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RECOMMENDATION 143/2015[*]

The Role of New Technologies in the Development and Strengthening of the Information Society in the BSEC Member States

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) recognizes that the information society is a new, perfect form of the modern society, where the equal access to information within a developed information and communications infrastructure contributes not only to sustainable socio-economic development, but also to decrease in poverty, improved quality of life, and informational integration on a global scale.

2. The PABSEC emphasizes that international practice demonstrates the positive impact of using information and communications technologogy (ICT) in the advancement of modern society. This technology enables the expansion and the diversification of the population's access to information and high-quality information services in several key segments such as government, education, health, and employment, among others.

3. The PABSEC is aware that regional cooperation in the context of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation has already resulted in positive outcomes and established a concrete platform for close cooperation in the field of technological development. However, cooperation on bilateral and multilateral bases calls for a more effective approach, including exhaustive dialogue among stakeholders in the science and technology community, aiming at achieving practical goals through cost-effective and result-oriented interaction.

4. The PABSEC recognizes that information and high level technologies are invaluable in the ongoing fight against the use of ICTs for criminal, terrorist or extremist purposes, where it is necessary to consolidate the efforts of the whole international community and to create a global information environment. In this context, it is expedient to consider the issues on joint use and control of Internet resources, elaboration of the procedure for prohibiting or curtailing information exchange and resources at another country's request, and compiling a list of terrorist-related sites.

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5. The PABSEC affirms the importance of protecting the information space of the BSEC Member States by adopting international legal mechanisms, improving national legislation so as to unify regulation of information space, and developing effective measures by which information deployed by BSEC countries impacts world public opinion.

6. The PABSEC is keenly mindful of governments' ability to create an environment for ICT-based growth through proven policies, such as investments in education, strategic use of ICT to address social challenges, and promotion of research and development (R&D) and similar incentives for innovation. These policies will provide not only short-term stimulus to local economies, but also offer a more strategic position from which both developed and developing economies can compete and succeed in the years ahead.

7. The PABSEC welcomes and supports the initiatives and programs of international institutions that are directed to the enhancement of technological development and the information society in the BSEC region.

8. The PABSEC has been paying close attention to the issue of enhancement of the information society and technological development within the framework of its activities. The Assembly has discussed reports and adopted corresponding recommendations, all of which emphasize the importance of developing information technologies in the BSEC Member States:

   - Report and Recommendation 45/2000 on *Development of Communications in the Black Sea Region*;

   - Report and Recommendation 60/2002 on *Globalization: Challenges and Prospects for the PABSEC Member States*;

   - Report and Recommendation 66/2002 on *Information Society: the Role of New Technologies*;

   - Report and Recommendation 71/2003 on *Black Sea Informational Alliance*;

   - Report and Recommendation 95/2007 on *Cooperation in the Field of High Technologies among the BSEC Member States*;

   - Report and Recommendation 121/2011 on the *Role of Parliaments in Providing Legislative Support for Enhancing Scientific and Technological Progress*;

   - Report and Recommendation 129/2012 on the *Role of Parliaments in Enhancing Information (Cyber) Security in the BSEC Member States*.

9. The PABSEC welcomes the *BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership* adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States in Belgrade on 11 June 2012, and endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the BSEC Member States in Istanbul on 26 June 2012. At the same time, the Assembly emphasizes the importance of the Third BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology (2014–2018) and the Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Science and Technology, adopted during the ministerial meeting on 3 December 2014 in Baky.

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

i) *support* enhanced and effective cooperation among Member States in the ICT and Hi-Tech sectors, including identifying goals, providing strategic directions, and defining more efficient forms of collaboration;

ii) *undertake* further steps towards consolidating project-oriented initiatives related to regional cooperation in the science and technology sectors by implementing appropriative mechanisms and identifying new projects of common interest to the Member States;

iii) *establish* a dynamic dialogue among stakeholders in the science and technology community (such as R&D organizations, industry bodies, user groups) in order to ensure their cost-effective and result-oriented interaction for the purpose of converting scientific discoveries into innovative, commercially viable products and processes;

iv) *promote* the mobility of students, academic staff, and researchers across the BSEC region within the framework of appropriate projects and programs in the science and technology sectors;

v) *encourage* the Member States to provide transparent and relevant information, training, and other services for project design and development in the science and technology sectors;

vi) *strengthen* cooperation and develop synergies with international and regional organizations and initiatives, as well as with non-governmental organizations, in order to increase the potential contribution of the Black Sea region in the science and technology sectors;

vii) *advocate* the establishment of information networks, including marketing and electronic trade centres for promoting goods and services in the Member States' markets;

viii) *establish* an inter-state network system that tracks patterns and practices that encourage acts of terrorism, to thwart attempts at using psychological terror against the citizens of the Member States;

ix) *improve* national legislations of the Member States so as to assign higher accountability to mass media;

x) *implement* the necessary measures to safeguard the BSEC information space by countering the propaganda of intolerance, incitement to religious and ethnic hatred and the dissemination of information conducive to terrorist activities or aiming at destabilizing the sovereign BSEC Member States;

xi) *promote* active participation in the field of cyber security by developing cooperation between the public and private sectors at both national and international levels;

xii) *educate* populations about culture of information security by raising awareness about the vulnerabilities, risks, and threats related to cyberspace and stressing the need to ensure the protection of national information systems;

xiii) *stimulate* Member States to actively participate in initiatives of international organizations to which they belong, so as to define and formulate relevant information security measures;

xiv) *elaborate* a strategy to enhance counteractive measures against cyber-attacks with the goals of:

  a) *adapting* the regulatory and institutional framework to the dynamics of specific threats in cyberspace;

  b) *establishing* profiles and enforcing minimum requirements for national cyber security infrastructures and for the efficient functioning of critical communications and systems;

  c) *ensuring* the resilience of technical infrastructures in cyberspace;

d) *safeguarding* national security by identifying, preventing, and countering the vulnerabilities, risks, and threats to cyber security;

e) *harnessing* opportunities to promote national interests, values, and goals of the BSEC Member States in cyberspace;

xv) *endorse* the third BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology (2014–2018) as a means to achieve the goals mentioned in the Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Science and Technology, adopted during the ministerial meeting on 3 December 2014 in Baky;

xvi) *consider* the importance of developing norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior of states and confidence building measures in information space.

xvii) *fully contribute* to the formation and development of legal mechanisms for speedy establishment of e-government.

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