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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Twenty-Second Plenary Session

Bucharest, 9-10 December 2003

Progress Report^{*}
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

RAPPORTEUR: Mr. Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the
Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
President of the Senate of Romania

** Adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 2003 in Bucharest*

The present Report is designed as an overview of the progress achieved by the Parliamentary Assembly in its activities during the period between the Twenty-first Plenary Session of the General Assembly in Chisinau, on 10-12 June 2003 until the Twenty-second Plenary Session of the General Assembly in Bucharest on 8-10 December 2003.

I. PABSEC IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2003

The PABSEC during the second half of 2003 concentrated its efforts to three directions: implementing the agenda and the Work Plan of its Committees, strengthening the legal status of the Assembly and enhancing its European orientation.

The conclusion of the 'Protocol Concerning the Privileges and Immunities of the PABSEC' at the last Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Baky is a landmark in the history of the Assembly which strengthens the international recognition of the Assembly and assists greatly in its unobstructed functioning. Additionally, the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the PABSEC has generated a constructive dialogue among the member countries and produced new ideas of facilitating the work bodies of the Assembly.

Following the significant progress during the last years in the relations between the PABSEC and the European Parliament, the Assembly's Committees for the first time focused extensively on issues of European interest such as the shaping of the European Economic Space, the Black Sea region within the context of the European enlargement and Wider Europe.

A. COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Effective cooperation between and among the national parliaments of the PABSEC constitutes the most important means of increasing the effectiveness of the Assembly. The constant support by the Presidents of the national parliaments, which is rendered to the activities of the PABSEC, enables constructive interaction among the elected representatives of the peoples in the region and stimulates multilateral cooperation. These developments are very much supported by the International Secretariat, which keeps close contacts with the national delegations.

On the occasion of the PABSEC activities, the Secretary General met with the leadership of the Parliaments of Albania, Romania and Russia as well as the Heads of the national delegations discussing the prospects for cooperation.

B. PABSEC INTERACTION WITH THE BSEC

The BSEC, since the start of functioning as a full-fledged organisation in 1999, has both enlarged and deepened cooperation in all statutory areas of cooperation. It is interesting to note that the number of Working Groups, Groups of Experts and Workshops as well as

Ministerial Meetings has significantly increased. This brings the Parliamentary Assembly in front of new challenges in consolidating regional cooperation. At the same time, the agenda of the PABSEC Committees follows closely the BSEC Agenda as the Reports and Recommendations adopted indicate.

During the BSEC Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, priority was placed on implementing the BSEC Economic Agenda and in particular progress has been made in the fields of: energy, tourism, transport, economic development, visa facilitation as well as the Project Development Fund. Participating in most BSEC meetings, the PABSEC representatives contributed to the elaboration of the respective documents.

One aspect that deserves special attention is the inclusion of the security dimension in the BSEC agenda through the organisation of 'ad hoc' meetings of security experts from within the region. The Assembly can render its valuable experience in the field, as it has previously dealt with 'soft' security issues and drafted relevant Reports and Recommendations.

The acknowledgement of the invaluable contribution of the Assembly in the relationship between BSEC and EU was explicitly mentioned by the Council of Ministers of Foreign in Baky, which stresses the significant role of the BSEC Related Bodies in the regional cooperation with a view of newly established Project Development Found and strengthening the relations with the European Union within the context of the EU Enlargement towards the Black Sea region.

Pursuant to the art.22, para.2 of the Host Country Agreement between the Organisation of the BSEC and the Government of Republic of Turkey for the International Secretariat of the PABSEC, the said agreement entered into force on 16 July 2003, thus establishing the legal basis for the relationship between the PABSEC International Secretariat and its host country. Bearing in mind the provision of art.4, para.2 of the Agreement, the BSEC PERMIS and the PABSEC International Secretariat drafted a Protocol on the Implementation of the Host Country Agreement between the Organisation of the BSEC and the Government of the Republic of Turkey, which will be signed by the Secretaries General of the BSEC and PABSEC at the 22nd PABSEC General Assembly in Bucharest

The cooperation based on the permanent contacts between the Organisation and the Parliamentary Assembly proves to be fruitful. As a result of a particular attention to the finalisation of the process of approval of the important international legal instrument – the Protocol Concerning the Privileges and Immunities of the PABSEC, at the Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Baky, on 31 October 2003 the document was open for signature by the BSEC Member States and signed after conclusion of the Meeting by the Ministers and the Heads of the Delegations. The Document will be forwarded by the BSEC PERMIS for ratification to the national parliaments of the PABSEC Member-Countries.

