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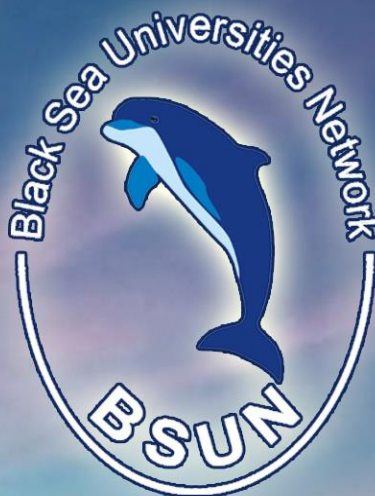
International Journal of the Black Sea Universities Network

Letters

*From the
Black Sea*

ESSAYS CONTEST

**“Twenty-five years of the Parliamentary Cooperation
in the BSEC Region
Views and Perspectives for the Future”**



Editorial by Mr. Asaf Hajiye, Secretary General of the PABSEC

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„LETTERS FROM THE BLACK SEA”

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EDITORIAL

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) at the 25th Anniversary



The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) came into existence as a unique and promising example of multilateral political and economic initiative with the signing of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the region, on 25 June 1992. Aiming at fostering interaction and harmony among its members, as well as to ensure peace, stability and prosperity, encouraging friendly and good-neighborly relations in the Black Sea region, today BSEC serves as a forum for cooperation in a wide range of areas for its 12 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

On the 26th of February 1993, in Istanbul, the Speakers of the Parliaments of BSEC Member States adopted the Declaration of the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC). The PABSEC is composed of 76 MPs bringing together members of Parliaments from twelve Member States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, out of which 3 are EU countries (Bulgaria, Greece and Romania).

The Assembly represents a unique forum of inter-parliamentary dialogue in the Black Sea Region and its main objectives are to achieve a high degree of regional economic cooperation and transform the Black Sea into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity.

In the world politics, the Black Sea Region plays an important role, as a bridge between Asia and Europe, being situated at the crossroads of major transportation routes from the East to the West (Silk Road) and from the North to the South (Viking Road). The opening of the railway connection Baku-Tbilisi-Kars has recently marked an important step in establishing a freight and passenger link between Europe and China. As the same time, this region is rich in energy resources and an important energy routes from Central Asia and Caspian Region, representing an outstanding source of oil and gas for the world markets. Several pipelines exist already and the most important one is Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan. The Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) is under construction and the two pipelines TAP and TANAP as part of it, being almost finished. Also, Shah Deniz 2 (Caspian Sea), one of the largest gas deposits in the world, will help guaranteeing European energy security by bringing Caspian gas resources to markets in Europe for the very first time. Another huge gas project is the Turk Stream which will deliver gas from Russia to Turkey and from here to the European customers.

Strengthening the cooperation and the good-neighborly relations is a condition for ensuring peace and stability, not only in our Region and in Europe, but worldwide. In this respect, it is important to consolidate the cooperation among Parliaments and also among Inter-Parliamentary Assemblies belonging to different regions of the world. Our Assembly is open for the cooperation with other Inter-Parliamentary Assemblies, not only from Europe, but from the whole world, that share common values and interests.

Several important International Parliaments, such as the German Bundestag, the French Parliament, the Knesset of the state of Israel, the People's Assembly of Egypt, the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the National Assembly of Belarus have the Observer status to the PABSEC, and, in addition, our goal is to strengthen the relations with the organizations not only from Europe, but also from Asia. In this respect, it is necessary to be mentioned that the PABSEC has granted the Observer status to OSCE PA, the Associate Member status to the IPU and the Observer status to the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA).

Nowadays, the human capital becomes one of the main factors for the development of all the countries, being one of the most important assets of the Black Sea, which must be protected and developed. This is the reason why a comprehensive common strategy should be created. In this respect, a special attention should be given to the young generation who will play an important role for the future. Our mission is to prepare the young generation for a bright future and, in this regard, education becomes one of the most important tools for the future of our societies. Therefore, we have to join our efforts for increasing the education level of our region and we have to cooperate strongly in order to improve the education systems of the different countries of the region. History showed that confrontation yield to nothing positive for the world, and in this respect, the Black Sea should not divide, but unite us all.

On the occasion of its 25th Anniversary celebrated in 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) organized an Essay Competition for students in partnership with the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN). The aim of the competition was to bring young people's view for the future development of the BSEC Region and to shape the vision for the future of our region, in cultural, political and economic terms. It was open to students aged up to 30, from all the BSEC Member States.

The topic of the competition was "Twenty -five years of Parliamentary Cooperation in the BSEC Region – Views and Perspectives for the Future" since the Parliamentary cooperation in the region has a long tradition. After the adoption of the Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), on 25th February 1993, in Istanbul , the parliamentary cooperation entered a new phase, by uniting the efforts of the national parliaments, in order to pursue the following goals: to secure the understanding and adoption, by the peoples, of the ideals and aims of the of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation: to provide a legal basis for the economic, commercial, social, cultural and political cooperation among the member countries; to enact the legislation needed for the implementation of the decisions taken by the Heads of States or Governments or by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs; to provide assistance to the national parliaments so as to strengthen the parliamentary democracy, to promote the cooperation with other international and regional organizations.

After assessing the papers, the jury decided the following: the 1st Prize was awarded to Mr. Yremchiuk Olekandr (Ukraine), the 2nd Prize to Mr. Mirmehdi Ahadzadi (Azerbaijan), the 3rd Prize (ex aequo) to Mrs. Hartagan Raluca (Romania) and to Mr. Alexandros Iliads Castillo (Greece).

H.E. Mr. Asaf HAJIYEV
Secretary General of the PABSEC

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Oleksandr YAREMCHUK, postgraduate student
Vinnitsa National Agrarian University Ukraine

Alexander Yaremchuk was born on July 24, 1992 in Vinnitsa, in the picturesque village of Karishki, Barskyi district, Ukraine.

After my high school graduation, without any hesitation, I chose Vinnitsa National Agrarian University, the Faculty of Agricultural Mechanization. The educational process was easy, as I like my specialization and studying at the Faculty of Agricultural Mechanization was my favorite activity.

With the creation of All-Ukrainian Scientific and Educational Consortium in 2013, the main objective of which is the symbiosis of educational, scientific and production capacities and the stimulation of the transfer of new technologies from academic educational and scientific institutions directly to production, my scientific activity stimulates me to enter the magistracy which I finished with honors in 2015. I entered the postgraduate study at Vinnitsa National Agrarian University, specializing in scientific areas 05.05.11 - machines and means of mechanization of agricultural production.



My scientific direction is the increase of efficiency, control, diagnosis and monitoring of technological equipment and agricultural machinery. I am the author of 17 scientific publications, including 3 Ukrainian professional editions, 13 conference materials and 1 patent for a utility model. Now I am finishing the work on writing a thesis on the topic: "Improving the efficiency of control and diagnostics of the electrohydraulic control system by the hydro pulse drive of an agricultural machine". I am communicative, ambitious and have great plans for the scientific activity in future" said Alexander.

Introduction

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (PABSEC), established on February 26, 1993, is the working body of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) as a member of the BSEC Parliamentarians, which is intended to contribute to the achievement of goals and objectives enshrined in the Declaration on the Establishment of PAOCHES and make a significant contribution to the strengthening of multilateral economic, social, cultural and political cooperation in the region.

Ukraine is one of the first among the countries of the Black Sea region to sign the Declaration on the creation of PAOCHES. In accordance with the Rules of the PAOCHES, the presidency of the Assembly passes once every six months on the principle of rotation in accordance with the English alphabet. During the

49th plenary session of the General Assembly in Istanbul on July 6, 2017, the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada A. Parubi accepted the chairmanship of PAOCHES for a term of one year.

BSEC is a rather complex structure, since its members are simultaneously members of such different political and economic groups as NATO, CIS, EU, etc. BSEC are significantly different in their priorities and vision of the future of the European process [1]. The key disintegration factors of the BSEC are the political instability of the participating countries and their economic incompatibility, as well as significant socio-cultural differences and deep conflicts, both between countries and within some of them. Unfortunately, the economic basis of cooperation of the countries of the region is not yet able to compensate for such heterogeneity of this organization, therefore,

now BSEC is largely a potential organization, not an effective reality of the present. The real achievement of BSEC remains the foundation of only the basic structures of regional cooperation.

