



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION PABSEC

Doc.: GA67/CC66/REC210/26

RECOMMENDATION 210/2026* **“Cultural Diplomacy for Strengthening Relations and Cooperation in the Black Sea Region”**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) underlines that cultural diplomacy constitutes one of the most effective and enduring instruments for strengthening relations, enhancing co-operation, and fostering peace and stability among the peoples and states of the Black Sea Region. In a geographically and historically complex area characterized by diverse identities and evolving geopolitical dynamics, culture provides a shared language through which dialogue can be deepened, trust rebuilt, and partnerships sustained. The rich and diverse cultural heritage of the Region ranging from ancient civilizations and maritime traditions to contemporary artistic expression serves as a solid foundation for meaningful cross-border collaboration and mutual understanding.
2. The PABSEC reaffirms that cultural diplomacy has evolved into a multidimensional tool extending well beyond traditional cultural exchange. PABSEC provides a unique platform for exchanging national experiences, harmonising approaches, and encouraging legislative frameworks that promote cultural co-operation. Cultural diplomacy supports education, youth mobility, creative industries, preservation, and digital innovation, while also reinforcing social cohesion within Member States by promoting respect for diversity, tolerance, and community engagement. By actively engaging in cultural dialogue, Member States can address misunderstandings, overcome political tensions, stimulate socio-economic development, and cultivate long-term stability and shared values across the Black Sea Region.
3. The PABSEC since its establishment, paid particular attention to the cultural cooperation and has elaborated and adopted Reports and Recommendations on this topic, including Report and Recommendation on “The Role of the Parliaments in Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the BSEC Member States” (Rep. Rec. 201/2024); on “Enhancing Cultural Cooperation and Multiculturalism in the BSEC Member States” (Rep. Rec. 163/2018); on “Combating Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage in the BSEC Region” (Rep. Rec. 148/2015); on “Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage” (Rep. Rec.136/2013); on “Cultural Cooperation in the BSEC Region: Experiences, Opportunities and Challenges” (Rep. Rec. 119/2010); on “The Dialogue among Cultures as a mean to build Trust among the Nations” (Rep. Rec. 89/2006); on “The Cultural, Educational and

¹* Assembly debate in July 2026 (See Doc. GA67/CC66/REP/26, Report of the Committee on Social and Humanitarian Policy “Cultural Diplomacy for Strengthening the Relationships and Cooperation in the Black Sea Region”, discussed in March 2026 in Tirana; Rapporteur: Mr. Erjo Mile, Member of the Committee, member of the PABSEC Albanian Delegation).
The text is to be adopted at the General Assembly in Georgia, on 1 July 2026.

Social Aspects of the EU Enlargement: Consequences for the Black Sea Region” (Rep. Rec. 86/2005); on “Preservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage of the BSEC Member States” (Rep. Rec. 80/2004); on “The Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region” (Rep. Rec. 70/2003); on “Guidelines on the Program for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Black Sea Region” (Rep. Rec. 18/1996); on “Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the PABSEC Member Countries” (Rep. Rec. 6/1994).

4. The PABSEC emphasises that particularly in regions shaped by historical sensitivity, ethnic diversity, cultural engagement plays a vital role in supporting reconciliation, dialogue, and long-term stability. Initiatives such as international cultural festivals, youth exchange programmes, and joint historical research create platforms for societal interaction beyond political disagreements. In this way, culture becomes an essential instrument for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and the strengthening of regional co-operation, demonstrating that it is not only an expression of identity but also a dynamic resource for building bridges and fostering a more interconnected and harmonious world.

5. The PABSEC stresses that the effectiveness and long-term impact of cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region depend on the sustained commitment of Member States to address a range of existing and emerging challenges. These challenges include limited institutional coordination at national and regional levels, administrative and regulatory barriers to mobility, disparities in digital infrastructure, and the need to enhance public awareness and visibility of cultural co-operation projects. A more integrated and strategic approach to cultural diplomacy supported by reinforced regional mechanisms will be essential for unlocking the full potential of cultural co-operation and for ensuring its contribution to sustainable development, social cohesion, and regional stability.

6. The PABSEC underlines that the Black Sea Region holds significant opportunities to further strengthen cultural co-operation by joint cultural festivals, artistic and creative collaborations, cross-border heritage preservation projects based on shared cultural traits and historical links, university exchanges, youth mobility programmes, and the development of innovative digital cultural platforms. Such good events generate tangible socio-economic and educational benefits, foster new networks of co-operation, and reinforce a shared sense of regional identity. By consolidating these initiatives, the Member States can further enhance people-to-people contacts, encourage intercultural dialogue, and promote creativity and innovation. In doing so, they will contribute to a more interconnected, resilient, and culturally vibrant Black Sea Region, grounded in shared values, mutual respect, and long-term co-operation.

