

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
**PABSEC**

Doc. GA 3470/97

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

## **Youth Cooperation in the Black Sea Region**

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*Text adopted by the Assembly on 11 December, 1997 in Chisinau*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee at its Eighth Meeting in Rize on 9-10 April 1997 decided upon the proposal of the Ukrainian national delegation to discuss the youth cooperation in the Black Sea region as the main subject on the agenda of its Ninth Meeting in Kyiv on 1-2 October 1997. It should be recalled that similar proposals to discuss this subject have been earlier expressed by the national delegations of Georgia and Greece.
2. The Rapporteur expresses acknowledgements to the national delegations of Armenia, Georgia, Greece, Turkey and Ukraine that have forwarded their contributions for this Report and the Recommendation on this subject, as well as to the International Secretariat for providing the information received from international organisations and from some youth organisations in the PABSEC member countries.
3. The Committee has been paying attention to youth issues within the framework of practically all subjects that it has taken up, particularly the ratification and implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information, cooperation among the PABSEC countries in the field of education and social guarantees in the transition period. At the same time, the Committee is aware of the need to discuss the issue of youth cooperation as a separate subject taking into account a very dynamic contribution that the energy and creative ability of youth can make to further development of the Black Sea cooperation process.

## **II. THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL YOUTH COOPERATION**

4. In the process of its evolution, the BSEC is gradually expanding the scope of its activities to include issues pertaining to the human dimension of the regional cooperation process. In particular, in the Moscow Declaration adopted on 25 October 1996, the Heads of State or Government of the BSEC Participating States “agree that their economic organisation will be enhanced by various measures in the sphere of human contacts”. The cooperation of youth may constitute a significant element of the emerging human dimension of the BSEC.
5. At the regional level, support is needed both from national authorities, on the one hand, and from the BSEC and the PABSEC, on the other, in order to ensure a sufficient legal, institutional and operational framework for a vigorous youth cooperation in the Black Sea region.
6. The Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information (1993) possesses an important potential for encouraging the youth cooperation in the fields of culture and education, in such areas as students’ exchanges, learning of the languages of the Black Sea countries, art contests and festivals, film festivals, cooperation on the opportunities of recognising diplomas and degrees, and various youth exchange programmes.
7. In February 1997, the Draft Statute of the Black Sea Sports Games was examined and signed by experts from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russian

Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. At present, the work is going on the final Protocol which will be signed at the ministerial level.

8. At the bilateral level, agreements aiming to promote youth cooperation have been concluded between some of the BSEC countries. For example, Turkey has signed sports cooperation protocols with Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania.

9. At the same time at present, there is no multilateral agreement specifically dealing with youth cooperation in the region. In this respect, the Assembly may support the proposal of the Greek national delegation to urge the competent government authorities to examine the prospects of signing a protocol for multilateral cooperation concerning the youth among the BSEC member states.

10. The participation of young people in social and political life is essential for democratic society. That is why most of the BSEC Participating States are currently working to elaborate coherent and comprehensive youth policies addressing the social, cultural and educational needs of young people. The concept of international cooperation, including the BSEC framework, should become an important component of these policies.

11. Reconsidering the youth policies with regard to young people's organisations is all the more obvious due to the end of the traditional monopoly of a single organisation for each age group, as was the case in the former Soviet Union and in the former socialist countries of the Central and Eastern Europe. The new, democratic, multi-party system giving the possibility of expression of a wide spectrum of opinions, should be also projected into children's and young people's worlds teaching them independent thinking, respect for human rights, and at the same time societal duties.

12. While examining the prospects for youth cooperation in the Black Sea region, it would be very useful to study and analyse the vast experience accumulated internationally and especially in Europe in promoting the coherent youth policies and in developing multifarious forms of youth contacts and initiatives.

### **III. YOUTH COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

#### **Activities of the Council of Europe**

13. In its international youth work, the Council of Europe endeavours to prepare young people to be active citizens in their own country and at European and international level, as well as to involve young people in the making of their future. The Council of Europe has produced a massive corpus of treaties aiming to establish a proper legal framework for comprehensive youth policies in the member countries and laying the groundwork for the activities of youth organisations and youth cooperation. These treaties include the European Cultural Convention which establishes the framework for the entire activities of the Council of Europe in the field of culture, education, heritage, sport and youth; the European Social Charter which inter alia provides for the protection of young people's social rights; the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights; and a whole array of conventions in the field of education promoting student mobility and mutual recognition of educational certificates: on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities, on

the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications, on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study, etc.

