



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Doc. GA21/CC20/REP/03

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

**REPORT**

**ON**

**“THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE BSEC REGION”**

**RAPPORTEUR: Mr. Georgios KALANTZIS (GREECE)**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In the past years important political, economic and cultural changes have taken place on the regional and global level. In the cultural area, these changes have expressed themselves in the new relationship between culture and development, i.e., in an understanding of the importance of the cultural dimension of development, new inter-cultural communication, and the strengthening of regional development with the parallel affirmation of new cultural identities. These changes are also being perceived in the creation of a new approach to the cultural policy.
2. UNESCO was the first to link the terms “culture” and “development”, and again the first to raise the question of the cultural dimension of development, taking the responsibility to stimulate the process of integration of the cultural policies into the development strategies worldwide.
3. The issue of integrating the cultural dimension in the concept of human and sustainable development is also one of the main aims of the cultural policy of the Council of Europe and the European Union.
4. As both an environmental factor, and as a catalytic process through which people communicate, are educated and empowered, culture has enormous potential to contribute to sustainable development, which is the regional task of the BSEC in the new millennium. For that reason the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee decided to take up the subject of “The Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region” as the main item on the Agenda of its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.
5. Contribution for the Report and Recommendation has been received from the national delegation of Bulgaria. Reference material used for the preparation of the Report was obtained by the International Secretariat mainly through the Internet from the web-sites of international organisations dealing with the issue, particularly UNESCO, UNDP, etc.

## **II. RELATION BETWEEN CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT**

6. Understanding the role of culture in development underwent a dramatic evolution from 1980s. The earlier economists maintained that traditional cultures, more often than not, were a hindrance to modernisation, development and economic growth. It was considered that if a country wishes to progress, it had to shed the ballast of traditional customs and institutions. It followed that the sooner the inherited culture could be neutralised, the better. This view has recently been replaced by a contrasting view: traditional cultures, in all their richness, variety and creativity, should be treated with respect; and that they can make an important contribution to development. They should also be regarded as a potential sources

of wisdom, that modernisers have all too often been disposed to overlook, since they contain values of solidarity and creativity that are actually vital for the development process. Certain practices, however, can hamper development if they undermine human rights or marginalise or exclude women or targeted groups of people from the development process.

7. “Culture” can be defined in many ways. In this Report, the word is understood in the same meaning as used by the UNESCO: **culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or a social group. It includes not only the arts and literature, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.** This sense of culture refers to the way people live together, interact, compete and cooperate.
8. Is "culture" an aspect or a means of "development," the latter understood as material progress; or is "culture" the end and aim of "development," the latter understood as the flourishing of human existence in its several forms and as a whole?
9. Both culture and development have become protean concepts, with an elusive and sometimes bewildering variety of meanings. For our present purpose, however, we can confine ourselves to viewing development in two different ways. According to one view, **development is a process of economic growth, a rapid and sustained expansion of production, productivity and income per head.** According to the other (espoused by UNDP's Human Development Report and by many distinguished economists) **development is seen as a process that enhances the effective freedom of the people involved to pursue whatever they have reason to value.** This view of human development (in contrast to narrowly economic development) is a **culturally conditioned view of economic and social progress.**
10. **The role of culture is different in the two interpretations of development.** In the view that emphasises economic growth, culture does not play a fundamental role but is purely **instrumental**: it can help to promote or hinder rapid economic growth. Without doubt, this instrumental view of culture is of great interest and importance, since the process of economic growth is generally highly valued.
11. However it is difficult to accept the view that culture can be fully captured in a purely instrumental role. Education, for example, promotes economic growth and is therefore of instrumental value, and at the same time is an essential part of cultural development, with intrinsic value. Hence we cannot reduce culture only to a subsidiary position as a mere promoter of economic growth.
12. There is, in addition, **the role of culture as a desirable end in itself**, as giving meaning to our existence.

