

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

Doc. GA 3976/98

THE ELEVENTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report

on

Cooperation of the Academic Communities of the BSEC Member Countries and Its Legal Framework

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Taking into account the need for the Parliamentary Assembly to review the development of cooperation among the academic communities as an important dimension evolving within the BSEC process, the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Ninth Meeting in Kyiv on 1-2 October 1997 decided, upon the proposal of the Bulgarian national delegation, to discuss "Cooperation of the Academic Communities of the BSEC Member Countries and Its Legislative Framework" as the main subject on the agenda of its Tenth Meeting in Tirana on 1-2 April 1998.
2. The Rapporteur expresses acknowledgements to the national delegations of Armenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey that have forwarded contributions for this Report and the Recommendation on this subject as well as to the PABSEC International Secretariat for information received from international organisations and other sources. The Rapporteur also thanks the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, the BSEC Standing Academic Committee and the Black Sea University for their valuable cooperation.
3. The PABSEC has already addressed some aspects of academic cooperation among the member countries within the framework of such issues as the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information (Report on the subject and Recommendation 3/1994 adopted by the Third General Assembly in Bucharest in June 1994) and the Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries for the Improvement of Education (Report on the subject and Recommendation 10/1995 adopted by the Fifth General Assembly in Moscow in June 1995).

II. THE EMERGENCE OF THE BSEC ACADEMIC DIMENSION

4. There is no doubt that science and technology are very important factors in economic development, pervading numerous areas of human activity in any country. The escalating costs of research and development, coupled with the rapid pace and complexity of technological innovation, are the realities faced by both the BSEC countries with developed market economies and countries in transition. For the latter the situation is much more difficult since they also have to tackle many complex problems associated with their transition to market economies. This serves to underline the need to cooperate more closely in identifying new forms and directions of regional scientific and technological cooperation, in exchanging information and experience, sharing best practices and undertaking joint projects for the common sake of all the BSEC countries.
5. The development of the multilateral and bilateral cooperation among the academic communities which aims to apply the achievements of science and technology to concrete fields of economic cooperation adds a new important dimension to the BSEC process. Since its inception, the BSEC has emphasised the importance of developing scientific and technological cooperation among the Participating States. In the Summit Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation adopted in Istanbul on 25 June 1992, the Heads of State or Government affirmed their "determination to make best use of all possibilities and opportunities for expanding and multiplying their cooperation in the fields of economics, including trade and industrial cooperation, of science and technology and of the environment" and listed science and technology among the priority projects of common interest.
6. In the Statement of the High Level Meeting of the BSEC Participating States that was held in Bucharest on 30 June 1995, the participants appreciated the readiness of the academic communities of the Participating States to cooperate in order to increase the contribution of the scientific and technological research and academic dimension to the economic and social progress in the BSEC area. Furthermore, in the Moscow Declaration adopted on 25 October 1996, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their support to the efforts undertaken by

the scientific communities for the benefit of expansion of cultural and scientific ties among the BSEC countries.

7. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Participating States considered for the first time the development of cooperation among the academic communities at their Fifth Meeting in Athens in April 1995 and endorsed the proposal to convene a BSEC conference of representatives of the academic communities of the Participating States which could launch this new dimension of cooperation within the BSEC process.

The Ministers also approved the initiative of Greece to establish the International Centre for Black Sea Studies with the task of carrying out policy-oriented and practical research aimed at the realisation of BSEC goals, especially in the fields of economy, industry and technology.

8. The issue of the cooperation of the academic communities was further considered at the Sixth MMFA in Chisinau in November 1995 and Seventh MMFA in Bucharest in April 1996. The Ministers agreed in particular that the International Centre for Black Sea Studies be established in Athens and the BSEC Conference of representatives of academic communities take place in Athens by the end of 1996.

III. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE COOPERATION AMONG THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES OF THE BSEC MEMBER COUNTRIES

A. THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

9. The principal BSEC intergovernmental subsidiary body dealing with the matters of cooperation among the academic communities is the **Working Group (WG) on Cooperation in Science and Technology**. To date, the WG has held three meetings:

- in Yerevan on 10-11 November 1994;
- in Bucharest on 30-31 May 1995 (preceded by a Meeting of Experts on Promotion of Technology Transfer on 29 May 1995);
- in Krasnodar on 16-17 December 1997.

10. The WG Meeting in Yerevan on 10-11 November 1994:

- discussed the principles of elaboration and adoption of joint concrete programmes in the field of science;
- discussed various steps to promote technology transfer;
- discussed the proposal to set up the BSEC Scientific Fund;
- emphasised the importance of identifying relevant financial sources both within the BSEC area and outside and instructed the BSEC Secretariat to contact in this context appropriate international institutions such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), European Patent Office (EPO), and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD);
- having discussed the development of cooperation among the academic communities of the BSEC Participating States, the WG recommended that the Fifth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs consider this new component of the BSEC process and called on the MMFA to assist in convening a BSEC conference of the representatives of academic communities which could launch a new dimension of cooperation.

11. The **WG Meeting in Bucharest on 30-31 May 1995** put forward the following proposals which were subsequently endorsed by the Sixth MMFA (Chisinau, November 1995):

- further development of cooperation among academic communities, including the convening of the BSEC conference;

- protection of intellectual property under market economy conditions;
- establishment of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS);
- creation of the BSEC Scientific Fund;
- cooperation in the field of technology transfer

12. **The Meeting of Experts on Promotion of Technology Transfer** held in Bucharest on 29 May 1995 submitted to the above mentioned WG Meeting its background paper with the following proposals:

- assisting intermediary organisations specialised in technology transfer, such as incubators, technology parks, technology centres, etc.;
- supporting training and educational institutions in modernising and adapting their programmes to the challenges of new technologies;
- developing data banks on new technologies;
- supporting awareness campaigns on new technologies and disseminating the best practices from international experience.

13. **The most recent WG Meeting held in Krasnodar 16-17 December 1997:**

- emphasised a need for creating a legal basis for cooperation in the field of science and technology, including the conclusion of relevant agreements;
- assessed some specific cooperation projects, such as an imitative mathematical model for the Black Sea basin and the industrial mariculture in the region;
- considered the creation of an investment fund for technological development emphasising that financial support should be solicited for this purpose from international donors; bearing in mind the past experience of the BSEC in creating such a fund, the WG called upon the Participating States to submit proposals on the modalities of the establishment of the investment fund;
- invited the interested Participating States to cooperate in initiating the establishment of databases on scientific, economic, technological, industrial and business information in order to use them for technology transfer in the BSEC countries; in this context, it was proposed to organise a meeting of experts on information and communications;
- considered progress in establishing the International Centre for Black Sea Studies; the delegations expressed interest of their States in the practical establishment of the Centre so that the ICBSS could become fully operational in 1998;
- examined ways and means of further cooperation with international and regional organisations;
- taking into account the need to ensure financial support for multilateral projects in science and technology, recommended to approach the European Commission with a view to establishing a special regional programme for the BSEC;

B. THE BSEC CONFERENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES

14. In accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Participating States, the Conference of representatives of the academic communities was held in Athens on 9-11 December 1996. It was attended by representatives of all the Participating States, Egypt and Tunisia as observers and UNIDO as a guest.

15. The delegations made general presentations on the prospects for comprehensive cooperation in the Black Sea region, as well as assessment of the existing scientific and technological potential in the BSEC countries. A thorough exchange of ideas and presentations

of various action-oriented proposals was held in six Working Groups which adopted recommendations on the following subjects:

- agriculture, health and new technologies;
- environmental protection, pollution and new technologies;
- information and communication technologies;
- materials, engineering, energy;
- social-economic sciences and humanities;
- development of mechanisms and methodologies for cooperation among the academic and research communities; establishment of mechanisms for exchange of information and data.

16. The participants found it advisable that cooperation in the field of science and technology between the BSEC and regional and international organisations such as the European Union be further developed. The participants also agreed that convening similar fora of the BSEC Participating States in the future will be of great importance for the promotion and achievement of BSEC goals.