14. **The European Youth Centres (EYCs)** of the Council of Europe, located in Strasbourg and Budapest, are educational establishments and residential centres for young people from all European countries and from some other countries. The EYCs co-operate with international youth organisations of widely differing origins including political, educational and religious, rural youth movements, trade union and young workers organisations. Every year several thousand young people get together at the centres to participate in seminars, colloquies and symposia on a wide range of subjects such as youth unemployment, the media or the growth of intolerance. The EYCs also run a programme of language and training courses. EYC staff provide the secretariat for intergovernmental co-operation in the youth field, including the preparations for the Youth Ministers' Conferences held periodically since 1985.

15. **The European Youth Foundation (EYF)** of the Council of Europe provides youth foundations with funds for their international activities. It provides not only financial support for a large variety of activities, but also makes grants to help with the administration of international youth organisations. In this way it helps to strengthen co-ordination among youth associations. Themes or activities for which the EYF gives financial support or in which the EYC co-operates include:

- democracy and participation
- peace and peace education
- unemployment and working life
- human rights
- East-West relations and North-South dialogue
- environment and ecology

All activities must have a multinational and intercultural dimension and be prepared by young people themselves.

16. The decision-making bodies of the EYC and EYF operate according to the principles of co-management. Their Governing Board is composed of an equal number of representatives of governments and youth organisations, and is backed by an Advisory Committee of youth organisations' representatives. The policies of the two institutions thus reflect the real concerns of young people.

### **The European Youth Parliament**

17. The European Youth Parliament is an independent, non-political youth organisation founded in 1987. Its main objective is to promote the European dimension in education and to give students in the 16-22 age group the opportunity to participate in a practical, positive learning experience. The EYP aims to provide an educational project which is suited to the needs of future European citizens who have to be aware of the characteristics of other nations, respect their differences, learn to work together, master two or three languages and understand the causes of international conflict.

18. The EYP organises two or three international nine-day sessions a year, which are held each time in a different European country. and involve the EU states as well as a minimum of four observer countries, bringing together about 300 students/pupils and

teachers/tutors from different nations. The Parliament's session includes three days of discussion in committees, in order to reach a consensus opinion on a resolution. The resulting resolutions are debated and voted on during a two-day General Assembly. Adopted resolutions are presented to the European Parliament.

19. The EYP is open to all secondary schools in the European Union. School headmasters have to agree to provide a delegation of 10 students from the last two years of secondary education accompanied by a teacher and allow for teacher time to prepare the delegation on 10 different European topics (politics, education, human rights, economy, agriculture, etc.). Delegations are selected by a national jury which, on the basis of the results of a contest, decides on the two teams which will represent the country at the biannual international session. At present, Greece and Turkey are full members of the EYP.

20. On 6-16 March 1997, Thessaloniki hosted the 24th International Session of the EYP, with the participation of about 300 students from 25 European countries. Among the BSEC countries, apart from Greece and Turkey, Romania attended as an observer. The agenda of the fifteen committees and the General assembly included subjects ranging from the situation in former Yugoslavia and illegal trade in nuclear materials to the environmental situation in the Mediterranean and information technology. The Session became one of the highlights of the programme of the Organisation for the Cultural Capital of Europe "Thessaloniki-97".

21. In September 1999, an international session of the EYP will to be held in Istanbul. This session can become a very useful forum where young people from the European Union and from the Black Sea countries will discuss matters of mutual concern, exchange views and experiences and plan future cooperation. The PABSEC International Secretariat has contacted the EYP Secretariat in England with a view to make arrangements for the involvement of the PABSEC and youth organisations from the Black sea region in the Istanbul Session.

### **Some Other Examples of European Youth Organisations**

#### **ESIB - The National Unions of Students of Europe**

22. ESIB (The European Student Information Bureau) - The National Unions of Students of Europe was established in 1982 with the aim of promoting the social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level and with regard to all European institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Community. At present it has about 30 member unions from almost as many countries.

#### **AEGEE (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe)**

23. AEGEE, established in 1985, is a non-political student association with 15,000 members in 170 local groups located in different European countries. The interesting distinctive feature of this association is that it operates only at European and local levels, there is no local level. The main aim of AEGEE is to promote European co-operation, communication and integration among young people, especially in the

young world. Its main activities include conferences, seminars, summer universities, winter schools, etc.

