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SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REPORT*

“Cultural Diplomacy for Strengthening Relations and Cooperation in the Black Sea Region”

Rapporteur: Mr. Erjo Mile, Member of the Committee (Republic of Albania)

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I INTRODUCTION

1. The Black Sea Region, with its unique convergence of civilisations, religions, languages, and historical experiences, represents a cultural crossroads of exceptional significance. Its strategic geopolitical location as a bridge between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East has shaped a shared cultural space influenced by centuries of interaction, trade, and cultural exchange. This rich cultural mosaic continues to provide a strong foundation for mutual understanding and cooperation among the peoples and Member States of the Region, complementing political and economic interaction.
2. In the current regional and global context, characterised by geopolitical tensions, social fragmentation, and humanitarian challenges, cultural diplomacy has gained increasing relevance as a tool for dialogue, trust-building, and peaceful cooperation. Alongside economic, infrastructural, and political initiatives, the social and cultural dimensions of cooperation have become essential for fostering long-term stability, inclusiveness, and people-to-people contacts in the Black Sea Region.
3. For the purposes of this Report, cultural diplomacy is understood as the set of policies, initiatives, and practices through which states, parliaments, public institutions, and societies promote mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation by means of culture, education, heritage, values, and people-to-people exchanges. Cultural diplomacy constitutes an integral part of the social and humanitarian dimension of international and regional cooperation and differs from public diplomacy by its long-term, reciprocal, and society-centred character. It relies on cultural assets such as language, education, artistic expression, historical narratives, and cultural heritage to foster dialogue, reduce stereotypes, and strengthen social cohesion.
4. Since its establishment the PABSEC is committed to supporting cultural diplomacy by actively engaging in cultural dialogue and has adopted Reports and Recommendations on this topic, including Report and Recommendation 201/2024 on the Role of the Parliaments in Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the BSEC Member States; Report and Recommendation 163/2018 on Enhancing Cultural Cooperation and Multiculturalism in the BSEC Member States; Report and Recommendation 148/2015 on Combatting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage in the BSEC Region; Report and Recommendation 136/2013 on Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage; Report and Recommendation 119/2010 on Cultural Cooperation in the BSEC Region: Experiences, Opportunities and Challenges; Report and Recommendation 89/2006 on the Dialogue among Cultures as a means to build trust among the Nations; Report and Recommendation 86/2005 on the Cultural, Educational and Social Aspects of the EU Enlargement: Consequences for the Black Sea Region; Report and Recommendation 80/2004 on Preservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage of the BSEC Member States; Report and Recommendation 70/2003 on The Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region; Report and Recommendation 18/1996 on Guidelines on the Program for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Black Sea Region; Report and Recommendation 6/1994 on Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the PABSEC Member Countries.
5. The Committee on Social and Humanitarian Policy at its 65th Meeting decided to discuss at its next 66th Meeting the Report, dedicated to the “Cultural Diplomacy for Strengthening Relations and Cooperation in the Black Sea Region”. The present Report reflects the information provided by the national delegations of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Türkiye and Ukraine. It also uses the research material and reports of relevant international organisations, as well as information from various internet sources.

II CULTURAL DIPLOMACY FOR STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONS AND COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

6. Cultural diplomacy has emerged globally as a soft-power instrument capable of expanding cooperation beyond political and economic domains. In the Black Sea Region, with its diverse cultures, languages, religions, and traditions, cultural diplomacy serves an important role. The Black Sea Region possesses a rich tapestry of shared historical and cultural heritage, spanning ancient civilisations, maritime traditions, trade routes, and diverse linguistic and religious communities. Enhancing the visibility of this shared heritage is a vital element of cultural diplomacy, as it reminds Member States of their common roots and longstanding ties. Joint programmes on cultural heritage preservation, museum collaborations, and cross-border tourism routes help promote awareness of the Region's interconnected history while also supporting local cultural industries. Intangible cultural assets such as folklore, crafts, music, dance, culinary traditions, and community rituals represent an equally significant part of this heritage. By promoting and safeguarding these traditions, Member States contribute to cultural diversity and strengthening the collective identity of the Region. Shared initiatives, whether under UNESCO frameworks or regional agreements, highlight the Black Sea as a multidimensional cultural space, encouraging cooperation in heritage management and supporting sustainable cultural tourism.

7. Cultural diplomacy contributes to regional stability by encouraging dialogue among diverse communities, creating channels of communication even during times of political tension. Cultural initiatives often remain active when other forms of cooperation become difficult, serving as confidence-building measures that preserve interpersonal and institutional connections. Through cultural events, academic exchanges, and dialogue platforms, Member States foster an environment in which cooperation can flourish despite political differences. Peaceful interactions and trust-building measures are essential for maintaining long-term stability in a region as historically complex as the Black Sea. Cultural diplomacy helps break down stereotypes, reduce prejudices, and humanise relations between populations.

8. Governmental structures, including ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of culture and education, diplomatic missions, and specialised cultural institutes, play a central role in promoting cultural diplomacy as an integral component of foreign policy. Through embassies, consulates, and permanent missions, states facilitate cultural exchanges, support language and education programs, organise cultural events, and promote national heritage abroad, thereby strengthening mutual understanding and people-to-people contacts. Inter-ministerial coordination ensures that cultural initiatives are aligned with broader diplomatic, economic, and development objectives, while foreign missions serve as operational platforms for dialogue with host countries, international organisations, and civil society actors. Within the Black Sea Region, the active engagement of governmental institutions and diplomatic representations is essential for sustaining cultural cooperation, implementing joint projects, and advancing the objectives of regional frameworks such as PABSEC through consistent, coordinated, and long-term cultural diplomacy strategies.

9. Cooperation between cultural institutions is a fundamental pillar of cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region. Cultural centres, universities, museums, theatres, and libraries serve as key actors in facilitating cross-border dialogue and cultural exchange. Partnerships between these institutions lead to coorganised exhibitions, research projects, conferences, and cultural festivals that enrich public understanding and broaden opportunities for collaboration. Such institutional cooperation supports the creation of stable networks that foster continuous dialogue beyond governmental frameworks.

