

THE TWENTY SECOND PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Doc.: GA22/LC22/REC73/03

RECOMMENDATION 73/2003¹

Black Sea region within the context of the Enlargement of the European Union

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is fully aware that the present process of the enlargement of the European Union, including three PABSEC countries, is the historic challenge changing the face of the European continent with extends the zone of political and economic stability and prosperity to the expanded borders securing larger community of peace and welfare and ensures that the countries are tied closer together for strong, stable and secure neighbourhood.
2. An enlarged and integrated EU will add more weight to the Europe's impact upon the global affairs enhancing the stand of the EU as a global actor confronting the formidable challenges. Within this framework the European Union and the European Parliament discuss the Wider Europe policy as a coherent approach of the Union towards the neighbours in north, east and south overlapping the BSEC region opening up prospects and incentives for membership in a long time perspective.
3. The strong attraction of EU membership provides powerful incentive for domestic reforms consolidating political and economic stability and sustained economic growth in the Black Sea region. The ambitious reforms under the EU guidance in aligning national legislation to the European acquis are furthered in the candidate countries of the BSEC. The EU standards and norms are taken as a basis when the BSEC countries tailor their policies for improvement of economic management, strengthening political institutions and sustainable development.
4. Over the last years the BSEC countries have significantly fostered economic integration process and created a solid framework for the conduct of economic policies. Substantial success has been reached towards transformation into the market-led democracies, open political systems, strong civil society and efficient institutional infrastructure. Yet, big variety in the levels of the national economic development, reform programmes and pace of economic growth further deepens the already heterogeneous character of the Black Sea region in terms of development levels and with the candidate countries integrating into the EU, more obvious becomes the picture of differences in living standards.

¹ *Rapporteur*: Mr. Borislav Ralchev, Chairman of the Committee – Bulgaria

The Assembly debate on 9 December 2003 (see Doc.: GA22/LC22/REP/03, Report of the Legal and Political Affairs Committee “Black Sea region within the context of the enlargement of the European Union” discussed in Rostov-Don, on 15 October 2003; *Rapporteur*: Mr. Necdet Budak – Turkey)

Text adopted by the Assembly in Bucharest on 9 December 2003.

5. As the enlargement of the EU proceeds, the prospect of accession of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey brings the future border of the EU to the Black Sea region. Within this context, cooperation between the EU and the BSEC in various fields shall become inevitable but rather complicated task due to the different status of the BSEC countries with the European Union.
6. The Assembly believes that more active involvement of the European Union in the BSEC region shall reinforce integration of the Black Sea region within the European architecture serving the aims of the EU directed for elimination of possible dividing lines on the European continent. In this respect, the Assembly stresses that although the new neighbourhood concept and existing regional initiatives imply strategy towards separate BSEC member states, the BSEC region as a whole has to be considered by the EU as a dimensional target of its regional priority.
7. For the institutionalisation of the relations between the European Union and the BSEC the Thirteenth MMFA in Tbilisi on 30 April 1999 approved the *Platform for cooperation between the BSEC and the EU* reflecting the common aspiration of the BSEC Member States that priority must be given to development of balanced, mutually beneficial and result oriented cooperation between the BSEC and the EU.
8. The BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future adopted in 2001 also stresses that priority has to be given to the development of a balanced, mutually beneficial cooperation between the BSEC and the EU and that the BSEC has to be creative and systematic in identifying and developing promising projects of mutual interest.
9. The recent resolutions of the Yerevan BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of 18 April 2003 invited the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic to take the opportunity of the role as President of the Council of Ministers of the European Union to propose to the EU Council to request the European Commission to prepare a draft proposal on a new relationship of the EU with the BSEC, on a multilateral basis, taking into consideration the experience of the Northern Dimension. Unfortunately, this effort was not met with enthusiasm at the subsequent Thessaloniki European Council.
10. The Assembly is confident that the active interaction of all dimensions of the BSEC with relevant institutions of the European Union shall undoubtedly pave the way towards constructive contribution to joint efforts and undertakings for enforcing the relations between the BSEC and the EU. In this respect, the Assembly appreciates the role by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies in promoting with the Centre for European Policy Studies a research project on cooperation in the Black Sea region with emphasis on its European dimension.
11. **Therefore, the Assembly recommends** the parliaments and the governments of the PABSEC Member Countries:
 - i. *to exploit the possibilities at the utmost* to broader use economic cooperation in the Black Sea region with a view of greater synergy between the member countries for further realisation of common objectives of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation;
 - ii. *to follow* the provisions embodied in the BSEC Summit Declarations, Resolutions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs related to strengthening regional cooperation and further integration into the wider European space;

- iii. *to spare no effort* to ensure that the norms, standards, principles, policies and practices of the EU are promoted paving the way towards prosperous life of the peoples in the Black Sea region strengthening stability in Europe and beyond and responding to the common challenges on the European continent.
- iv. *to boost* the dynamic and consistent country-by-country reforms in the key civil, political, economic and social spheres;
- v. *to further improve* institutional framework necessary for the wide-ranging cooperation in the Black Sea region and beyond;
- vi. *to intensify* coordination between the countries in order to help each other to narrow the gap in the stages of development and economic progress in order to enhance development and realise full economic potential of the countries participating in the regional integration;
- vii. *to undertake adequate steps* towards peaceful settlement of prevailing conflicts in the Black Sea region fully applying the international norms and legal instruments as a necessary prerequisite for taking place in the new European architecture;
- viii. *to make full and appropriate use* of existing bilateral and multilateral instruments in the priority fields related to fostering regional and interregional cooperation;
- ix. *to facilitate* adoption or approximation of national legislation directed towards bringing the Black Sea region closer to the European integration with due regard to the body of the European Law (*acquis communautaire*);
- x. *to continue* intensive partnership with the BSEC and its Related Bodies for efficient implementation of the “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership” boosting dynamics of regional integration and promoting political, economic and social stability and due cooperation with the European Union;
- xi. *to coordinate* the actions between the all the BSEC dimensions for seeking the due recognition of the BSEC by the European Union and institutionalisation of the relations between the BSEC and the EU.
- xii. *to further pursue* the high level dialogue between the PABSEC and the EP officials and secure that the regular reciprocal participation in each other’s meetings cements more viable contacts between these two parliamentary structures;
- xiii. *to establish* more effective relations and working contacts with the European regional or sub-regional structures with a view to enrich the Black Sea regional cooperation with new approaches;

12. The Parliamentary Assembly invites the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.