

**THE TWENTIETH PLENARY SESSION OF THE PABSEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RECOMMENDATION 66/2002* on**

‘INFORMATION SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES’

1. **The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation** draws attention to the growing importance of the information society which is being created by the rapidly developing information and communication technologies.
2. Given the complex relationships between the expanding new technologies and the emerging information society, it is important to ensure improvement in the quality of the information and communication technologies, while pursuing the aim of increased well-being of citizens.
3. There is an urge to support research and development in non-technical disciplines concerning the digital world and the information society such as new economics resulting from the changed nature of work, new paradigms of educational, ethical, sociological and philosophical issues resulting from the changing style of human life.
4. At a global level, it has become a priority to meet the challenge of better integration of all countries into the global information society with a view to develop a more equitable information society which offers fair chances of inclusion to all countries. The establishment of a proper balance between the various components of the information world is the main challenge to be met for the democratic development of our societies.
5. Serious reductions in government funding for technological research have significantly downgraded technological development in the countries of the Black Sea. The main problems are that they have been unable to establish an effective co-ordination between academy and university – run science and technology and applied science or to generate links between industry and research. There are signals of positive developments in the countries that are lagging behind and the region could nourish important centres of information technology.

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6. The Assembly is aware of the importance of technological development for the regional integration of the BSEC countries as well as their integration into the community of economically advanced European countries.

I. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore recommends the National Parliaments and the Governments of the BSEC Member States:

i. *to analyse* the basic trends in technology activities at national level and assess the efficiency of the measures taken over the last years with a view to developing research efforts and elaborating explicit policies for stimulating technological innovations;

ii. *to encourage* policies and undertake measures for the dissemination of electronic data processing, the application of information technologies and telecommunications in the economy and society, the development of small technology based firms, the dissemination of environment-friendly technologies, the acceleration and the commercialisation of technological innovations and the development of technological infrastructure;

iii. *to support* the development and the deployment of broad-band communication channels (including wire-less communication) and to establish a regulatory framework based on the full liberalization of telecommunications, as a prerequisite for creating the communication infrastructure necessary for the development of the Information Society in the region;

iv. *to pass* laws and make intensive studies on reforming law enforcement agencies, in order to effectively manage and control the inevitable flood of information technology crimes, while, at the same time, encouraging the use of the new information and communication technologies, and promote ethics and codes of good conduct;

v. *to coordinate* their policies aimed at the protection of society against cyber-crime, inter alia, by adopting appropriate legislation, and fostering international co-operation, while upholding the imperatives of individual freedom and without compromising the interests of the public at large;

vi. *to revise* education systems and provide training so that learning institutions are more responsive to the needs of the emerging digital world and to ensure that all, particularly the youth have the possibility to be digitally literate and to that goal to support pilot projects, exchange of best practice and co-ordination of research efforts;

vii. *to ensure* the interoperability of digital libraries, in order to maintain diversity and unconstrained access to the cultural and scientific heritage of nations across borders, and across linguistic or cultural barriers;

viii. *to facilitate* technological developments favourable to the expansion of electronic commerce and to improve continuously the legal and organisational framework of electronic business and define procedures for managing and operating them, thus fostering the creation of new opportunities for economic growth and employment;

ix. *to encourage* information and communication technologies (ICT) which are essential for the competitiveness of industries, commerce and services particularly to place emphasis on the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which account for a large part of the workforce and for which innovation plays a crucial role;

x. *to study* the use of new information and communication technologies as part of the promotion of electronic democracy through improved online interaction between citizens and the government as well as through easy access to essential public data;

xi. *to undertake* measures within the framework of the BSEC Economic Agenda with a view to implementing the immediate priorities of:

- a. establishment of a regulatory framework defining the development of the information society, as well as the ethics and codes of use of the technology and the means to protect them;
- b. encouragement through the BSEC Bank funds of the initiatives for networks development covering the whole Black Sea area and for the Black Sea networks interconnection with the main international backbone networks;
- c. enhancement of the knowledge base of the Black Sea society through the integration of local research networks into the international research and development world. More precisely *to enhance* the relations with the European Community which has a long experience in the field of new technologies concerning the market regulation, technology promotion and research coordination and *to support* the development in the BSEC region of a network of 'centres of excellence' created strictly on a competitive basis and to better utilise the opportunities provided by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies to this respect;
- d. creation of a Register and Database of information resources and technologies for joint use;
- e. development of production and introduction of information protection tools against non-authorized access to the information systems;
- f. creation of a network of information and marketing centres and electronic trade centres for promoting goods and services in the BSEC member states' markets.

II. The Parliamentary Assembly invites the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organisation of the BSEC to consider this Recommendation.