At the same time PABSEC continued its efforts directed to support the ratification process of the "Additional Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Organisation of the BSEC".

C. PABSEC PRESIDENCY

As it was declared in June 2003 in Chisinau, during the ceremony of the Rotation of the PABSEC Presidency, the Parliament of Romania gave special importance to this mission, taking into account the principles and objectives of the organisation of BSEC.

In accordance with the Declaration of the Tenth Anniversary of PABSEC signed during the Chisinau PABSEC Parliamentary Summit, the Romanian Presidency granted special attention to the consolidation of PABSEC's relations with the European Parliament. To this purpose, the consultations, on several occasions, at the level of the Presidents of the PABSEC and the European Parliament constituted an important objective of the PABSEC Presidency.

The PABSEC President initiated contacts with the Parliamentary Dimension of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe and fruitfully promoted the relationship with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative. Participation for the first time of the PABSEC President in the Annual Meeting of the PA CEI represented a unique opportunity for consolidating the relations between the two Assemblies. Addressing the PA CEI Plenary Session, PABSEC President proposed to grant, on a reciprocity basis, the observer status and to conclude a Protocol of Cooperation between the two Assemblies. To this end, PA CEI addressed the PABSEC an official application for observer status with the PABSEC.

During his term of office, the PABSEC President, took advantage of all possible opportunities to encourage development of closer bilateral relations of cooperation between the National Parliaments of the PABSEC Member Countries, both at the level of the Presidents, as well as of the specialised committees, as an important modality for enhancing their joint activity in the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly. Within this context, and upon his invitation, Mr. Volodymyr Lytvyn, Chairman of the Supreme Rada of Ukraine, paid an official visit to Romania on 13-14 November 2003.

Stressing the importance attached to the cooperation between the PABSEC and the National Parliaments having observer status with the PABSEC, the PABSEC President had working meetings with the Ambassadors of Egypt, France, Germany, Israel and Slovakia as well as other meetings with the Ambassadors of FYR of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, countries which are in the process of acceding to BSEC. On the other hand, the PABSEC Secretary General had a meeting with the Consul General of Serbia and Montenegro in Istanbul.

During the 21st General Assembly in Chisinau, the Secretary General discussed with the representatives of the delegations having an Observer Status with the PABSEC ways to intensify their participation in the BSEC activities with a view to enhancing cooperation capacity. Following the discussions, the delegation of the Knesset of the State of Israel informed of their intention to organise in 2004 a seminar with the participation of the all PABSEC delegations.

On 15–16 September 2003, the PABSEC President paid a working visit to the PABSEC International Secretariat in Istanbul. During the visit President discussed with the

Secretary General some aspects of the forthcoming Twenty-second General Assembly to be held in Bucharest as well as other developments in the Assembly's activities.

The President opened the work of the Third Meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group on the revision of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. For the first ever time the PABSEC President took part in the Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials at the BSEC PERMIS in Istanbul (15 September 2003). Addressing the participants of the Meeting, he stressed the importance of growing cooperation and further consultation between PABSEC and BSEC and called for an efficient activity of the organization, with concrete actions and positive outcomes for every BSEC country. The President met with the Secretaries General of the BSEC PERMIS and the BSEC Business Council.

During his meeting with Mr. Muammer Guler, Governor of Istanbul, the President referred to the role of the local authorities in deepening regional cooperation and mentioned the contribution of the PABSEC' initiative of the Black Sea Capitals' Association.

Addressing the participants of the Second Black Sea Energy Summit, held on 22-23 September 2003, in Bucharest, the PABSEC President stressed the major interest of the PABSEC for this debate of vital importance for the Black Sea Region, Europe and the whole world, as well as the strategy adopted by the Council of Ministers of the BSEC.

II: ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEES

The activities of the Committees for their autumn meetings were focused on topical economic, legal, social and cultural subjects, most of them being at the core of the BSEC strategy elaborating documents to be submitted to the Twenty-second Plenary Session of the General Assembly in Bucharest.

A. THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, 17-18 SEPTEMBER 2003, TIRANA

- i. **'Shaping a European Economic Space'** was the main item on the Agenda. The Rapporteurs voiced in favor of the formulation of a 'Black Sea' strategy on behalf of the EU or the incorporation of 'Black Sea synergies' in existing EU policies towards the region. As the Recommendation stressed, the European economic space shall be built on a joint commitment of all European states. First, for the EU to provide a clear and credible roadmap for the eventual integration of the transforming countries into European and global structures and to providing financial, technical and political support to domestic reform programs and regional initiatives. Second, for the BSEC countries which are undergoing structural reforms, the commitment is to working towards political and social stability and a determined effort to implement consistent macroeconomic policies and deep structural, institutional, social and environmental reforms. The Report and Recommendation are submitted to the General Assembly.
- ii. **'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours'**. The Committee stressed the importance of the BSEC in an enlarged Europe whose external borders will expand to the Black Sea in the near future.

- iii. **PABSEC Legal Information Network.** The Committee reviewed developments of the LIN project and proposed that the LIN is placed on the agenda of the Sub-Committee of Information Technology. Mr. Dan Chirita, the LIN Coordinator informed the participants on the current stage of LIN and presented the users' guide of LIN database.
- iv. **BSEC Meetings.** The members evaluated the work of the specialized Working Groups of the Organization of the BSEC in the fields of transport and visa facilitation, economic development as well as on the Black Sea Project Development Fund.
- v. **The next meeting of the Committee** will be held on 9-10 March 2004 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The main subject on the Agenda will be 'Sustainable Development of Tourism Industry'. Rapporteurs will be Mr. Sokol Olldashi, Member of the Committee, Albania (Report) and the Chairman of the Committee (Recommendation).

B. THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, ROSTOV DON ON 15 – 16 OCTOBER 2003

- i. **'The Black Sea Region within the Context of the EU Enlargement'**. The members of the Committee concluded that following the enlargement of the European Union, with the prospect of Bulgarian, Romanian and Turkish accession, the future border of the EU will come to the Black Sea Region occupying substantial part of the Black Sea coastline. To this end, cooperation between the EU and the BSEC in various fields shall become an inevitable, but rather complicated task due to existing status of the BSEC countries with the EU, current bilateral commitments, different approaches, policies, legal bases and financial instruments. The parliamentarians stressed that the strong attraction of EU membership provides a powerful incentive for domestic reforms consolidating political and economic stability and sustained economic growth. As the EU enlargement represents a real contribution to world peace, security and prosperity at a time of great international tension, internalisation of the political and economic criteria leading to a political stability and sustained economic growth become beneficial to the whole continent. Being an essential part of the European space, the BSEC region has to seek for its due recognition by the European Union and through the joint efforts of the BSEC, as is mentioned in the Recommendation, the PABSEC and other related bodies have to seek institutionalised relations between the BSEC and the EU and strengthen the contacts between PABSEC and the European Parliament. The Report and Recommendation are submitted to the General Assembly.
- ii. **PABSEC Rules of Procedure** – following a lengthy debate at the Committee whether to discuss in Bucharest the amendments approved by consensus or to postpone them until spring meetings it was decided: 1. *To present to the consideration of the Standing Committee and the General Assembly in Bucharest on 8-10 December 2003 the articles approved by the three working group meetings with the consensus.* 2. *To organise the fourth meeting of the Working Group in spring 2004 in Istanbul for discussing the amendments by the delegations of Turkey and the proposal submitted by the delegation of Romania.*

In conformity with the instruction given by the 3rd Working Group, during the meeting between the PABSEC and BSEC Secretaries General, it was agreed to make an addition to the Article 10A of the PABSEC Rules of Procedure as follows:

‘To ensure better BSEC-PABSEC interaction the Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS is invited to inform the Parliamentary Assembly on the BSEC activities and the projects requiring direct involvement of the legislative bodies of the PABSEC member-countries’.

