

Doc. GA28/CC27/REP/06

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

REPORT*

**“THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION AND THE POTENTIAL THREATS FOR
CULTURAL DIVERSITY”**

Rapporteur: Mrs. Olga SELIVERSTOVA (Russia)

* *Text considered by the Twenty Seventh Meeting of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee in Moscow on 27 September 2006 and approved by the Twenty Eighth General Assembly in Baku on 23rd November 2006*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Black Sea region, as crossroads and a bond between Europe and Asia, East and West since early times, has its own specific features. Here different cultures, traditions and religions have intertwined, influenced and enriched each other in the course of time. This gives the Black Sea region a prominent place of its own on the global cultural scene.

2. The process of globalization creates conditions for renewed dialogue among communities, increase premises for interaction and dialogue, thereby contributing to the spread of knowledge about other cultures and heightening people's awareness of their own cultures. The opportunity to share the world's cultural heritage and to promote its preservation is contributing to a better understanding among peoples worldwide and is underlining the value and interpenetration of cultural diversity.

3. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), the following statement appears: "Recognizing that the processes of globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage".

4. The UNESCO was, among others, invited "to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programs to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject". The General Conference of UNESCO held in Paris from 3 to 21 October 2005, during its 33rd session has adopted the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

5. Within this framework PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee following the last Reports on "Dialogue among the cultures as a mean to build trust among the nations" and "Cultural, Educational and Social Aspects of EU Enlargement: Consequences for the Black Sea Region" and taking into consideration the challenges of globalization decided to take up the subject of "The process of globalization and the potential threats for cultural diversity" as the main item on the Agenda of its 27th Meeting.

6. The Report benefited from the contributions from the national delegations of Azerbaijan, Romania and Ukraine. In addition, the reference material has been obtained by the PABSEC International Secretariat and from the official Internet sites of the related international organizations.

II. GLOBALIZATION AND POTENTIAL THREATS FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

7. The accelerating speed of globalization, facilitated by the spread of modern transport and communication technologies, has profoundly changed the framework of multicultural societies. With the globalization of markets and information networks, consumption patterns

and mass culture are becoming more and more uniform the world over. By the same mechanisms, however, it has become easier for migrants to preserve elements of their native culture while adjusting to life in their new living environment.

8. Globalization is neither the panacea which will cure mankind of all problems and conflicts, nor is it the ultimate calamity that strikes down the cultures of the world. Indeed, globalization has enormous effects on cultural heritage.

9. Globalization has the power to lead people to a better quality of life. However, from the perspective of people from developing countries, including many BSEC states, globalization is not always perceived as something good. Given their economic structures, different ways of life and scant political power those people are not prepared to engage with people from different cultural and industrial backgrounds like those of the so called developed, westernized and industrial countries.

10. Actually the profound process of globalization does not decrease the difference between the rich and the poor countries with low level of GPA. The state infrastructure of these countries is demolished or is at a very low level. These countries have ethnical conflicts and the social chaos destroy the ground of national evolution and jeopardize the consolidation of the cultural heritage.

11. Due to the impact of globalization, aspects of local lifestyles are becoming aspects of global lifestyles and meanwhile certain traditional lifestyles are rapidly changing or diminishing.

12. Basically, culture or traditional ways of life are handed down from generation to generation by oral, behavioral and material traditions. Nowadays, many aspects of material culture are changing rapidly and thereby diminishing their own functions.

13. BSEC countries are concerned with the preservation of the transmission of traditional ways of life to future generations. Cultural diversity and thus cultural richness in the region is based on different communities as well as on different cultural environments. However, this transmission from one generation to the next can be interrupted by the processes of globalization.