10. Educational programmes, including scholarships, joint degrees, university partnerships, and student mobility schemes, play a crucial role in enhancing cultural awareness and intercultural dialogue. By enabling students and researchers to study, work, and collaborate across borders, these

programmes help cultivate shared experiences and strengthen regional cohesion. As a result, education becomes a key platform for cultivating respect, tolerance, and understanding among the peoples of the Black Sea Region. Cultural exchanges and artistic collaborations constitute some of the most effective forms of cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region. Through festivals, exhibitions, artistic residencies, and exchange programs, countries of the Region facilitate direct interaction between their citizens, fostering a deeper appreciation of each other's cultural heritage and values. Such initiatives not only promote artistic creativity but also contribute to building long-term interpersonal relations, especially among youth, students, and cultural professionals who become future ambassadors of regional cooperation.

11. The increasing importance of digital communication has transformed cultural diplomacy by enabling new forms of engagement, outreach, and visibility. Virtual cultural platforms, online exhibitions, digital archives, and remote artistic collaborations allow Member States to connect their populations regardless of geographic limitations. These tools have become especially valuable in expanding access to cultural content and in facilitating dialogue among individuals who may not have the ability to participate in in-person events. Digital diplomacy also enhances international visibility by promoting national cultural achievements to global audiences. Social media, virtual reality technologies, and digital storytelling offer innovative opportunities for cultural promotion and exchange. Additionally, digital communication strengthens inclusiveness by enabling broader public participation, particularly for youth, diaspora communities, and people with limited mobility. As such, digital initiatives are increasingly recognised as essential components of modern cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region.

12. The Black Sea region continues to experience persistent geopolitical and security challenges that significantly undermine regional cooperation and stability. Protracted and unresolved conflicts, as well as renewed hostilities in certain areas, have resulted in diminished trust among neighboring states and have weakened multilateral dialogue mechanisms. The militarisation of the region, increased defense expenditures, and the presence of foreign military actors have contributed to a fragile security environment, limiting the scope for confidence-building measures and cross-border cooperation. These conditions directly affect cultural diplomacy initiatives by restricting mobility, reducing institutional engagement, and politicising cultural interaction, thereby diminishing the role of culture as a neutral platform for dialogue.

13. Economic instability and structural disparities among Black Sea countries represent another major challenge to regional cooperation. Significant differences in income levels, public investment capacity, and access to international financial resources constrain the ability of certain states to allocate funding for cultural, educational, and heritage-related programmes. In many cases, cultural diplomacy is deprioritised in favour of urgent economic or security concerns. Additionally, external economic shocks, including global financial crises, supply chain disruptions, and rising energy and food prices, have further strained national budgets, leading to the suspension or scaling down of cross-border cultural projects and limiting participation in regional initiatives promoted under the PABSEC framework.

14. The deterioration and inadequate protection of cultural heritage sites constitute a critical problem in the Black Sea Region, particularly in areas affected by conflict or political instability. Armed conflicts have resulted in the destruction, damage, or illicit appropriation of cultural and historical monuments, museums, archives, and religious sites. In some instances, cultural heritage has been deliberately targeted or used as an instrument of political influence, undermining shared historical narratives and exacerbating social divisions. Limited regional coordination, insufficient legal enforcement mechanisms, and a lack of technical expertise further impede effective preservation and

restoration efforts, weakening the potential of cultural heritage as a unifying element for regional identity and cooperation.

Role of PABSEC and National Parliaments in Strengthening Cultural Diplomacy

15. National parliaments play a central role in advancing cultural diplomacy by providing the legislative, institutional, and political framework necessary for sustained cultural and social cooperation. Through legislative action, parliaments adopt and harmonise laws supporting cultural exchanges, the protection of cultural heritage, the development of creative industries, and mobility for artists, academics, and cultural institutions. Parliamentary committees responsible for culture, education, foreign affairs, and international cooperation translate these objectives into concrete policies and oversee their implementation.

16. Parliamentary diplomacy complements intergovernmental efforts by maintaining dialogue and cooperation even in periods of political tension. Inter-parliamentary exchanges, joint initiatives, and thematic discussions contribute to trust-building, mutual understanding, and the strengthening of people-to-people contacts across the Black Sea Region.

17. Moreover, parliaments serve as important channels for citizen representation, ensuring that intercultural dialogue and international cooperation remain firmly grounded in the aspirations and needs of societies. Through public hearings, parliamentary debates, and engagement with civil society, academia, and cultural institutions, legislators help foster inclusive participation, social cohesion, and a broader sense of ownership over intercultural initiatives.

18. The promotion of education, youth exchanges, and academic cooperation constitutes another strategic priority for parliamentary engagement. By supporting initiatives that encourage student mobility, joint research programmes, and institutional partnerships, parliaments contribute to nurturing future generations committed to dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect. These efforts are indispensable for building sustainable foundations for peaceful coexistence and long-term regional stability.

19. Furthermore, in an era of rapid technological transformation and digital communication, parliaments play a vital role in shaping policies that harness digital platforms for intercultural engagement, while also addressing emerging challenges such as disinformation, hate speech, and cultural polarisation. Through legislative action and oversight, parliaments can promote responsible digital governance that supports constructive dialogue and protects fundamental freedoms.

20. Within the institutional framework of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), cultural dialogue holds a prominent place as a fundamental pillar of regional integration. PABSEC recognises that cultural cooperation is not merely an accessory to economic development but an essential foundation for building trust, strengthening people-to-people contacts, and fostering peaceful coexistence. By promoting shared values, respect for cultural diversity, and open communication, the Assembly supports Member States in developing collaborative policies that advance both cultural and socio-economic development.

21. PABSEC provides a unique platform for exchanging national experiences, harmonising approaches, and encouraging legislative frameworks that promote cultural cooperation. Through its reports, recommendations, and committee activities, PABSEC plays a vital role in advocating cultural diplomacy as a tool for sustainable regional development and for reinforcing ties among the peoples of the Black Sea Region. Cultural diplomacy remains a powerful instrument for fostering mutual understanding, strengthening cooperation, and enhancing peace and stability in the Black Sea Region. By actively engaging in cultural dialogue, Member States can contribute to building trust, stimulating socio-economic development, and promoting shared values across the Region.