17. The participants agreed to recommend to the Secretariats of the BSEC and the PABSEC to present various proposals of the Conference for further consideration and action by the relevant PABSEC and BSEC bodies.

The Final Statement

18. The Conference adopted a Final Statement stressing that the Conference had effectively launched a new and very significant academic dimension of the BSEC. The participants came to the firm conclusion that the existing scientific and technological potential of the BSEC States can and should play a greater role in the multilateral process of cooperation. The Statement also referred to an urgent need for further exploration and elaboration of specific ways and means of strengthening interaction among scholars and scientists of the Black Sea region. The participants called upon the Governments and Parliaments of the BSEC Participating states to render support and assistance, including financial, for further development of collaboration in science, technology, culture and humanities in the Black Sea region.

Recommendations of the Conference Working Groups

19. **Working Group 1: agriculture, health and new technologies** proposed the following priority cooperation objectives:

- sustainable agriculture by sharing experience in dropwise irrigation, by-product recycling and supply of micronutrient deficiency in soils;
- aquaculture, fish and mollusk breeding;
- preserving and exploring the plant genetic resources, examining the adaptability of existing plant varieties and breeding new genotypes for fulfilling specific needs;
- malnutrition and epidemiological studies;
- sharing experience in neuroscience research;
- assessment of micronutrient deficiency in humans and domestic animals;
- setting up a BSEC Veterinarian Centre based on newly created similar structures such as the Balkan Veterinarian Committee in Bulgaria;
- biotechnological research, including gene transfer, cultivation of micro-organisms to obtain protein-rich biomass, vaccine production, biological treatment of industrial waste water;

20. **Working Group 2: environmental protection, pollution and new technologies** identified the following priority areas for joint academic and research activities:

- water resources and management: new technologies for water purification, river and ground water quality monitoring;
- integrated coastal zone management;
- marine and terrestrial biodiversity research;

- hazard prevention and contingency planning;
- ocean prediction and observation systems;
- forestry.

21. **Working Group 3: information and communication technologies** agreed on the following priority guidelines:

- assessment and improvement of the communication infrastructure in the BSEC countries; to this end, creation of a Core Technical Group (Task Force);
- development of a Regional Information Exchange System based on the existing network of national information centres in the BSEC countries.
 - WG 3 supported the initiative of UNIDO to provide assistance in the implementation of networked Industrial and Business Information Systems (IBIS) in the BSEC countries;
 - development of information services in different sectors such as scientific research, business, culture, health, environment, etc.
 - development of electronic commerce by bank associations of the BSEC member countries and by the newly created Black Sea Trade and Development Bank;
- creation of an Advisory Board on ICT to ensure the implementation of recommended actions;
- computer modelling and simulation of the Black Sea pollution and economic development. WG 3 encouraged the initiative of the Krasnodar University in this area;
- joint research and development activities, such as software applications to support regional sectoral services, development of multilingual translation systems, multimedia, etc.;
- distant learning and digital library technologies and their use for training programmes.

22. **Working Group 4: materials, engineering, energy** recommended the following priority areas of cooperation:

- development of new high-performance materials and new material processing technologies;
- integration of electrical power networks of the BSEC countries, taking into account the European Electrical Power Network;
- use of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and biomass;
- training of policy makers and managers for the energy sector;
- planning, modelling and effective use of energy sources;
- research pertaining to the environmental impact of energy conversion processes;
- application of basic scientific knowledge to develop new systems such as instrumentation data processing techniques and laser techniques in production;
- development of Intelligent Manufacturing Techniques;
- studies related to water systems management, including quality, price, energy consumption, losses and processing.

23. **Working Group 5: social-economic sciences and humanities** defined the main priorities of research in its field as follows:

- to study the economic potential and to elaborate the concept of economic cooperation amongst the BSEC member states;
- to examine in depth the possibilities of creating a free-trade zone within the BSEC region;
- to draw up a programme for research on the historical, cultural, economic and political relations amongst the peoples of the Black sea region on a comparative basis.