14. Nevertheless, globalization provides opportunities to access knowledge and information about a broad range of cultural heritage on a global scale, to obtain visibility, to secure appreciation for cultural expressions, to raise interest and support for their preservation, to let cultural expressions be captured in digital and other forms and to have them disseminated worldwide (through various media and communication tools), to expose and transmit diverse identities, to establish ownership and to secure intellectual property rights arrangements, to further creativity and to promote inclusive and new forms of dialogue.

15. However, it poses threats in the wake of a strong emphasis on material values inherent in globalization processes, and through the dominance of some languages and cultural practices, implying an accelerated trend towards a loss of languages and the extinction of certain

practices. All these trends favor the emergence of a uniformity of expressions and approaches, impinging on cultural diversity.

16. The effects normally identified with globalization are not only occurring at the global level, but are equally often the results of internal processes within countries and regions, urbanization trends and regional integration. Therefore, cultural heritage is indivisible from internal cultural trends and calls for a holistic perspective and approach. It comprises of tangible heritage, intangible heritage, knowledge and skills related to the production of cultural artifacts. However, the process of globalization with its rapid acceleration sometimes affects and even in some cases interrupts this indivisibility. Accordingly, it can be said that globalization trends affect cultural heritage as a whole and without distinction.

17. Every culture has been more or less influenced by other cultures and has forged its cultural identity in history. The openness of one culture to others is significant. However, the rapid flow of people, products and information, as well as rapid cultural interpenetration caused by globalization, menaces non-dominant cultures, especially their intangible cultural heritage, which has been handed down from generation to generation.

18. Complementing the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is an indispensable tool allowing for a holistic approach to cultural heritage and providing a general framework for highlighting the special role of the bearers of intangible cultural heritage, thus creating conditions for the protection and safeguarding of its various components.

19. A major and delicate challenge becomes to ensure the authenticity of the works, avoiding adulteration while allowing for a dynamic integration and evolution of cultural processes and products. This requires further reflection on identifying, defining, and inventorying living forms of cultural expressions, while avoiding new packaging for tourism- or screen purposes- and extending it to reasoning and views of society. This will help contribute to a significantly better understanding of human beings, cultural communities and culture. Regular updating and evaluations of the results of the selection processes should be envisaged. Intangible cultural heritage focuses on a wide array of cultural expressions, many of which are in flux and constant evolution. Intangible cultural heritage is a major element in defining and forming identities of peoples and communities – it is a key element for partaking in the globalization processes without being “subdued”.

20. Aiming to develop cooperation between the BSEC member states in the field of education, culture and social affairs, PABSEC Committee has, in particular, addressed the following issues: “Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the PABSEC Member Countries”, “Guidelines of the Program of the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Black Sea Region”, “Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region” and the Assembly adopted corresponding Recommendations 6/1994, 18/1996 and 70/2003. PABSEC Committee has drawn particular attention also to the preservation of cultural heritage in the BSEC Member States and recalls the Report on “Preservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage of the BSEC Member States” with adopted Recommendation 80/2004.

21. Globalization creates a decrease of transmission opportunities due to the dismantlement of communities, which are the collective guardians of the intangible cultural heritage. This process is caused by the unprecedented mobility of populations and by urbanizations.

22. One can acknowledge that sometimes reactions to globalization can lead to extreme results. Sometimes the interruption of the continuity of the practicing of intangible cultural heritage is due to the conflicts caused by extreme nationalism or ethnocentrism arisen as a counter reaction to globalization.

23. Rapid processes of economic globalization can possibly result in lack of technical and financial capacity in most of the developing BSEC states and prevent them of taking protection measures and to provide incentives to the successors of this heritage. This, of course, is caused by the widening economic and technical gap between the haves and the have-nots.

24. Globalization can also cause the displacement of local communities. This decrease of environment and materials necessary to practice intangible cultural heritage interrupts traditional knowledge of indigenous people related to nature. Deterioration of the environment caused by economic globalization can also lead to decrease of traditional crafts.

25. The various ways in which intangible cultural heritage is being preserved and transmitted require special attention. The disappearance of languages as a result of the impact of globalization is bound to have negative effects, both direct and indirect, on identities and intangible cultural heritage.