13. Culture and development are linked in a number of different ways, and the connections relate both to the ends and to the means of development. That's why it is not surprising that the World Bank, as a leading development agency, has in recent years started to take considerable interest in the way that cultural factors can influence the process of development.
14. Culture plays a number of pivotal roles in the development process. Speaking about the role of culture as a means to development rather than its role as a constituent part of development and its basic ends, perhaps the simplest connection concerns the direct economic value of cultural investments. Some cultural developments, for example those that expand tourism, can be directly beneficial from an economic point of view, being a source of much income and employment. It is worthwhile to point out also that there are immense differences in the region in the development of facilities for travel and tourism. Promotion of these facilities creates additional economic benefits.
15. Moving to the role of culture as part and end of development, if development is seen not just growth of GNP, but more broadly, as an enhancement of the freedom and well-being of people, then development efforts, including economic expansion, can be integrated with programs for supporting and helping dissemination of indigenous cultural expressions, for example the expansion of traditional music and dancing. These too are cultural investments, but these activities may be aimed primarily at cultural objectives, as opposed to generating incomes. There is nothing contradictory in pursuing several objectives simultaneously. Spread of cultural contacts – between the different countries as well as within them – through films, paintings, music, dancing, etc., can expand cultural opportunities and also provide income and employment to many.
16. Along with constructive cultural opportunities generated by economic development, we also have to consider its negative and even destructive influences. **Globalisation**, closely linked with the process of economic development, needs a special attention in this context.
17. Having developed over the last decades, currently, globalisation tends to manifest itself in almost all spheres of life. Economic systems become more closely integrated, financial markets transcend national boundaries and information exchange around the world becomes easier and faster. The increasing globalisation of economic, political and cultural relations influences and changes societies, cultures, institutions, identities, and social relations.
18. Globalisation provided opportunities and at the same time entailed risks. It links cultures ever more closely and enriches the interaction between them, but it may also be detrimental to national creative diversity and to cultural pluralism. The cultural values, which identify and link local, regional or national communities, seem in danger of being overwhelmed by the relentless forces of the global market place. Economic globalisation has brought cultural homogenisation,

dominated by the pressures of popular culture. The result could be social displacement - a lack of continuity with traditions and perspective. But for development to be inclusive and sustainable, it must nurture the diversity of belief systems and traditions that enhance people's self-images and give them confidence to act in their own interests while respecting and supporting the traditions of other groups.

19. In these circumstances questions are raised as to how societies can manage the impacts of globalisation so that local and national cultures, and the creativity that sustains them, are not damaged but rather are preserved and enhanced. This is a central task for cultural policy.

### III. THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BSEC REGION

20. The BSEC region is characterised by great diversity in the levels of national economic development, pace of economic growth, in ethnic groups and cultures. The majority of the BSEC member states are facing the difficult consequences of protracted transition to a market economy and democracy, as the whole region undergoes a painful and multiple process of transformation and restructuring.
21. Economic and socio-political changes have profoundly transformed the cultures of the region. Culture in the transition countries, like the whole political and economic system, is also in a state of transition to democracy. Radical changes in the field of culture are taking place on the background of economic difficulties. The main problem of culture and cultural policy in these countries is the survival of culture itself in the conditions of a general crisis.
22. Different models of cultural policies are currently being applied in the countries of the BSEC region, more or less centralised, more or less past-oriented or with a penchant for contemporary projects, relying more or less on public subsidies.
23. One of the aims of the new cultural policy is the integration of cultures into the European cultural processes and the preservation of its national identity.
24. Most cultural policies remain relatively narrow. The very notion of "cultural policy" - in essence, how governments manage culture - must be broadened considerably. Defining and applying **an effective cultural policy implies** finding new ways of holding together multi-ethnic societies by exploiting pluralism in new and different ways - the dialogue between the cultures should constitute a fundamental aim of cultural policies. An effective cultural policy implies new ways of stimulating creativity in politics and policy-making, in technology, in industry and commerce, in education, in the arts, and in social and community development. It implies new ways of exploiting media to reduce the information gap. It implies adopting new ways of reflecting women's concerns, needs and interests and creating a fairer distribution of resources and power between men

- and women. It implies new ways of giving the young a greater role as standard bearers of future cultural generations. It implies a fresh, diversified approach to cultural heritage.
25. Speaking about the role of **culture in development** of the region we mean exploring and understanding the cultural factors (such as **cultural heritage**) which influence development, and working with cultural resources to achieve development which is effective, appropriate and sustainable. The term development, in its broad context, seen as a process that enhances the effective freedom of the people involved to pursue whatever they have reason to value relates to issues of **human rights, gender equality** and other associated fields. Thus, culture and development relates to ways in which culture can influence the success of development and make a practical contribution to survival and the improvement of the human condition.
  26. **Cultural heritage** encompasses material culture, in the form of objects, structures, sites and landscapes, as well as living and expressive culture as evidenced in forms such as music, crafts, performing arts, literature, oral tradition and language.
  27. The cultural heritage is more accurately reflected in the museums, mirroring the knowledge, experience and practices. Museums of different kinds and in different ways can make a significant contribution to "cultural policy", "cultural development" and "cultural heritage". There is much evidence that heritage and museum development can play a significant role in plans for economic development, whether as part of general tourism initiatives, or more specifically in relation to the regeneration of regions of industrial decline and change. Many museums also are of great importance in relation to the fields outside what is conventionally classified as the cultural sector, including important areas of science, particularly environmental science and conservation, and to education, as museums are important contributors to the informal education of people of all ages.
  28. Spending money on museums may be considered a luxury by decision-makers whose priorities often lie in other fields. Yet museums can be a tool for economic and social development: generating employment and income, fostering cooperation, promoting education. Museums can increase the self-awareness, confidence and pride of communities. As museums become an integral part of local, regional and national life, they play a role in a country's well-being.
  29. For societies at large, cultural diversity and uniqueness can be a leverage for major foreign exchange earnings and economic opportunities. The most obvious means is through tourism development. Travel and tourism constitute the world's largest industry. Cultural tourism can afford endless opportunities for communities' and countries' economic growth. This is yet another argument for developing the cultural heritage as a sector.