24. **Working Group 6: development of mechanisms and methodologies for cooperation among the academic and research communities; establishment of mechanisms for exchange of information and data.**

The WG recommended the creation of a **Standing Academic Committee (SAC)** composed of representatives of 11 BSEC member States (1 member plus one replacement per State) that will be appointed by the respective Governments. The SAC members are members of academic institutions (universities, research centres, academies, etc.) of their countries.

The SAC will be responsible for carrying out the following tasks:

1. Determination of the priority areas in research and development, in coordination with the BSEC the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies.
2. Establishment of Task Forces to fulfil the following objectives:
 - to implement the policy defined by the SAC for selected priority areas and technological domains, by initiating, selecting and managing specific projects; in addition to the above, two more task forces should be created - on Humanities-Culture and Education-Training, respectively.
 - determination of the availability of information and data that are associated with on-going and possible future projects relevant to the BSEC region;
 - technical implementation of the necessary ICT (information and communication technology) infrastructure to achieve efficient servicing of information needs;
 - to advise and assist in the development of National Innovation Relay Centres (BS-IRCs) and to maintain their connectivity with each other, as well as with EU IRCs, within a network.
3. Organisation of meetings related to the fulfilment of the aforementioned policy objectives.
4. Advice on the creation of Centres of Excellence in areas of high interest to the BSEC member countries.
5. Initiatives to establish contacts with national and international bodies for the purpose of raising funds to support and implement R&D and related policies of the BSEC.

C. THE BSEC STANDING ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

25. The First Meeting of the BSEC Standing Academic Committee was held in Sinaia, Romania on 26-27 February 1998. The Meeting reviewed activities, exchanged views and information regarding the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the first BSEC Conference of representatives of the academic communities. The following priorities were identified for joint scientific projects at the current stage of the SAC's activities, to be carried out through establishing appropriate Task Forces:

- transportation of energy resources,
- interconnection of electric power grids in the area,
- modernisation of transport and communication infrastructures,
- establishment of a data bank on research units in the region,
- environmental monitoring of the Black Sea.

The participants were informed about the activities of the Black Sea Universities Network and AIMOS Network (30 universities from 15 countries of South and Eastern Europe) and decided to exchange information and coordinate activities with the networks and other related organisations.

The Meeting also adopted guidelines for the SAC's activity aimed at further promoting the academic cooperation in the BSEC region.

The Meeting was attended by the Rapporteur of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee who briefed the members of the SAC on the activities undertaken by the PABSEC to promote academic cooperation in the region.

D. THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF BLACK SEA STUDIES (ICBSS)

26. At the Fifth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Participating States (Athens, April 1995), the Ministers approved the initiative of Greece to establish with the financial support of the European Union, other international organisations and business communities the International Centre for Black Sea Studies with the task of carrying out policy-oriented and practical research aimed at the realisation of BSEC goals, especially in the fields of economy, industry and technology. The Sixth MMFA (Chisinau, November 1995)

decided that the Centre will be located in Athens. Finally, the Eighth MMFA (Moscow, October 1996) has called upon the Hellenic Republic to undertake the necessary measures which will enable the ICBSS in Athens to start its operations within 1997 as an international body open to all the interested BSEC States.

27. The ICBSS is an independent, non-profit, international institution. Its principal goal is to study practical ways of fostering and strengthening the international economic relations within the Black Sea Region and to contribute to the application of achievements of science and technology to concrete fields of economic cooperation.

28. The ICBSS will attempt to function as a locomotive for promoting cooperation among researchers, academics, entrepreneurs, managers, government agencies and the media from Black Sea Countries, as well as from other parts of the world, particularly from the European Union Countries.

29. The Centre also aims at fostering contacts among research centres in the BSEC region and aspires to become a linkage institution for an international dialogue between the Black Sea Region, the European Union and other parts of the world. To this end, the Centre will carry-out interdisciplinary and policy-oriented research and relevant activities that will promote a more profound understanding of the current economic, social and other problems of the region.