26. Using language is an important way to protect it from extinction. But usage of language goes beyond speaking about it, one must speak it. To counter the loss of linguistic diversity, the use of native languages should be promoted by documenting them and by encouraging their use in poetry, drama and film, and by promoting their use as a means and an object of instruction.

27. Globalization has taken various forms - linguistic, economic and religious - with uncertain and frequently unresearched impact on the preservation and diversity of cultural heritage.

III. The place of Religion, Mass Media and Education towards the process of globalization and preservation of cultural diversity

a) Religion

28. The role of religions deserves special attention, as many religions are in fact globalizing actors, who at the same time deplore the loss of local identity in the cultural sphere.

29. The freedom of religion is as much vital as the freedom of speech. It should be accepted that religious freedom is a fundamental right of individuals and communities, it entails respect for the integrity of all religious convictions and all ways in which they are exercised. Freedom of expression must be exercised within the limits of the law and should coexist with personal responsibility and be based on respect for others' rights and sensibilities.

30. The events concerning the “cartoon crisis” that happened in Denmark, declare that these types of actions have a negative reflect on all religious communities. The European Parliament resolution on the right to freedom of expression and respect for religious states clearly that such protests do not develop intercultural dialogue and cannot build interreligious ties among the states. It also declares that freedom of expression should coexist with responsibility and with respect for human rights, religious feelings and beliefs, “whether they are connected with the Islamic, Christian, Jewish or any other religion”. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue as well as the advancement of mutual understanding and respect is an ongoing challenge for the globalised world.

31. It is through a vigorous but peaceful dialogue of opinions under the protection of the freedom of expression that mutual understanding can be deepened and mutual respect can be built. Dialogue between cultures and with religions should be fostered. This dialogue must be based on tolerance, not prejudice, and on freedom of expression and religion and the values connected with them.

b) Mass Media and Education

32. The abovementioned “cartoon crisis” demonstrated how big and responsible the role of mass media can be in the globalized society, which provides people with information, influencing on the processes of shaping of public opinion, attitudes and of making political choices.

33. The mass media are vital for the creation and development of a democratic culture in any country. Development of cooperation in the field of mass media, and first of all among the national televisions of the BSEC Member States, can facilitate peace and international understanding, mutual respect and tolerance among the peoples inhabiting the region. Exchange of cultural programmes on the television contributes to the better knowledge of one’s neighbours and for the discovery of common cultural roots and similarities. Such cooperation creates the necessary background for further political and economic cooperation and prevention of conflicts.

34. The television broadcasting is the most powerful and influential medium of mass communication and the most important source of information for the majority of the population of the Black Sea region. The national television institutions, financed from the state budget, have a special responsibility of informing the population on a wide range of events, including the major developments in political, economic, social and cultural life of the BSEC Member States.

35. Taking into consideration the valuable effect that intercultural dialogue can have on the BSEC Member States exercised by the catalytic role of the Mass Media, the Assembly recalls the Report and Recommendation 47/2000 on “The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Cooperation in the Black Sea region”. At the same time it recalls the four meetings of the Public Broadcasters from the BSEC Member States, held in Bucharest 2001, in Greece 2002, in Sofia 2003 and in Odessa 2004 as a result of the PABSEC initiative.