Situation in the BSEC Member States

22. Cultural Diplomacy of ***the Republic of Albania*** serves as a strategic instrument in support of economic development, national interests, and the strengthening of Albania's international profile. It contributes to the preservation and promotion of national identity, cultural heritage, values, arts, and traditions, while fostering diplomatic relations, lobbying efforts, and international cooperation. Through cultural diplomacy, Albania enhances its visibility abroad, promotes tourism and trade, and encourages economic partnerships and foreign investment, positioning culture as a key driver of sustainable development and soft power. Albania's cultural diplomacy strategy aims to expand its international presence by strengthening engagement with the diaspora, the strategy seeks to enhance Albania's positive image as a country with a rich cultural heritage and a distinctive identity, while increasing global visibility through participation in prestigious cultural and academic events. At the same time, it focuses on reinforcing cultural and linguistic identity among younger generations of the diaspora through active creative involvement, expanding cooperation with national and international institutions in the fields of arts, education, science, and tourism, and building intercultural bridges.

23. As an integral part of Albania's foreign policy, cultural diplomacy actively supports the country's European Union integration process. Through coordinated initiatives led by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and Albanian diplomatic missions, Albania promotes its European profile not only within the EU but also globally. The government initiative CulturAlb, launched in April 2025, plays a central role in this effort by showcasing Albania's rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Dozens of exhibitions, concerts, film screenings, literary events, and international cultural festivals have been organised across Europe and beyond, including in EU Member States and countries of the broader Central and Eastern European and Balkan Region.

24. In 2025 over 200 cultural, educational, and diaspora-focused activities were implemented by Albanian embassies and consulates in 30 countries. These activities emphasised the promotion of Albanian language and literature, artistic creativity, intercultural dialogue, and diaspora engagement particularly among youth. Concrete examples of Albania and BSEC bilateral cooperation include sustained cultural exchanges and joint heritage initiatives with Türkiye, encompassing exhibitions, museum projects, heritage restoration, and diaspora-led promotion of Albanian culture, academic and cultural collaboration with Romania focused on Albanology, scientific conferences, and Black Sea Balkan heritage, participation in regional cultural festivals and cooperation in archaeology and heritage studies with Bulgaria, cultural and academic exchanges with Ukraine, including activities with Albanian diaspora communities, and agreements and exchanges with Georgia and Azerbaijan in performing arts, music, and the promotion of cultural heritage.

25. ***The Republic of Armenia*** implements its cultural policy within a clearly defined legislative and strategic framework based on the Government Programme for 2021–2026 and the Strategy on the Preservation, Development and Promotion of Culture for 2023–2027. This framework is regulated by the Law on the Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation, complemented by sectoral laws such as the Law on Cinematography and the Law on the Import and Export of Cultural Values. The Strategy identifies international cultural cooperation as a priority and defines two concrete objectives: ensuring coordination between cultural and foreign policies and increasing Armenia's international visibility through the promotion of cultural heritage, contemporary culture, and creative industries. These priorities are implemented primarily by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

26. Cultural diplomacy is operationalised through the active engagement of museums, higher education institutions, performing arts organisations, and cultural centres in international projects and partnerships. Armenian cultural institutions have carried out joint exhibitions and cooperation projects with internationally renowned museums, including the British Museum and the Louvre,

significantly increasing the international visibility of Armenian cultural heritage. Institutional capacity-building is further supported by the Foundation for Cultural Development, which facilitates international cultural cooperation, promotes contemporary cultural initiatives, and implements large-scale cultural diplomacy projects aligned with state priorities.

27. Armenia places strong emphasis on cultural diversity and social cohesion by integrating minority languages and cultures into national education standards and cultural policy. Targeted programmes implemented by the National Centre for Educational Development promote intercultural dialogue, while initiatives such as the “The Roof Is Armenia” project and state-supported minority-language periodicals contribute to the preservation of minority identities. In parallel, the protection of minority cultural heritage is addressed through concrete measures, including the restoration of minority religious monuments and the inclusion of the Pontic Greek dialect in the national list of intangible cultural heritage requiring urgent safeguarding. At the regional level, Armenia plays an active role in cultural cooperation within the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, having assumed the Presidency of the BSEC Working Group on Culture for the periods 2023–2025 and 2025–2027. During this period, Armenia initiated the 3rd International Crafts Festival in 2024, organised expert workshops on cultural legislation, and led the adoption of a new Action Plan defining priorities for regional cooperation.

28. ***The Republic of Azerbaijan*** regards cultural diplomacy as a strategic component of its foreign policy, aimed at strengthening regional cooperation, promoting national cultural heritage, and fostering humanitarian ties. The Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan plays a key role in establishing the legal and institutional framework for cultural diplomacy. Azerbaijan implements a comprehensive policy directed at the development of cultural interaction. It has acted as an initiator and active participant in a number of international platforms, including: the hosting of international humanitarian forums in Baku; the advancement of intercultural dialogue within the framework of the “Baku Process” (since 2008); and the organization of cultural events and festivals involving countries of the region. Azerbaijan actively cooperates with UNESCO, promoting elements of its national cultural heritage for inclusion in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists, including mugham, carpet weaving, and traditional crafts.

29. The Milli Majlis serves as the principal institution ensuring the legal foundation of cultural policy. The Parliament of Azerbaijan has adopted and continues to refine the following legislative acts: the Law “On Culture” (2012); the Law “On the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments” (1998, with subsequent amendments); the Law “On Education” (2009, with amendments); and the Law “On Non-Governmental Organizations” (2000, with amendments).

30. Cultural diplomacy constitutes an important instrument for strengthening relations and cooperation in the Black Sea region. Relying on a consistent state policy and the active role of the Milli Majlis, Azerbaijan demonstrates an effective model for the development of cultural interaction. The Parliament of Azerbaijan plays a central role in shaping the legal framework, advancing parliamentary diplomacy, supporting cultural initiatives, and strengthening international cooperation. Further development of cultural diplomacy within the framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), with the active participation of parliaments, will contribute to establishing a sustainable foundation for peace, trust, and mutual understanding in the region.