- iii. **‘Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours’**. The parliamentarians underlined that the Black Sea area will become not only a neighbour, but also a part of the European Union. The enlargement should not lead to the emergence of new dividing lines in Europe, especially as regards the free movement of people and the simplification of visa procedures.
- iv. **The Third Meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group**, held in Istanbul on 15 – 16 September 2003, based upon the experience of the two previous meetings, turned into a dialogue inspired by understanding and determination to make the Rules as effective as possible. As a result of the efforts of the Working Group and the common understanding of its members to facilitate the work the major portion of the Rules of Procedure has been consented and approved by consensus. Only the Articles 4.4, 25.5 and 28.7 remained to be worked out.
- v. **The next Meeting of the Committee** will be held on 7-8 April 2004 in Tirana. Main item on the agenda will be ‘Framework of Cooperation between the PABSEC and the European Parliament’. Mr. Floros Konstantinou, Member of the Committee (Greece) will be the Rapporteur on the Report and Mr. Borislav Ralchev, Chairman of the Committee (Bulgaria) is the Rapporteur on the Recommendation.

C. THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, IN THESSALONIKI ON 1 – 2 OCTOBER 2003

- i. **‘Fight against poverty in the BSEC Member States’**. During the meeting, the participants considered the increasing gap between the rich and the poor within the BSEC member states as an obstacle for the sustainable development of the countries of the region. The Recommendation stressed that the elimination of poverty constitutes the greatest challenge faced by the BSEC member states, since poverty threatens to limit both the progress and the stability in the societies, as well as functioning of democratic institutions, the security of individuals and economic development. The Report and Recommendation are submitted to the General Assembly.
- ii. **Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours’**. The members stressed that BSEC region, having vast natural resources, a skilled workforce and a substantial high technology potential, can have mutually advantageous trade and economic relations with the EU.

- iii. **The next meeting of the Committee** will be held on 24-25 March 2004 in Yerevan. The main item on the Agenda is ‘People with disabilities: improving social, economic and civil rights’. Mr. Adam Tleuzh, Member of the Committee (Russia) is the Rapporteur on the Report and Mr. Shaitdin Aliyev, Chairman of the Committee (Azerbaijan) is the Rapporteur on the Recommendation.

III. PABSEC INITIATIVES

One of the main achievements of the Assembly has been the strengthening of the multidimensional character of Black Sea regional cooperation. The following two important meetings took place during the second half of the year 2003 under the PABSEC auspices.

- i. **The Third Conference of the Public Broadcasters from the BSEC Member States.** Mr. Blagovest Sendov, PABSEC Vice-President, Mr. Borislav Ralchev, Chairman of the Assembly’s Legal and Political Affairs Committee (Bulgaria), participated in the Conference of the Public Broadcasters from the BSEC Member States which was held in Varna on 4 – 6 September. The participants focused on modalities of establishing an institutional framework of cooperation, particularly drafting the ‘Statutory Principles of the Black Sea Public Broadcasting Cooperation’.
- ii. **The Fourth Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals’ Association.** The Fourth Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals’ Association was held in Chisinau on 28 September – 1 October 2003 and considered the issue of ‘The role of Capital cities in family and child protection: economic, social, administrative programmes’. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Nicolae Bondarciuc, PABSEC Vice-President. The participants adopted the Chisinau Declaration of the Fourth General Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals Association, that, in particular, called upon the participating cities to enhance their partnership in addressing the issues related to the social protection of children and families.
- iii. **The PABSEC Legal Information Network – PABSEC LIN**

The PABSEC International Secretariat’s efforts in assisting the functioning of LIN focus on the following steps. First, the Secretariat explore the possibilities of joining the GLIN database in order to foster networking of the LIN project. Second, the National Parliaments have been requested, once more, to appoint the national teams in charge of LIN. Third, the Secretariat has already contacted the European Parliament on the possibilities of linking LIN with the European Parliament database and a meeting will be realised in the near future.

The PABSEC LIN project is included in the work of the Sub-Committee on Information Technology. Consequently and in view of the above-mentioned ongoing developments it would be appropriate to review developments regarding the LIN at the

meeting of the Sub-Committee to be held during the next Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee in Tbilisi, in March 2004. A meeting of the LIN experts could be held in the framework of the Sub-Committee. Further organisational aspects will have to be arranged at a later time.

IV. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PABSEC, BSEC, BSEC RELATED BODIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF THE BLACK SEA FAMILY

A. ORGANISATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The Ninth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held on 31 October 2003 in Baku.