36. Unfortunately, the influence of globalized media contents, standardized education and invasion of uncontrolled mass tourism can lead to a loss of interest in and respect for local and traditional cultures due to the standardization of values among the younger generations

37. The Assembly recalls the Report and Recommendation 24/1997 on “Youth Cooperation in the Black Sea Region” where it was underlined the encouragement of closer professional contacts among young people, such as joint activities of the associations of young entrepreneurs, young political leaders, and national students’ unions. etc, as well as the exchange of students, art contests and festivals and other activities within the framework of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Educations, Science and Information. It was also placed particular emphasis on supporting the efforts of national youth associations with a view to establishing, under the auspices of PABSEC, a Black Sea Youth Assembly. The Assembly made a further contribution to promoting the Black Sea cultural cooperation by supporting the initiative by the PABSEC Russian delegation concerning the organisation of the Children and Youth Festival of the BSEC Member States. In the result of the support provided by the PABSEC, the first and the second Children and Youth Festivals “Golden Ferry” were organised in Sochi in 2001 and 2002, both upon the invitation of the PABSEC Russian Delegation. Based on the same concept, the first Black Sea Capitals Festival was held on 24-31 August 2002 in Ankara.

38. PABSEC has also addressed the following issues: “Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries of the Improvement Education”, “Cooperation of the Academic Communities of the BSEC Member Countries and its Legal Framework”, “Mutual recognition of Higher Education Diplomas by the PABSEC Member-Countries”, “The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Cooperation in the Black Sea Region”, “Black Sea Universities Network: Contribution to the BSEC Academic Cooperation”, “Cooperation in the sphere of cultural tourism in the Black Sea Region” and adopted relevant Recommendation 10/1995, 27/1998, 31/1998, 47/2000, 56/2001 and 83/2005.

IV. CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION FOR THE BSEC REGION

39. The BSEC Organizations have been able to define major goals, obtain international recognition as a dynamic regional initiative with well developed intergovernmental, interparliamentary, business, banking and academic dimensions. By launching collaboration in spheres of common interest, the BSEC has proved to be a useful forum for a broad multi-cultural dialogue on various issues of regional cooperation.

40. The dynamics of the emerging new European Architecture and under the process of globalization open up the potential for effective partnerships with BSEC. BSEC can play a major role in providing the necessary links between the enlarged EU and Eastern Europe, the Caspian region and Eastern Mediterranean.

41. The implementation of the BSEC economic agenda through collective activities and efforts will contribute to a more dynamic, sustainable development of each member state, and of the region as a whole, to the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and civil society, and to the wider goals of European integration and stability.

42. In the new century a major goal of the BSEC will be to put knowledge to the forefront of its activities by taking advantage of the latest achievements in science and technology. Special programs are being developed by the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology with the aim of surveying on-going research, and identifying promising areas related to the real needs of the Member States. The contribution of the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and other Related Bodies and Affiliated Centers are substantial.

43. A strong and effective partnership between the BSEC and the EU based on coinciding interests and common values, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms must be developed and maintained. Cooperation between the PABSEC and the European Parliament contributes to the promotion of such a partnership

44. As many other countries worldwide, the BSEC Member States, formed measures to meet the challenges of the new world order. They intensified trade and transport relations between and among the member states and achieved more economic development and democratization. They also tried informing alliances and economic partners and participate more in subregional and regional cooperation with more developed and experienced states.

45. The precept of ensuring and promoting the freedom of expression also applies with regard to intangible cultural heritage: to live and let people live in their own languages. This will help to deepen the understanding of the way in which all BSEC countries can best use their cultural traditions so as to shape their future. The promotion of multilingualism is an essential tool to help preserve and appreciate intangible cultural heritage.

46. The formulation and implementation of appropriate cultural policies assists in the quest to preserve intangible cultural heritage, drawing on the power of dialogue. Cultural policies empower local communities by way of negotiation between cultural agencies and community people. Cultural policies also include capacity-building and encourage cultural creativity as an individual and community process. Particular challenges include: a) the conservation of material conditions for intangible cultural heritage to thrive and be transmitted, b) the rooting of responsibility for Intangible Cultural Heritage in local agencies and actors, and c) the safeguarding of collective rights and the promotion of incentives for active participation.