31. ***The Republic of Bulgaria*** bases its cultural diplomacy on a clearly defined national legal and strategic framework, with the Protection and Development of Culture Act serving as its core instrument. The Act establishes the fundamental principles of national cultural policy, including the democratisation of cultural governance, freedom of artistic creation and non-permission of censorship, decentralisation of management and financing, and equality of artists and cultural organisations. It also prioritizes the preservation and enrichment of cultural and historical heritage,

the protection of the Bulgarian literary language, traditions, and customs, and the safeguarding of national cultural identity, including the culture of Bulgarian communities abroad, while promoting cultural diversity within the unity of national culture. International cultural cooperation is guided by freedom of expression, mutual understanding, and respect for fundamental values, and is implemented at three levels: the European Union, bilateral and multilateral frameworks, and the national level. As an EU Member State, Bulgaria aligns its actions with the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations, as set out in the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the European External Action Service, supporting both international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy as instruments of external engagement.

32. The implementation of the cultural diplomacy relies primarily on state cultural institutions, most notably the network of Bulgarian Cultural Institutes (BKI) operating in 11 European capitals. These institutes function as key tools for promoting Bulgarian culture abroad by strengthening the country's international image, expanding the presence and influence of Bulgarian arts, facilitating the realisation of Bulgarian artists and cultural products on international markets, and supporting cultural tourism linked to Bulgaria's heritage. Their activities are coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which integrates cultural diplomacy into the country's foreign policy by supporting dialogue with strategic partners, consolidating the work of diplomatic missions, cultural institutes, and Bulgarian communities abroad, and engaging cultural and academic organisations as key partners. The State Cultural Institute under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs further supports this process by managing the ministry's art fund, contributing to policy formulation, coordinating bilateral, regional, and multilateral cultural initiatives, participating in EU cultural cooperation, and providing specialised training in cultural diplomacy in cooperation with the Diplomatic Institute.

33. Intercultural dialogue, inclusion of minority cultures, and social cohesion are promoted primarily through regional and cross-border cooperation in the Black Sea Region, with a strong focus on cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries. Cultural heritage preservation is treated as a strategic priority and is pursued through the creation of transnational networks between museums and heritage institutions, which facilitate joint research, professional exchange, and the preparation of shared nominations for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Bulgaria also supports the development of transnational cultural routes accompanied by shared tourist infrastructure, promotional materials, publications, and documentaries that highlight the region's common heritage, as well as joint initiatives for the restoration of architectural monuments of national and regional significance within BSEC member states and cooperation to combat the illegal trafficking of cultural property. Partnerships with civil society are encouraged as a key mechanism for engaging local communities and minority groups, including through joint regional celebrations of European Heritage Days. At the same time, Bulgaria promotes culture as a driver of regional, social, and economic development by strengthening cultural and creative industries, drawing on good practices from other European regions, supporting public-private partnerships between cultural actors, businesses, and educational and scientific institutions, and prioritising concrete actions such as building artistic collaboration networks, developing mobility information services, exchanging good practices, exploring the establishment of a Cultural Industries Fair in the BSEC region, implementing joint projects funded by EU programs such as Creative Europe, Erasmus, and Horizon, and jointly promoting the Black Sea Region as an attractive destination for cultural tourism and cultural routes.

34. *The Hellenic Republic* considers cultural diplomacy a core pillar of its foreign policy, utilising its rich cultural heritage and contemporary achievements as a bridge for dialogue and cooperation. Strategic investment in education plays a central role in enhancing Greece's international image and fostering long-term partnerships, supported by targeted legislative initiatives and policy frameworks. Reforms promoting the internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions, the establishment of

Chairs of Modern Greek Studies abroad, and the modernisation of curricula contribute to openness and global engagement. At the same time, inclusive education policies such as intercultural schools, reception classes, and structures supporting refugees, migrants, and Roma promote equal opportunities, social cohesion, and intercultural dialogue, reinforcing education as a key instrument of cultural diplomacy.

35. Higher Education Institutions and cultural organisations act as major drivers of Greece’s cultural diplomacy by advancing science, the humanities, and culture while fostering intercultural dialogue through conferences, academic programs, and international collaborations. The promotion of the Greek language and culture is supported through Chairs of Greek Studies, international exchange programs, joint and double degrees, English-taught programs, and the “Study in Greece” initiative, which enhances academic mobility and attracts international students. These efforts are complemented by the activities of institutions such as the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, state scholarship programs, and targeted educational diplomacy initiatives in the Black Sea Region. Active participation in international and European organisations further strengthens democratic culture, multilingual education, and inclusive approaches that value cultural and linguistic diversity.

36. Within the framework of cultural diplomacy, Greece has developed a wide range of good practices aimed at protecting and promoting cultural heritage while addressing contemporary challenges. These include initiatives to improve access to monuments and museums, protect heritage from climate change, promote sustainable development through programs such as “Green Cultural Routes” and “All of Greece, One Culture,” and support contemporary artistic creation and digital innovation. Despite challenges arising from geopolitical instability, limited mobility, and funding constraints in the BSEC region, Greece sees opportunities for enhanced cooperation through museum and exhibition partnerships, the creation of a digital archive of shared Byzantine and Pontic heritage, and the strengthening of networks such as the Black Sea Universities Network and the “Jason” Program for Hellenic Studies. Joint research initiatives and trans-border educational cooperation are viewed as key tools for promoting good unneighborly relations, cultural dialogue, and effective collaboration in addressing shared regional challenges.

37. In the context of globalisation and the intensification of international relations, *the Republic of Moldova* regards cultural diplomacy as a strategic instrument for asserting national identity, promoting cultural values, strengthening its international image, and advancing integration into the regional and European space. This approach is grounded in the National Strategy for Culture and Heritage 2025–2035 and the Concept of Cultural Diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova, approved on 12 September 2025. These framework documents aim to strengthen international cooperation through active participation in European and international networks, partnerships, and programmes, to harness the creative potential of the diaspora and the domestic cultural scene in an international context, and to support concrete cultural diplomacy initiatives such as international book fairs, exhibitions, festivals, and artistic tours.

38. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, strategically coordinates cultural diplomacy by developing policies, setting priorities, and ensuring the necessary legal framework for promoting culture abroad. Embassies and consulates act as active cultural promotion hubs, organising cultural events, facilitating joint projects, and supporting bilateral dialogue with international partners, in collaboration with the diaspora. Public and independent cultural institutions, artistic groups and creators, educational and research institutions, as well as cultural associations, the tourism sector, and the media, all contribute concretely to cultural diplomacy through international cultural production and promotion, artistic and academic exchanges, studies, publications, and public communication. In this context, Moldova has implemented tangible initiatives, including over 20 cultural and artistic activities funded through the

cultural diplomacy budget line in 2025, the “Martisor Around the World” campaign (2024–2025) held in 12 countries with more than 6,000 spectators, and cultural tours for the diaspora (2023–2025) comprising over 120 events and reaching more than 65,000 participants.

39. Within the framework of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area and in the PABSEC format, the Republic of Moldova is committed to further strengthening cultural diplomacy by expanding bilateral and multilateral partnerships, enhancing participation in international cultural organisations, promoting regional artistic mobility programmes, and developing joint projects for the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Moldova also aims to advance intercultural dialogue, minority cultural inclusion, and social cohesion through regional thematic initiatives, the organisation of joint cultural events, and the exchange of good practices in cultural and humanitarian policies. Through these concrete actions, the Republic of Moldova reaffirms its commitment to contributing to a shared regional identity based on diversity, dialogue, and cooperation, while highlighting culture as a key driver of sustainable development and mutual trust among societies in the Black Sea Region.

40. **The Romanian** cultural diplomacy represents a strategic instrument for strengthening international cooperation, promoting national values, and enhancing its visibility within the Black Sea region and beyond. Coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, and the Romanian Cultural Institute (ICR), it integrates concrete measures such as international cultural programs, translation and publishing support, touring exhibitions, and artist residencies. In line with the Institutional Strategic Plan 2024–2027 of the Ministry of Culture, priorities include expanding Romania’s cultural presence in European and Black Sea platforms, increasing participation in UNESCO cultural initiatives, promoting the Romanian language through educational partnerships, and supporting major national heritage sites and creative industries as instruments of cultural diplomacy.

41. As the main operator of the country’s cultural diplomacy under Law no. 356/2003, the Romanian Cultural Institute implements specific actions aimed at strengthening international cultural relations. These include organising Romanian Seasons abroad, financing mobility grants for artists and cultural professionals, supporting film distribution and theatre co-productions, and developing digital promotion tools for Romanian literature, visual arts, and performing arts. The Strategy of the Institute for the years 2022–2026, encourages public private partnerships with cultural foundations, universities, and creative industry stakeholders, while also promoting intercultural dialogue through programs dedicated to national minorities, in line with Law no. 33/1995 and Law no. 282/2008 on minority rights and regional languages. At the level of the Romanian Parliament, cultural diplomacy activities are carried out through the Culture Committees within the international organisations of which the Parliament is a member, through joint delegations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, as well as through the Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Arts, and Media and the Committee for Relations with UNESCO.

42. Within the framework of the PABSEC, cultural diplomacy could be reinforced through clearly defined initiatives such as establishing annual “Black Sea Cultural Seasons,” creating a joint calendar of regional festivals, and developing mobility schemes for young artists and cultural managers. Flagship events hosted in Romania including the George Enescu International Festival, the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, and the Transylvania International Film Festival could serve as regional platforms for co-productions and professional exchanges. The designation of 2026 as the “Constantin Brâncuși Year” provides an opportunity to organize traveling exhibitions, educational workshops, and cross-border cultural tourism routes connecting Black Sea littoral states, thereby strengthening people-to-people contacts and supporting the creative economy across the region.

43. ***The Republic of Serbia*** normative and strategic framework for cultural diplomacy is defined by the Cultural Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2020–2029, which recognises culture as a resource for international visibility, social cohesion, and the development of intercultural dialogue based on respect for cultural diversity. This framework is further supported by the Law on Culture and regulations governing foreign affairs, which enable institutional and programme-based international cooperation among cultural actors. Through the strengthening of public and cultural diplomacy mechanisms, Serbia has established a coordinated and strategic approach to cultural cooperation as an integral component of its foreign policy.

44. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia plays a central role in the implementation of cultural diplomacy through its diplomatic-consular network and bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks. Serbian cultural centres abroad and diplomatic missions serve as platforms for the promotion of Serbian culture, contemporary creativity, and intercultural dialogue with institutions and audiences in host countries. The Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with national cultural institutions, provides professional and programmatic support, while universities and academic institutions contribute through educational and scientific cooperation, mobility of students and researchers, and the development of scientific diplomacy. This approach is reflected in concrete bilateral examples, including the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Protection of Cultural Heritage with Türkiye (2022), the Cultural Cooperation Programme with Greece (2017), and the longstanding Agreement on Cultural Cooperation with Bulgaria, all of which enable continuous exchange, joint projects, and heritage protection.

45. In addition to bilateral cooperation, Serbia actively participates in multilateral cultural frameworks within the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), including the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC (PABSEC). Declarations, conclusions, and documents adopted within these forums provide an important political and programmatic basis for strengthening cultural cooperation, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding among Member States. Acknowledging existing challenges such as limited resources, the need for clearer strategic articulation, and complex regional contexts Serbia views cultural diplomacy not as a supplementary activity, but as an essential instrument contributing to stability, dialogue, and sustainable development in the Black Sea region.