A characteristic feature of the BSEC is that there is no absolute dominance of any one force here. Despite membership in the BSEC of Russia, due to the difficulties of the transformation period and the limited resources in the first period of the BSEC, it did not show much action in its activities. Only in 1995 there was a significant stepping-up of Russia's role in this organization, especially during the presidency period (April-October), when a series of events was held, and a number of initiatives, both economic and political, were put forward. Turkey tried to focus its emphasis on economic cooperation within the BSEC and create, under its auspices, a structure that would become a regional center of gravity. It is in the Black Sea region that Ukraine can show its weight in regional power. Indeed, the CIS, another regional organization of which Ukraine is a member, is marked by a clear domination of Russian interests and the absence of effective mechanisms for resolving economic and political problems and the development of cooperation. Hence, the attractiveness of the BSEC in the eyes of Ukraine. BSEC has the potential to become a solid foundation for Ukraine's cooperation with the countries of the Black Sea region, but unfortunately it has not, until now, become. The share of trade with member states of the BSEC in the total foreign trade turnover of Ukraine is 48.3%, but 87.9% of this figure is trade with Russia.

An integral conceptual assessment of its economic interests in the BSEC is of great importance for Ukraine [1]. It is also necessary to develop a system of priorities in relations with the states of the region within the BSEC, to find acceptable ways to reconcile the interests of the BSEC member states with other international structures, appropriate mechanisms for overcoming political contradictions, and ultimately, a place in the world economic system.

Ukraine attaches particular importance to the BSEC as an Organization, which enhances their status in the negotiations on the forthcoming possible accession to the EU. Russia does not set such goals, but is interested in ensuring its participation in projects concerning the development of a common

energy market, transport infrastructure, border cooperation, etc.

The population of the BSEC countries is over 330 million people. The region is rich in resources, with a strong production base, skilled labor force. The status of observers are France, Germany, Austria, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Tunisia and international organizations such as the Energy Charter Conference, the Black Sea Club. BSEC cooperates with the European Union, the organizations of the Baltic region. One of the fundamental differences from other regional integration associations (the CIS, GUAM, EurAsEC) - BSEC integrates countries involved in other institutionally well-developed international structures. The European Union, NATO are organizations whose membership is the aspiration of many countries that are members of the BSEC. Greece on May 1 2004 became a member of the EU. Therefore, BSEC concentrates entirely on the economic aspect of integration without disregarding the resources and resources of the policy and defense fields. This, in particular, is due to the fact that a number of countries have reciprocal territorial claims [1]. Whatever the economic interests, the Black Sea identity positively and unifying affects the relations among these states. Another feature of the BSEC, in comparison with other sub regional groups, was the basis for future activities not trade, but production cooperation. This was reflected in the sectorial approach to addressing the overall economic problems of the region.

In Ankara, October 25, 2007, 17 meetings of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (RMZS) of the BSEC member countries took place, the results of which was signed by the Ankara Declaration. The meeting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine completed the solemn ceremony of handing Ukraine half-yearly chairmanship in the Organization (November 1, 2007 - April 30, 2008). During the first half of the period of the presidency of Ukraine in the BSEC, a number of measures were taken to revitalize the Organization. Among them are the scientific and practical conference on science and technology policy, the International scientific and practical conference "Security and stability in the Black Sea region: regional cooperation and settlement of" frozen conflicts ", the First International Black Sea Container Summit, the First Banking Forum of the member states BSEC and meetings of statutory working bodies of the Organization.

One of the main priorities of Ukraine's presidency in the Organization is to strengthen cooperation between the BSEC and the EU through the Troika mechanism at the political level, joint participation in high-level events of the EU member states and the BSEC, development of mechanisms of cooperation in specific industries, involvement of EU member states, who have the status of observer in the BSEC, to the practical activities of the Organization. Thus, on February 14, 2008, a special meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC took place with the participation of representatives of the EU at the same time as the meeting of ministers of the EU and the Black Sea region. Therefore, BSEC is a regional initiative, which has recently become an international economic organization. The goal of the group's members was to achieve lasting peace, stability and prosperity through economic cooperation, intergovernmental ties, and interaction with international and regional systems.

In recent years, the Organization has focused on finding positions and place in the entire international relations system. BSEC is a purely economic organization focusing on the selection and implementation of specific projects to enable businessmen and entrepreneurs to expand their trade operations.

One of the main priorities of Ukraine's development is cooperation with the EU in the field of scientific and technical informatively. The Ukrainian governments of the last decade announced plans to restructure the economy, namely to make it more innovative and competitive. This modernization, coupled with a higher standard of living, is a prerequisite for achieving the long-term goal of the country: joining the EU.

The key problems of the state, such as energy losses, poor environmental protection and the outdated industrial sector and infrastructure, cannot be solved without international cooperation and new knowledge. In addition, national priorities in the field of Scientific and Technical Information (RTI), as a rule, have much in common with the EU priorities.

In 2010, Ukraine signed a new agreement on cooperation with the EU, which came into force in a year. It opens up new opportunities for cooperation and provides the basis for a number of joint initiatives, such as

joint EU-funded research projects, joint expeditions, exchange of information, and so on. In July 2015, the Ukrainian parliament ratified the agreement on associate membership of the country in the EU program "Horizon 2020".

Most research institutions are concentrated in the industrial sector. Scientific and technical policy in Ukraine is mainly under the control of the ministries, but local authorities have at their disposal some tools to influence local universities and research institutes [2]. Local governments may introduce tax breaks, for example, provide financial support from their budgets and allocate state land for technology parks and business incubators. Traditionally, the university sector plays a minor role in the national research system, since its role is reduced mainly to learning. Share Research and development work (R & D) carried out by the sector of higher education, from the beginning of the XXI century ranged from 5 to 7%. There are more than 340 universities in the higher education sector, but only 163 of them conducted R & D and about 40 of these universities are privately owned.

The Ministry of Science and Education plays a key role in defining a science policy along with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. In addition, a number of other ministries and departments distribute public funds to specific research programs, projects and research institutions. The total number of such agencies varies around 40.

Most research institutes relate to specific economic areas and focus on industrial R & D. Formally, these organizations are subject to various ministries and government agencies, but in recent years, ties with ministries have weakened. The National Academy of Sciences and five other state-funded academies traditionally play a key role in the national research system, as they receive three quarters of the state budget allocated to R & D. The Academy conducts fundamental research, coordinates many scientific and innovative programs, and sets priorities in the field of STI and provides scientific advice. Their situation is complicated by the fact that in 2014, the Russian Federation de facto absorbed many Ukrainian research institutes in Crimea, including the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas, AO Kovalevsky in Sevastopol and the Crimean Astrophysical Observatory.

The system of state testing is currently lagging behind the world average by the number of scientific articles and their impact on the development of world science. The number of Ukrainian publications has not yet recovered to the level of 2008, and the citation index remains one of the lowest among the Black Sea countries. Ukraine's indicators in the social sciences, computer sciences, life sciences and agricultural sciences are particularly low, despite the fact that in 2011 it ranked third in the world in terms of grain exports, while yields in the country exceeded the average. The share of publications of Ukrainian scientists in some areas of technical sciences, such as welding and electric machines, is much higher.

In the field of R & D there is no long-term policy on human resources. The government's long-term government policy on human resources in R & D is more "inertial" than targeted, despite various special scholarships. The last scholarship was introduced in 2012 to finance research abroad [2]. Although in 2005 Ukraine joined the Bologna process, which aims to harmonize higher education throughout Europe, the country still has a mixed system. In 2014, the new Ministry of Education and Science announced plans to establish a three-tier system of Ukrainian degrees: bachelor-magistracy-doctorate. Many Ukrainian scholars have reached the retirement age. The average age of doctors of sciences is over 61 years old, and candidates of sciences are more than 53 years old. The average age of scientists is increased by one year every three years.

From the Soviet era, Ukraine inherited a relatively well-developed system of education. The country still has some positive features of this system, such as the emphasis on mathematics and science at the undergraduate level. However, since independence, there has been a strong concern about the quality of education in the field of STI. On the one hand, as universities interact with industry to a limited extent, programs do not have time for the latest advances in the business world. Some high-tech sectors no longer exist, including electronics and a number of military enterprises in the machine-building industry. Demand for specialists with a degree has declined in some technical disciplines, especially in industry, after graduates did not find their job qualification.

With the exception of agriculture, health

and services, the share of graduates in the natural sciences has declined by a quarter since the mid-2000s, and by more than one fifth in the technical sciences. On the other hand, the share of graduates in the field of humanities and arts has increased by 5% and in the social sciences, business and law - by as much as 45%, according to the State Statistics Office.