30. More specifically, the Centre will carry out the following functions:

- a) to inquire, collect and file the flow of relevant information relating to the Black Sea Region and its linkages with its neighbours;
- b) to promote contacts and cooperation between research centres ("affiliates") in the BSEC area;
- c) to contribute to the development of an academic network among the BSEC Participating States to promote more contacts and exchanges among researchers;
- d) to serve as a bridge between BSEC and the EC to promote inter-regional cooperation schemes and analyse the experience of other regional structures, with the aim of using it to the benefit of BSEC;
- e) to conduct policy-oriented studies and advise governmental and private institutions;
- f) to train professionals, scholars and young researchers interested in the study of the region;
- g) to elaborate the scientific background and expertise for concrete BSEC projects and programmes of multilateral cooperation;
- h) to conceptualise general parameters of cooperation in the BSEC area;
- i) to undertake other relevant tasks to be decided by competent BSEC bodies.

31. In order to promote its goals, the Centre will employ means such as:

- a) The carrying out of research programmes and publications;
- b) The setting up of task forces and/or ad hoc study groups, and the organisation of seminars and conferences for researchers, officials, groups of experts, diplomats, entrepreneurs, managers, etc.;
- c) The cooperation with government services, public or private entities and international organisations in the exchange of information and the study of special topics;
- d) The creation of a comprehensive infrastructure for documentation and information systematisation, through the employment of data banks and other advanced data processing technology;
- e) The award of research fellowships for projects aimed at the study of the Black Sea Region, as well as the efforts to maximise any other relevant activity.

32. In order to accomplish its objectives, the Centre may conclude cooperation agreements with the UN specialised agencies, the EU, other regional associations, private or governmental organisations, foundations or research and training centres, academic institutions etc.

33. The Centre will be financed from revenues from academic activities, assistance from private and public sectors, ad hoc funding from the Greek State, donations from any natural or legal entity, the European Union and other international organisations, and voluntary contributions of the BSEC Participating States.

E. THE BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY (BSU) AND THE BLACK SEA UNIVERSITIES NETWORK (BSUN)

34. **The Black Sea University**, which began its activities in Romania in May 1993, is an international centre of permanent education specialising in short-term postgraduate-level courses, workshops and seminars. About 30 international courses were held annually since the last 5 years, attended by over 5000 participants from 40 countries. Apart from its training programmes, the BSU has also established a family of research centres:

- the National Centre for Sustainable Development;
- the Conflict Prevention Centre;
- the Laboratory of Educational Technology;
- the International Study Centre for Advanced Materials and Technology;
- the Business Innovative Partnership Project.

35. The PABSEC, an official sponsor of the BSU since 1995, has been developing relations with the University practically since its inception. Professor Mircea Malitza, President of the Black Sea University Foundation, attended the Committee Meetings in Bucharest in April 1995 and in Cheboksary in September 1995 as well as the Sixth General Assembly in Ankara in November 1995. The Sixth General Assembly adopted Decision 4/1995 "The Framework of Cooperation between the PABSEC and the Black Sea University" which emphasised "a special interest in the organisation of the network of universities in the Black Sea area - having the existing BSU as a pivotal point and a communication centre enhancing contacts, cooperation, summer courses and joint research; this was also strongly recommended by UNESCO. The Assembly will promote with its authority this step".

36. The First Conference of University Rectors from the Black Sea countries which was held in Mangalia, Romania on 4-7 September 1997 at the initiative of the BSU and the Ovidius University, Constantza, agreed to set up **The Black Sea Universities Network**.

Among the main goals of the Black Sea University Network are: identifying and enhancing intellectual resources badly needed for sustainable development; planning common research and training projects; and better representing the intellectual production of the region in a competitive world and an era of knowledge.

The participants of the First Conference chose a pragmatic approach and a less structured formula leaving it for the Conference in 1998 to organise a Council of Rectors with a president from among them and an Executive Committee. The Network is now linking 36 universities and inviting more to join; it is estimated that it can be eventually joined by 80-100 universities from the Black Sea region.