### **Young European Federalists**

24. The Young European Federalists (JEF) present an example of a politically oriented youth organisation. JEF is the youth section of the Union of European Federalists and is part of the European Movement. It has about 15000 members in 23 different member sections all over Europe. The aims of JEF, as proclaimed in their Manifesto, are to work for the creation of a European Federation, peace and a World Federation, and for a freer, more just and more democratic federal society. JEF stands for a decentralised, self-managed society and therefore criticises the European Union for its “democratic deficit” and “collusion of diplomats, technocrats and bureaucrats” while at the same time supporting a more prominent role for the European Parliament. At the European level, JEF organises summer and winter camps, seminars and campaigns on main European issues.

## **IV. YOUTH COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION: RECENT INITIATIVES**

25. **The Black Sea University** (the Black Sea University Foundation) began its activities in Romania in May 1993. The BSU is a an international centre of permanent education specialising in short-term (approximately two weeks in duration) postgraduate-level courses, seminars and workshops. Its main objective is to create a multinational intellectual environment of non-formal education where scholars, experts, representatives of the private sector, and students may come together to facilitate mutual knowledge and understanding among the Black Sea nations and enhance scholars' and students' ability to solve common problems such as preserving the natural environment and cultural heritage of the region while also promoting regional economic development.

26. In 1993, the Black Sea University organised 30 summer schools and workshops with about 900 lecturers and students from 25 countries. In 1994, the University hosted 40 summer schools and seminars with about 1100 participants from 37 countries. In 1995, its post-graduate school conferring master's degrees was started. It is planned that the University will gradually be upgraded to a full-sized higher educational establishment.

27. The Assembly, an official sponsor of the BSU since 1995, has been developing relations with the University practically since its inception. In a number of its documents - Report of the Committee on the Black Sea Cultural Convention and Recommendation 4/1994, Report on cooperation in the field of education and Recommendation 10/1995, the Assembly supported the BSU activities and its transformation into an international institution of higher learning at the graduate and postgraduate level.

28. 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” in order to provide a legal basis for joint actions.

29. A recent example of PABSEC - BSU cooperation is the participation of Mr. Karapet Rubinian, PABSEC Vice-President, in the International Workshop “Roots of Conflicts in the Black Sea Area” organised by the BSU Conflict Prevention Centre in Mangalia, Romania on 24-31 August 1997.

30. In February 1997, experts from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine examined and signed the Draft Statute of the Black Sea Sports Games. The Draft Statute foresees that every four years - two years before the Olympics - these Games will be held in one of the participating countries; the experts agreed that the first Games would be held in Turkey. The aim of the Black Sea Sports Games shall be to strengthen friendship among the athletes and youth, to contribute to the development of social and cultural cooperation among the Black Sea countries, to ensure a close relationship among the National Olympic Committees of concerned countries and to promote an international sports solidarity under the Olympic philosophy. The Games will be organised through cooperation among the National Olympic Committees and will include Olympic sports. According to the Draft Statute, a number of bodies - the General Assembly, the Administrative Committee, specialised committees and the General Secretariat - will be established to deal with financial, administrative and technical matters. At present, the work is in progress on the final Protocol which will be signed at the ministerial level.

31. **The United Nations International Youth Association - Georgian Net** was established in 1993 as a non-governmental, non-political, non-religious and humanitarian organisation adhering to the UN principles. It is associated with the United Nations of Youth (UNOY), a non-governmental organisation established in Holland in 1989. UNOY believes that tasks facing the United Nations cannot be accomplished through the efforts of governments only, it is necessary to engage the important potential of youth in order to achieve the UN goals.

32. UNOY-Georgian Net organised the **conference “The Youth of the Black Sea Countries for the UN”** which was held in Tbilisi on 11 December 1996, concurrently with the Eighth Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly. The resolution adopted by the conference called for establishing links among youth and youth organisations in the BSEC countries, stressed the need for an international conference of the UN youth associations from the Black Sea countries and decided to initiate work with a view to setting up a new organisation, UNOY-BSEC. Its aims will be to popularise UN ideals, protect human rights, raise the role of youth in resolving regional conflicts through peaceful means, broaden economic and cultural cooperation and exchange information with other international youth organisations. The resolution was presented to the PABSEC General Assembly on 12 December 1997, and the Assembly welcomed and expressed its support to the initiatives put forward by the conference.