Between 2001 and 2015, the number of students increased from 1.5 million to 2.5 million, but this trend will be short-lived. A decrease in the total population of the country will lead to a decrease in the number of students in the coming years. The number of foreign students in Ukraine is negligible, although several foreign universities, including MSU named after MV Lomonosov, created campuses in the country, while some foreign universities have developed joint programs with their Ukrainian counterparts. Graduates receive a double diploma from both universities. Probably, the most famous programs are conducted by the Kiev Polytechnic Institute and some German technical universities.

The government, formed in 2014, has developed a series of measures aimed at addressing such key issues in Ukrainian science policy: setting research priorities that are consistent with the goals of national development; a clear orientation of R & D in meeting the best EU standards for joining the European Research Area; administrative changes to improve the management of the R & D system.

However, the policy measures outlined in various strategic documents are less aimed at identifying specific knowledge requirements and providing strategic information on structural changes in the economy [2]. In addition, to increase the spread of knowledge, meet the needs of business in knowledge, as well as increase the mobilization of resources in the private sector provided quite limited measures.

Ukrainian policy in the field of science and innovation in industry is almost entirely focused on the direct state support of the six national academies of sciences, state enterprises and state universities. Particularly noteworthy is the lack of coordination between science policy (with an emphasis on the quality of scientific research and the number of skilled specialists) and policy in the field of economic development. This is due to the division of functions in the two main ministries responsible for the development of this area, as well as central and regional

authorities.

Universities have become a system of global peace in addition to fulfilling their traditional local and national roles. The response to global problems (energy, water and food security, urbanization, climate change, etc.) is increasingly dependent on technological innovations and well-grounded scientific advice given to decision makers. The findings from the research institutes and universities for the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the preparation of the Joint Action Plan show that these institutions play a decisive role in solving global problems. Research universities also attract the attention of the innovation industry. Companies like "Google" in this world succeed only next to the largest research centers, a successful combination that accelerates the emergence of dynamic business ecosystems such as the Silicon Valley in the United States and Bangalore in India, under the roof of innovation and prosperity.

Universities themselves have become global players. They are increasingly competing with each other in attracting funds, professors and talented students. The reputation of a university is determined globally and this trend will intensify as the digital revolution gives the world class university a growing presence in the world through online courses.

As evidence of this statement, global university rankings have emerged over the past ten years and they reflect the existence of both global competition and the global family of universities. The annual Academic Ranking of Universities of the World (ARWU) was first published in 2003 by the Centre for World-class Universities of Shanghai University Jiao Tung. Other international rankings soon followed: ranking of the best universities in the world under the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) version and ranking of the best universities in the world under the "Times Higher Education". International university rankings cause controversy, but they are never ignored.

What is a world class university? The world class university is a critical mass of talent (both teachers and students), self-government and administrative autonomy; academic freedom of faculties and studies, which includes the right to critical thinking; the opportunity for young researchers to lead their laboratories; sufficient

resources to provide a full-fledged life for learning and advanced research [2]. Some of the high-ranking institutions are the old western universities, in which young universities can learn a lot. Most universities are not included in the world class ratings, but nevertheless they play an important role in the formation of the local level.

In the last ten years, many new universities - especially from Asia - have entered the top 500 ARWU, although US universities still dominate the top of the list. Over the last decade, the emergence of an increasingly multipolar academic world, as already noted in the 2010 UNESCO Science Report, is noticeable.

In recent years, the rule has become distance cooperation: scientists now live in a virtual world. One way to measure this is to see the co-authorship of scientific publications. In the year 2015, the Leiden University Ranking for their ability to provide distance collaboration has shown that the top ten are six universities in Africa and Latin America, and is headed by Hawaiian University (USA).

The number of students is growing rapidly around the world. By 2025 developing economies will have 63 million students more than now and it is expected that the total number of students in the world by this time will more than double and reach 262 million. Almost all of this growth is expected in the newly industrialized world, more than half - only in China and India. The mobility of students, the mobility of the minds and the internationalization of universities have never been so high. In 2013, 4.1 million students were studying abroad, which is 2% of all university students. This number may double to 8 million 2025. At the same time, a small percentage of brain drain will not endanger the development of national innovation systems, and the mobility of students in higher education will remain as free as possible. The need for universities will remain high throughout the world, while state support for students is decreasing in most countries. Therefore, loss in productivity is inevitable, despite the very competitive nature of science; in particular, the emergence of university networks to bring together teachers, courses and projects is a step forward.

To keep up with the times, stimulating innovation and sharing scientific knowledge is a

critical condition for ensuring sustainable social and economic well-being and integration into the global economy. In the long run, no region or nation can remain a mere "consumer" of new knowledge, but should become the "creator" of new knowledge. Innovation development is a necessary role for universities; Innovation (or technology transfer) should become an important mission of learning and research.

Unfortunately, many countries in Africa and Asia now make fewer inventions than in the early 1990's, despite good economic growth. As shown by the analysis of patents obtained between 1990 and 2010, 2 billion people live in regions that are lagging behind in innovation. This backlog is outweighed by the extremely rapid development of India and China: about one third of the 2.6 million patents received in 2013 came from one China.

The lack of new patents in many countries is due to the lack of entrepreneurial spirit, as numerous examples show, for example, the invention of its own mobile bank in Africa. Most likely, the gap is due to the fact that universities cannot implement research and technology due to lack of financial resources. According to Bloom, responsibility for this gap in higher education lies partly in the international community of developers, which in the past did not encourage African governments to make higher education a top priority.

By estimates, 11 million young Africans will come to the labor market each year in the next decade; efforts need to be made to support their ideas. To find a good job in the global economy, young people need qualifications, knowledge and desire to create a new, as well as awareness of the value of intellectual property.

One of the ways of collective creation of the best conditions for cooperation and "reverse innovations" for universities is to work on the necessary (important) technologies. The purpose of these technologies is economic, social and environmental sustainability; they should be at the same time high-tech (and therefore appealed to researchers) and inexpensive (and therefore suitable for developers and entrepreneurs).

At the Federal Polytechnic School, Lausanne applied one such initiative, called Essential Tech. This program uses important technology in the context of a full value chain: from understanding the needs to monitoring the real impact of these technologies and ensuring

their long-term viability. In order for technology to have a significant and lasting impact, one must take into account all - scientific, economic, social, industrial factors and the environment. This program requires an interdisciplinary, multicultural approach and collaboration, as well as partnerships between the private sector, public figures and civil society, and especially among stakeholders from low and middle income countries. Many countries around the world have put forward such initiatives or are planning to do so.

The digital revolution is one of the new and revolutionary ways for universities to become global, get out of their campuses and get the world-wide audience. Cloud computing and supercomputers, as well as processing large amounts of data have already changed research. They gave rise to such global projects of cooperation as the Human Genome project in the 1990's and the more modern Human Brain project. They provide the opportunity to create a scientific network for a large number of people where researchers, patients and citizens can work together. In education, this revolution takes place in the form of mass open online courses (MOOC). Many world-class universities understand what they can give to MOOC for their popularity and reputation, and began to create such courses.

Two factors accelerate the spread of MOOC (Escher et al., 2014). First, digital technology has grown up, laptops, tablets and smartphones have become widespread on all continents. Secondly, the "digital from birth" generation has now reached the student age and easily uses permeable social networks for personal communication. The number of world-class universities that use this digital innovation is increasing, and the number of students - only one of the MOOC providers, Coursera, is growing, and the number of students almost doubled from 7 million in April 2014 to 12 million today. Unlike former online training programs, the costs of MOOC are not students, but institutions that create courses, because it increases the attractiveness of institutions. MOOC allows one university to expand its teaching to a global audience: at the campus of the Federal Polytechnic School of Lausanne 10,000 students, but nearly 1 million registrations for its MOOC worldwide.

In the coming years, Molec will allow the creation of affordable quality courses for distribution anywhere [2]. Education at the

campus will remain fundamental to students' lives, but universities must adapt to global competition and increased student demand for quality lectures distributed by the best universities. Universities in which lectures are complemented with seminars and unique practical classes will undoubtedly be part of the 2020 landscape. MOOC will accelerate planning and creating such courses by partner universities. The MOOC can also fill up the shortage of textbooks by offering free-of-charge modules of knowledge created by the best experts stored in repositories similar to Wikipedia.

The driving force created by MOOC may result in the emergence of new training programs. By this time, MOOC is spreading as individual courses. However, they can be included in official programs in the future. Universities - or their networks - can decide on the certification of courses and, possibly, the distribution of revenues. Certified courses are very important for vocational training, because employers pay more attention to the knowledge of the candidate than to formal degrees. Through lifelong learning, which is critically important for the intellectual community, MOOC will become a viable global goal.

