



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Doc.: GA60/EC59/REC185/22

RECOMMENDATION 185 /2022*

**“Challenges and Prospects of Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture in the BSEC
Member States after the Pandemic”**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) acknowledges the vital role of agriculture as the most important indigenous sector in the Wider Black Sea Region. The PABSEC shares the global conviction that, notwithstanding the changes in technology and society over the past years, agriculture remains critically important to produce safe quality food, as sustainable as possible, economically, environmentally and socially. The increased global demand for agricultural products is driven largely by population growth and the challenges of addressing resource depletion and climate change, also increase. Along the challenges facing the sector, there are equally many prospects. The governments realign policies in light of the emerging challenges and opportunities, based on achieving productivity through sustainability.
2. The PABSEC is concerned that the Russian military aggression against Ukraine has caused a considerable price increase in global food markets and substantially affected the development of agricultural industry and trade and is severely affecting food security in the Wider Black Sea Region and the world at large.
3. The PABSEC stresses that the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflicts in the Black Sea Region have further burdened agriculture and exacerbated the already existing issues surrounding it. The pandemic highlighted the importance of increasing agricultural production, ensuring food sovereignty, import substitution of basic agricultural products, increasing the competitiveness of agricultural production in domestic and foreign markets, as well as modernization of the material, technical and technological bases. There is a need for better functioning of the agricultural industry, more flexible and reliable supply chains and more concerted efforts, to minimize risks and increase efficiency.
4. The PABSEC notes with satisfaction, that the agricultural sector in the Black Sea Region has demonstrated significant resilience through the pandemic and laid the foundation for the well-functioning of the post-pandemic recovery mechanisms. The Assembly supports the actions of the BSEC Member States which promptly mobilized all the capacities and timely implemented

Assembly's debate on 7 December 2022 (see Doc.: GA60/EC59/REP/22, Report of the Economic, Commercial and Financial Affairs Committee “Challenges and Prospects of Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture in the BSEC Member States after the Pandemic”, discussed on 3 November 2022; Rapporteur: Mr. Milija Miletic, Member of the Committee- the Republic of Serbia)

The text was adopted at the General Assembly, on 7 December 2022, in the Republic of Serbia.

measures in agricultural and food systems, to maintain continuity of agricultural production, sufficient domestic food availability and food safety. Overcoming the crisis in the field of agriculture became possible by quick adaptation and implementation of coherent agro-industrial policies and also by concerted efforts of government authorities, relevant agencies, agricultural associations, etc. The Assembly highly appreciates the successful pandemic response, as well as the efforts towards the development of competitive, knowledge-based and sustainable agriculture.

5. The PABSEC recalls its Recommendations in the fields of agriculture and food, including Recommendation 54/2001 “Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development”, Recommendation 94/2007 “State and Prospects of Fisheries in the BSEC Member States”, Recommendation 114/2010 “Food Security in the BSEC Member States”, Recommendation 120/2011 “GMO (genetically modified organisms) Application in the BSEC Countries: Economic and Environmental Aspects”, Recommendation 126/2012 “Perspectives of Development of Winegrowing and Winemaking Sectors in the BSEC Member States” and reiterates its commitment to strengthen the mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as the exchange of the best practices, in the field of agriculture in the Black Sea Region.

6. The PABSEC welcomes the activities of the BSEC Organization and its bodies, on strengthening the cooperation among the BSEC Member States in the field of agriculture. The PABSEC appreciates the actions of the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry and stresses the need to intensify the cooperation with the aim to implement joint projects and initiatives. The Assembly applauds the collaborative effort of the BSEC Organization and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in joint implementation of the project for launching the BSEC Regional Cooperation Centre for Sustainable Food Systems.

7. The PABSEC recognizes the importance of agriculture for the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Assembly extends its full support to the comprehensive SDG 2 on achieving zero hunger, aiming at sustainable food production systems and implementation of resilient agricultural practices, to successfully respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

8. The PABSEC attaches a special importance to global partnership at different levels and commends the enhanced collaboration with international and regional specialized organizations, including the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) etc., as a useful mechanism for an effective resolution of global agriculture and food related challenges.

9. The PABSEC also welcomes the successful holding of the First Summit of the United Nations Food Systems in 2021, as an international multilevel partnership, to meet the urgent need to transform food systems and encourages the BSEC Member States to strengthen the international cooperation in the field of sustainable food systems and agriculture. The Assembly acknowledges that the sustainable agricultural development requires more targeted action, a systemic joint approach, coordinated efforts and cooperation of all stakeholders, at national and international levels.

10. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States:

- i. improve the mechanisms of regional cooperation in the agricultural field, giving due consideration to the existing challenges;
- ii. *make efforts* to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic and the ongoing conflicts on the food and agricultural sectors and support international trade in food and fertilizers;
- iii. *take necessary steps* to solve the critical issues of maintaining the smooth operation of the agricultural sector and ensuring its long-term sustainability at the national, regional and international levels;

- iv. *enhance* the institutional and legislative framework, with the aim of formulating a joint long-term regional strategy to boost agricultural industry;
- v. *exchange* information on national agricultural legislation and review, as appropriate, the existing laws and regulations, to ensure the consistency and conformity of domestic legislation with international standards and guidelines on agriculture;
- vi. *stimulate* wider rural economy and take steps to reduce regional disparities in agriculture;
- vii. *promote* further cooperation among the BSEC Member States, in the field of agricultural industry, by concluding bilateral or multilateral agreements, as well as protocols of cooperation and memorandums of understanding among competent national authorities;
- viii. *deepen* business contacts in the field of agriculture and further promote collaboration among agricultural enterprises, food business operators and associations, in the BSEC Member States;
- ix. *encourage* cooperation in the veterinary and phytosanitary fields, regarding animal breeding and welfare, plant health and protection, including seed and genetic resources, as well as the food safety;
- x. *enhance* cooperation in the field of innovative agricultural technologies for the efficiency of production and sustainable agricultural growth, as well as for the use of fewer natural resources, and reduce waste;
- xi. *exchange* experience in the field of digitalization of the agro-industrial complex;
- xii. *set forth* action and strategies to attract agricultural investment by both public entities and private enterprises, and promote a wider investment policy for the development of rural areas in the region;
- xiii. *effectively deploy* financing and credit instruments of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and other financial institutions, in order to support agriculture;
- xiv. *encourage* increasing of domestic agricultural production capacities, to eliminate the future food crisis;
- xv. *boost* the agricultural trade, increase the export of agricultural goods in the region and eliminate obstacles in the mutual trade;
- xvi. *promote development* of scientific research in agriculture and make the best use of its potential, to support small and medium-sized farms to increase their productivity and competitiveness in the global market;
- xvii. *encourage* exchange of agrarian scientists in leading laboratories and research centers, with the aim to improve qualifications and gain experience in the field of the latest achievements of modern agricultural science;
- xviii. *mobilize efforts* on promoting investment in human capacity across all agriculture market segments and levels, to engage the youth and improve farmer skills;
- xix. *exchange* visits among the representatives of ministries of agriculture, agricultural companies, universities, agricultural associations, in order to share the best practices, the advanced experience and methodologies;
- xx. *launch* projects linking agriculture and tourism, to stimulate rural tourism as a contributor to the diversification of income and living standards in rural areas;
- xxi. *promote* implementation of the strategic objectives in the agricultural sector, stipulated in the BSEC policy documents;
- xxii. *provide* the necessary support to the activities of the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry and the implementation of the BSEC Action Plan, elaborated by this Working Group.

11. **The Assembly invites** the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.