33. According to the information received by the PABSEC International Secretariat from UNOY-Georgia Net, the organisation is now implementing the “Development Cooperation“ Programme which consists of three projects:

- **International Scientific Symposium “The Mediterranean and the Black Sea Coast”**, to be held in October 1998, whose participants - leaders of non-governmental youth organisations, scholars and public figures - will focus on the cultural heritage and the issues of scientific and cultural co-operation. The organisers hope to attract the sponsorship from the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank.
- **The Youth of the Black Sea countries in the Changing World** which aims to establish a new regional youth organisation, UNOY-BSEC Net. For this purpose, the Information and Communication Centre will be established in Tbilisi to gather information concerning national youth organisation in the region, to exchange information with all interested organisations and to function as a co-ordinator of UN youth associations in the Black Sea area.
- national-level **seminar “Non-governmental Organisations for Sustainable Development”**, with the participation of leaders of Georgian youth organisations, representatives of different government structures and the media, to be held in Georgia in September-October 1997

34. Youth non-governmental organisations, through **the Black Sea NGO Forum**, have been actively contributing to the sustainable development of the Black sea region and efforts to protect the environment of the Black Sea undertaken within the framework of the “Bucharest Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution” and the Black Sea Environmental Programme supported by the UN Global Environmental Facility. The Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea, signed in Istanbul on 31 October 1996 by the ministers of the environment of six Black Sea coastal countries, lays an emphasis on continued close involvement of NGO’s in the development and implementation of both regional and national policies aimed at rehabilitating and protecting the Black Sea ecosystem and the sustainable use of its natural resources.

35. On 5-6 June 1997, schoolchildren’s **Environmental Assembly** was held in Trabzon, Turkey at the initiative of Affan Kitapcioglu Lycee in that city. The meeting brought together pupils and teachers from six Black Sea coastal cities - Batumi, Sochi, Odessa, Constanta, Varna and Trabzon - who discussed the environmental problems of the Black Sea and measures to prevent and remedy its pollution. The final documents of the meeting were sent to the United Nations and to the governments of the Black Sea and Danube riparian states. The PABSEC Cultural Committee and the International Secretariat provided assistance during the preparation of this event.

36. On 25-26 September 1997, **“Young Entrepreneurs, Spirit of Enterprise, Employment creation”**, an European Pre Conference for the 3rd Conference on the Craft and Small Business Sector, was organised by the Hellenic Organization of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and Handicraft S.A. with the support of the European Commission in Larissa, Greece. The conference dealt with the creation and development of small enterprises by young people as a feasible answer to such problems as unemployment, exclusion from the job market, regional and economic decline. The discussions centred on factors shaping and influencing the spirit of enterprise among young people and on policies and measures to facilitate exchange of experiences and technical knowledge among young entrepreneurs.

37. The Scouting and Guiding Federation of Turkey and the Mayor of Sile, a small resort town on the Black Sea coast in the vicinity of Istanbul, have recently proposed to the PABSEC to support the **Summer Camp in Sile, Turkey in 1998** for schoolchildren from all the BSEC countries. The Municipality of Sile and the Scouting and Guiding Federation have started a project of **the Black Sea Cultural Park** in Sile which will feature an artificial lake shaped like the Black Sea, surrounded by a park consisting of eleven parts each representing a BSEC country. During their stay in the summer camp, children will be able to participate to the completion of this project thus making this park not only representative of the Black Sea area, but also the result of a joint effort by children from all the BSEC Countries.

## V. PROPOSALS OF THE NATIONAL DELEGATIONS

### 38. Armenia

- To exchange information in the field of youth policies.
- To organise mutual study visits by the representatives of the youth organisations of the BSEC Participating States for exchanging experience and identifying co-operation models.
- To urge the Parliaments of the BSEC Participating States to create a legal framework for the activities of youth organisations and for elaborating youth policies.
- To organise workshops and training seminars for young leaders and for officials dealing with youth issues.
- To urge the governments of the BSEC Participating States to facilitate the financing of youth programmes in the countries of the region.
- To elaborate co-operation programmes for the countries of the region in the field of culture and education.

