essential changes but at the same time, according to recent statistics, the situation starts to become gradually better in terms of the well-being of the people of the Black Sea region

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The Assembly debate on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 ( see Doc. GA30/CC29/REP/07 – Report on “Improvement of the quality of life in the BSEC member states”, discussed by the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Twenty Ninth Meeting in Baku on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007 – Rapporteur: Mrs. Zhala ALIYEVA (Azerbaijan)

6. The Assembly acknowledges that social and employment policies should be treated with the same importance as economic policy and that social policy should be conceived as a productive factor in the socio-economic process.

7. **Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends** the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC member states:

**i) to take measures** for combating unemployment and poverty, through an active approach linking decisive actions on health and education in order to enhance individual capacities for labour market integration;

**ii) to give** more chances to young people, in particular those from vulnerable groups and in underdeveloped regions and cities, by addressing the mismatch between skills and labour market requirements and providing social guarantees;

**iii) to amplify** efforts on the inclusion of vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities, focusing on the need for public anti-discrimination policies and awareness-raising actions;

**iv) to ensure** sufficient resources available to provide access to health care and adequate social protection benefits for all (notably pensions) and to improve the poverty reduction effectiveness of the social protection system;

**v) to accelerate** the implementation of the reform through increased provision of social services, continued de-institutionalisation and the expansion of adequate community-based care;

**vi) to promote** the active social involvement of the most vulnerable social groups by upgrading and extending the provision of services and the financial "safety net" (minimum incomes) and by developing multidimensional policy approaches to the wider social inclusion of persons and groups with special characteristics;

**vii) to increase** efforts to ensure adequacy and long term sustainability of the pension system, notably by increasing employment and promoting longer working careers, so as to broaden the contribution base;

**viii) to modernise** the management of the health system through structural changes and the development of a comprehensive framework for evaluating the quality of the services provided;

**ix) to continue** efforts to achieve a fully-fledged, decentralised, social health insurance-based system and its long-term financial sustainability;

**x) to seize** the opportunity of the International Centre for the Black Sea Studies in order to conduct surveys and comparative study on quality of life among the BSEC Member States;

**xi) to examine** the possibility of implementing the pattern of European Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions regarding the pan-European Quality of Life Survey and consider the creation of a Black Sea Region Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions within the BSEC countries;

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