



Annex III to BS/CM/R(2007)1

**STATEMENT
OF THE MINISTERS FOR CULTURE OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE
ORGANISATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)**

Sounion, 4 July 2007

We, the Ministers for Culture of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) –the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine–, at the meeting at Sounion on 4 July 2007, during the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office of the Republic of Turkey (May-October 2007) and the term of the Hellenic Republic as the first Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Culture (November 2006-October 2008),

Acting on the basis of the resolution of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Moscow, 15th Meeting, 1 November 2006), which approved the establishment of the BSEC Working Group on Culture and its Terms of Reference;

Confident that culture, cultural heritage and cultural industries are major assets for sustainable social and economic development, as well as for meeting the challenges that our societies are facing in a changing world;

Re-asserting our commitment to the basic documents of the United Nations, in particular the UN General Assembly Resolutions on the global agenda for dialogue among civilizations and the promotion of cultural understanding and co-operation with UNESCO and the Council of Europe that are relevant to international co-operation in the field of culture;

Convinced that the variety of cultural identities and values represents a key resource for enhancing political dialogue, developing economic co-operation and ensuring stability in the wider Black Sea area in accordance with the BSEC Charter and other relevant policy documents;

1. Declare our determination to work together in the framework of the Organization of the BSEC in order to enhance mutual knowledge and appreciation of our respective cultural assets as a significant contributing factor to comprehensive interstate cooperation in the wider Black Sea area and to that end:

- a) Attach particular importance to the current efforts for enhanced cooperation between BSEC and the European Union and to establishing a working relationship with a view to achieving an operational framework for co-operation also in the field of cultural affairs, as mentioned in the 15th Anniversary Summit Declaration (25 June 2007, Istanbul);
- b) Undertake to further strengthen the existing co-operation within the BSEC in the field of culture and to work together in a constructive spirit with international organizations concerned, especially the Council of Europe and UNESCO, as well as with other regional and international bodies and non-governmental networks for cultural co-operation.
- c) Emphasize the need to explore in a systematic way the potential of the region and to work towards shaping a better understanding of the Black Sea distinct regional cultural identity by developing joint strategies and programs.
- d) Enhance cooperation between the BSEC Working Group on Culture and the BSEC Related Bodies, in particular the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), with a view to implementing the relevant recommendations.

2. Reiterate our determination to promote an open model of cultural co-operation, based on:

- a) Respect for and promotion of the rich cultural diversity of our countries;
- b) Enhancement of intercultural dialogue as a means to increase mutual understanding and respect for each other;
- c) Identifying and maximizing the cultural potential and the available resources, including human capital, of the BSEC Member States;
- d) Addressing the challenge to link culture and economy and work with the creative industries and the business community towards developing a relationship between cultural aims and economic interests;
- e) Improvement, through culture, of the quality of life of the people in the region.

3. Agree to proceed with the establishment of an operational framework for the implementation of the priorities set in the agreed Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Culture, through intergovernmental co-operation, engagement of the relevant actors of the BSEC institutional family, in particular the PABSEC and the International Center for Black Sea Studies, and interaction with the civil society, focusing on the following lines of action:

- a) Fostering balanced and sustainable development by taking into account the significance of cultural heritage and its inherent values;
- b) Undertaking cooperative action, at regional level, for the listing, protection and valorization of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible;
- c) Strengthening cooperation in the field of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of cultural property;
- d) Building networks of cooperation and developing joint projects in the field of contemporary culture, such as literature, theatre, dance, music and visual arts;
- e) Creating synergies in the field of cultural tourism with related industries;

- f) Reviving ancient routes and creatively developing new ones as vehicles for intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, good neighborhood relations and social cohesion;
- g) Identifying necessary sources for financing joint projects through national and international public and private funds.

4. Welcome the elaboration of the Draft Action Plan covering the term in office of the Hellenic Republic as Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Culture (November 2006-October 2008), conceived to attain practical results in the field of cultural co-operation, and submit for endorsement to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States. We deem it necessary that the Draft Action Plan be finalized by the end of September 2007, using the procedural possibilities available in the BSEC normative framework, including silence procedure.

5. Express our gratitude to the Hellenic Republic, in particular to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, for the warm hospitality extended to the participants and the substantial contribution to the success of the First Meeting of the Ministers for Culture of the BSEC Member States.

Sounion, 4 July 2007