

RECOMMENDATION 56/2001*
ON
**“THE BLACK SEA UNIVERSITIES NETWORK:
CONTRIBUTION TO THE BSEC ACADEMIC COOPERATION”**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is fully aware that at present, there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-cultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the young generation will need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and wisdom.
2. The “*BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future*”, representing the strategy on short and long-term cooperation in the region, stresses that in the new century putting knowledge to the forefront of its activities by taking advantage of the latest achievements in science and technology will be one of the main goals of the BSEC. The development of cooperation among academic communities should be aimed at applying the achievements of world science and technology to the priority fields of economic collaboration in the Black Sea region.
3. The role of education in general, and of higher education in particular, in promoting and preserving democracy, and in educating the young generation for democratic citizenship, is now generally acknowledged. To this end the Parliamentary Assembly expresses its belief that education should prepare the individuals for life in a democratic society by enabling them to carry out their duties and responsibilities as citizens, and teaching them the fundamental principles and values at the root of our societies, such as respect for human rights and democracy, as well as tolerance and solidarity.

* Rapporteur: Mr. Malkhaz Baramidze (Georgia)

The Assembly debate on 5 December 2001 (see Doc. GA18/CC17/ REP/01 – Report on “The Black Sea Universities Network: Contribution to the BSEC Academic Cooperation” discussed by the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Seventeenth Meeting in Tirana on 10 October 2001; Rapporteur: Mr. Blagovest Sendov).

Text adopted by the Eighteenth General Assembly in Sofia on 5 December 2001.

4. In 1995 the Parliamentary Assembly adopted the “*Decision 4/1995 on the Framework of Cooperation between the PABSEC and the Black Sea University*” and on this basis has supported the activities of the BSUN, which, from the very beginning, has functioned in the spirit and towards attaining the goals of the BSEC.
5. The PABSEC has stressed on several occasions the need for mutual recognition of higher education qualifications by the BSEC Member States, which facilitate the free movement of students, lecturers and researchers within the Black Sea region, and welcomed the efforts undertaken by the BSUN to promote cooperation among the universities of the BSEC Member States.

Within this framework the Assembly recalls its Recommendations: 10/1995 *on Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries for the Improvement of Education*, 27/1998 *on Cooperation of the Academic Communities of the BSEC Member Countries and its Legal Framework* and 31/1998 *on Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Diplomas by the BSEC Member Countries*.

6. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that international cooperation facilitates advancing higher education throughout the world. Networking, intensifying international cooperation, based on sharing, solidarity and equality among partners, has emerged as an instrumental means of action.

The PABSEC appreciates the projects worked out by the BSUN, aimed to put in place a specific and well-articulated university network, developing the essential European values and boosting cooperation among the universities in the Black Sea region.

7. **The Parliamentary Assembly recommends** the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States:
 - i. **to enact** and whenever necessary **to harmonise** legislation in the fields of education, science, culture and information based on common criteria and in line with international and European standards, taking into consideration the paramount importance of broad-scale cooperation in these areas as defined in the “*BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future*”;
 - ii. **to accede to** and **to ensure** the implementation of international and European legal instruments on recognition of higher education qualifications, first of all the *1997 UNESCO/Council of Europe Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in Europe*;
 - iii. **to support** the setting up of a coordinated framework for speeding up implementation of the proposals by the PABSEC and BSUN on unifying and harmonising academic curricula, paving the way for recognition and

equivalence of courses and diplomas which will open the education systems of the BSEC Member States to each other and to the outside world raising its competitiveness in tomorrow's global labour market, promote academic mobility as a source of intellectual enrichment;

- iv. ***to encourage*** nationals to return to their country of origin and to take part in economic, social and cultural development of their countries, since for many of the BSEC Member States the "brain drain" is still remaining a serious problem;
 - v. ***to take*** appropriate measures strengthening academic and student solidarity through joint research projects, partnership between the universities, promoting university-industry links, developing Information Technology and Communications facilities and securing financial resources for a growing participation by the universities in the regional networking cooperation;
 - vi. ***to encourage*** relevant national institutions to initiate specific programs with the BSUN on education, research, high technologies, management, environment, natural sciences etc. in order to strengthen networking and cooperation in the region, focusing on the attainment of the main goals and objectives of the BSEC;
 - vii. ***to pay special emphasis*** to entrepreneurial education in universities and innovative activities in business tailored on the realities of the Black Sea culture, civilisation and resources;
 - viii. ***calls upon*** the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Governments of the Member States, as well as to the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank to provide any possible financial assistance to the BSUN programs;
 - ix. ***to support*** application by the BSUN to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation to be granted adequate status, which will allow the BSUN with its rich scientific potential to play a more active and effective role in the development of regional cooperation.
8. **The Parliamentary Assembly** invites the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation to consider this Recommendation.

