



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Doc.: GA58/CC57/REC184/21

RECOMMENDATION 184/2021*

“Objectives and Challenges of Cooperation in the field of Education in the Black Sea Region after the Pandemic”

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) underlines the importance of education as the process of mastering knowledge and skills during the lifetime and acknowledges that improvement of education system plays an important strategic role in the accumulation and transfer of learning and expertise to the coming generations. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all countries in the world and almost all areas of public life, including education, creating largest disruption of the education process at all levels in the human history. The necessary transition from a traditional teaching model to a distance learning format caused many difficulties but at the same time opened new opportunities for using new technologies in education. The counter measures taken by the ministries of education in close cooperation with the ministries of health allowed maintaining the general level of education.

2. The PABSEC stresses that the educational community in the Black Sea region has shown its resilience and laid the foundation for further recovery. The BSEC Member States quickly managed to adapt to the new realities. Large-scale investments were directed into educational system to close the gap between different groups of students in accessing online education. Despite the pandemic situation and the restrictive measures, the countries have managed to maintain continuity of education process. Strengthening cooperation in the field of education, as well as the exchange of the best practices help to better understand the vulnerabilities and improve the situation creating truly modern conditions for students and teachers.

3. The PABSEC recalls its Recommendations in the field of education, including Recommendation 154/2016 “Education and Science for Sustainable Development in the BSEC Member States”, Recommendation 133/2013 “Benefits and Perspectives of Cooperation at the Postgraduate level among Universities of the BSEC Member States”, Recommendation 125/2011 “Lifelong Learning in the BSEC Member States”, Recommendation 100/2007 “Improvement of the Quality of Life in the BSEC Member States”, Recommendation 97/2007 “The Bologna Process and the Reforms of Higher

* Assembly debate on 25 November 2021 (See Doc. GA58/CC57/REP/21, Report of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee “*Objectives and Challenges of Cooperation in the field of Education in the Black Sea Region after the Pandemic*”, discussed on 12 October 2021 online; Rapporteur: Ms. Charoula Kefalidou – Greece)

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Educational Systems in the BSEC Countries”, Recommendation 86/2005 “Cultural, Educational and Social Aspects of EU Enlargement: Consequences for the Black Sea Region”, Recommendation 56/2001 “Black Sea Universities Network: Contribution to the BSEC Academic Cooperation”, Recommendation 31/1998 “Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Diplomas by the PABSEC Member Countries”, Recommendation 10/1995 “Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries for the Improvement of Education” and reiterates its commitment to strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of education in the Black Sea Region and establishing bilateral and multilateral contacts between educational institutions.

4. The PABSEC highly appreciates the actions of the BSEC Member States, which promptly mobilized all local possibilities and promptly began to cope with the crisis. To this end, the PABSEC welcomes the activities of the BSEC Organization within the framework of its Working Group on Education and stresses the need to intensify cooperation with the aim to implement joint projects and initiatives for the enhancement and improvement of education.

5. The PABSEC stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has become a real challenge for education systems. The education sector has passed a serious test of strength and effectiveness of its work. It became necessary to take large-scale response measures in the shortest possible time in harsh preventive conditions. Overcoming the crisis in the field of education became possible by taking radical decisions, quick adaptation and concerted efforts of government authorities, heads of educational institutions, teachers, students and their parents. It is necessary to use in practice the achievements of pedagogical science and best practices for planning and normalizing the work of educational institutions after the pandemic.

6. The PABSEC welcomes the launching of the UN Global Education Coalition (GEC) as an international multisectoral partnership between the UN agencies, civil society, and media to meet the urgent and unprecedented need for continuity of learning and the Global Skills Academy, which aims to equip one million youth with employability skills, and calls on the BSEC Member States to strengthen cooperation in the field of education at international level with the aim to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

- i. *take* the necessary measures to ensure normalization of functioning of education system in the light of the formation of new social conditions after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ii. *contribute* to creation of a legal framework to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the educational process and the development of education systems in the context of the pandemic;
- iii. *introduce and implement* policies for adapting education systems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the continuity of state educational programs at all levels and all directions;
- iv. *ensure* safety of all participants in the educational process during the pandemic by strengthening coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, as well as mandatory testing and voluntary vaccination;
- v. *elaborate* a set of measures for state and social support to the employees of the education system and students;

- vi. *introduce* standards of financial and technical support to the education systems at all levels;
- vii. *promote* the development and implementation of information educational technologies and modern teaching methods, including distance learning, to ensure the continuity of the educational system during and after the pandemic;
- viii. *take the necessary measures* to integrate science and education in order to preserve and promote research, development, science and technology in education system in the context of the pandemic;
- ix. *ensure* the sustainability of the management of educational institutions with the aim to promote continuity in education and scientific work in force majeure situations, including pandemics, natural disasters, political turmoil, etc.;
- x. *support* application of an updated student assessment system to suit the pandemic conditions in order to identify possible knowledge gaps due to obligatory distance learning and the development of remedial or accelerated learning programs;
- xi. *promote* diversification of educational programs for vocational training in order to adapt the training and retraining system to the new pandemic requirements and create greater diversity and increase the range and quality of educational services;
- xii. *facilitate* the exchange of information, experience and best practices in education to respond to global challenges under the Goal 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- xiii. *promote* development of a full partnership between education systems by enlarging and improving international relations and international activities in the field of education;
- xiv. *encourage* regular and systematic exchange of information between the BSEC Member States on achievements in the sphere of education in the BSEC Region, as well as exchange of experience on the organization of quality and effective education during the pandemic, in particular: training formats, use of information technologies and digital resources and retraining for teachers;
- xv. *enhance* organization of seminars on topical issues in the field of education in order to strengthen practical cooperation between educational institutions of the BSEC Member States;
- xvi. *take active measures* to achieve the strategic goals in the education sector, as defined in the “BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership” (2012), in particular its Goal 14 “Higher Standards in Education and Training”;
- xvii. *intensify* cooperation with the BSEC Working Group on Education and promote the implementation of the respective Action Plan.

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