46. ***The Republic of Türkiye*** pursues a comprehensive cultural diplomacy policy aimed at strengthening its soft power by making its historical heritage, language, culture, and human values more visible at the international level. This policy is implemented through a multi-layered and inter-institutional framework that takes regional priorities into account, with particular emphasis on regions sharing strong historical and cultural ties. By utilising instruments such as language education, cultural and artistic activities, academic cooperation, media engagement, humanitarian assistance, and development cooperation, cultural diplomacy contributes to enhancing Türkiye's international image, building mutual trust, and creating a foundation for long-term cooperation at both regional and global levels, including within the Black Sea region.

47. Cultural diplomacy activities are carried out through a coordinated network of public institutions, under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for cultural agreements, public diplomacy initiatives, and cultural events organised through diplomatic missions. The Yunus Emre Institute plays a central role by promoting Turkish language and culture abroad through education, cultural programs, and academic cooperation, with a notable presence in BSEC member states. These efforts are supported by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) through development and cultural heritage projects; the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) through diaspora engagement and educational diplomacy; the Turkish Maarif Foundation through the promotion of education abroad; and the Ministry of Culture and

Tourism through the international promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Alumni networks and Turkish Graduates Associations in the Black Sea Region further strengthen people-to-people connections.

48. Given the strategic importance of the Black Sea littoral states for public and cultural diplomacy, cooperation within the BSEC framework faces challenges arising from regional instability, ongoing conflicts, and legal or administrative restrictions in certain countries. To enhance the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy among BSEC member states, several measures are recommended: establishing a regional youth and cultural exchange program to promote mobility and lasting engagement; launching a “BSEC Cultural Routes Program” to increase the visibility of shared heritage through festivals and thematic events; encouraging joint film, television, and audiovisual co-productions to strengthen intercultural understanding; integrating regional history and shared values into educational curricula, particularly in international schools; and involving transportation, tourism, and branding actors such as airlines and tourism organisations in joint cultural promotion initiatives across the BSEC Region.

49. **Ukraine** pursues a comprehensive cultural diplomacy policy, aimed at strengthening its international presence through the promotion of its cultural heritage, language, creative industries, and democratic values, while also reinforcing resilience in the context of ongoing security challenges. This policy has gradually developed into an integral component of state foreign policy through a system of legal and strategic documents that define cultural diplomacy as part of Ukraine’s broader soft power and public diplomacy framework. Cultural diplomacy is grounded in the Law of Ukraine “On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy,” further integrated into the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine and the Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it is recognised as an instrument for improving understanding of Ukraine abroad, strengthening international cultural ties, countering disinformation, and promoting a positive image of the state. By using tools such as cultural programming, academic cooperation, international exhibitions, educational initiatives, and strategic communication, Ukraine’s cultural diplomacy contributes to building mutual trust, supporting long-term partnerships, and strengthening regional cooperation, including in the Black Sea Region.

50. Cultural diplomacy activities are implemented through a coordinated network of public institutions and professional actors, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine providing overall strategic guidance through diplomatic missions and foreign policy coordination. A central specialised institution in this field is the Ukrainian Institute, operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which develops professional approaches to international cultural engagement, analytical expertise, and cooperation frameworks with foreign partners. Its work is complemented by Ukrainian cultural institutions, artists, creative industries, museums, theatres, and academic institutions that create the artistic, intellectual, and educational content of cultural diplomacy and ensure Ukraine’s presence in international cultural processes. Academic and educational institutions also contribute through the development of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar studies abroad, research cooperation, academic mobility, and support for international scholarly networks. State and local authorities provide the regulatory, organisational, and financial basis for these activities, while Ukrainian embassies in Black Sea countries implement practical cultural diplomacy instruments such as exhibitions, literary events, documentary screenings, educational hubs, and partnerships with local cultural institutions and communities.

51. Given the strategic importance of the Black Sea Region for Ukraine’s cultural diplomacy, strengthening cooperation within regional frameworks remains both a priority and a challenge, to enhance the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region, several measures are recommended: transforming current solidarity into long-term institutional partnerships among

cultural, educational, and scientific institutions; investing in competitive cultural products that respond to international audiences and strengthen regional visibility; institutionalising cultural cooperation within regional platforms such as BSEC and PABSEC through regular expert meetings, cultural programmes, and parliamentary initiatives; strengthening shared commemorative practices and cultural calendars with regional partners; and expanding joint educational, artistic, and research initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue, mutual trust, and sustainable cooperation among Black Sea societies.

III. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORK AND EXPERIENCE

52. International and regional organisations contribute to the promotion of cultural diplomacy by providing normative frameworks, policy guidance, and platforms for dialogue that support cultural cooperation, social cohesion, and people-to-people contacts. These experiences offer useful reference points for the Black Sea Region, while regional and parliamentary frameworks remain central to shaping cooperation adapted to regional specificities.

The United Nations (UN)

53. The United Nations advances cultural diplomacy through its specialised agencies and system-wide initiatives, with UNESCO serving as the lead entity for culture. Core UN programmes include the World Heritage Programme, which promotes international cooperation through joint nominations, monitoring missions, and shared conservation standards, and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Programme, which facilitates cross-border cultural dialogue through multinational heritage inscriptions and community-based safeguarding projects.

54. At the operational level, the United Nations implements cultural diplomacy through UNESCO field offices, UNDP country programmes, and the UN Resident Coordinator System, ensuring coherence across agencies. Specific UN initiatives include the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists, the UNESCO-Aschberg Programme supporting artistic mobility and freedom of expression, and UN-led culture-for-development projects integrating heritage, education, and social cohesion. In peacebuilding and post-conflict contexts, the UN Peacebuilding Fund supports culture-based dialogue, heritage rehabilitation, and youth engagement as confidence-building measures. Through these system-wide programmes, the United Nations embeds cultural diplomacy into its mandates on peace, development, and human rights, using culture as a practical tool for dialogue, inclusion, and international cooperation.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

55. In recent years, UNESCO has intensified its role in promoting cultural diplomacy, focusing particularly on the protection of cultural diversity, the strengthening of creative industries, and the safeguarding of intangible heritage. The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is operationalised through UNESCO's, these programmes provide structured, legally grounded mechanisms through which states engage in cultural diplomacy under UN auspices. Also, the 10th Conference of Parties to the 2005 Convention (June 2025) adopted new resolutions aimed at enhancing cultural policy frameworks, digital transformation in the cultural sector, and the integration of local communities into global cultural governance. UNESCO has also updated its Basic Texts (2023-2024 editions), reaffirming global commitments to cultural rights and international cultural cooperation.