7. The PABSEC emphasises the advancement of cultural dialogue as a fundamental element of regional cooperation and recognizes the BSEC Working Group on Culture as an essential platform for promoting dialogue, coordinating initiatives, and strengthening synergies among Member States. Through its activities, the Working Group contributes to the exchange of best practices, the development of joint projects, and the promotion of shared regional objectives. PABSEC reaffirms its commitment to further support the activities and initiatives of the BSEC and the respective Working Group on Culture for advancing the impact of cultural diplomacy and for reinforcing mutual understanding, shared values, and long-term co-operation across the Black Sea Region.

8. The PABSEC appreciates the cooperation of the BSEC Member States with international organisations including the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and OSCE, which play pivotal roles in shaping and advancing cultural cooperation. Through their strategic documents, programmes, and initiatives, these organisations underscore the growing international recognition of culture as a vital component of sustainable development, peacebuilding, and international partnership. In this context, enhanced parliamentary dialogue within PABSEC offers valuable opportunities to further harmonise approaches, share best practices, and strengthen

the legislative and policy foundations necessary for effective cultural diplomacy and deeper regional co-operation.

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

- i. *reaffirm* that cultural diplomacy constitutes a strategic instrument for strengthening mutual understanding, trust, and co-operation among the BSEC Member States and recognizes its role as a pillar of regional stability and peace;
- ii. *urge* the Member States to integrate cultural diplomacy more systematically into their national policies and regional co-operation strategies, ensuring coherence between cultural, educational, social, and economic policies;
- iii. *encourage* the formulation of coordinated national strategies on cultural diplomacy that are aligned with shared regional objectives and supported by adequate funding and institutional capacity;
- iv. *emphasise* the need to combat stereotypes, prejudice, and cultural misinformation by supporting intercultural education and media literacy within and across Member States;
- v. *support* initiatives aimed at enhancing digital skills and infrastructure in the cultural sector, to reduce disparities among Member States and ensure equitable access to digital cultural content;
- vi. *highlight* the value of expanding educational and academic co-operation, including scholarships, joint degree programmes, university partnerships, and student and researcher mobility schemes, as effective tools for fostering long-term regional cohesion;
- vii. *recommend* the development of youth focused cultural diplomacy initiatives, including youth exchanges, creative residencies, volunteer programmes, and intercultural training, to cultivate future generations of advocates for regional co-operation;
- viii. *call* upon the governments of the BSEC Member States to enhance support for cultural exchanges, joint artistic projects, festivals, exhibitions, and creative collaborations that promote people-to-people contacts and intercultural dialogue across the Region;
- ix. *support* the development of joint initiatives for the preservation, protection, and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including shared historical narratives, maritime heritage, folklore, traditional crafts, music, and culinary traditions;
- x. *encourage* closer co-operation among cultural institutions such as libraries, theatres, and universities, with a view to establishing sustainable cross-border networks and long-term institutional partnerships;
- xi. *acknowledge* the growing importance of digital cultural diplomacy and recommends the expansion of virtual platforms, digital exhibitions, online archives, and remote cultural collaborations to broaden access and participation;
- xii. *encourage* the creation of joint cultural tourism routes and cross-border cultural itineraries that highlight the shared heritage of the Black Sea Region, contributing to sustainable tourism and local economic development;
- xiii. *invite* the BSEC Member States to strengthen parliamentary dialogue within PABSEC on cultural issues, including the exchange of best legislative practices and the harmonisation of legal frameworks supporting cultural cooperation;
- xiv. *advocate* increased use of the BSEC Project Development Fund to support culture-related projects, particularly those focusing on youth engagement, digitalisation of cultural heritage, intercultural education, and regional mobility;

xv. *support* the examining of collection of data, research, and best practices on cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region, including the use of international indicators and methodologies to assess impact and effectiveness;

xvi. *stress* the importance of involving civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, youth groups, and local communities in cultural diplomacy initiatives, to ensure inclusiveness, sustainability, and societal relevance;

xvii. *provide* necessary support to the activities of the BSEC Working Group on Culture and facilitates the effective implementation of their action plans and ensure alignment with strategic goals and fostering collaboration among the Member States;

xviii. *promote* closer alignment and cooperation between PABSEC, BSEC, and relevant international organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the OSCE in the field of cultural cooperation.

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