



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Doc.: GA51/CC50/REC163/18

RECOMMENDATION 163/2018¹

“Enhancing Cultural Cooperation and Multiculturalism in the BSEC Member States”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) reaffirms its commitment to the common goals and objectives stipulated in the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the BSEC, wherein the Heads of State and Government underlined the essential “role of culture in the development of the region” and took into consideration that “cooperation in the spheres of culture, tourism and youth policy creates better understanding among our peoples”.
2. The Assembly recalls the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information, signed in 1993, which constitutes a long-term legal framework for cooperation and is a solid foundation for the conclusion of other bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements. It recommends the governments to support the projects in the cultural sphere, to create conditions for the involvement of nongovernmental organisations, artists' and writers' associations, youth and children's organisations, private foundations and other organizations into the Black Sea cultural cooperation process, in order to broaden and diversify the cultural contacts among the peoples living in the Black Sea Region.
3. The PABSEC reaffirms its determination to further enhance the cultural cooperation among the BSEC Member States and to respect the culture and cultural identity, which

¹ Assembly debate on 21st June (see Doc.: GA51/CC50/REP/18, Report of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee on *Enhancing cultural cooperation and multiculturalism in the BSEC Member States*, discussed in Novi Sad, on 18 April 2018; Rapporteur: Mrs. Lyudmila BOKOVA, Member of the Committee, Russia).

Text adopted by the Fiftieth-first General Assembly in Tirana, on 21 June 2018

constitute important assets for the Region and major tools for sustainable social and economic development as well as for meeting the challenges that our societies are facing in a changing world. In this context, the PABSEC recalls its Recommendations on issues related to cultural interest:

- The role of culture in the development of the BSEC region (rec. 70/2003);
- Preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage of the BSEC Member States (rec. 80/2004);
- Cooperation in the sphere of cultural tourism in the Black Sea region (rec.83/2005);
- Cultural, educational and social aspects of the EU enlargement: consequences for the Black Sea region (rec.86/2005);
- The dialogue among cultures as a means to build trust among the nations (rec.89/2006)
- The process of globalisation and the potential threat to the cultural diversity (rec.93/2006);
- Cultural Cooperation in the BSEC Region: Experiences, Opportunities, and Challenges (rec. 119/2010);
- Combating Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage in the BSEC Region (rec. 148/2015).

4. The PABSEC believes that there is a growing need for the BSEC to examine the ways and means of renewing the interest of the Member States for cultural cooperation, identifying some flagship projects and facilitating their financing. Developing BSEC programmes for cultural exchanges and organizing common exhibitions would vivify the interaction among the Member States and promote the region's cultural identity on the international stage. It is important to continue to explore and promote the role of the culture in the region.

5. The Assembly re-asserts its commitment to the basic documents of the United Nations, in particular the UN General Assembly Resolutions on the Global agenda for dialogue among civilizations and the promotion of cultural understanding and cooperation with UNESCO and the Council of Europe that are relevant to international cooperation in the field of culture.

6. The Assembly reaffirms its commitment to work more closely with the BSEC and its related bodies in the process of effective implementation of the "Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership", which constitutes the common program of action for the Member States for the future. The variety of cultural identities and values of the Black Sea Member States represents a key resource for enhancing political dialogue, developing economic cooperation and ensuring stability through mutual understanding and appreciation of the countries' cultural traditions.

7. The PABSEC calls for particular attention for the cultural policies of the Member States and will continue to foster intercultural dialogue and preserve the cultural and linguistic identity of minority groups through: • Enhance integration through culture by increasing human contacts aiming at enhancing the understanding and respect for cultural diversity; • Improve access to culture of minority groups of people and preserve their cultural and linguistic identity; • Promote language exchanges.

8. The PABSEC appreciates the efforts made by the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) within the framework the *BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership*, and its Goal 8, where the Member States declare their determination on building networks of cooperation and developing joint

projects in the field of modern culture (literature, theatre, dance, music and visual arts); Promoting cultural and creative industries and strengthening the role that they play in the cooperation among the BSEC Member States; Encouraging Cultural tourism/Cultural routes projects in the Black Sea Region and their implementation.

9. The Assembly expresses its appreciation for the work conducted by the BSEC Working Group on Culture and reiterates its commitment to fully support the efforts made, in order to explore the potential of the region, in a systematic way and to work towards shaping a better understanding of the Black Sea distinct regional cultural identity, by developing joint strategies and programs.

10. The PABSEC welcomes the elaboration of the Draft Action Plan covering the term of office of the Republic of Serbia, as Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Culture (2017 - 2018), conceived to attain practical results in the field of cultural co-operation.

