

BAKU DECLARATION

of the Third General Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals' Association

We, the Governors, Prefects and Mayors of the Capitals of the Black Sea Countries, attending the 3rd General Assembly of the Black Sea Capitals' Association, held in Baku on April 29-30. 2002, under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation, upon the invitation of the Head of the Baku City Executive Power:

- **Welcoming** the Tenth Anniversary of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation. which for the first ever time has laid down a solid, pragmatic and democratic framework of multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region, aimed at strengthening good neighbouring relations, economic integration, prosperity and peace, as a substantial contribution to the new European architecture and **reaffirming** the commitment of the Black Sea Capitals' Association to play an increasing role in meeting these challenges,
- **Emphasising** the significance of the consistent support provided by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation - PABSEC to the ongoing process of developing close interaction among the Black Sea Capitals and, within this framework, of the Recommendation 57/2001 adopted by the 18th PABSEC General Assembly, in December 2001, in Sofia, whereby the Parliamentarians representing the eleven National Parliaments expressed their appreciation for the progress achieved by the Black Sea Capitals' Association in addressing vital issues of local governance, first and foremost the living standards, involvement of the citizens in the overall management of the local administration, elaboration and implementation of comprehensive economic and social programs with a direct and positive impact on the overall sustainable development of our countries,
- **Stressing** the crucial importance of the legal and administrative measures taken by the Parliaments and Governments facilitating realization of the endeavours of the Black Sea Capitals' Association,
- **Reaffirming** our commitment to the principles and goals embodied in the Statute of the Black Sea Capitals' Association as well as our determination to undertake resolute actions in order to place our citizens' main concerns as the priorities of our future cooperation within the framework of the Black Sea cooperation,
- **Stating** that the Baku Meeting provided an excellent opportunity to make a fruitful and comprehensive exchange of views on the subject of critical importance of strengthening the role of the local authorities in improving the quality of life in the Capital Cities and underlying the contribution by the participants in identifying pragmatic ways and means in order to promote economic strategies, social programs and institutional framework for meeting the high responsibilities of the Capital - Cities administrations,
- **Appreciating** the setting-up by the Ankara Municipality of the special web site of the Black Sea Capitals' Association (<http://www.bs-ca.org>) which opens up real opportunities of rapid and efficient communications among the Capital-Cities,
- **Expressing** their will to undertake new actions in order to expand cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

Hereby agree on the following:

I. Economic Strategies

The Governors and Mayors reassert their resolve to put in place comprehensive programs aimed at alleviating the serious consequences of the transition period in most of the Capital-Cities of our countries, mainly through:

1. *drawing up special programs aimed at increasing the contribution by the Small and Medium Enterprises to the improving of the living standards and generating new jobs for the reduction of unemployment, which is an important cause of negative social phenomena such as frustration, crime, lack of social cohesion, isolation and marginalisation. To this end, the Mayors and Governors are committed to promote entrepreneurial spirit and market mentality and to provide technical support and training to the private sector;*
2. *focusing on implementing housing projects mainly for the disadvantaged segments of the population at a relatively low cost in order to alleviate the critical situation that our Capital Cities are faced with in this sensitive field of activity;*
3. *attracting investments for the local projects initiated by the Capital-Cities administration, including from the International Financial Institutions;*
4. *developing a modern and efficient transport infrastructure and public utilities, meeting the continuing expansion of the Capitals and the incoming population mainly from rural areas;*
5. *safeguarding high technical standards in construction industry taking into consideration that many of the Capital-Cities are frequently affected by disastrous earthquakes.*

II. Social Programs

We state our determination to carry our extensive social programs based on the principle of subsidiarity at three levels -families-neighbourhood-communities-, which could contribute to eliminating many negative social hardships encountered by the citizens and at the same time produce a synergy effect in terms of fostering solidarity and friendly environment, particularly through:

1. *improving public welfare as a crucial factor in the overall development of our Capitals and of our countries as a whole;*
2. *implementing special cultural projects fighting against social exclusion and contributing to integration of the young generation into the society;*
3. *taking particular care of the protection of children, young people, woman, refugees and internally displaced persons, people with handicaps, elderly people and migrant workers, seeking the support of the relevant financial institutions and NGOs.*

III. Institutional Framework

The Capital-Cities administrations have a high responsibility in promoting democratic institutions taking into consideration that democracy has to be implemented at the closest possible level to the citizen. To this end, we are decided:

1. *to promote democratic citizenship in our Capital-Cities, human rights, tolerance and respect for cultural and religious differences;*
2. *to support the principle of 'good governance' in the management of our municipalities which calls for closer cooperation between various political and economic players and contributes to social and territorial cohesion within the states;*
3. *to observe ethical standards in local governance through establishing suitable legal framework in order to fight corruption, illegal trafficking in people, to win public trust and encourage citizens to participate in the public affairs of the Capital-Cities administration,*
4. *to involve the representatives of the civil society in the implementation of the programs elaborated by the Capital-Cities administration;*
5. *to expand partnerships between the Black Sea Capitals focusing on the actual needs of our cities on economic and environmental priorities as regards water management, waste treatment, transport infrastructure, training for municipal staff.*

IV. Black Sea Capitals Festival. *The participants welcomed and supported the kind invitation by Mr. Melih Gokcek, Mayor of Ankara, to organize **the First Black Sea Capitals Festival**, on 24-31*

August 2002, in Ankara, as a major cultural event aimed at strengthening friendly cooperation between and among our Capital-Cities.

V. Next Meeting. *The Mayors and Governors decided to hold the Fourth General Assembly in the second half of September, 2003, in Chisinau, upon the kind invitation of the Mayor of Chisinau. The main subject: Role of the Capital Cities in improving the Children and Family Protection: economic, social and administrative programs.*

VI. Express of thanks. *The participants expressed their gratitude to Mr. Hajibala Abutalibov, Head of Baku City Executive Power for the excellent conditions provided for the Meeting and the warm hospitality extended to the participants.*

Adopted by the 3rd General Assembly of the Black Sea Capital's Association, on 30th April 2002, in Baku.