

DECLARATION

On the Occasion of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Establishment of the PABSEC

1. We, the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, have gathered in Athens on 9 June 2008 for the BSEC Parliamentary Summit marking the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.
2. We reaffirm our commitment to the idea of overall development in the BSEC region, founded on goodwill and mutual willingness for cooperation, as well as the consolidation of inter-parliamentary interaction among the BSEC Member States, directed towards the realization of the common ideals and principles enshrined in the Istanbul Summit Declaration, the Bosphorus Statement and the Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.
3. We pledge our full support to the efforts of the heads of state and heads of government of the BSEC Member States; these efforts are aimed at furthering the development of the Organization and the realization of the principles of cooperation put forth in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fifteenth Anniversary Summit of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, adopted at Istanbul on 25 June 2007.
4. Over the past years, the Parliamentary Assembly has laid a solid foundation for its sustained growth and has gained regional recognition. During these fifteen years, the Assembly has accomplished significant work in achieving the aims and fulfilling the tasks set out in the statutory documents and has proved itself to be an important mechanism for deepening good-neighbourly cooperation, friendship and partnership among the Member States. The sphere of activities of the PABSEC embraces the basic areas of regional cooperation, including enhancement of political interaction, meeting new challenges and threats, promoting environmental protection, trade, energy, transport, tourism, telecommunications, science and technology, and combating terrorism. At the same time, we note with concern that unresolved conflicts and the numerous negative phenomena emanating from them undermine stability, prevent sustainable development and impede the processes of regional and European integration.
5. Inter-parliamentary interaction is an important component of the BSEC. The

national parliaments of the BSEC Member States are involved in shaping the legal framework, and play an active role in securing political and legislative support for regional cooperation.

6. We note with satisfaction the repeated acknowledgement by the BSEC Summits of the role of the Parliamentary Assembly as an important institution providing effective and close interaction between the national parliaments of Member States. We are of the opinion that further strengthening the status of the Assembly will boost multilateral cooperation in the region, giving an added impetus to achieving practical results.
7. We appreciate the outcomes of the activities of the BSEC, the BSEC Business Council, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies, and stress the necessity for closer coordination of activities of all the BSEC institutions, based on the principle of complementarity.
8. We note with satisfaction the successful functioning of the PABSEC International Secretariat, its role in consolidating the Assembly and the effective implementation of assigned tasks with a view to deepening and enlarging cooperation between the parliaments of the BSEC Member States.
9. The Parliamentary Assembly is determined to further strengthen relations with other parliamentary assemblies and take an active part in the work of inter-parliamentary structures, paying particular attention to the enhancement of cooperation with the European Parliament. The PABSEC stresses the importance of cooperation with the Observer States and the need for deepening practical interaction.
10. The PABSEC is committed to extensively using the potential of the Assembly in cooperation with the parliaments of the BSEC Member States and to making concerted efforts to promote all-round growth of good-neighbourly relations, mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation, and to contributing more meaningfully to ensuring peace, stability, prosperity and development of the states and peoples in the region.
11. We, the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Member States of the Organization of the BSEC, share the belief that our Assembly will effectively serve the lofty goals and tasks declared at its founding.

Athens, 9 June 2008