30. Cultural heritage is threatened by numerous factors including: ill-managed tourism and infrastructure development; poorly regulated building; some forms of trade, marketing, and international communication; environmental degradation; vandalism; theft; and armed conflict. An intensive, widespread and coordinated effort is required for publicising these conditions, and for explaining the dimension and meaning of the loss. Advocates for protection of cultural heritage must present the case to a wide variety of audiences from governments, to developers, the military, law-makers, financiers, social and economic development agencies, and to the general public, including the young. Appropriate messages through a variety of media are needed to reach the broadest possible audience.
31. Incorporating cultural heritage conservation into the social and economic development paradigm opens up possibilities for turning globalisation, infrastructure, and tourism challenges into opportunities.
32. **Gender equality** – Relations between women and men are shaped by culture. Gender identities and gender relations are critical aspects of culture because they shape the way daily life is lived in the family, but also in the wider community and the workplace.
33. While the specific nature of gender relations varies among societies, the general pattern is that women have fewer resources at their disposal and limited influence over the decision-making process that shape their societies and their own lives. This pattern of disparity based on gender is both a **human rights and development issue**.
34. Societies and cultures are not static. They are continually being renewed and reshaped. Development has changed how we look at men and women and the relations between them. Any form of discrimination against women can no longer be tolerated on equity grounds, nor can it be justified in terms of social efficiency: women's productive capacities are an essential ingredient in improving the quality of life for all. Achievement of equal and full participation of women in all spheres of activity constitutes an inseparable part of political, economic, social and cultural development of all countries.
35. To reach this end it is necessary to fully implement the most important international document in the field of women's rights is *the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* of the United Nations, which contains principles and standards relating to the rights of women in all spheres of family life and of society, and aimed to end the discrimination that denies or limits women's equality in political, economic, social, cultural and civic fields, as well as *the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action*, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, which reflect a new international

- commitment to the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere.
36. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of sustainable development in all areas of life.
  37. **Children and young people** - The world has never had a generation of young people so large or so young. Some 20% of the world's population today is in the 15 to 24 age group. Special attention should be paid to children, in accordance with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Children must be given the opportunity to develop in various ways – in terms of their imagination, capacity for creative thought and ability to express themselves verbally and physically, with creative use of words, sounds and pictures.
  38. Despite the differences in education and opportunity, it is a fact that no youth generation has never been as literate and multiculturally aware as the present. Today's young exhibit a degree of political awareness and a sensitivity to social injustice as never before. The implicit challenges are immense. First and foremost, they have to be protected against marginalisation and neglect by ensuring their social inclusion and involvement in civic and cultural programs, and by addressing their health, educational and employment needs. The young are the ones who can ensure that the infinite diversity of cultures will in future be better understood.
  39. A stance is emerging to seek and to highlight the cultural dimension of development in relation to **poverty alleviation, social cohesion and conflict resolution**.
  40. **Poverty** is one of the serious problems of the BSEC region. The time has come to give an important role to culture in the fight to address this problem. Contribution of culture to poverty alleviation is manifold. It may be direct or indirect. One way in which it works is by stimulating awareness and creativity, thereby emancipating people and empowering them to change their living conditions. Another is by permitting participation in a cultural context by marginalised groups, enabling them to take part in processes of change that affect their community.
  41. Vigorous policies in the area of popular culture and a strong promotion of the community participation can be used to put the region's enormous latent social capital to work. The democratisation of culture is one of the best investments that a society can make. By strengthening identity and self-esteem, culture creates conditions favourable to the development of community participation and **social cohesion**. Culture unleashes a nation's social capital and its ability to unite around common objectives to achieve progress.