At first, universities are afraid that some vibrant world-class universities will assign the business of MOOC to establish dominance and homogeneity. What we really see is that MOOC is becoming an instrument of cooperation, collaboration and diversity.

For many years, and this is understandable, elementary education was the main problem of education. Now is the time to acknowledge the critical importance of the experience and research skills that can be provided only by universities, students and advanced training courses.

University partnerships in collaborative work, reassessment, integration, mixed and certified occupations will be possible worldwide [3]. Tomorrow's universities will be global and multi-level enterprises, with a live campus, several branches of strategic partners, and a global virtual online presence. The Lausanne Federal Polytechnic School is among the universities that have already entered this path.

Science not only works with the use of data, the main output of any scientific research is also data. The information revolution led by science provided parallel development Web 2.0

and Science 2.0. Internet of the second generation.

Web 2.0 made it easier for people to share information and collaborate, and the second generation of free science (Science 2.0), in turn, uses these technologies based on the Internet to attract more and more employees to the research field. This growing interconnectivity, information pooling and reuse of data allowed us to develop a modern approach to science. In the world of the formation of Science 2.0, it gradually replaces the existing methods of teaching and studying science. With the initial exponential development and use of data for scientific purposes, this is a paradigm shift and contributes to, and benefits from, this information revolution.

Researchers and lecturers now combine their data and research results on online platforms, so that the global scientific community can use them and add new scientific data there based on collaboration. An example of such a collective science can be seen in the creation of a large array of data for climate change projects using global models. Such studies allow the use of large amounts of data collected in different parts of the world to solve local problems. This type of use of large data arrays for local purposes can close the gap between large-scale data and data at the local level. Another example is the recently-digitized and open source version of the 3K RGP, 2014 rice selection project that provides virtual access to 3000 rice genome sequencing data from 89 countries. Local researchers can use this information to create improved rice varieties, scattered locally and distributed among farmers, resulting in an annual rice crop that increases economic growth.

The joint influence of the tools of the Internet and the promotion of a culture of free science at the institutional level and nationally stimulates the collection and consolidation of large amounts of data in the areas of virtual knowledge. Such a combination of metadata, for example, allows you to develop local-scale projects based on weather patterns and breeding varieties that are best suited to the specifics of local climatic conditions. In this way, students of various scientific disciplines are increasingly connected with each other and receive large amounts of data. This gave science a more positive dynamics and gave rise to two-dimensional scientific practice.

The focus of scientific discoveries has shifted from fundamental research to "life-related", or great science, to address complex developmental issues, many of which have been identified as goals of sustainable development in UN documents. However, fundamental research is needed for future scientific discoveries. One of the classic examples is the discovery of the double-stranded DNA of Watson and Crick in 1953, which laid the foundation for further work in the fields of genetics and genomics. A newer example is the sequencing of the human genome, which ended in 2003 under the Human Genome Project. While the identification of 25,000 human DNA genes was a purely scientific problem, sequencing the corresponding pairs of bases within the same project was made to unlock the secret of genetic variability in order to improve the treatment of genetic diseases.

Computer networks and interactions on the Internet facilitating the exchange of scientific information in real-time, on the scale of the entire global scientific community, gradually inspire researchers to turn to these results and develop ways to address social problems at the local level [3]. This transition of research priorities in the direction of the agenda, of great science is evident in the number of research funds in the field of applied sciences. Researchers invest more than before in translating the results of fundamental research into commercially viable and sustainable products and technologies with potentially favorable effects on socio-economic conditions.

Today's interconnected and futuristic approach to science has redefined open and inclusive scientific practices in a new way. What was the interaction between a teacher and a student in a research laboratory is now becoming a virtual interaction. Nowadays, many scientific experiments involving ordinary citizens are both able to access and add new to large volumes of scientific data in real time through virtual platforms that can influence scientific processes, and, sometimes, processes of government adoption, decisions that affect their lives. This involvement of citizens allows the general public to informally participate in the collection and analysis of large amounts of data and influence, for example, adaptation to the local conditions of Western construction technologies, in order to adapt to the local needs of people in developing countries. This method of public participation will gradually build an educated civil society and

increase the role played by citizens in the decision of applied scientific problems. The term "civic science" means engaging citizens who actively contribute to science, for example, provide experimental data and facilities for researchers. It stimulates stronger integration of science, politics and society, and thus more open, transparent and democratic research.

One example of civic science - the project for managing ecosystem services carried out by UNESCO and its partners - is closely linked to the fight against poverty. The project combines the latest concepts of adaptive management with technological breakthroughs in civilian science and the joint acquisition of knowledge [4]. A number of virtual observation points over the environment allow vulnerable communities to participate in solving various local environmental problems.

As the enhancement of the culture of open science by providing access to large amounts of data reinforces the reproducibility of scientific results, it inevitably raises the question of how this type of openness and engagement can sustain responsibility for actions that are produced as a result of how it affects these data in open access, and how the integration of science and widespread participation at all levels can go hand in hand with respect for intellectual property rights. In this way, duplication of data or misuse (for example, when ignoring citation rules or when the commercial use is prohibited) should be prevented.

With the rapid change in technology that varies "from genomic sequencing machines capable of reading human chromosome DNA (about 1.5 gigabytes of data) for half an hour, to an accelerator of elemental particles of the level of the Large Hadron Collider of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), which issues close 100 terabytes of data per day, researchers are choking on information."

A recent survey by Datawell's research community showed that 80% of scientists wanted to combine their data with other members of the community of scientists and teachers. However, researchers working in the information-intensive areas are increasingly contemplating how best to manage and control common data and where to bridge the gap between data transparency for social benefits and the risk of an uncontrolled "information explosion."

Given that interdisciplinary research and research areas requiring significant collaboration, such as bionanotechnologies, astronomy and geophysics, are informational and require frequent data exchange and access in the process of interpretation and comparison with the results of previous studies, resources should be similarly located to detect , application and communication in the management of large data arrays, and for establishing protocols for merging large data arrays and data management policies at high levels of scientific cooperation. Even at the level of citizens, uncontrolled dissemination of information in the attempts to make the science more friendly to citizens may lead to an excessive amount of scientific information falling on citizens, so that they will not see any meaning or benefit. Creating large arrays of scientific data should go hand in hand with data security and control in order to ensure the proper functioning of an open and inclusive scientific culture.

When governments agreed that the Agenda up to 2030 would reflect a generalized pattern of sustainable development, it turned out that science had an impact on all the goals of sustainable development in this summons. Provisions related to science can also be found in the Declaration section, in many tasks related to the goals of sustainable development, in the section "Means of Implementation", including national investments in science, technology and innovation, the promotion of fundamental science, scientific education and education, and finally, in the sections of the Agenda for monitoring and evaluation of 2030.

Science has already found some solutions to the challenge of safe and sustainable energy supply in the face of the major challenge of climate change, but there remains room for further innovation, both in terms of energy recovery and storage, and in relation to energy efficiency.

However, the transition to sustainable development cannot relate only to engineering and engineering sciences. Social and human sciences play a vital role in establishing a sustainable lifestyle. They find and analyze the underlying causes behind decision-making at the personal, sectorial and social levels.

In addition, they offer a platform for critical consideration of public concern and

aspirations, discussing priorities and values that determine the political processes that are the core of the goal of peace, justice, and effective institutions.

Fundamental and applied sciences are two sides of one coin, they are interconnected and interconnected. As Max Planck noticed, "Knowledge must precede the application, and the more detailed our knowledge, the richer and more valuable results that we can derive from our knowledge." Fundamental researches are driven by curiosity about the unknown, and not the desire to solve a practical task. Fundamental science involves the emergence of thought from the usual framework, it leads to new knowledge and offers new approaches that, in turn, can lead to practical application. This requires patience and time and, accordingly, long-term investment, but fundamental science is a prerequisite for any scientific breakthrough. In turn, new knowledge can lead to practical scientific programs and to great progress for mankind [5]. Fundamental sciences and applied sciences thus complement each other, provide innovative solutions to the most important problems that humanity faces on the path to sustainable development.

Examples of ideas that have revolutionized science are countless. In the history of medicine, the discovery of the bacterial cause of illness has allowed the development of immunization methods that have saved countless lives. Electric light did not arise by improving the candle; This transition took place in separate steps, when from time to time new concepts appeared. Physics based on elemental accelerators is another example of how one invention gave unexpected side effects: originally developed only as a tool for basic research, accelerators have now become a common tool in the largest medical centres where they produce X-rays, protons, neutrons and heavy ions for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as cancer, benefiting millions of patients.