The Parliamentary Assembly was represented by Mr. Asaf Hajiyeu, Head of the PABSEC Azerbaijani Delegation, Mr. Shaitdin Aliyev, Chairman of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee, and Mr. Alexey Kudriavtsev, Secretary General.

In the general statements the Ministers and the Heads of the delegations noted the determination towards further enhancement of the scope of multilateral cooperation with a view of newly established Project Development Fund and strengthening the relations with the European Union within the context of the EU enlargement towards the Black Sea region. **At the same time, all the speakers noted the constructive role of the Parliamentary Assembly in deepening cooperation in the region and the efforts by the Assembly and its President for expanding cooperation with other regional organisations and particularly with the European Parliament.**

Mr. Shaitdin Aliyev on behalf of the Assembly in his speech expressed particular thanks to the BSEC for elaboration of the important legal instruments – already signed and ratified Host Country Agreement and the Protocol Concerning Privileges and Immunities of the PABSEC finalised and opened for signatures. At the same time, he noted the importance of strengthening cooperation between the PABSEC and the European Parliament.

PABSEC-BSEC interaction. The Council of Ministers adopted important Resolutions and Recommendations concerning the BSEC-PABSEC Interaction, which stands as follows:

“ I. RESOLUTIONS:

Protocol concerning the Privileges and Immunities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)

22. The Council welcomed the finalization of the Protocol Concerning the Privileges and Immunities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) and decided to open it for signature by the BSEC Member States.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS:

BSEC-PABSEC INTERACTION

PABSEC recommendations

52. The Council took note of the following PABSEC Recommendations:

- Recommendation 68/2003 on “Cooperation in the Field of Energy”;
- Recommendation 69/2003 on “Cooperation among the PABSEC Member-Countries in Strengthening Good Governance”;
- Recommendation 70/2003 on “Role of Culture in the Development of the BSEC Region”;
- Recommendation 71/2003 on “Black Sea Informational Alliance”.

53. The Council welcomed the cooperation between the PABSEC and the European Parliament, which has been impressively upgraded recently and expressed the hope that it will promote the BSEC-EU cooperation as well. ”

After conclusion of the Meeting, the Ministers and the Heads of the Delegations signed the Protocol concerning the Privileges and Immunities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), which will be duly forwarded by the BSEC PERMIS to the national parliaments for ratification.

ii. **Participation in the meetings.** Constructive cooperation has developed between the PABSEC and the BSEC also through participation in each other's meetings.

- a) Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu, PABSEC President, President of Senate of Romania addressed the participants of the Meeting of the BSEC Committee of the Senior Officials, 15-16 September 2003, Istanbul. Mr. Alexander Furman, PABSEC Deputy Secretary General, represented the PABSEC International Secretariat.
- b) Mr. Asaf Hajiyev, Head of the PABSEC Azerbaijani Delegation, in the Meeting of Ministers of Energy from the BSEC Member-States, 18-19 September 2003, Baky.
- c) Mr. Shaitdin Aliyev, Chairman of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee and Mr. Alexey Kudriavtsev, PABSEC Secretary General, in the Ninth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member-States, 31 October 2003, Baky.
- d) Mr. Alexey Kudriavtsev, PABSEC Secretary General and Mrs. Natia Gaprindashvili, Secretary of the PABSEC Legal and Political Affairs Committee, in the Meeting of the BSEC Senior Officials, 29-30 October 2003, Baky.
- e) Staff of the International Secretariat in the BSEC Working Groups and other meetings:
 - Mr. Victor Dediu, PABSEC Researcher-Archivist, in the BSEC Working Group Meeting on Cooperation in Combating Crime, 9-10 June 2003, Istanbul.

- Mr. Victor Dediu, PABSEC Researcher-Archivist, in the BSEC Working Group Meeting on Visa Facilitation for Lorry Drivers, 12-13 June 2003, Istanbul.
- Ms. Panagiota Manoli, Secretary of the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee, in the BSEC Working Group Meeting on Trade and Economic Development, 16-17 June 2003, Istanbul
- Ms. Panagiota Manoli, Secretary of the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee, in the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance, 27-28 August 2003, Istanbul
- Mr. Alexander Furman, PABSEC Deputy Secretary General, in the Meeting of the BSEC Committee of the Senior Officials, 15-16 September 2003, Istanbul.
- Mr. Victor Dediu, PABSEC Researcher-Archivist, in the BSEC Working Group Meeting on Transport, 1-2 October 2003, Baky.
- Mr. Alexander Furman, Deputy Secretary General participated in the BSEC Coordination Meeting on 8 October 2003, Istanbul