47. The essential function performed by museums, in particular ethnographic museums among the BSEC countries, must be acknowledged, as they create understanding and appreciation for different ways of life and otherwise unfamiliar cultural heritage. Moreover, ethnographic museums contribute to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through the collection, preservation and pursuit of research as well as on traditional ways of life from around the world embracing cultural diversity.

48. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) represent an effective tool for documenting intangible cultural heritage and helping to preserve and promote the entire range of cultural expressions involved therein.

49. All the above challenges can be met through institutional reforms in order to have a more practical and tangible framework of contact and implementation of policies among the BSEC countries.

50. **Azerbaijan:** The Law of 31 May 1996 on "On adherence to the International Convention of elimination of all forms of Racial discrimination" as shown in the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 6 February 1998 "on Culture" and respective decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 16 April 1998. In the article 8 of the Law "on Culture" ("right for national identity") is said: every individual has the right for preservation of national cultural identity, freely chose moral, aesthetic and other values, the state guarantees the right of individuals for national identity". Moreover, number of articles in the Law "on Culture" indirectly guarantees to the individuals the rights for cultural identity. Especially the article 48 (Cultural cooperation in the sphere of culture), article 49 ("International exchange in the sphere of culture"), Article 50 ("Cooperation in the sphere of protection of cultural property") provide for the national minorities the possibilities to have international cultural ties with its historical homeland.

51. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism implements the project "Cultural Diversity of Azerbaijan" within the UNESCO Programme "Cultural Diversity". In the framework of this project, Baku hosted the Conference with the similar title with the support of the OSCE representation in Azerbaijan. The Declaration was adopted on Cultural Diversity of Azerbaijan in which development of cooperation between the state, government and private sector, implementation of necessary measures for preservation of cultural diversity and realisation of regular monitoring were outlined as main principles. At the same time, in the framework of the results of the Conference it was decided to set up the Coordination Council for cultural diversity with prime objective to coordinate cooperation between the cultural communities of national minorities in Azerbaijan. Within the framework of the project on "Cultural Diversity of Azerbaijan" organisation of the art festival and photo exhibition of national minorities in Azerbaijan was also envisaged. Moreover, cultural communities of national minorities operating in Azerbaijan have been involved in the projects of cultural tourism.

52. **Romania:** The position of Romania on the cross-roads of Latin, Slavic and Central European cultures is reflected in the variety and richness of its cultural heritage in both a national and a wider European setting. It constitutes the interactive space for cultural

minorities and identities, carries large economic potential. The Romanian social scenery is characterized by its variety of complementary cultural traditions: Hungarian, German, Jewish, Turk, Tartar, Russian, Roma, Serbian, Bulgarian, Croatian whose significant identities should translate themselves into a creative contribution to the world contemporary art.

53. The principal provisions of international conventions and recommendations are appropriated and respected in Romania: “European Cultural Convention”(1954), “European Chart of Regional and Minorities Languages”(1992) and “The Frame Convention for protection of national minorities”. Romania is the first country in Europe that had concluded the ratification procedure of the Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity Convention. In July 2006, Romania submitted the ratification instruments to General Director of UNESCO.

54. **Turkey:** The initiative of “Civilizations Alliance” which was first put forward by Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero in 2004 during United Nations General Assembly, and then co-sponsored by the Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayip Erdogan, officially went into effect following a statement issued by the United Nations on 14 July 2005. The basic aim of the initiative that has become a current issue as a response to the tension creating efforts between the West and the Islam world is to contribute to the creation of unity and cooperation and harmony by attaching priority to common universal values between cultures. Having gained increasing appearance since then, the initiative has become today one of the priority projects attributed in the context of the dialog between cultures, religions and civilizations. Just as, the Civilizations Alliance Initiative has been the most outstanding initiative in view of eliminating the lack of dialog and understanding between the Islam and Western worlds during the recent cartoon crisis. Turkey, in the existence of EU in which multiculturalism is the essential, basically accepts that EU culture will contribute her own culture values and her own values will play major and pioneer role within EU Culture. In the globalizing world, cultural heritage that is intangible is a resource of cultural richness that transfers past to future. In this context, Turkey became one of the first party countries of The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and was elected to the membership of Intergovernmental Committee, having 18 members, that leads the implementation of the Convention hereafter, being completed the domestic law procedure as soon as possible.