Science plays a key role in education. The critical thinking that comes with science education is vital for training the mind to understand the world in which we live, make choices and solve problems. Yes, literacy provides the basis for solving everyday problems, reducing the likelihood of misunderstanding and leading to a general understanding. Therefore, literacy and capacity building should be promoted in low and middle

income countries, especially when there is often a lack of a broad understanding of the benefits of science and the need to allocate resources for it. This situation creates a dependence on more scientifically literate and industrially developed countries. Consequently, science plays a role in achieving the goals of quality education.

Publicly useful science not only brings constructive changes on the path to sustainable development. It is also the way to overcome political, cultural and psychological barriers and, thus, contribute to the establishment of a lasting peace. Science can spread democratic practices when the results are freely distributed and united and become accessible to all. For example, the Internet was invented to facilitate the exchange of information between scientists working in the laboratories of the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland. After that, the conditions for access to information on the Internet have been radically changed around the world. Being a state-funded research center, they preferred to make the Internet free for everyone, rather than patenting this invention.

In order for the post-2015 development agenda to become a tool of change, it is vital to understand the relationship of developmental issues identified for sustainable development. This item was recognized by the Open Task Force on Sustainable Development Objectives, which was convened by the UN General Assembly during official talks, which led to the formulation of the Agenda until 2030. The artificial division of the agenda of the 2030 year on disciplines may be necessary for general understanding, resource mobilization, communication and raising public concern. However, the complexity and strict interdependence of the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, environmental and social - is beyond doubt.

To illustrate the relationship between these three dimensions, let's consider the following: nutrition, health, gender equality, education and agriculture are linked to several goals of sustainable development and are interrelated. It is impossible to be healthy without proper nutrition. Proper nutrition, in turn, is closely linked to agriculture as a source of food. Agriculture affects the environment and, accordingly, biodiversity; It is believed that agriculture, if it is poorly managed, will be the main reason for reducing the area of forests. Women are concerned with health, nutrition and

agriculture [6]. In the countryside, they are responsible for daily cooking and child care. Lacked education and thus access to knowledge, some women do not know about the above relationships. Moreover, cultural features often damage their welfare when they are considered second-class citizens. Promotion of gender equality and assistance to rural women will thus be of paramount importance for progress in these areas and curb excessive population growth. Science is a good way to track such interconnections in the context of gender equality.

Another example of a close relationship between agriculture, health and the environment is the concept of "one health". This concept advocates the idea that the health of humans and animals is closely linked. This is evidenced in particular by the fact that animal viruses can spread to humans, as in the case of Ebola or influenza (avian influenza).

Given the interdisciplinary nature of science for sustainable development, the Scientific Advisory Board under the Secretary-General of the United Nations has emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between different scientific areas and clearly and clearly described science as a key component for future success. Governments need to understand the potential of science to combine different systems of knowledge, disciplines and discoveries, and its ability to provide a sound knowledge base to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

During the last five years there have been great geopolitical changes that have had a significant impact on science and technology. Here are just a few examples: Arab Spring 2011, a nuclear deal with Iran in 2015, and the creation of the Economic Association of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2015. At first glance, many of these events have little relevance to science and technology, but their indirect impact was most often significant. In Egypt, for example, after the "Arab Spring" there was a radical change in the policy in the field of STI. The new government views the creation of a knowledge economy as the best way to use effective growth drivers. Adopted in 2014, the Constitution allows the state to allocate 1% of GDP to research and development (R & D), and states that "the state guarantees freedom of research and encourages its institutions as a means of achieving national sovereignty and

creating a knowledge economy that provides support researchers and inventors ".

Meanwhile, countries emerging from armed conflict are modernizing their infrastructure (railways, ports, etc.) and contributing to industrial development, ensuring environmental sustainability and education to support national recovery and revival of the economy, as is the case in Côte d'Ivoire and Sri Lanka.

The nuclear deal concluded in 2015 could be a turning point for science in Iran, but international sanctions have already prompted the government to accelerate the transition to a knowledge economy in order to compensate for the loss of oil revenues and international isolation through the creation of local products and processes. The influx of proceeds as a result of the lifting of sanctions should give the government the opportunity to increase investment in R & D, which in 2010 accounted for only 0.31% of GDP.

Environmental crises of a natural or anthropogenic nature have, over the last five years, also influenced the policy and management of STI. The consequences of the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima in March 2011 have affected far beyond Japan. This catastrophe forced Germany to commit itself to phase out the use of nuclear energy by 2020 and stimulate discussions in other countries on the risks of nuclear energy. In Japan itself, the triple disaster has had a tremendous impact on Japanese society. Official statistics show that the tragedy of 2011 undermined public confidence not only in nuclear technology, but also, more broadly, in science and technology.

In determining the essence of the scientific and technological revolution, it is first of all to draw attention to the organic unity of science and technology in the process of their development. Modern technology and science are impossible without the realization of scientific achievements in them. If in the past science acted as an independent sphere of activity, independent of other factors of social life, then from a certain time it begins to enter into a close connection with other spheres of human activity. In particular, science intensified its relationship with production and technology. Substantially influencing them, it cannot develop without their support.

In modern production there is a clear tendency towards the technological application of science and its steady gradual transformation into a direct productive force. This process has two interrelated directions. First, the results of scientific research are embodied in technology, technology, in material production, that is, science performs the so-called material and technical function. Secondly, scientific knowledge affects the producers themselves, people, their outlook, creative abilities. During the process of deployment of scientific and technological revolution, this tendency is becoming increasingly clear, becoming increasingly urgent is the need to improve the creative abilities of the individual, increasing the importance of the spiritual development of the working people as a decisive factor in material production. Without the intellectual development of the human beings as workers, engineers, technicians, organizers of production, the successful development of technology would be impossible as technology makes use of them in production. On the basis of the statement above, one can provide a definition of the essence of the scientific and technological revolution. The scientific and technological revolution is a radical transformation of the productive forces on the basis of the transformation of science into direct productive power, the change of place and the role of man in production.

According to scientists, the scientific and technological revolution originates in the mid-50's of the XX century with the introduction of complex mechanization, with communication, the emergence of electronic computers. The modern stage of the scientific and technological revolution is increasingly associated with such priority areas as automation, robotics, cybernetization, development of microelectronics, biotechnology, and computer science.

Significant changes in the most important parameters of computers over the past decades have led to fundamental changes in the field of information technology and technology, which can be defined as the transition to so-called paperless information. The content of a qualitatively new technology of information processes consists in releasing the human brain from non-creative, mechanical, routine work, in transferring a significant part of such work to machines in order to release brain reserves for the creative activity of various types, including the processing and use of information. Having

found out the essence and main directions of the modern stage of the scientific and technological revolution, it is expedient to pass to the characteristics of its social consequences.

The development of science and technology in itself does not depend on what kind of socio-economic system it occurs. Scientific and technological progress makes possible the development of society, and how scientific and technical achievements are used - depends on the specific socio-economic structure of society.

The social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution can be reduced to the following main groups:

- aggravation of the ecological situation, the emergence of the problem of human survival as a result of pollution and poisoning of the environment;

- change of relations in the system "man-technician" (the worker becomes a regulator, adjuster, programmer and those who manage the technological process);

- increase in the share of highly skilled workers and specialists in the maintenance of new technology and technology (which frees labor resources);

- acceleration of structural changes in the field of human activity (the transfer of labor from agriculture to industry, and from it - in the field of science, education, service). This leads to an increase in population concentration in cities, the intensification of migration processes, a significant reduction of the worker and an increase in free time (hence the possibility of harmonious development of the individual);

- "internationalization" of social relations (for example, the inability to produce anything in one country, not taking into account international standards, prices on the world market, international division of labor);

- human loss of emotionality, intellectual overload, formalization of contacts, one-sidedness, technical consciousness;

- biological and psychological adaptation problems of man emerging in ordinary and extreme environmental conditions (ultrahigh and ultralow pressure, temperature, electromagnetic fields, radioactivity, etc.);

- further improvement of the education system. This is one of the most serious problems caused by the scientific and technological revolution. The STR requires constant education, which consists of two subsystems: basic education and additional.