37. The Assembly should welcome this important initiative which it has actively promoted and should step up its support both to the BSU and to the BSUN. Prof. Dr. Gabriela Stanciulescu, BSUN Vice-Rector, has been invited to make a presentation on the Network at the Tenth Meeting of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee in Tirana on 1-2 April 1998. This presentation will undoubtedly enrich the deliberations of the Committee on cooperation of the academic communities of the BSEC Member Countries.

IV. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC COOPERATION

38. As mentioned above, the Summit Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Statement of the Bucharest High-Level Meeting, Moscow Declaration, as well as a series of decisions taken by the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs have expressed strong support

to cooperation in the field of science and technology in the Black Sea region, thus creating a favourable regional legal environment for further development of cooperation among the academic communities of the BSEC member countries.

39. Furthermore, Article 23 “Academic cooperation” (Section VII “BSEC - Related Bodies”) of the BSEC Charter - due to be signed in Ukraine later this year at the BSEC Meeting of the Heads of State or Government - reaffirms the pledge to promote the cooperation among the academic communities, scholars and scientists of the Member States.

40. It should be pointed out that the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information signed on 6 March, 1993 by all the BSEC member countries, except Bulgaria and Greece, already ratified by all the Parties and in force since 1994, provides a broad framework for developing scientific cooperation in the Black Sea region. In Recommendation 12/1995 adopted by the Sixth General Assembly in Ankara in November 1995, the Assembly has already proposed to Greece to consider accession to the Convention. Both Bulgaria and Greece could be invited by the Assembly to consider the possibility of joining the Convention.

41. There is definitely a need for enhancing and upgrading a legal basis for cooperation in the field of science and technology, including the conclusion of relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements at the inter-governmental level, within the framework of inter-regional, trans-border and local authorities cooperation and at the level of academic and research institutions.

42. At the present stage when the institutions of this new BSEC dimension are being established and their mandates and terms of reference are being formulated, it is important to ensure co-ordination among all the components and actors of the academic cooperation in order to ensure their synergy, effective use of available resources and avoid duplication of work.

43. At present, many BSEC countries are elaborating and adopting new legislation related to higher education and research, science and technology, intellectual property, etc. Efforts should be made in order to harmonise the legislations of the BSEC countries in this fields, on the one hand, and to absorb the best available international and European legislative experience, on the other, with a view to removing obstacles to scientific and technological cooperation, to promoting transfer of knowledge and technology as well as academic mobility among the BSEC member countries.

V. INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

44. As members of the world community, the BSEC countries are participating in international scientific cooperation promoted by UN, UNESCO, UNIDO and other UN specialised agencies, as well as numerous other inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations. For example , **UNESCO** is currently engaged in a number of programmes of interest to the BSEC countries, such as University-Industry-Science Partnership Programme (UNISPAR), Earth Sciences and Natural Hazards, Man and Biosphere Programme (MAP), International Hydrological Programme, Environment and Development in Coastal regions and Small Islands (CSI), Life Sciences - Biotechnology, etc.

An example of successful cooperation with UNESCO is the Black Sea University Foundation which has worked in close contact with UNESCO’s Centre for Higher Education in Bucharest.

45. Being part of Europe, the BSEC countries can participate in programmes of scientific cooperation implemented by various European organisations, particularly by **the European Union**. The BSEC countries in transition receive technical assistance within the framework of PHARE (targeting Central and Eastern European Countries) and TACIS (targeting CIS countries) programmes which aim to help the concerned countries to implement political, social

and economic reforms. The TEMPUS PHARE and TEMPUS TACIS programmes support the development and renewal of higher education through joint projects and academic mobility.

46. The preparation of the business plan for the International Centre for Black Sea Studies was financed by EU as a TACIS project. PHARE has financed the study "Conceptualising BSEC Process" performed by a Greek consultancy company, *Ethniki Business Research and Consultancy S. A.*, in cooperation with the Moscow Institute of Europe, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy and many other research institutions and scholars from the Black Sea region. Two other fundamental studies on BSEC - "Study on the Obstacles of Economic Cooperation among BSEC Countries" and "Study on Priorities in Economic Relations between BSEC-EU Countries" - have been financed through TACIS.

