

MOSCOW DECLARATION OF THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT OF THE PARTICIPATING STATES OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The Heads of State or Government of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) - Republic of Albania, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine,

- expressing the desire of their countries and peoples for constructive and fruitful cooperation in various fields of human activity with the aim of making the Black Sea region a zone of peace, stability and economic prosperity,

- confirming their adherence to the principles and goals of the Istanbul Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement of 25 June 1992, the Bucharest Statement of 30 June 1995, as well as the provisions of the international agreements in force, principles and norms of international law,

- sharing the common vision of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation as an integral part of the European architecture based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, prosperity through economic liberty, social justice and equal security which is open for interaction with other countries, regional initiatives and international organizations and financial institutions,

- taking into account the growing role of regional initiatives in developing positive trends of contemporary international life,

declare their determination to realize concerted actions and to undertake additional measures for the benefit of practical progress towards achieving the BSEC goals, as well as to strengthen confidence, stability and prosperity in the region.

1. Cooperation and partnership, stability and economic prosperity

The Heads of State or Government confirm their support of efforts undertaken so far by their Governments, Parliaments, Ministries and institutions, regions and cities, business and scientific communities for the benefit of developing cooperation and partnership, democracy, good-neighbourly relations, expansion of economic cooperation, cultural and scientific ties among the BSEC countries.

They will promote the development of the Black Sea region as an area where the principles of free international cooperation and partnership, democracy and market economy prevail. They will work to ensure that the Black Sea region find an appropriate place in a new Europe of cooperation and integration.

They will strive for utilizing the rich potential and favorable development prospects of the Black Sea region to improve their ties with adjacent and neighbourly regions.

They express their intention to develop further cooperation in fields of common interest with such institutions as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Economic Cooperation Organization and others, such regional initiatives as the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Central European Initiative and Euro-Mediterranean Initiative.

They support the efforts to provide peace and stability in Europe. In this regard, they consider the OSCE forthcoming Lisbon Summit (2-3 December 1996) as an event of major importance.

Recognizing the inherent ties between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean they confirm the need to develop efficient cooperation between the countries of both regions and to establish appropriate mechanisms of interaction.

While appreciating the European Union contribution to the promotion of a number of the BSEC projects, the Participants appeal to the EU to work out a common platform for developing closer contacts and mutual cooperation.

They particularly note the positive steps taken towards cooperation in the Balkans in the post-conflict period. They welcome the results of the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the South-East European countries in Sofia and express their readiness to cooperate constructively, relying also on the BSEC structures, in the implementation of economic projects in the Balkans.

They also support peaceful initiatives concerning the Trans-Caucasian region and stress the necessity of rehabilitation of economic links in the Caucasus, taking into consideration the economic aspects of the Kislovodsk Summit Declaration signed on 3 June 1996.

They express their intention to strengthen confidence, stability and economic prosperity in the region by promoting cooperation in coping with consequences of natural disasters and technogenic accidents and ensuring ecological and nuclear security, as well as the safety of maritime and other transport.

They emphasize that the most important goal of cooperation and partnership in the Black Sea region is to improve, on a continuous basis, the living standards and the working conditions based on sustainable development, rational management of natural resources and protection of the environment.

2. Strengthening of the institutional and legal framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

The Heads of State or Government agree that one of the priorities at present is the strengthening of the institutional and legal basis of the BSEC which will contribute to enhancing effectiveness of the Black Sea economic cooperation and ensuring better interaction in all its dimensions including intergovernmental, interparliamentary, business, finance, academic and public ones. For this purpose they consider it appropriate that the process of transformation of the BSEC into a regional economic organization be continued in accordance with the mandate given by the Eighth MMFA.

They note that the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly, the BSTDB, the Business Council as well as the Centers affiliated to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation are of major importance for its further development and consider that their active, coordinated and efficient functioning will enhance the BSEC.

They welcome the ratification of the Agreement Establishing the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank by eight Member-States namely Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Turkey. At the same time they invite those Member-States that have not yet accomplished their obligations, to speed up the relevant processes in order to enable the Bank to start the relevant operations at the beginning of 1997.