Taking into account the above facts, one can conclude that science is critically important in the face of the most important problems of sustainable development, it provides the foundation for new approaches, solutions and technologies that enable us to identify, clarify and solve local and global problems. Science finds answers that can be verified and repeated, and thus provides a basis for informed decision-making and effective impact assessment. As in the research, as well as in using their results, science covers the understanding of natural processes and the impact on them of human beings, the organization of social systems, the contribution of science to health and well-being and to better existence and life strategies, giving us the opportunity to approach the main goal of eliminating poverty

Ukraine is interested in the fullest possible development of the BSEC as an international organization contributing to the multilateral cooperation of the countries of the region, the formation of a climate of security and stability in the Black Sea area. To this end, it is expedient for Ukraine to support and put forward its own initiatives, built on the ideology of comprehensive integration of the region in the field of economy, politics and security. The BSEC will only have a full-scale strategic development perspective if it initiates the transition of the ideology of the model of intergovernmental cooperation to the plane of conceptual schemes of integration cooperation, starting with the creation of a regional free trade zone and the formation of effective international structures responsible for the security of economic activity.

Modern economic and political realities objectively demand the creation of new forms and structures for securing stability and security in the Black Sea region, which is essential for the sustainable development of the European space. Existing international organizations that have to take care of the security situation in the region (OSCE, NATO, EU, CSTO, etc.) are not able or willing to ensure the implementation of the whole range of regional security tasks. On the other hand, the level of symmetrical and asymmetric threats in the region is rather high, numerous regional conflicts and territorial disputes remain unresolved. Stabilizing the situation in the region could contribute to the establishment of an effective regional security system that could include both actual and

potential members of the NATO and the EU, as well as those countries which, for whatever reason, cannot or do not want to be involved in these structures (member countries CSTO, etc.). The optimal way of solving this problem may be the gradual transformation of the BSEC into an organization of regional cooperation and security.

Ukraine is interested in implementing regional energy and infrastructure projects - the ring road around the Black Sea, the Common Energy Market of the Black Sea. Participation of Ukraine in the BSEC is due to its transit location. Our state could increase trade with Turkey, Romania, Georgia and a number of other countries. On the other hand, Ukraine could secure its energy independence in the BSEC. The attraction of foreign investments is also in the interests of Ukraine. Another part of Ukrainian interest in the BSEC is its euro integration. Ukraine can get and use the Romanian and Bulgarian experience with regard to European integration and the implementation of all necessary reforms.

The achievements and experience during the ten-year existence of BSEC, its authority and the interest in expanding its functional capabilities in the region make this plan suitable for implementation. The use of the existing BSEC working structures and the practices of its wide cooperation with the European and Euro-Atlantic structures can provide high efficiency and political and economic attractiveness of the project, both for the great world powers and for regional countries and organizations.

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IEWS FROM AZERBAIJAN

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Mirmehdi Ahmadzada was born on December 12, 1999 in Baku, Azerbaijan. During his school life, Mirmehdi improved his English skill. Then, after finishing a famous Turkish lyceum in Baku, he entered Azerbaijan State University of Economics to the Faculty of International School of Economics. He opted for accounting and auditing as a specialty. Mirmehdi highly appreciates the education the university gives to the students because it contributes to develop research as well as analytical skills through different home assignments, economics discussions during lectures, and fascinating intellectual games. Meanwhile, he likes his specialty, and this situation also has a positive influence on his interest to the educational process.



Writing a research paper that is full of statistical as well as analytical information and data about the Black Sea region with the title of “Twenty-five years of the Parliamentary Cooperation in the BSEC Region – Views from Azerbaijan” became one of the main educational achievements in his life. After writing this, since Mirmehdi studies accounting and auditing, he started to take significant courses about ACCA and to prepare for exams. Even he got Financial Accounting certificate with a high result. It is all about his scientific direction.

Studying in Turkey in the first semester of 2018-2019 academic year within an exchange program brought him an experience from a foreign education system. There Mirmehdi took different management and economics courses from professional lecturers. He is an ambitious, and hardworking student, and tries to build a great career life for the future.

This paper is written in order to analyze the purpose and role of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) in the greater Black Sea region and its current as well as potential effects on the economy of Azerbaijan. While recognizing projects such as TAP and BTC as a successful example of regional integration, we have identified a number of major challenges for the organization, namely the lack of a common identity, limited motivation of the member states towards a more institutionalized BSEC, a lack of binding decision making power and regional conflicts among the member states. The organization can play a decisive role in the stability of the region and enhance the energy security of the European Union, but the political interests of its major members can undermine this potential. At the end, we present various recommendations for making the organization more influential.

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, regional integration organizations play a crucial role for creating sustainable development and inter-dependence among different countries by fostering cooperation. Both economic development and various kinds of conflicts have spillover effects to the countries’ neighbors. For sharing the prosperity from economic growth and taking collective actions against conflicts, regional organizations exist. Such organizations bring regional and global stability and security

and contribute to find common ground for peaceful settlement of disputes.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block, the future of the greater Black Sea region was under question. Encouraged by the lack of leadership and security concerns in the region, Turkey, with the leadership of its former president Turgut Ozal, took the initiative and proposed creation of a regional organization. After multiple rounds of informal discussions, Heads of States from 11 governments: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania,

Russia, Turkey and Ukraine got together and signed the Bosphorus Statement in June 1992. Its charter came into effect in 1999 and with the new membership of Serbia in 2004, number of member countries increased to 12. Additionally, there are 13 observer countries (Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Tunisia, and United States of America) and 4 observer organizations (International Black Sea Club, Energy Charter Secretariat, Black Sea Commission and Commission of the European Union). It must be noted that the creation of BSEC should not be considered as “regionalization” but rather should be treated as building a new region that has not existed before, because from historical point of view these 12 countries do not share much in common, except for physical proximity.

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization mainly focuses on economic activities among its member states. The organization has special focus groups on agriculture, trade, finance, transportation, tourism, environment and etc. However, we must mention that BSEC is not a trade bloc as the member states have no obligations related to trade among themselves or with third parties. Today the organization has become more of a “political forum” where the heads of states can discuss different topics. Long and frozen conflicts in the region (Karabakh, Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistria and etc.) prevent closer integration of the member states and restrict the competence of the organization.

The heads of the member states meet at Summit Meetings, which occur once in approximately five years. The main decision making body is the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which meets two times a year. All of the activities of the organization are coordinated by the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS). The working groups meet on a non-regular basis, which decreases the effectiveness of the process. Also, the responsibilities of these working groups are not well defined and overlap with each other. Currently there is no concrete monitoring mechanism which is a major obstacle when it comes to implementing different projects.

The organization has a number of relevant bodies such as The Black Sea Trade and

Development Bank (BSTDB) for financing regional development projects, The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) as a think tank, The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) which brings together members from individual parliaments for better cooperation and others.

According to the data of the World Bank, the organization has a population of 336.4 million people with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.79 trillion USD as of 2016. Seven countries combined (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia) have a more or less negligible economies as they account for less than 7% of the organization’s Gross Domestic Product combined. The two largest economies of BSEC, Russia and Turkey alone constitute 76.86% of total GDP. Despite having 12 member states, the organization only accounts for 3.68% of the World economy. The total trade volume among the member states is equal to 167.3 billion USD. Perhaps one of the most important factors of this organization is that it is home to the world’s second largest source of oil and natural gas after the Gulf region.

Literature Review

The effects of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) on the economies of the member states have been moderately analyzed by various researchers. It must be noted that as the main pioneer of the organization, a majority of the studies are focused on Turkey and its role in the creation of BSEC.

According to a study conducted by Dikkaya and Orhan (2015), despite the potential for intra-trading, trade opportunities are not exploited enough. The main reasons behind this argument is that the member states have not integrated with the BSEC well enough or are more interested in other regional integration organizations, namely the European Union (EU). They mention that trade opportunities among these nations arise from the fact that some member states are rich in natural resources that the others are in need of, and vice-versa. Additionally, the authors believe that the BSEC can be some form of “training ground” for the member states to make themselves ready for larger regional and global organizations.

Aslan and Sharapov (2014) mention that despite not having a direct access to the Black

Sea, Azerbaijan joined the union upon the encouragement of Ankara. However the conflict in Karabakh and similar regional conflicts (Abkhazia, Ossetia, Crimea, Dniester and etc.) creates challenges for the organization and hampers its effects. At the end they conclude that although a number of obstacles continue to exist, the BSEC is the most institutionalized organization in the region and has great potential for the member states to develop cooperation among themselves.

Siskos and Darvidou (2017) analyze the current account deficit of Greece and argue that she needs to increase production of petroleum and natural gas by additional 1.2 billion USD to balance the current account. Regional energy projects, such as Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) can supply the needed natural resources for that cause.

In his research, Mustafa (2005) writes that regional integration organizations not only enhance security by creating dialogue and mutual understanding, but also help them to adopt some norms and standards which can make it easier for the member states to integrate into larger organizations. The lack of a “Black Sea identity” in the region is one of the challenges the organization faces as each member state has different population, economy, culture, geography etc. The author argues that this region is an “intellectually constructed region” and is still in the process of being created. The creation, however, comes from the will of the local people, which can be interpreted as strength. On the other hand, this also means that the region will have to seek international recognition, given that it has successfully completed the integration process.