47. Since 1984, European Community research and technological development (RTD) activities have been defined and implemented by a series of multiannual framework programmes. The Fourth RTD Framework Programme expires at the end of 1998 and will be followed by the Fifth Programme (1999-2003). One of the aims of these programmes is to promote cooperation in the field of RTD and demonstration with third countries and international organisations. Within the RTD framework, the European Commission may provide funding from scientists from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and CIS:

- (a) the Inco-Copernicus programme: stabilisation of RTD potential, environmental protection and health, RTD in industry;
- (b) specific projects of the RTD Framework Programmes, e.g. sustainable development or environmental protection;
- (c) ISTC - International Science and Technology Centre - in Moscow: opportunities for scientists from CIS countries, especially those with expertise in developing weapons of mass destruction to redirect their skills in civilian scientific and technological projects.

48. A number of BSEC countries, and their Parliaments, have benefited from the Legislative Reform Programme for Higher Education and Research (LPR) implemented by **the Council of Europe**. The Programme has provided analysis and recommendations regarding draft laws and other specific issues:

Albania: Draft Law on Higher Education - adopted as law in 1994;

Bulgaria: Draft Law on Higher Education - adopted into law in 1995 - and Draft Law on Research;

Moldova: advice on the implementation of higher education law;

Romania: ministerial co-ordination of the higher education sector; financing higher education;

Russia: Draft Law on Higher Education and the Statute of Moscow State University;

Ukraine: Draft Law on Higher Education.

49. An important joint initiative of the Council of Europe and UNESCO is the **Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region** signed in Lisbon on 11 April 1997. The Convention provides a comprehensive coverage of matters earlier addressed by four separate Council of Europe conventions and aims to promote Europe-wide academic mobility. It has already been signed by twenty-seven European countries, including BSEC countries Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine. The Convention has not yet entered into force and its signing and ratification process is still under way.

50. **The European Science Foundation** is the European association of national funding organisations of basic scientific research. The ESF currently has 62 member organisations from 21 countries, including the National Hellenic Research Foundation and the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. The Foundation's five Standing Committees (for Medical Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences, Physical and Engineering Sciences, the Humanities and the Social Sciences) conduct conferences and workshops and pursue long-term programmes in specific fields of research.

51. The less known “Third (or social) Dimension” of NATO provides opportunities for funding scientific cooperation projects within the framework of **NATO’s Science Programme** and Science for Peace Programme, especially in such areas as disarmament technologies, high technology, the environment and computer networking.

VI. PROPOSALS OF THE NATIONAL DELEGATIONS

52. Armenia

1. To encourage stronger bilateral scientific ties between the BSEC member countries in order to establish a basis for regional cooperation among these countries.
2. To create opportunities for an effective information exchange in the field of science and technology among the BSEC member countries.
3. To deem it advisable that PABSEC representatives attend the BSEC conferences on the cooperation of the academic communities.
4. To conduct a study of the legislative framework in the field of science and education of the BSEC member countries with a view to elaborating recommendations on removing obstacles to the development of scientific cooperation.
5. To facilitate the organisation of regional science and technology conferences, seminars and symposia in specific branches of science and technology.

53. Bulgaria

1. Setting up a Black Sea Research Fund with the purpose of financing joint research projects of scholars in the BSEC.
2. The statute of the Black Sea Research Fund should be elaborated and a working group from the BSEC and the PABSEC should be set up.

54. Greece

A basic issue that needs to be discussed within the PABSEC is the issue of transparency concerning the recognition of degrees among BSEC member states. The member states should cooperate in information exchange with regard to the recognition of degrees.

55. Romania

1. Taking note of the increasing recognition of the role of attitudes, mentalities and cultural values in fostering the economic development, to ask the Black Sea University and its Network to launch a project of interdisciplinary studies and training “Cultural factors in stimulating regional projects of wealth creation” and to invite parliamentarians to participate in this project and support it.

