

## **Message from Mr. Asaf Hajiyeu, the Secretary-General of the PABSEC**

The main objective of the Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, which was established in 1993, is to achieve a high degree of regional economic cooperation and to transform the Black Sea Region into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity. This requires a close cooperation among national parliaments and also international support that will allow efficient use of the full potential of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The Black Sea Region is a bridge between Asia and Europe and is at the crossroads of major transportation routes. Here are crisscrossed the main transport roads: the Great Silk Road, connecting East and West, Varyags road from North to South. The region is rich in energy resources and there are important energy routes delivering oil and gas to the world markets. But the main wealth of the Black Sea Region is the human capital that is necessary to be protected and developed. All this confirms the importance of the Black Sea Region in terms of world politics.

This year the international community faces a new challenge - the implementation of the strategic agenda for sustainable development for the period up to 2030. In this context, the BSEC Member States need to actively participate in the implementation of the objectives of sustainable development to ensure a peaceful, just, worthy future and wider opportunities for all. The main purpose is to build a developed society and this is the future strategy to meet the needs of present and future generations.

The BSEC Countries need to join efforts to effectively implement the “BSEC Economic Agenda – Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership”, which was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the BSEC Member States in 2012. The Agenda provides a roadmap outlining the framework for joint action that is needed to give a new impetus to the economic cooperation in the region and to implement important projects. For the achievement of these projects it is necessary to create an effective legislative framework supporting the interests of all the BSEC Member Countries, which grant a special importance to the role of PABSEC in this direction. Therefore, a particular attention is concentrated to the enhancement of the status of the PABSEC and its transformation into a full-fledged international parliamentary structure for reaching the outlined objectives.

The successful implementation of global and regional goals requires strengthening the partnership relations. The achievement of the common goals is possible only with the active participation of governments, parliaments, workers, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders involved in the transformation process. To this end, the Assembly has intensified the contacts with regional and international organizations

and decided to extend the cooperation with the Asian countries. The PABSEC has already obtained the observer status in the Asian Parliamentary Assembly and continues to strengthen the ties with other parliamentary assemblies and international organizations.

The problem of refugees is one of much concern and it is a painful issue in the world, costing the global economy over 250 Billion Dollars. Today, the refugee density in the Black Sea Region is twice as high as the average figure in the world and every fact implies people's lives, feelings, woes and sufferings. The solution to these problems requires joint efforts, not only at regional but also at global level.

Climate change issue is important for our region. It affects almost all socio-economic sectors and impacts on such strategic resources as water, food and energy. It slows down and even jeopardizes sustainable development. Therefore, it is necessary to actively participate in the dialogue regarding the climate change and to cooperate with the competent international authorities for a lasting global solution to this important issue, taking also into account the specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances.

There are quite a number of conflicts in the region that adversely affect the regional economic development. These conflicts have to be solved in the near future since it entails sufferings of innocent people. History shows that confrontation yields nothing good. That is why strengthening the cooperation and good neighborly relations is important for ensuring peace and stability.

I would like to emphasize that we are all one family and we have to bring our own contribution to build a common future where there is no place for hostilities and in this respect, the Black Sea should not divide but unite us all.

I wish peace and prosperity to all the peoples living in this region.