

## **YALTA SUMMIT DECLARATION**

### **Yalta, 5 June 1998**

1. We, the Heads of State or Government of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), have met in Yalta on 5 June 1998 to assess the progress of the BSEC since its inception by the Istanbul Declaration of 25 June 1992 and to give guidance for its future course and development. We all share the conviction that the considerable progress achieved in our multilateral economic cooperation contributes to enhancing peace, stability and security to the benefit of our peoples, and that time has come to consolidate the international legal personality of the BSEC. To that end we signed the Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, an act which transforms the existing intergovernmental mechanism into a fully-fledged regional economic organization
2. We share the common view that in the 21st century the role of the Black Sea region, both in world politics and in the global economy, will grow substantially, due to its strategic location and vast economic potential. The BSEC should adapt itself to a world of overall transition and rapid change, embracing new areas of cooperation while deepening the cooperation in the existing ones. This requires a new BSEC economic agenda for the future, in order to meet the challenges of the era of globalization and information society, to stimulate economic growth and innovation, to create employment and build on the synergy that exists between our countries.
3. We reaffirm our commitment to trade liberalization and harmonization of foreign trade regimes, with due regard to the WTO rules and practices. We attach particular importance to the implementation of the existing agreements between the BSEC Participating States and the EU, as well as accession of all Black Sea States to the WTO, as important first steps in that direction and appeal to the EU and WTO to give the BSEC the necessary support to achieve these goals. We also reconfirm our political will to gradually establish a BSEC Free Trade Area as a long-term objective and to elaborate a Plan of Action of a staged process to that end.
4. We are convinced that the private sector should be the driving force for the consolidation of the BSEC process, so that the aim to complement cooperation between governments by cooperation among the business communities be achieved. We support the involvement of the private sector in the development and implementation of the concrete projects of interest to the BSEC Participating States.
5. We express our deep satisfaction with the establishment, early this year, of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank in Thessaloniki, which will be the main financial pillar of the BSEC and expect it to commence its operations soon. It will give a new quality to the BSEC, whose activities are now evolving from the stage of project development into the stage of project implementation. We appeal to the international banking and financial institutions to strongly support the BSTDB and consider ways and means to participate in its activities.
6. We consider project implementation to be of crucial importance for the consolidation and further development of the BSEC process, especially the implementation of such projects, which create new shared values and generate interaction among the interested states. In this connection, we assess positively the idea of selecting priority areas of cooperation and designating country

coordinators on those areas. This new set-up will increase the efficacy of project execution by a strengthened commitment of the Participating States to take the lead in their implementation.

7. The BSEC will further develop its already established cooperation with the European Commission, OSCE, WTO, UN/ECE, UNIDO and other international organizations on the basis of complementarity, comparative advantage and subsidiarity. It should further elaborate the modalities for cooperation with the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Royaumont Process of Stability and Good-Neighborliness in South-Eastern Europe, the Process on Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, the South-East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and explore the possibility to establish cooperation with other interested regional initiatives. We expect that the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation be accorded an Observer status in the UN General Assembly.

8. In this cooperation, the BSEC-EU relationship is of a particular importance. We welcome the Conclusions of the EU Council of Ministers of last December as a first step in the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy of the EU towards the BSEC and its Participating States. We fully share the view that the BSEC-EU cooperation in the fields of transport, energy, telecommunication networks, trade, ecology, sustainable development, justice and home affairs has a promising future. The ultimate aim is to progressively shape the EURO-BSEC economic area.

9. The BSEC has gradually become an attractive partner for cooperation, both for states from our region and beyond. We commend Austria, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic and Tunisia for their constructive participation in the BSEC events as Observers. At the same time we express our gratitude to those states who have applied for membership or observer status and appreciate their desire to become a part of the BSEC family. We agree to discuss the issue of enlargement after the Charter of the Organization of the BSEC enters into force. We will be in a position to address the issue of granting observer or other appropriate status to countries and a number of NGOs in due course.

10. It is our belief that now the BSEC serves more than one purpose. It is an indispensable complementary means to accelerate economic and social progress and hence to consolidate the democratic institutions of all our countries. It is also a preparatory ground for integration into the united Europe of the 21st century. It presents a historic opportunity to build up, step-by-step, our common future together through mutual cooperation at all levels- state to state, region to region, people to people- so that the Black Sea region becomes one of the economic areas of attraction for investment, of prosperity and stability in the next century.

11. We call upon the National Parliaments to ratify, accept or approve the Charter of the Organization as soon as possible, being convinced that the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC will also assist in this respect. We highly appreciate the valuable contribution of the PABSEC to the development of the BSEC process, for the prosperity of all and each of the countries here represented.

12. We express our gratitude to the Government and the people of Ukraine for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of the Summit