They make an appeal to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank to consider the possibility of developing co-financing programs and to eventually participate as members in the BSTDB. They appeal as well to the European Union to adopt relevant decisions enabling the European Investment Bank to extend its operations to cover all the BSEC countries.

They are convinced that cooperation of their countries in the Black Sea region will be more effective, solid and developing in close interaction among national Parliaments. In this framework they emphasize the role and place of the Parliamentary Assembly as the parliamentary dimension of the BSEC providing consistent support to the Black Sea cooperation process. To this end the BSEC-PABSEC interaction shall be based on an appropriate mechanism.

The Heads of State or Government express their appreciation on the results of the Meeting of the Ministers of Internal Affairs in Yerevan in October 1996 that launched interaction of law-enforcement bodies of the Participating States in combating organized crime, illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons, radioactive materials, illegal migration, and all acts of terrorism, thus contributing to the creation of favorable conditions for promoting trade and economic cooperation in the Black Sea region.

Recognizing the Meetings of Foreign Ministers as a regular decision making organ of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, they also agree that the ministers/deputy ministers responsible for specific economic sectors, i.e. transport,

communications, energy, trade and industry, environment, tourism will meet on a regular basis to discuss the issues of cooperation and to take concrete decisions within their competence.

They believe that the experience of first meetings at these levels will encourage the holding of other meetings of the BSEC ministers/deputy ministers for considering appropriate projects and programs of multilateral cooperation.

3. Regional stability

The Heads of State or Government view the economic cooperation and partnership as the cornerstone of lasting regional stability and as a practical mechanism of reducing the political risks and preventing destabilization. They agree upon the necessity of joint efforts to ensure stability in the region and they attach special importance to the adoption of urgent concrete measures for combating organized crime, violence, terrorism, illicit drugs, weapons and radioactive materials trafficking, and illegal migration, etc.

They agree to instruct the Ministers of Foreign Affairs together with other appropriate authorities to elaborate programs to strengthen cooperation in these fields as well as to develop further interaction between the law-enforcing, border, customs and immigration authorities, search and rescue services and units for actions in emergency situations to eliminate the consequences of natural and technogenic disasters.

4. Programs of action

The Heads of State or Government also agree on the desirability of developing and adopting national programs to promote regional cooperation within the BSEC and of taking steps at the national level for more active involvement of ministries and institutions, regions and cities, business support funds and other similar structures in this cooperation, which would not contradict the legislations of the Participating States.

They express their support to the projects of cooperation and in particular the projects of:

- laying regional and transregional fiber optical communication lines;
- development of a project for the interconnection of the BSEC countries' power systems, which would be open for power networks of neighboring countries and regions;
- implementation of major transregional projects for energy transportation;

- development in the BSEC region of a transport infrastructure integrated into the European networks.

They welcome the adoption at the Eighth Meeting of BSEC Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Statement on Basic Principles of Investment Collaboration in the BSEC Region and consider it an important contribution to the future development of a reliable basis for the promotion and protection of investments.

They believe that in order to give impetus to the trade cooperation on the regional level the competent BSEC bodies together with the appropriate Ministries of the Participating States, taking into account the obligations of several BSEC States deriving from their participation in international organizations, should accelerate introducing the regime of mutual trade preferences between the BSEC States and examine in 1997 the possibilities for creation in the BSEC region of a free-trade area.

They call upon private sector representatives and other business communities of the BSEC Participating States and extraregional states to use more efficiently their potential in the interest of cooperation and ensuring economic growth, that have become possible as a result of the ongoing political reforms and structural transformations in the Black Sea region.

In this context, they consider the Business Forum that took place in Bucharest as a useful initiative and they express the view that it would be desirable to hold similar gatherings of the representatives of business communities in the future and encourage other forms of cooperation of this kind.

They also agree that their economic organization will be enhanced by various measures in the sphere of human contacts.

5. Future steps

The Participants expressed their satisfaction with the results of the Moscow Meeting, they agreed to support the realization of the BSEC objectives and confirmed their readiness to meet when necessary in the future to this end.

The Heads of State or Government expressed their gratitude to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation for the kind hospitality extended to Them during the Moscow Meeting.