On the other hand, the representative of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat participated in the PABSEC Meetings:

- Ambassador Ion Bisteanu, Deputy Secretary General of the PERMIS, in the Twenty-first Meeting of the Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee, on 17-18 September 2003, in Tirana

B. BSEC RELATED BODIES AND AFFILIATED CENTRES

PABSEC continues to intensify its cooperation with the BSEC Related Bodies. The need for such cooperation is recurrently stressed in the PABSEC Recommendations.

i. BSEC Business Council

- During his working visit in Istanbul, the PABSEC President, paid a visit to the BSEC Business Council and held discussions with the Secretary General, Mr. Costas Masmanidis on the BSEC activities and issue of visa facilitation, particularly for Lorry Drivers.

ii. Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB)

- Following the proposal by the Mr. Adam Tleuzh, Member of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee (Russia), the International Secretariat has informed on the project Mr. Mustafa Gurtin, the President of the BSTDB.

iii. International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)

- The PABSEC International Secretariat provided assistance concerning the ICBSS project - the Conference “The New European Architecture in the 21st Century: Promoting Regional Cooperation in the Wider Black Sea Area: the BSEC Case”, held on 3-7 September 2003, Milos (Greece). The Conference was attended by Mr. Dan Nicolae Rahau, Chairman of the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee (Romania), Mrs. Marina Podolean, Member of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee (Moldova) and Mr. Necdet Budak, Member of the PABSEC Legal and Political Affairs Committee (Turkey). The PABSEC International Secretariat was represented by Mr. Alexander Furman, PABSEC Deputy Secretary General.

The Black Sea Newsletter. The Black Sea Newsletter is the first joint publication of the BSEC family and was produced by the BSTDB. The PABSEC closely cooperated with the BSEC Related Bodies and particularly with the BSTDB staff in the preparation of this Newsletter.

C. OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

V. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Strengthening cooperation with international, regional and sub-regional organisations further paves the way towards sharing experience, better use of international resources and introducing new dimensions of cooperation. For this reason, PABSEC increasingly views its objectives from an international perspective and being an integral part of Europe further strengthens its ties with the European parliamentary organisations.

Members of the Assembly continued to take active part in the meetings of the European Parliamentary Assemblies as well as in other international gatherings. The International Secretariat prepared necessary documentation and made appropriate arrangements.

i. European Parliament

At the request of representatives of the European Parliament during the visit of the PABSEC delegation to Brussels on 20 May 2003, the Communication from the European Commission to the European Council and the European Parliament “Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours” (COM (2003) 104 final, 11 March 2003) was discussed at the PABSEC Committee Meetings in autumn 2003. After the final discussion at the 22nd Plenary Session of the General Assembly in Bucharest on 8-10 December 2003, the Conclusions of the Debates will be forwarded to the European Parliament.

On 1 September 2003, PABSEC President Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu addressed a letter to Mr. Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament, informing him of the Assembly's forthcoming debates on the Communication and stressing the commitment of the PABSEC to strengthen its relations with the European Parliament through a structured and programmed cooperation, as a contribution to European integration process.

ii. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

- Mr. Salih Kapusuz, PABSEC Vice-President, in the 12th OSCE PA Annual Session, 5-9 July 2003, Rotterdam.

iii. Inter-parliamentary Union

- Mr. Nicolae Bondarciuc, PABSEC Vice-President, in the 109th Assembly of the Interparliamentary Union, 29 September - 3 October 2003, Geneva.

iv. Council of Europe

- Mrs. Natia Gaprindashvili, Secretary of the PABSEC Legal and Political Affairs Committee, in the Conference of the Council of Europe on 'Frozen Conflicts in Europe - the Approach of Democratic Security: the Case of Transnistria', 11-12 September 2003, Chisinau.
- Mr. Dorel Constantine Onaca, Head of the PABSEC Romanian Delegation, in the 13th Session of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, 15-17 September 2003, Ljubljana.