Looking at the creation of BSEC from a political point of view, Kana (2003) writes that after the drastic changes in the region as a result of collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey started to draw her own foreign policy unlike before when she was heavily dependent on NATO and EU. This new organization was created after Turkey redesigned its foreign policy due to security, political and economic concerns raised by the chaotic situation in the region.

Sayan (1998) evaluated the impact of BSEC from two different points of view; firstly if the creation of this regional integration

hampered the globalization process and secondly how did it affect trade between the member states within the organization and with third parties. The empirical results obtained from the gravity model implied that the organization contributes positively to the overall process of globalization and it has led to trade creation for its member states. According to his model, the creation of BSEC has especially helped those countries who were formally part of COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) like Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. The model of the study finds that between 1993 and 1994 the Gross Trade Creation (GTC) of Azerbaijan increased by 37.3 million current USD due to the BSEC. The vast majority of this additional trade belongs to trade between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Nuriyev (2007) writes that the Black Sea region is becoming more and more important to the European Union as it is a source of conflict and troublesome migration. Azerbaijan and other newly formed Ex-Soviet states that did not possess administrative and political experiences at the time of independence needed strong support from the international community and BSEC has played its fair role for this cause. In case the BSEC successfully integrates its member states, it would enhance the security architecture of Europe. According to his paper, Azerbaijan is important for the international community (especially for the European Union) and BSEC itself for three reasons:

1. Energy Security: As a natural resource rich country, Azerbaijan has oil and gas pipelines (existing and under construction) that connect its resources to Western Europe through two other BSEC member states: Georgia and Turkey. In the future, Azerbaijan can also be part of a Trans-Caucasian pipeline which would transfer the gas resources of the Eastern Caspian Sea to the growing European markets. These pipelines are vital for the EU, because it diversifies its energy supply sources and prevents total monopoly.
2. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan is without a doubt the number one thing that both countries are worried about. Resolving this problem will stabilize the whole South Caucasus and speed up the regional integration process. For that cause, BSEC can help to create better circumstances for a peaceful solution to the

conflict. Given the political and military ties of Turkey and Russia to the opposing sides in the conflict, resignation of the war might lead to irreparable consequences for the whole region.

3. Integration into European Structures: Because of its hydrocarbon resources, Azerbaijan has already become a partner of the European Union; however, the country is still far behind on economic and political standards of Europe. In case the nation decides to go forward with Western Integration, then a number of bold actions will have to be taken.

Despite focused on economic cooperation, Hartwig (1997) argues that BSEC is not like the Central European Free Trade Area or others as it is more about multilateral and bilateral cooperation among the member states and does not possess a legally binding status. In case a member state does not comply with the agreements or resolutions of the organization, there are no counter measures (such as sanctions) imposed, which makes the decisions of BSEC less effective as the member states have no obligation and little interest to implement them most of the time.

BSEC and Azerbaijan: Past Cooperation and Future Prospects

Considering the fact that Azerbaijan's neighbors and largest trade partners are present in BSEC, it is natural that their weight in the overall trade statistics of Azerbaijan is quite large. As we can observe from Table 1 below, the Russian Federation and Turkey are the top import origins while top export destinations are again Turkey, the Russian Federation and Georgia. Imports from BSEC countries constitute 39.77% of total imports coming to Azerbaijan. On the other hand, exports to BSEC countries accounts for only 23.19% of total exports. This can be explained by the fact that the top export destination of 2017, Italy is not part of the organization (in 2017 exports to Italy alone constituted 31.9% of all exports as a result of oil exports to EU). Presence of the Black Sea Economic Corporation Organization assures the stability of the external trade of the member states and paves the way for sharing economic prosperity in long run. The trade between Azerbaijan and Armenia does not exist due to ongoing conflict, while the economic relations between Azerbaijan and Albania are only marginal.

Table 1: Trade between Azerbaijan and BSEC countries, 2017 – thousand USD

Member State	Imports from	Exports to
Albania	433	72
Armenia	-	-
Bulgaria	37,275	153
Georgia	74,148	471,349
Greece	12,136	159,548
Moldova	6,752	241
Romania	68,124	267,230
Russian Federation	1,554,258	587,025
Serbia	5,478	18
Turkey	1,273,709	1,366,337
Ukraine	459,915	350,366
Total BSEC	3,492,228	3,202,339

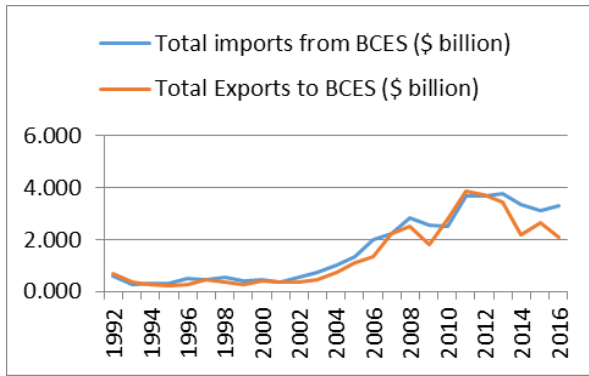
Source: Azerbaijan State Customs Committee, 2018

When we look at the graph below, which shows the total imports and exports of Azerbaijan with the rest of the BSEC countries, it is easy to observe that after the years of instability following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, trade of Azerbaijan with other 12 member states has steadily increased overall, particularly between 2000 and 2007. There was a slight decline in the year 2008 as a result of the global financial crisis, which especially hurt exports to Turkey (between 2007 and 2009, Azerbaijani exports to Turkey decreased by 9.81 times) while in the cases of other major export partners (Russian Federation, Ukraine and Georgia) trade was not affected by the crisis, most probably due to the fact that these ex-Soviet countries, as well as Azerbaijan were not integrated into the global financial system enough to be hurt from the recession as much as Turkey was.

Graph 1: Dynamics of trade between Azerbaijan and BSEC countries

Source: Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee, 2018

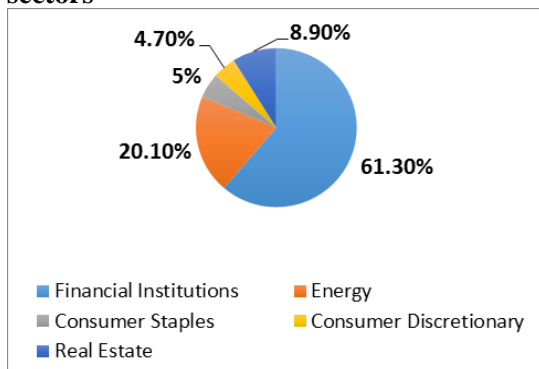
However this does not mean that the increase of trade with these countries came as a result of BSEC agreements. The gravity model tells us that the larger the GDP of states that engage in trade, the greater the volume of trade



turnover between them. Thus the overall increase in the trade volume observed in the graph above is rather related to development of the economies of the member states. Considering the fact that neighbors of Azerbaijan such as Russian Federation, Turkey and Georgia who has strong economic ties to Azerbaijan are present in the organization, it is natural that the organization accounts for a large portion of imports and exports of Azerbaijan.

Apart from trade with individual countries, Azerbaijan has been benefited from the BSEC membership by cooperating with its affiliate body, Black Sea Trade & Development Bank (BSTDB). Azerbaijan has a 5% share in this institution and since its establishment in 1999, the bank has disbursed 34 loans to the country, totaling 322 million Euros. A majority of these loans (61.3%) have been given to the entities of financial sector, such as Accessbank, Azer-turk Bank, Turan Bank, Demir Bank, TBC kredit and others. However the bank has also issued loans to different companies such Embawood, Demirchi Business Centre and supported Lukoil Overseas Shah Deniz Ltd, with a 62 million USD loan. We can see the distribution of the projects by sectors from the Graph 2 below.

Graph 2: Projects of BSTDB in Azerbaijan by sectors



Source: Black Sea Trade & Development Bank, 2018

Overall we can say that being a member of BSEC have helped Azerbaijan following its independence and troublesome conflict to a certain degree. Members of BSEC are the largest trade partners of Azerbaijan which contributes positively to its economic stability. Regional projects that we are going to analyze below are a clear example of successful integration of the countries in this region. More infrastructure projects that connect not only the member states to one another, but also Europe to Asia have big potential in the region. Such projects can seek financing from individual member states, or from international banks, including BSTDB.