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

- i. *declare* determination to further strengthen and enhance the cultural cooperation among the Member States, to encourage creativity and to stimulate innovation in this field;
- ii. *emphasize* the need to explore the potential of the Region by developing joint cultural projects that will pave the way for further cultural exchanges among them;
- iii. *encourage* the implementation of Cultural routes projects in the Black Sea Region and, in this context, support the establishment of an institution called “the Cultural Port of the Black Sea”;
- iv. *underline* the importance of following new trends in culture, like the development of new Silk Road projects, and invites the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States to investigate possible proposals on cultural dimension of new Silk Road to be developed within the BSEC;
- v. *aims* to raise awareness and respect for the cultural diversity, within the BSEC Member States, by developing cooperation projects, targeted on the local communities;
- vi. *reiterate* determination to continue promoting a model of cultural cooperation, based on: respect for and promotion of the rich cultural heritage of the BSEC Member States and enhancement of the intercultural dialogue as a means to increase mutual understanding and respect for each other;
- vii. *reaffirm* commitment to strengthen the cooperation and develop synergies with the BSEC Related Bodies, international and regional organizations and initiatives as well as with Non-Governmental Organizations;
- viii. *promote* the necessary legislative changes to adapt the current legislative framework for the timely implementation of multilateral projects and agreements;
- ix. *develop* a more active approach in expressing support for the new initiatives and in promoting adoption of the new laws and multilateral agreements related to implementation of the commitments and principles enshrined in the BSEC Summit Declarations, the BSEC Charter and the Declarations of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- x. *further strengthen* cooperation between the BSEC countries in the sphere of culture, in particular, by setting priorities, developing joint strategies and programs as well as

- through partnership relations with other regional and international organizations and non-governmental networks on cultural cooperation;
- xi. *enhance* cooperation between the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee and the BSEC Working Group on Culture as well as with BSEC Related Bodies, with a view to implementing the relevant recommendations;
 - xii. *support* building networks of cooperation and developing joint projects in the field of contemporary culture, such as literature, theatre, dance, music and visual arts;
 - xiii. *revive* ancient routes and creatively developing new ones as vehicles for intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, good neighbourhood relations and social cohesion;
 - xiv. *actively promote* cultural tourism, as a key to sustainable development for the benefit of all peoples in the wider Black Sea Region;
 - xv. *create* a Plan for connecting destinations in the Black Sea Region and provide the cultural and creative industries an environment, allowing them to continue expanding, creating growth and increasing employment;
 - xvi. *enhance* the interaction between Government officials, entrepreneurs, academia, NGO's and young people, providing fresh incentives for exchanges, common projects and initiatives in the field of culture;
 - xvii. *address* the challenge to link Culture and Economy and work with the stakeholders of the cultural and creative activities as well as with the private sector towards developing a sustainable economy of culture;
 - xviii. *further strengthen* the existing cooperation within the BSEC, in the field of culture and work together with international organizations concerned, especially the Council of Europe and UNESCO as well as with other regional and international bodies and non-governmental networks;
 - xix. *support finalizing* the negotiations of draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNESCO and BSEC, as an important step in developing the collaboration between the two organizations;
 - xx. *examine* the possibility of financing the participation of Member States' experts in the BSEC Working Groups;
 - xxi. *enhance* cooperation between the BSEC PERMIS and the Focal Points in the Member States with a view to wider dissemination of opportunities to participate in BSEC-funded projects / activities.
 - xxii. *form and enhance* mutual understanding and trust among the BSEC countries, develop equitable and mutually beneficial partnership, increase the participation of countries in the network of international cultural cooperation, further integrate the BSEC countries into the world cultural space;
 - xxiii. *preserve* the rich historical traditions of culture and develop a dynamic cultural life in the context of diversity and freedom of creativity, pluralism of opinions without any censorship, recognizing the equal dignity of the cultures of the peoples living in the of the BSEC countries;

- xxiv. *encourage* organisation the Days of Culture of the BSEC countries and other integrated events, mutual trips of cultural figures for the development of creative contacts, exchange of experience, participation in conferences, symposiums and other thematic events;
- xxv. *work* together to create a platform for multilateral cooperation in the field of education and science in the BSEC region on the basis of leading universities in a consortium format, network universities, etc.;
- xxvi. *promote* contacts among scientists with the aim to jointly prepare textbooks and teaching tools for ensuring objective coverage of the history of relations between our states, paying due attention to the counteraction to attempts of falsification of history and interpretation of historical events in political interests;
- xxvii. *facilitate* formation of a positive image of our countries, using historical and archive materials in the exhibition, publishing and media activities;
- xxviii. *seek to strengthen* the state support to the mass media, that promote culture of the BSEC countries.
- xxix. *improve* the practice of informing the citizens about the tourism opportunities of the BSEC countries and ensure participation of international expositions in major international tourism exhibitions;
- xxx. *maintain* direct links between cultural institutions, artists associations and renown personalities, as well as activities of specialized public funds and businesses, whose sponsorship helps in implementation of important projects of cultural cooperation.
- xxxi. *preserve* cultural and linguistic identity of national minorities through enlarging people-to-people contacts aiming at improving understanding and respect for cultural diversity, improving access to minority cultures and preserving their cultural and linguistic identity;
- xxxii. *preserve* cultural and historical heritage, national identity and traditions within the national communities and in the countries where their compatriots live;
- xxxiii. *develop* youth exchanges, paying special attention to more active participation in international cultural cooperation of youth organizations from our countries.

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