



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Doc.: GA58/LC58/REC183/21

RECOMMENDATION 183/2021*

“Fostering digitalization and innovation in order to improve the legislative process and transparency of the parliamentary activity”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) underlines that the implementation of urgent tasks in difficult pandemic situations, ensuring the timely adoption of urgent decisions and the fastest possible delivery of information to the population, dictates fostering digitalization of the parliamentary activity and the use of effective innovative approaches. These measures aim to strengthen the public sector accountability, improve public services and increase citizens’ trust.
2. The PABSEC stresses that fostering digitalization and innovation in parliamentary activities contributes to a greater transparency and openness. Innovative approaches in the work of parliaments enhance the mechanisms for overseeing the strengthening of democratic governance and create the necessary conditions for improving the efficiency of the legislative process. Strengthening the control over the activities of the state machinery also significantly reduces corruption at all levels. The modern Internet technologies provide unique opportunities for state bodies, including parliaments, to quickly publish laws and decisions, as well as maintain a free flow of information and respond to the citizens’ inquiries.
3. The PABSEC expresses the conviction that the digital ubiquity transforms social and political relations. Involving web instruments by political actors for the organization of social and political relations, ensures the interaction between society and public institutions. Fostering innovation and digitalization, digital democracy and digital diplomacy, make it possible to use new technologies in the political domain, both at national and international arena for developing coordinated actions to overcome the political, social and economic crises.

*Assembly debate on 22 November 2021 (See Doc. GA58/LC58/REP/21, Report of the Legal and Political Affairs Committee “*Fostering digitalization and innovation in order to improve the legislative process and transparency of the parliamentary activity*”, discussed online, on 4 October 2021; Rapporteur: Ms. Roberta Alma Anastase – Romania)

Text adopted at the General Assembly, on 22 November 2021 at online meeting.

4. The PABSEC notes that the introduction of digital technologies into the election system and the use of remote electronic voting become especially relevant in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. To this end, it is necessary to take measures to organize elections, ensuring the safety of life and health of all the participants in the electoral process. In this regard, it is necessary to make amendments to the legislation, providing for the possibility of conducting online voting, taking into account the observance of sanitary and epidemiological requirements in order to ensure the safety of citizens during elections.

5. The PABSEC stresses that fostering innovation and digitalization, not only leads to fundamental transformations and simplify people's lives, but becomes tools in the hands of cyber terrorists and terrorist organizations. The growing demand for the use of information technologies in various spheres of activity requires more attention to the information security. The most topical problem of cybercrime against a particular state is cyberterrorism. In this regard, the PABSEC recalls its Recommendations in the field of cybersecurity, including Recommendation 162/2018 “Strengthening Cooperation in Cybersecurity in the BSEC Member States” and Recommendation 129/2012 “The Role of Parliaments in Enhancing Information (Cyber) Security in the BSEC Member States”, emphasizing the need to study the existing and potential threats in the field of information security and take joint measures to strengthen the ICT systems safety in the BSEC Member States.

6. The PABSEC underlines that the activities of the parliaments become more agile, finding iterative solutions to quickly address the emerging problems. At present, the parliaments of the BSEC Member States undertake a wide variety of digital transformations to proliferate digital technologies in standard parliamentary procedures.

7. Therefore, the PABSEC recommends that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:

- i. *strengthen* the legislative work to adopt the necessary amendments and innovations in laws, related to the digitalization of the parliamentary activities;
- ii. *expand* policies for ensuring the transparency and openness of the legislative process, aiming to increase the citizens’ trust in the public institutions and assure a better citizens’ participation;
- iii. *review and update* the digital strategies of the parliaments, to capture and embed the lessons learned during the pandemic, through the implementation of the good management practices;
- iv. *use* digital transition for a more transparent and efficient governance that requires sound strategies, long-term investments and an efficient and sustainable use of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT);
- v. *assure* the resilience of the technical infrastructure, including telecommunication equipment, software, special applications and security services, needed for the establishment of the smooth digital transformation of the parliaments;
- vi. *promote* setting up of the platforms that hold governments and parliaments accountable to the citizens;
- vii. *further enhance* the development of remote working practices using cloud-based tools, digital solutions and the advanced ICT infrastructure, especially in times of pandemics;

- viii. *take measures* to increase the professional capacity and skills of the staff of the legislative bodies for a prompt digitalization of the parliamentary activity;
- ix. *invest* in the digital literacy of the citizens to take full advantage of the electronic parliament, freely available to citizens, governments and businesses, regardless of individual, social or cultural characteristics of the geographical location;
- x. *ensure* that the digitalized system has robust security features, so that the citizens can access, provide and exchange information online, with the assurance of privacy, confidentiality and reliability;
- xi. *address* the cybersecurity related issues, confronting the security of the parliamentary platforms and ensure a long-term strategic planning, to strengthen information security through the development of policies aiming at mitigating the potential risks;
- xii. *support* the parliaments of the BSEC Member States to intensify their efforts in order to ensure a transparent, open and efficient parliamentary activity;
- xiii. *ensure* a high level of mobilization of authorities in exchange of best practices, sharing knowledge, coordinating actions, providing technical assistance in the process of digitalization, through strengthening coordination and enhancing cooperation.

8. The PABSEC invites the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.