2. Taking note of the progress accomplished by the Black Sea University in application of Decision 4/1995 adopted by the Sixth General Assembly, in particular, for the organisation of the Network of Universities in the Black Sea area,

to support the extension of the Network and to express hope that the number of 36 universities willing to enter the Network will considerably increase before and after the Second Conference of Rectors to be convened in Constantza in July 1998;

to express the conviction that the aims of the cooperation developed by the Network, being consonant with the objectives of PABSEC, will enjoy support of the parliamentarians of the PABSEC member countries;

to consider as a priority for the Network the establishment of an advanced communication system, introduction of computer-supported educational technologies with emphasis on multimedia and increased Internet access capacity;

to encourage the Black Sea University to develop in its Network the research activities, multiplying the centres of advanced and applied research, fulfilling an active role in innovation and the promotion of excellence.

56. Turkey

The Turkish national delegation has submitted the “Decisions Taken by the Representatives at the Meeting on Academic Collaboration Among Higher Education Authorities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”

Representatives from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, the Russian federation, Turkey and Ukraine met in Ankara on November 17, 1997 to discuss mechanisms and the organisational structure to be established to promote academic collaboration among higher education institutions of the member countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. After discussions and deliberations, it was unanimously decided to propose the following to the Summit of the Heads of State:

1. A Standing Committee of Academic Cooperation and Coordination shall be set up as an organ of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.
2. The said Committee shall consist of three members from each member state, one shall be a representative of the Rectors Committee or its equivalent, one representative of the state authority responsible for higher education (ministry or council of higher education), and one shall be a representative of the organisation responsible for scientific and technological research.
3. A secretariat of the said Committee shall be set up.
4. A fund shall be established at the disposal of the said Committee to finance the expenditures of the secretariat and the costs of collaborative programmes to be organised and/or coordinated by the Committee.
5. The said Committee shall in its first meeting prepare rules and regulations covering its organisation and activities, taken by consensus.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

57. As a result of consistent efforts deployed by the BSEC and its bodies, academic institutions, researchers, scholars and scientists from the countries of the region, the academic dimension has emerged as a new important component of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation which can and should play a greater role in the multilateral cooperation in the region.

58. Apart from its useful inputs into the BSEC, the regional cooperation of academic communities can contribute to solving serious social problems affecting the BSEC countries in transition such as the rising unemployment the ‘brain drain’ depleting the national intellectual potentials.

59. The bodies that will spearhead and co-ordinate the cooperation of academic communities have practically completed their formative stage, defined their mandates and identified priorities. Emphasis should be placed now on concrete projects and programmes of regional scientific cooperation.

60. There is a need for a more comprehensive legal framework, including bilateral and multilateral agreement at various levels, which would facilitate regional scientific cooperation.

61. Likewise, at the national level more efforts are needed to continue legislative reform in the field of higher education, research and related fields with a view to creating more favourable conditions cooperation among the academic communities. Priority should be given to the elaboration and renewal of the relevant legislation harmonising it among the member countries in accordance with European and international standards.

62. The BSEC Standing Academic Committee and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies should enjoy an enhanced support from governments, parliaments and business communities in order to play their pivotal roles in developing the academic cooperation in the region.

63. The BSEC Conference of representatives of the academic communities should be convened at regular intervals in order to review the progress achieved in the regional academic cooperation and make proposals for future cooperation.

64. At the same time, BSEC, PABSEC, as well as competent authorities in the member countries should encourage new forms of academic cooperation and interaction in the region, such as for example the newly established Black Sea Universities Network.

65. It is important to ensure co-ordination among all the components and actors of the academic cooperation in order to ensure their synergy, effective use of available resources and avoid duplication of work. To this end, the BSEC could consider elaborating and adopting a framework programme of academic cooperation which would outline the priorities of cooperation for given periods of time, modalities of such cooperation, the scope of action of various bodies and the mechanism of interaction among them.

66. There is no doubt that cooperation among the academic communities of the BSEC countries will benefit from international donor organisations and from synergies with various international and European organisations and programmes. At the same time, certain priorities should be agreed upon and pursued, such as closer cooperation with the European Union and its bodies.