



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Doc.: GA56/EC55/REC 176 /20

RECOMMENDATION 176 /2020*

“The Role of Parliaments in Combating Pandemic - Economic Aspects”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) states that the outbreak of the new corona virus disease, COVID-19, poses an unprecedented challenge to the world. The current global crisis is not only a health crisis, it is also a deep socio-economic and humanitarian crisis, with severe consequences to human life, health, safety and well-being. Tackling the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the priority tasks for most states of the world, at the present moment.
2. The PABSEC supports the actions of the states in the fight of the disease and acknowledges that although responses may vary in their scope, intensity and duration, they are all aimed at mitigating and confronting the COVID-19 challenges.
3. The PABSEC deeply appreciates the contribution of the World Health Organization in the global fight against the pandemic, as well as the contribution of the medical and healthcare workers, scientists and essential workers and services, for their role in saving human lives, thus enabling societies and economies to function in a challenging environment.
4. The Assembly recognizes that the pandemic poses a threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), officially known as “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, endorsed by the United Nations (UN) and adopted by the Decision of the UN General Assembly, in September 2015. The PABSEC extends its full support to the SDG and, in accordance with this agenda, attaches a special importance to global partnership and

***Assembly debate on 24 November 2020 (see Doc.: GA56/EC55/REP/20, Report of the Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee “The Role of Parliaments in Combating Pandemic - Economic Aspects ” discussed on 7 October 2020; Rapporteur: Mr. Artak Manukyan-Armenia)*

Text is adopted by the Assembly, on 24 November 2020

- regional collaboration that aim to develop each Member State's healthcare systems, enabling international organizations to implement efficient and sustainable healthcare policies.
5. The PABSEC welcomes the Resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, on the COVID-19 pandemic, "Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)", adopted on 2 April 2020 and "International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19", adopted on 20 April 2020.
 6. The PABSEC notes that the "Economic Agenda: towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership", adopted in Istanbul, on 26 June 2012, attributes a special importance to strengthening the cooperation of the BSEC Member States in the sphere of public health and preventing the spread of infectious diseases and, in the framework of the Goal 7 of the Agenda, "Health Care and Pharmaceuticals", calls for a number of strategic measures, inter alia, enhancing the cooperation in the sphere of public health and in preventing the spread of infectious diseases; further elaborating the Epidemiological Surveillance and Response Network and establishing a system of regular exchange of information on registered infection diseases, among the BSEC Member States; developing cooperation in the field of sanitary protection, according to the national legislation.
 7. The PABSEC recalls its Recommendation 44/2000 on "Cooperation in the Field of Public Health among the BSEC Member-Countries", in which the Assembly calls on national parliaments and governments to "cooperate on emergency situations, resulting from natural, man-made or technological disasters which represent a significant challenge for public health", as well as the Recommendation 157/2017 "The Role of the Parliaments in Providing Sustainable Healthcare Systems in the BSEC Member States", in which the Assembly calls "the relevant national administrations to coordinate their healthcare-related activities, so as to allow the regular and systematic exchange of information on health threats".
 8. The PABSEC recognizes that the disruptions in societies, economies and in the lives of peoples, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, clearly show that global challenges know no borders and that no country could deal with them only on its own. The COVID-19, as a global threat, requires a global response and efficient international and regional co-operation.
 9. The PABSEC underlines that a coordinated and wide-ranging multilateral strategy is needed, in order to deal with the health emergency needs, to support the economic activity and to prepare the ground for the recovery in the BSEC Region. The Assembly expresses the confidence that a successful multilateral economic cooperation forms an efficient response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, and it welcomes many forms of assistance and solidarity among the BSEC Member States.
 10. The PABSEC expresses the commitment to support multilateralism and enhance the role of the parliaments in addressing today's global challenges. The PABSEC recognizes that one of the key components for the successful implementation of the national economic recovery programs, is the parliamentary support. Adequate political backing on behalf of national and international parliamentary institutions, is crucial for the joint and effective action, in order to mitigate the adverse consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, on the economies of the BSEC Member States.
 11. The Assembly emphasizes that, in addressing the pandemic, the national parliaments of the BSEC Member States adopted the necessary laws, economic aid packages and emergency health measures. They embarked upon comprehensive measures, worked in an extraordinary regime and played a crucial role in ensuring that emergency measures are introduced and implemented adequately and timely.