42. **Conflict resolution** – It the beginning of the XXI century it is particularly timely to rise the level of international discourse on the issues of conflict. Most of the intractable, prolonged and damaging conflicts of the modern times are inter-ethnic, which means they are inter-cultural, or inter-religion, which also means they are inter-cultural. Unresolved conflicts in the BSEC region undermine the political, economic and social situation in the region and complicate the process of economic development and multilateral economic cooperation.
43. Ethnic clashes in some countries call for clearer thinking about strategies to promote peaceful coexistence between the cultures. Inter-cultural communication has a significant role to play in modern conflict resolution and inter-ethnic peace building efforts. The dialogue between cultures appears to be one of the fundamental cultural and political challenges for the world today. It is an essential condition of peaceful coexistence.

#### IV. INTER-CULTURAL COOPERATION

44. Development embraces not only access to goods and services, but also the opportunity to choose a full, satisfying, valuable and valued way of living together, the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole. In this respect inter-cultural communication and cooperation have an important role to play.
45. Taking into consideration the importance of cultural cooperation for better understanding among the peoples inhabiting the BSEC region, acknowledging the necessity of cultivation of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance, wishing to strengthen their cultural ties and to continue their efforts aimed at developing cooperation, the ministers of culture of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine signed in 1993 *the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information*. The Convention constitutes a long-term legal framework for cooperation and is a solid foundation for the conclusion of other bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements in future. It is open for the third countries.
46. Immediately after the signature of the Convention the Parliamentary Assembly adopted *Recommendation 3/1994 on the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information*, calling on the national parliaments to expedite the ratification process of the Convention.
47. The Assembly recommended the governments of the member countries to expedite the endorsement procedure. The governments were also recommended to support the projects carried out within the framework of the Convention and to create conditions for the involvement of non-governmental organisations, artists' and writers' associations, sports, youth and children's organisations, private

- foundations, etc. into the Black Sea cultural cooperation process in order to broaden and diversify the cultural contacts among the peoples living in the Black Sea region.
48. In the period of 1993-1995 all the Signatory States ratified the Convention and it entered into force. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey is the Depository State of the Convention.
  49. A number of important events had been held in the framework of the Convention since it was signed: the Black Sea University opened in Romania in 1993 which lead to the creation of the Black Sea Universities Network later on in 1997, the First Black Sea Arts Festival in Sochi in 1994, two Black Sea Film Festivals in Georgia, “Waves of the Black Sea” writers’ cruise, exchanges of artists, scientists and students, etc. A series of bilateral cultural, educational and scientific cooperation agreements have been concluded between the Signatory States.
  50. 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.
  51. The two festivals provide an excellent occasion for the children to enjoy a pleasant experience, to recognise different cultures and to make new friends. Acquaintance with the cultural traditions of other nations, informal communication enriched spiritually each participant of the forum. No doubt that the festivals open up new opportunities for fostering the climate of trust, mutual understanding and respect among the children and youth of the BSEC member countries, which will contribute to peace and stability in the Black Sea region.
  52. Taking into consideration the positive role that the Children and Youth Festival is playing, Recommendation 58/2001 on the Organisation of the Children and Youth Festival of the BSEC Member States adopted by the 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly on 5 December 2001 in Sofia approves the proposal of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee to organise future festivals in the PABSEC Member Countries, upon the invitation. It calls upon the parliaments and governments of the BSEC member states, the BSEC Business Council, the BSTDB, the specialised BSEC Centres, NGOs and the business community to provide any possible financial assistance in the organisation of the future festivals.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

53. Culture is an underlying force for socio-economic development. It interacts with development in many different ways, being involved as both the ends and the means of development.
54. Cultural creativity is a source of human progress, and cultural diversity, being a treasure of humankind, is an essential factor for development. Traditional cultures, in all their richness, can make an important contribution to development.
55. First of all culture gives direct economic benefit as a major source of jobs. Activities involved in developing the cultural heritage, as well as the cultural industries themselves and cultural products, create a large number of jobs both directly and indirectly. In future, culture will need to be integrated more closely into regional and local development strategies in order to maximise the impact in terms of employment.
56. Culture can make a positive contribution towards social stimulation and integration - empowering women, addressing the needs of the young generation, alleviating poverty – thus assisting the achievement of social cohesion.
57. Inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation are essential conditions for peaceful coexistence in the region, preparing the necessary ground for the economic development and multilateral economic cooperation.
58. However, limited technical and financial resources in many countries 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.
59. Considerable societal changes during the last decade led to the development of a new model of cultural policy, which is still being elaborated. The cultural policy, as one of the main components of sustainable development policy, should be implemented in coordination with policy in other social areas, on the basis of an integrated approach. Any policy for development must be profoundly sensitive to culture itself. The cultural policy must become a key element of the general strategy of development within the region and in the broader European space.