55. **Ukraine:** From the point of view of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine, the major challenge to the modern world in the process of cultural globalization consists in preservation of individual cultural identity. Today the level of ethnic self-awareness and Ukrainian identity, in particular, among young people is not very high, which is caused by various factors. Taking this into consideration, one of the major objectives of cultural policy in Ukraine must be preventing the “absorption” of a unique national culture by world mass products for successful promotion of which on the world market there have been created all necessary conditions. Application of the experience of leading European countries in opposing globalization process is extremely important for Ukraine.

56. The Kyiv Initiative is based on the experience of the project "Support for Transition in the Arts and Culture in Greater Europe" (STAGE), carried out between 2000 and 2005. The STAGE project contributed to the development of new and dynamic cultural policies in the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia Ukraine and Moldova, reinforcing the cultural exchanges among the South Caucasus countries and with other European countries, and building mutual understanding and democratic stability in region. The Kyiv Initiative was brought into life at the 5th Ministerial Colloquy of the STAGE project which took place in Kyiv in September 2005.

57. The project indicates an integrated approach for sustainable cultural, economic and social development through cultural and heritage policies and action in the cultural and natural heritage fields with a view to promoting dialogue, participation and respect for cultural diversity.

58. A first consultative meeting was held in Strasbourg on 30-31 January 2006 with representatives of the participating countries. Further working meetings of this group took place in Strasbourg in April and May 2006 in the framework of the plenary sessions of the Steering Committee for Culture (CDCULT) and for Cultural Heritage (CDPAT). The meetings provided the opportunity for an update on recent developments in the countries concerned and specified concrete expectations in terms of objectives and action for the Kyiv Initiative, studying also implementation issues.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

59. Globalization is a set of processes which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power. Countries non-aligned, as many were and still are, but some did and still do change their alignments from one side to another and the leaders are making choices in terms of their perceptions of their security interests, their calculations of the balance of power, and their ideological preferences. In this new world of globalization, however, cultural identity is the central factor shaping a country's association and antagonism.

60.. Modern world nowadays functions more like an integrated system: a lot of world institutions have been set up, people migration is getting easier, the process of borders "erasing" between the independent states is under way with their economy becoming more and more dependent on the activities of the world transnational corporations. All these characteristics, which determine globalization process, are emerging in cultural field through creation of unified world pop culture.

61. Standardization and unification of cultural processes is taking place with active promotion of its products on the world market. On the back of these processes, there come problems with the preservation of cultural diversity and identity during expansion of the global culture because these particular qualities of the society are being destroyed under the pressure of pop culture.

62. The expansion of the market economy to BSEC countries lead to rampant commercialization and commoditization of intangible cultural heritage by staging for example, religious rituals for shows, the so called “folklorization”.

63. Cultural diversity means exchanges, including through trade of cultural goods and services. It also means that such trade must be balanced, so as to allow for the preservation and promotion of diverse cultural expressions around the world.

64. Adequate conditions have been created for artistic expressions and for stimulating many talented young tradition bearers to develop their artistic talent. Consideration should also be given to integrating contemporary artistic expressions in activities relevant to intangible cultural heritage.

65. The major challenge to the modern world and especially to the BSEC countries in the process of cultural globalization consists in preservation of individual cultural identity. Cultural globalization is a highly dialectic process, in which globalization and localization, homogenization and fragmentation, centralization and decentralization are not excluding opposites, but inseparable sides of the same coin.

66. It is important to ensure that globalization will help mutual understanding about different ethnic, national, religious, linguistic entities, and BSEC countries should strive to maintain cultural differences in the region.