12. The PABSEC is mindful that parliaments and parliamentarians have a paramount role in combating the current pandemic and its consequences. The PABSEC states that parliamentarians need to intensify their activities in the national parliaments and in the international parliamentary structures, through cooperation with other parliamentary assemblies and organizations, in order to promote a gradual economic recovery and to ensure a sustainable development.

13. The PABSEC emphasizes that a successful and sustainable recovery requires strong political leadership, patience and responsibility. Recovery strategies and national efforts, in the BSEC Member States, need to be complemented by supportive global programs, measures and strategies.

14. The PABSEC affirms that the fight against the pandemic, requires the engagement of numerous relevant actors and calls for the cooperation at the level of governments, parliaments, central banks, businesses, health workers, scientists, researchers, etc., in the BSEC Region.

15. **Therefore, the Assembly** recommends that the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States:

i. *provide* necessary support to economic policies and strategies implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic;

ii. *make the effort* to remove, in accordance with the national legal frameworks, trade restrictions and protectionist measures, in relation to the pandemic, and to refrain from applying new restrictive trade measures in the process of the economic recovery. Open trade routes and supply chains are crucial for providing vital medical and humanitarian goods, in the time of a global pandemic, helping at successful recovery of economies in the Black Sea region;

iii. *take* appropriate measures regarding transport infrastructure, such as simplification of the transportation procedures and implementation of the key transport conventions that will ensure continuity of supply chains and an accelerated transport of essential goods;

iv. *provide* further support to medical appliances and protective equipment production industries, such as safety equipment, cleaning and hygiene products, widespread COVID-19 testing, which are essential basic measures to fight the virus;

v. *invigorate* the cooperation at the level of business organizations, in the form of business forums, via videoconferencing;

vi. *implement* safety and health measures that will gradually restore the tourist flows among the BSEC Member States and ensure that health measures are implemented, so that minimize an unnecessary impact on travel;

vii. *support* tourism industry and implement measures to help tourism businesses and workers, to adapt their services, in order to meet the post COVID-19 working conditions, in terms of health, safety, restoring the customer's confidence and promoting public-private partnerships and collaborative efforts for tourism recovery, including crisis preparedness and management systems, protocols and skills;

viii. *take* steps to further promote local tourism and accommodate visitors from their own countries, as domestic tourism is expected to play an important role in leading the initial recovery phase, given the uncertain outlook for international travel;

ix. *increase* efforts to keep agriculture safely running and take concrete and long-term measures to protect farmers and producers from the volatility of the current crisis;

x. *elaborate* new mechanisms of regional cooperation, giving a due consideration to the challenges regarding food security, related to the COVID-19 pandemic and promote cooperation of food business companies and associations in BSEC member states;

xi. *support* the further enhancement of technological development and the information society in the BSEC region, also the use of information and communications technology (ICT), as well as a mutually beneficial and effective cooperation among the Member States, in the ICT and HiTech sectors;

xii. *further collaborate and attract investments*, especially in sectors that thrived throughout the crisis, like industries and services based largely on digitalization and artificial intelligence, software solutions for businesses and the general public, telecommunications and Internet services, e-commerce and online shopping, pharmaceutical and chemical industries, online services, online offices, etc;

xiii. *take further measures* to mobilize additional financial resources and increase development funding for reaching a sustainable medical solution, such as a vaccine, and intensify scientific collaboration and cooperation of pharmaceutical industries concerning medicines, medical equipment and vaccines, respecting the principles of solidarity, responsibility, effectiveness, safety, fairness, availability and affordability;

xiv. *stimulate* cooperation and exchange of information, at the regional level, between municipalities and regional administrations, regarding the ways to address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis;

xv. *enhance* regional integration by collaborative efforts and work, toward mitigating the downfall of economy, trade, tourism, employment etc., in the BSEC Region, ensuring the alignment of the national strategies to the common goal of preserving the health of citizens and economies, while respecting national and regional particularities;

xvi. *develop* national economic policies and strategies, for a successful implementation of the post pandemic national economic recovery programs, regarding the small and medium enterprises, tourism, blue economy, road transport, transportation of goods, banking, financial sectors, employment in the BSEC Region, etc;

xvii. *support* the work of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation on Tourism, in the process of the development of a common platform for the resumption of cooperation in the field of tourism, such as the proposal to introduce the "BSEC Coronavirus Protocols" regulating safety and health measures, which will gradually restore the tourist flows among the interested BSEC member countries.

16. The Assembly invites the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.