56. Following the MONDIACULT 2022 World Conference, UNESCO positioned culture as a “global public good” and expanded the Culture-2030 Indicators Programme, assisting Member States in measuring the contribution of culture to sustainable development. Recent Global Reports on cultural and creative industries (2022–2024) highlight the evolving role of culture in peacebuilding,

socio-economic recovery, and international partnership-building UNESCO a central actor in shaping contemporary cultural diplomacy.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

57. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contributes to cultural diplomacy by integrating culture into its core mandates on sustainable development, governance, and peacebuilding. Through programmes such as the Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS) and culture-sensitive development frameworks, UNDP supports governments in assessing the economic, social, and governance value of culture and in designing evidence-based cultural policies. UNDP-funded initiatives frequently link cultural heritage, creative industries, and cultural tourism with local economic development, employment, and social inclusion. By supporting national institutions and policy reforms, UNDP enables culture to function as a diplomatic asset that promotes dialogue, shared values, and long-term cooperation among states and communities.

58. At the operational level, UNDP implements cultural diplomacy through country offices and regional programmes that focus on social cohesion, conflict prevention, and recovery. Concrete activities include digital transformation across more than 120 countries. In 2024 alone, UNDP helped governments in 122 countries implement labour market reforms, improve investment environments, and increase access to finance, strengthening economic resilience and inclusive growth amid global economic headwinds. To accelerate digital inclusion and support achievement of the SDGs, UNDP expanded its work on digital public infrastructure (DPI) in 25 countries. UNDP has also actively engaged in addressing emerging global risks, it continues to advocate solutions for deepening debt crises affecting developing nations, warning that rising debt service burdens jeopardize development progress, and pushing for multilateral debt relief frameworks. This recent phase highlights UNDP's evolving role in shaping resilient, inclusive, and digitally enabled development pathways in a rapidly changing global context. Working within the UN Resident Coordinator system, UNDP ensures that cultural initiatives are aligned with broader UN strategies, reinforcing culture as a practical instrument for diplomacy, resilience, and sustainable development.

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

59. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is a UN initiative specifically mandated to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a tool for peace, conflict prevention, and mutual understanding. Operating under the authority of the UN Secretary-General, UNAOC focuses on four priority areas: education, youth, media, and migration. Through global platforms such as the UNAOC Global Forum, the Fellowship Programme, and the Young Peacebuilders Programme, UNAOC facilitates direct engagement among policymakers, civil society leaders, educators, journalists, and youth from different cultural backgrounds. These initiatives create structured spaces for dialogue, capacity-building, and cross-cultural exchange, making UNAOC a central UN mechanism for practical cultural diplomacy.

60. At the implementation level, UNAOC supports concrete projects that counter polarisation and promote inclusive narratives through grants, partnerships, and advocacy campaigns. Programmes such as the Plural+ Youth Video Festival, the Intercultural Innovation Hub, and media literacy initiatives encourage creative expression, responsible communication, and collaboration across cultural and national boundaries. UNAOC also works with governments and UN country teams to integrate intercultural dialogue into national policies and development strategies. By mobilising civil society and youth alongside states, UNAOC strengthens people-to-people diplomacy and reinforces the UN's role in using culture and dialogue to address global and regional challenges.

Council of Europe (CoE)

61. The Council of Europe has reinforced its commitment to cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, and democratic participation through the implementation of the European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century (Strategy 21). Activities during 2022-2024 focused on community engagement, cultural education, and strengthening cultural rights, in line with the principles of the Faro Convention. The CoE has emphasised that cultural heritage is a shared social responsibility and plays a vital role in building resilient, inclusive societies.

62. The Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) has expanded significantly over the past few years, offering practical tools to cities across Europe to manage diversity, support integration, and promote cultural participation. Recent CoE reports (2021-2024) underline the importance of cultural institutions in combating discrimination, fostering social cohesion, and preventing polarisation themes of particular relevance to the geopolitically sensitive Black Sea Region.

European Union (EU)

63. The EU has substantially advanced its approach to cultural diplomacy through the continued implementation of its Strategy for International Cultural Relations (2016-2025) and the Creative Europe Programme (2021-2027). Reports published in 2023 and 2024 highlight achievements in enhancing cultural networks, supporting artistic mobility, and strengthening the resilience of creative sectors. The EU has also increased investment in digital cultural platforms, enabling cross-border collaboration among museums, archives, educational institutions, and cultural organisations.

64. For the Black Sea Region specifically, the EU Strategic Approach to the Black Sea Region (2025) marks a significant new development. This updated strategic document highlights the role of cultural cooperation, people-to-people contacts, and youth exchanges as essential components of regional stability. The Black Sea Synergy Implementation Report (2024) emphasises the need to revitalise cultural cooperation, promote regional mobility, and utilise cultural diplomacy as a tool for strengthening socio-political resilience and sustainable development.

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

65. The OSCE has expanded its engagement in cultural diplomacy as part of its broader agenda on human security, tolerance, and conflict prevention. Through its Ministerial Council decisions and thematic reports (2021-2023), the OSCE emphasises the role of intercultural dialogue in reducing tensions, improving community relations, and promoting freedom of cultural expression. The organisation's activities focus not only on cultural rights but also on fostering inclusive societies through education, youth engagement, and media literacy.

66. In recent years, OSCE field missions in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia have increasingly incorporated cultural dialogue into peace-building initiatives. Reports after 2022 highlight that cultural diplomacy particularly through shared heritage projects, educational exchanges, and community-level cultural initiatives is one of the most effective tools for building trust and contributing to long-term stability in politically sensitive regions, including the Black Sea basin.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

67. The OECD has strengthened its focus on the economic and social dimensions of culture, publishing several influential reports under the Culture and Local Development framework (2020-2024). Recent analyses highlight how cultural and creative industries drive innovation, urban regeneration, and economic competitiveness. The OECD also provides updated statistical methodologies for measuring the cultural sector, improving policy-making and cross-country comparison.