v. CEI and its Parliamentary Dimension

- Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu, PABSEC President, President of the Senate of Romania, in the Annual Meeting of the CEI Parliamentary Assembly, 2-4 October 2003, Warsaw.
- Mrs. Makhbule Ceco, Head of the PABSEC Albanian delegation, in CEI Economic Forum, 19-21 November 2003, Warsaw.

vi. IPACIS

- Mr. Nicolae Bondarciuc, PABSEC Vice-President, and Mr. Dan Nicolae Rahau, Chairman of the PABSEC Committee on Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs, in the 21st Plenary Session of the IPACIS, in the Saint-Petersburg International Parliamentary Conference on Pan-European Cooperation, 16-20 June 2003, Saint-Petersburg.
- Mr. Alexey Kudriavtsev, PABSEC Secretary General in the 22nd Plenary Session of the IPA CIS, 15 November 2003, Saint-Petersburg.

vii. Other Meetings

- Mr. Nicolae Bondarciuc, PABSEC Vice-President, and Mr. Dan Nicolae Rahau, Chairman of the PABSEC Committee on Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs, in the 7th Saint-Petersburg International Economic Forum, 16-20 June 2003, Saint-Petersburg
- Mr. Oleg Salmin, PABSEC Treasurer, Head of the PABSEC Ukrainian Delegation, in the 12th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), 8-9 September 2003, Oulu (Finland)
- Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu, PABSEC President, President of the Senate of Romania, in the Second Black Sea Energy Summit, 22-23 September 2003, Bucharest.
- Mr. Mustafa Bas, Head of the PABSEC Turkish Delegation, Mrs. Makbule Ceco, Head of the PABSEC Albanian Delegation, Mr. Ali Alirzayev, Member of the PABSEC Azerbaijani Delegation and Mr. Dan Nicolae Rahau, Member of the PABSEC Romanian Delegation in the International Black Sea Day, organized by the Union of Black Sea Region NGO's with the assistance provided by the PABSEC International Secretariat, 30-31 October 2003, Istanbul.
- Mr. Salih Kapusuz, PABSEC Vice-President and Mr. Volodymyr Anischuk, Vice-Chairman of PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee, in the International Conference on 'Illegal Migration as a Threat to International Stability and Security of States', 27-28 November 2003, Minsk.

VI. Elections Monitoring

- Mr. Salih Kapusuz, PABSEC Vice-President took part in monitoring the presidential elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan, 15 October 2003, Baku.
- Mr. Mekhak Mkhitarian, Member of the PABSEC Armenian Delegation, in monitoring the parliamentary elections in Georgia, 2 November 2003, Tbilisi.

VII. Working Visits

- Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu, PABSEC President, President of the Senate of Romania, on 15-16 September 2003, PABSEC Headquarters, Istanbul.

VIII. FINANCIAL MATTERS

A. THE PABSEC BUDGET

The International Secretariat has been executing the budget as approved by the General Assembly. The Financial Regulations have been observed in full scope. The principle of economic spending of the budget resources was observed.

In its Twenty-First Meeting held in Chisinau, on 10 June 2003 the Standing Committee requested the National Delegations to fulfil their financial obligations. In conformity with article 23.2 of the Rules of Procedure says: "*The Participating States shall make their due contributions to the bank account of the Assembly in US dollars during the first two months of the year*".

Some countries have not met their obligations as stipulated in the article. For the period of 1997-2003 the total figure of debts is 499.928 US \$. It is of outmost importance to comply with the financial regulations in order to secure the normal functioning of the PABSEC and the International Secretariat.

Since the PABSEC Reserve Fund has decreased substantially over the past years, it is only sufficient to finance the activities of the Assembly for several months. In case of delay in the transfer of contributions in the first months of 2004, there is real danger, for the first time in the history of the Organisation, of the shortage of financial resources. This may lead to the necessity to consider some unprecedented measures, such as reduction in the PABSEC presence at international events or some other steps which would not be conducive to the proper functioning of the Assembly.

IX. PUBLICATIONS AND WEB-SITE

The International Secretariat has published the PABSEC Biannual Bulletin 20/2003.

The PABSEC Web site has been updated and improved with the assistance of professional designer company fully reflecting the latest developments in the Assembly. Secretariat is preparing to open the Russian-language version of the Website by the end of the year. Next year work will continue in order to provide information on the Website in all the PABSEC official languages.