### 39. Georgia

- The PABSEC recommendations should envisage the acceleration of legislative process. It would be desirable to harmonise the laws of our countries at the drafting stage. To this end, the Parliaments should exchange both enacted laws and legislation drafts through the PABSEC International Secretariat.
- To make use of the capacity of the Black Sea University to train specialists in the field of market economy.
- To examine the possibility of establishing a special youth foundation, with a foreign funding component, aiming to address youth problems, such as support to young families and housing.
- To involve youth associations of the Black Sea countries in the establishment, under the patronage of the PABSEC, a Black Sea Youth Assembly. Its membership, status and objectives could be discussed at the Cultural Committee Meeting and then at the General Assembly.

### 40. Greece

- Both the state and the private sector must support youth exchanges through the allocation of relevant funds.
- Youth co-operation could be oriented, inter alia, towards the organisation of common cultural or scientific events, seminars, etc.

- The competent government authorities could examine the prospect of signing a Protocol for Multilateral Cooperation concerning the youth among the BSEC Participating States.

#### **41. Turkey**

- Mutual seminars and activities on the economic, geographic, historical, social and political matters
- Mutual volunteer work by youth groups for the benefit of peoples
- Joint actions to protect the environment, natural and cultural heritage
- Mutual activities of disabled persons and experts working with them
- Youth exchange programmes in different fields
- Mutual activities aiming to exchange experience in the field of youth policies and research

#### **42. Ukraine**

- To promote coherent youth policies addressing all the youth issues in their entirety and, first of all, social issues such as employment, housing, support to young families, combating crime, etc.
- To provide for an effective cooperation between government bodies and youth and children's organisations in the implementation of youth programmes and projects
- To ensure the organisational support and public financing of the programmes and projects targeting young people's social and human development
- To encourage the development of youth initiatives and youth organisations, and to enhance young people's participation in public and political life

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

43. Young people must be more actively involved in the Black Sea cooperation process as part of a wider public participation in the BSEC projects and activities, both at national level and through international, European and regional youth platforms. The cooperation of youth from the BSEC Participating States may add a new dynamic dimension to the Black Sea cooperation process, promoting human contacts, exchanges and common projects and thus fostering the climate of mutual understanding and respect conducive to peace and stability in the Black Sea region.

44. The Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Participating States should do their utmost to elaborate and implement comprehensive and consistent youth policies addressing the needs of the younger generation in the fields of education, employment, social security and culture. These policies should provide the necessary legal and operational framework for the activities of youth organisations as a prerequisite of young people's participation in institutional and political life. It is advisable to coordinate the youth policies of the Participating States and, to this end, exchange and harmonise relevant legislation.

45. At the same time, the young people's participation in social and political life will prepare them to become active citizens of their countries and of the European and the Black Sea communities of nations. This participation will teach them to enjoy the

democratic way of life and will better prepare them for their productive integration in modern society, preventing their exclusion and marginalisation which breed crime, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and other social evils.

46. Efforts should be taken, in spite of severe financial constraints, to provide for adequate financing of youth programmes from both public and private sources.

47. There is a potential for a build-up of youth efforts helping to promote the sustainable development of the Black Sea region and the measures to protect the environment of the Black Sea. The Assembly could recommend that 31 October - the Black Sea Day proclaimed in 1996 by the Ministerial Meeting in order to commemorate the adoption of the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan - should be marked every year with various youth events, such as Black Sea lessons at schools and universities, seminars, art festivals, etc.

48. To promote cooperation among the youth of the BSEC Participating States, a number of specific activities can be envisaged and promoted:

- examining the possibility to sign a multilateral protocol on cooperation in youth affairs;
- cooperation in the field of sports, in particular within the framework of the Black Sea Sports Games;
- study visits, seminars and workshops for young leaders and for officials dealing with youth issues;
- closer professional contacts among young people, such as joint activities of the associations of young entrepreneurs, young political leaders, national students' unions, environmental and cultural heritage associations and groups, etc.;
- exchange of students, learning of the languages of the Black Sea countries, art contests and festivals, film festivals, cooperation on the opportunities of recognising diplomas and degrees, as well as other activities within the framework of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information;
- establishment of a Black Sea Youth Assembly as a forum promoting a greater involvement of young people in the Black Sea cooperation process. The PABSEC can provide its patronage to this organisation;
- organisation of the Boy Scouts' and Girl Guides Summer Camp in Sile, Turkey for children from all the BSEC countries and the establishment of the Black Sea Cultural Park in Sile.
- cooperation with the Council of Europe, the European Union and other European institutions and international organisations in the field of youth affairs, as well as contacts of the youth organisations from the BSEC countries with European and international youth bodies.