68. In its most recent findings, the OECD emphasises the role of cultural participation in social well-being and community cohesion linking cultural engagement directly to inclusive growth. The organisation's work aligns closely with global cultural diplomacy trends by identifying culture as both an economic asset and a strategic soft-power tool. These insights are particularly valuable for emerging regional cooperation frameworks like those in the Black Sea Region.

The Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

69. BSEC serves as the main intergovernmental platform for regional cooperation in the Black Sea Region, and culture has gradually become a central dimension of its strategic priorities. Over the past decade, BSEC has increasingly integrated cultural diplomacy, dialogue, and heritage protection into its activities, aligning these themes with its goals of stability, cooperation, and regional cohesion.

70. The key priorities for BSEC activities in the field of culture are defined under Goal 8: "Development of Tourism, Protection of Cultural Heritage and Promotion of Modern Culture" of the BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards a Sustainable Future of the Wider Black Sea Area, adopted in 2023. This Goal is further elaborated through 22 Frameworks of Action, aimed at supporting sustainable tourism practices, safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and fostering contemporary cultural expressions across the BSEC region. Within this policy framework, the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) actively promotes cultural diplomacy as an effective policy instrument for enhancing mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation among the BSEC Member States. Through the organisation and facilitation of thematic meetings, workshops, expert networking activities, and cultural initiatives, PERMIS supports structured dialogue and cooperation in areas such as cultural heritage, education, creative industries, and people-to-people contacts. In this regard, the BSEC Working Group on Culture, established in 2006, serves as the principal platform for advancing regional cooperation in the cultural field.

71. Recent BSEC activities demonstrate the growing importance of culture as a catalyst for regional stability and development. Many BSEC working groups particularly those on culture, education, youth, and tourism, have expanded their cooperation to include joint studies on cultural heritage protection, maritime culture, ecological heritage, and creative industries. Overall, BSEC's expanding cultural agenda highlights the organisation's recognition that cultural diplomacy reinforces trust, reduces misunderstanding, and supports long-term cooperation among its Member States. Through these efforts, BSEC continues to provide a valuable institutional platform for promoting shared values, mutual respect, and deeper regional integration through culture.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

72. The Black Sea Region stands as a historically rich and culturally diverse space, shaped by centuries of interaction among civilisations, empires, religions, and traditions. Its geographic position at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East has endowed the Region with a unique cultural heritage that continues to influence contemporary relations among its peoples and Member States. In this context, cultural diplomacy has emerged not merely as a complementary policy tool, but as a strategic necessity for strengthening regional cohesion. By promoting dialogue, mutual respect, and shared cultural values, cultural diplomacy nurtures a sense of common belonging while respecting diversity. It enables societies to engage constructively beyond political fluctuations, contributing to peace, stability, and a sustainable framework for long-term regional cooperation.

73. Cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in regions with historical sensitivity, ethnic diversity, or political tensions. By focusing on cultural understanding and heritage preservation, it supports reconciliation, dialogue, and long-term stability. Cultural diplomacy initiatives such as international cultural festivals, bilateral museum projects, youth exchange programmes, and joint historical research offer platforms where societies can engage outside political conflicts. This makes cultural

diplomacy an essential tool for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and strengthening regional cooperation. It proves that culture is not only an expression of identity but also a dynamic resource that can build bridges and contribute to a more interconnected and harmonious world.

74. By fostering dialogue, people-to-people contacts, and respect for cultural diversity, cultural diplomacy complements political and economic cooperation and contributes to trust-building and stability. Its effectiveness lies in its long-term, inclusive, and society-centred character, which allows cooperation to continue even when other channels are constrained.

75. At present, cultural diplomacy remains an active and resilient dimension of cooperation in the Black Sea Region, even amid complex geopolitical and socio-economic challenges. Governments, parliaments, international organisations, and cultural institutions continue to support initiatives that sustain dialogue and preserve shared cultural ties. Regional platforms such as BSEC and PABSEC, alongside the engagement of the United Nations system, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and other partners, provide essential mechanisms for coordination and policy exchange. While the scale and intensity of activities vary among Member States, there is a growing recognition that cultural diplomacy plays a stabilising role by maintaining communication, fostering trust, and reinforcing social cohesion at both national and regional levels.

76. Despite its recognised value, cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region faces persistent and multifaceted challenges. Geopolitical tensions, unresolved conflicts, and security concerns continue to disrupt institutional cooperation, and cultural interaction. Economic disparities and limited public resources often reduce the capacity of states and institutions to sustain long-term cultural initiatives, while damage to cultural heritage particularly in conflict-affected areas undermines shared historical narratives. Fragmented coordination, insufficient legal safeguards, and uneven digital capacity further constrain the effectiveness of regional efforts. Addressing these challenges requires renewed political commitment, stronger regional coordination, and a shared understanding of culture as a strategic investment rather than a secondary policy concern.

77. Parliamentary commitment adds significant value to cultural diplomacy by providing legislative support, democratic legitimacy, and institutional continuity. Through parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation, national parliaments and PABSEC play a key role in translating cultural dialogue into sustainable regional partnerships.

78. Cultural diplomacy should be further strengthened as a central pillar of cooperation in the Black Sea Region. By reinforcing legislative frameworks, empowering parliamentary committees, supporting cultural institutions and civil society, and embracing digital innovation, Member States can enhance the reach, inclusiveness, and sustainability of cultural cooperation. A coordinated and forward-looking approach to cultural diplomacy will not only preserve the Region's rich cultural heritage but also transform it into a source of resilience, dialogue, and shared progress. Through sustained commitment and collective action, cultural diplomacy can continue to build bridges among societies, deepen mutual trust, and contribute meaningfully to peace, stability, and sustainable development throughout the Black Sea Region. Looking ahead, the Region has significant opportunities to build upon successful cultural initiatives already underway: joint festivals, artistic collaborations, heritage preservation projects, university exchanges, youth mobility schemes, and innovative digital cultural platforms.