



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

Doc. GA56/CC55/REC178/20

RECOMMENDATION 178/2020¹
“The Role of Parliaments in Combating Pandemic - Social Aspects”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) stresses the devastating impact of the novel coronavirus infection COVID-19 on societies and economies, and notes that it fundamentally changes the lives of people. The effective response to today’s global health crisis requires decisive and innovative action by individual states and at the regional level with due account of the complexity of the current situation.
2. The PABSEC notes the important role of parliaments in ensuring a safer and less uncertain life for people in the context of a global pandemic by adjusting the strategies for strengthening public healthcare, as well as coordinating the necessary efforts to prevent the international spread of diseases. Resilience of social security networks, increased testing, support for health workers, and provision of vital medication and personal protective equipment are essential elements of national strategies aiming at reduction of the pandemic and achievement of inclusive and sustainable growth.
3. The PABSEC highly appreciates the actions of the BSEC Member States, in prompt mobilization of domestic capabilities and timely response to the crisis situation in accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization. The Human life and health became top priority. For preventing the spread of infection a set of measures have been taken, medical services have been converted to combat COVID-19, scientific potential has been increased, incentives have been set to enhance recovery, and economies have been structurally changed. Despite the ongoing measures, more needs to be done.
4. The PABSEC notes with satisfaction that during the pandemic, national parliaments redoubled their efforts to promote accountability, transparency, tolerance and social cohesion. They were mobilized in a special regime of high legislative alert for the timely adoption of the necessary laws in force majeure situation.
5. The PABSEC stresses that parliaments and parliamentarians must ensure a high level of mobilization, civic responsibility, mutual assistance, tolerance and compassion in combating global pandemic. Parliaments serve as a key link in fostering dialogue and

¹ *Assembly debate on 24 November (see Doc.: GA56/CC55/REP/20, Report of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee “The Role of Parliaments in Combating Pandemic – Social Aspects”, discussed on 7 October 2020; Rapporteur: Mr. Musa Guliyev, member of the Committee, Azerbaijan).*
Text adopted at the Fifty-Sixth General Assembly

collaboration with the public and play important role in ensuring evidence-based information, awareness-raising and panic prevention. Citizens' trust and social cohesion increase discipline in fulfilling pandemic regulations and contribute to building of more inclusive and resilient society.

6. The PABSEC shares the conviction that social and economic development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development and form the basis for improving the quality of life for people. Therefore, it is necessary to find a balance between containing the spread of the viral infection and eliminating the socio-economic consequences of the crisis caused by COVID-19.
7. The PABSEC is determined to facilitate the timely implementation of the necessary measures at all levels. It is important to enhance the socio-economic aspects of sustainable development through the adoption of national programs to protect citizens and infrastructure.
8. The PABSEC welcomes the activities of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, in particular, the creation of a task force of experts from the Member States to prepare the BSEC Coronavirus Protocols, aimed at overcoming the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic in the field of tourism.
9. The PABSEC believes that the challenges of the novel coronavirus infection pandemic COVID-19 can be counteracted through broader international cooperation. Solidarity and cooperation are the most powerful weapons of the international community in the fight against pandemic.
10. Therefore, the PABSEC recommends that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:
 - i. *prioritize* the fight against the pandemic, which poses a serious threat to human health, welfare and well-being;
 - ii. *extend efforts* for strengthening legal framework for comprehensive response and due address to destructing social and economic impact of the pandemic;
 - iii. *take measures* to strengthen inter-parliamentary interaction to strengthen national and international legal frameworks aimed at containing and preventing a pandemic;
 - iv. *strengthen* regional cooperation, taking into account relevant international legal instruments in combating pandemic;
 - v. *support* establishment of reliable, sustainable and safe system for prevention, control and response to pandemics under the International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization;
 - vi. *create* platforms and scale up existing ones for exchange of knowledge and skills in the field of combating pandemic, as well as for collaborative research;
 - vii. *ensure* continuous exchange of information in the field of healthcare and combating pandemic, including through the Centre for Information and Best Practices on the Sustainable Development Goals for the Black Sea region;
 - viii. *develop* a plan of action for enhancing cooperation in information and communication field to prevent dangerous viral diseases and avoid their spread;
 - ix. *consider the possibility* of boosting domestic production capacities to eliminate the shortage of essential products and personal protective equipment;

- x. *re-assess and re-plan* supply chains, focusing on urgent needs, including personal protective equipment, diagnostics and clinical products;
 - xi. *promote* the implementation of effective methods for prevention and treatment of infectious diseases by improving sanitary conditions and compliance with relevant laws and regulations;
 - xii. *encourage* research and innovation to introduce pioneering medical approaches, including more involvement in global efforts to find vaccines and medical treatment for COVID-19;
 - xiii. *take the necessary measures* to overcome the existing difficulties in the field of education and build new up-to-date skills in the field of distance/online learning;
 - xiv. *ensure* dissemination of accurate, clear and evidence-based information as the most effective means against spread of misinformation, panic and fear during pandemic;
 - xv. *provide necessary framework* for strengthening social development with particular attention to societal interests and social protection;
 - xvi. *encourage* the work of charity organisations, activists and volunteers in providing medical and social support to people at risk during pandemic;
 - xvii. *help ensure* that the social impact of pandemic does not complicate the condition of refugees in camps in recipient or transit countries;
 - xviii. *support* the work of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the field of combating pandemic.
11. The PABSEC invites the BSEC Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.