OPENING CEREMONY

The Eighth Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was held in the "Metechi Palace" hotel, in Tbilisi, on 10-12 December 1996, upon the invitation of the Parliament of Georgia.

The opening Ceremony was addressed by H.E. Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia, Mr. Zurab Zhvania, PABSEC President, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia and Mr. Namuk Kemal Zeybek, Minister of State, on behalf of the BSEC Chairman-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

PARTICIPATION

The General Assembly was attended by:

1. **Speakers/Presidents** of the Parliaments of Armenia, Georgia, Greece and the Russian Federation (State Duma).

   **Deputy Speakers** of the Parliaments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation (State Duma) and Turkey.

2. **National delegations** of all Member Countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.

3. **Black Sea Economic Cooperation**: Mr. Namuk Kemal Zeybek, Minister of State, who represented the BSEC Chairman-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Deputy Director of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and the designated President of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank.

4. **Observers**: The Chairman of the Committee on Transport of the People’s Assembly of Egypt, the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Deputy Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

5. **Officials guests**: The Speaker of the National Assembly of Bulgaria.

6. **PABSEC International Secretariat**.
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Recommendations adopted by the General Assembly:
   
   (a) Recommendation 16/1996 on Development of Cooperation in the Field of Trade and Business among the BSEC Member Countries (Doc. GA 2385/96)

   (b) Recommendation 17/1996 on the Basic Principles of the Black Sea Convention on Combating Organised Crime and Terrorism (Doc. GA 2412/96)

   (c) Recommendation 18/1996 on the Guidelines for the Programme of the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Black Sea Region (Doc. GA 2393/96)

2. Reports approved by the General Assembly:

   (a) Report on Development of Cooperation in the Field of Trade and Business among the BSEC Member Countries (Doc. EC 2384/96)

   (b) Report on the Basic Principles of the Black Sea Convention on Combating Organised Crime and Terrorism (Doc. LC 2412/96)

   (c) Report on the Guidelines for the Programme of the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Black Sea Region (Doc. CC 2392/96)

   (d) Progress Report on the Activities of the Bureau and the Standing Committee between 13 June-10 December 1996 (Doc. BA 2652/96)

3. Decisions adopted by the General Assembly:

   (a) Decision 5/1996 on the Follow-up of the First Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Environmental Protection of the Black Sea (Doc. GA 2481/96)

   (b) Decision on Auditing the 1996 PABSEC Budget

   (c) Approved total expenditures in the revised 1997 Budget of the Assembly at 931,000 US $ and decided that the final budget will be approved by the Ninth General Assembly in Athens in June 1997.

4. General debate

   Speakers/Presidents of the Parliaments of the BSEC Participating States and Heads of national delegations took part in the debate.
5. Moscow Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the BSEC Participating States

During the debates on this issue, the participants welcomed the results of the Moscow Meeting of the Heads of State or Government, assessing that the Moscow Declaration represented a solid basis for further actions of multilateral cooperation within the BSEC process, in accordance with the priorities of the BSEC Participating States and joint objectives of their interaction.

Welcoming the participation by Mr. Olexander Tkachenko, PABSEC Vice-President in the Moscow Meeting, the Assembly stressed the significance of the fact that relevant provisions on the PABSEC-BSEC relations were included in the Declaration adopted by the Heads of State or Government.

In this framework the Assembly particularly underlined the importance of the future BSEC legal status where the cooperation mechanism between the PABSEC and BSEC should be clearly defined with a view to uniting the efforts of the Parliaments and Governments in implementing the Black Sea Cooperation goals.

6. Ratification of the Agreement establishing the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank

Having considered the Background paper prepared by the International Secretariat, the Assembly noted with satisfaction that eight BSEC Participating States - Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation and Turkey - had ratified the Agreement Establishing the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank which represents an aggregate of seventy one percent of the initial authorized capital of the Bank.

The Assembly called upon those countries which have not yet completed the ratification process to speed up the necessary procedure.

7. Observers

The Assembly decided to grant the observer status to the KNESSET of the State of Israel.

8. Rotation of the Presidency

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, starting with 12 December 1996, Mr. Apostolos Kaklamanis, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Hellenic Republic became the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation for a six-month term of office until the end of the Ninth General Assembly to be held in Athens in June 1997.
9. **Elections**

*Vice-President*: Mr. Vakhtang Rcheulishvili, Member of the Georgian PABSEC delegation was elected Vice-President of the Assembly for a two-year term of office (December 1996 - December 1998).

10. **New Credentials**

The Assembly ratified the credentials of the new members.

11. **The 1997 Spring Plenary Session of the General Assembly**

The Assembly decided that the 1997 Spring Plenary Session of the General Assembly will be held on 17-19 June 1997, in Athens.

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

1. **The Eighth Meeting of the Standing Committee discussed the following matters:**

   (a) Meeting between the representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Assembly of the Western European Union

   The Standing Committee took note of the background paper prepared by the International Secretariat and voiced in favor of considering ways and means for possible cooperation in the future between the two Assemblies on issues of common interest.

   (b) Meeting of the Ministers of Internal Affairs of the BSEC Participating States

   The Standing Committee welcomed the results of the meeting held on 16-17 October 1996 in Yerevan. It recognized the importance of the Joint Statement on developing cooperation in the field of combating organised crime, terrorism, illicit trafficking of weapons, drugs, radioactive materials and illegal immigration in the region as a step forward in expanding the cooperation among the Member Countries in combating the above mentioned forms of criminality.

   Given the fact that the PABSEC passed two Recommendations on this important matter in 1996, the Assembly advocated the need for a closer cooperation between the Parliaments and Governments with a view to elaborating a Black Sea Convention on Combating Organised Crime and Terrorism.

   (c) Signing of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Exchange of Legal Information among the Parliaments of the PABSEC Member Countries
The Agreement was signed by the Secretaries General of the PABSEC Parliaments or their representatives in the presence of the members of the Standing Committee on 12 December 1996. It became the first agreement within the PABSEC framework aiming to develop cooperation among parliamentary services of the Member Countries.

(d) Contributions to the 1996 Budget

The Standing Committee requested the Member Countries which had not paid their contributions for 1996 to do it at the earliest.

2. **The Standing Committee:**

(a) Added a new Article IV. 9 on the job description of the Archivist and revised Article VIII. 3.a on the collective sickness insurance of the Turkish staff of the Staff Regulations of the International Secretariat.

(b) Since the present headquarters of the PABSEC in Dolmabahce Palace had to be vacated and the need arose for new premises, the Standing Committee instructed the International Secretariat to carefully study, together with the PABSEC Treasurer, this matter, including the possibility of purchasing a building for the PABSEC International Secretariat, and then to report to the Bureau of the Assembly within two months’ period.

(c) Adopted the 1997 PABSEC Calendar

The Ninth Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly will be held on 17-19 June 1997, in Athens.


**BUREAU**

1. Mr. Lucas Katsikaris was appointed Secretary of the Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee on the basis of the results of the competition for this vacant position, for a term of office of three years starting with 1 January 1997.

2. Approved the enlargement of the PABSEC International Secretariat’s staff by one post, namely the Archivist.

3. The Bureau mandated the PABSEC President to take appropriate decisions on the participation by the PABSEC representatives in international gatherings scheduled between 1 January - 1 July 1997.