Regional Projects for Stronger Integration

Firstly, BSEC has been creating relations even with other countries that are not members of this organization and with non-governmental as well as intergovernmental organizations. One of them is the European Union. Nevertheless, Europe depends on a continuous energy supply. So, natural gas will be utilized in domestic as well as commercial energy use and fortunately, it does not have any negative impact on the environment. Furthermore, natural gas that exists in Azerbaijan as a natural resource is transmitted from the Caspian to the Mediterranean Sea through pipelines and therefore, projects containing transport of this natural resource seem to be the most economical, safe and environmentally friendly way to transmit Azerbaijani gas to Western markets. Whereas differing from natural gas, oil cannot be considered as environmentally-friendly. In spite of this situation, the purchase of crude oil and oil products by European countries from Azerbaijan still continues due to large pipelines such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), which is a major project contributing massively to transportation of crude oil from Caspian to the Mediterranean Sea and Western markets. Turkey is playing a key role in the provision of Caspian oil to the Western world.

Now let us analyze the strong contribution of the BTC to the region: The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline has a length of 1,100 miles, from Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, through Georgia and to Ceyhan-

the Turkish Mediterranean port. The pipeline can transmit one million barrels a day from the Caspian Sea which contains the world's third-largest oil and gas reserves. Its costs were 3.2 billion USD and in this expensive work BP, the British oil company, is the leader of the consortium. Moreover, there exist some fascinating reasons why this pipeline seems important from the view of European countries: this trade can minimize western dependence on oil that is produced in Russia as well as the Middle East, especially from Arabic countries. So, this project indirectly leads to greater energy security of Europe. In addition, Azerbaijan, the supplier of oil to the Western countries, wants to raise its world status with this trade and to obtain international support in the dispute with Armenia over the problem of the Nagorno-Karabakh. The conflict is seen as a serious threat that decreases the region's security and stability. Similarly, Georgia which has bad relations with Russia, one of the strongest countries in the world, sees the BTC as a solution to the reduction of its dependence on Russian energy provision. Undoubtedly, these regional and political problems have a negative influence on the economic relations among the members of the BSEC; hence intergovernmental organizations ought to give exact solutions.

Now, let us observe which countries benefit more from this project. No doubt, as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline crosses Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, they earn substantial revenue from transit fees and royalties. Even before the existence of the BTC, BP made estimation that Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey would get revenues of more than 150 billion USD from oil and gas fields as well as pipelines between 2005 and 2024. In the meantime, the government of Turkey sees the scheme as the "Silk Road of the 21st century" and BP considers the Caspian Sea as one of the new major profit centers in the region.

Due to the conflicts between some members of the BSEC mentioned later in this paper, possible terrorism or other violence and troubling acts should be taken into account by the security systems as well as defense ministers of countries in which the pipeline passes. However, as the BTC passes within a few miles of Karabakh, the conflict territory between Azerbaijan and Armenia, critics have assumed this might be an opportunity for an inevitable

attack although no violence has been observed until now. As a consequence, if we take into account that Azerbaijan is one of the members of BSEC, the sale of oil and gas can give BSEC both economic value and international prestige. In addition to this, there exists other projects which will be realized in the future and these potential plans contain electrical energy interconnections in the BSEC region.

The Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) that which 3500-kilometer length and involves myriad shares of countries as well as 11 countries is considered as an imperative regional projects as well. It contains an array of pipelines: the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) as well as the Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project (TANAP).

Briefly, we can describe them like this:

- 1) The South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) is 691 km long, will transport Caspian gas from Azerbaijan, through Georgia and then on to Turkey;
- 2) The Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) is 1,841 km long, will provide Turkey with natural gas and plays a key role in gas transportation to Europe;
- 3) The Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) is nearly 870 km long, will take gas to the western countries, in particular to Italy through Greece and Albania.

Probably in 2020, gas transportation to Europe will start. If in the future, the demand rises, the capacity of the pipeline system can be expanded.

The discovery of new natural gas deposits in Azerbaijan led to the construction of new projects like TANAP that will be handled by the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), and with the contribution of this project, the Caspian Sea gas will be transported to Turkey and Western countries. Meanwhile, Shah Deniz-2 seems as one of the biggest gas deposits in the world, with estimated reserves of at least 1.2 trillion cubic meters.

Some major companies are partners for the development of the project: The Southern Gas Corridor Closed Joint Stock Company, the state-owned Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS) and BP. The shares of these firms are

58%, 30%, and 12% respectively. TANAP is a project between two countries, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Its financial condition is very strong because Azerbaijan allocated over 6 billion USD to this project. Undoubtedly, in addition to financial as well as economic benefits, and the provision of the region with natural gas, Turkey will obtain additional advantages such as new workplaces for the unemployed. It is expected that 15,000 jobs will be generated as a result of investments, which are estimated at 11.7 billion USD. It begins in Ardahan, from the Turkish-Georgian border, passes the whole territory of Turkey and ends in Edirne, the western part of the country which is the Turkish-Greek border. From that point, the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline or briefly, TAP, connects with TANAP and TAP takes natural gas to Europe. The capacity of the pipeline will be increased to 31 billion cubic meters with the help of additional investments. There are two stations that supply the local network with gas in Turkey. Nevertheless, in comparison with TANAP, TAP has more shareholders with varying degrees of shares: BP, SOCAR, Statoil - each of them have 20% shares, Fluxys, Total, EON, and Axpo – each of them have stakes that are under 20%.

Though each of the three parts in the Southern Gas corridor seems very essential, TANAP is perhaps the most important and prestigious one. At full capacity of the pipeline, Turkey will get more natural gas from Azerbaijan in comparison with previous years which will force other gas suppliers to decrease their prices. This will make the market more competitive, making the Black Sea region a fast developing place in the world.

After talking about the energy sector of the region of BSEC, particularly about the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline as well as the Southern Gas Corridor and their regional as well as economic benefits, we can now pass to the next topic related to the one above: economic relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia. From ancient times, the nations who live in the present territories of these countries had strong political, economic and cultural relationships.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these countries became independent at the beginning of the 1990s. Following independence, the neighbor countries began to strengthen their relations and to create particular

regional organizations in order to maximize profits and increase the overall economy in the region. Firstly, for the purposes of creating opportunities which European and Central Asian countries were interested in, such as greater trade, exports, and imports in the regions of Caucasus and Central Asia, in 1993 the Transportation Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia, or TRACECA was established and began to play a key role in transportation in the region. Of course, TRACECA connects Europe to Central Asia via the Caucasus. The Transportation Corridor starts from Eastern Europe and continues to the Georgian port of Poti situated on the Black Sea. As stated in the official website of the European Commission, TRACECA is considered as a program aims to tackle political and economic issues in the Black Sea region, Central Asia, and the Caucasus by the way of the contributing to the improvement of transport. Because of the vital importance of such projects to the European countries, they have allocated large amounts of money for the realization of the plans. Moreover, in 1998, 12 TRACECA countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, some of them members of the BSEC, signed an agreement called like “Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (MLA)”. Agreement included four additional annexes on documentation, commercial maritime navigation, rail and road transport, as well as customs procedures. Certainly, this project revived the important function of the Great Silk Road. In addition to this, both Azerbaijan and Georgia together with their organizations engaging in business and trade, started to give contributions to this essential project because of the fact that they had much to gain from this project and wanted to attract myriad countries which were interested in finding an easy way of participation in markets of Asia and Europe. Undoubtedly, the project has been developed day by day, but now TRACECA is connected to Viking Railroad. This railroad connects two countries of Eastern Europe: From the Ukrainian port of Odessa to the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda. In the meantime, new ports, bridges, roads and other transport constructions that are essential for the development of TRACECA are being built and new tariff rules are being improved. Furthermore, even though the US and NATO are

not the part of the region, they supported this scheme and US Congress played an active role when TRACECA became operational. In 1999, a meeting was held regarding the revitalizing the Great Silk Road. Both business associations and organizations in Azerbaijan and Georgia highlighted their commitment in contributing to the establishment of the East-West Corridor. This meeting can be considered not only as the support for TRACECA but also as the way for the improvement of international relations. It is worth mentioning the involvement of both America-Georgia Business Council and the US-Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce in this project. The efforts of these organizations have had an important role in providing some information to US policymakers about the significance of the transportation corridor. The most important in this context was the conference of "The East-West Energy Transport Corridor is Reality" which was held in 2003 after successful efforts. The most important topics discussed during the meeting were the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline as well as the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline. Consequently, today Azerbaijan and Georgia make shipping of diverse goods from Asia to the Western world much easier with the contribution of the Transportation Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia.

Another regional project that is worth mentioning is GUAM. In 1996, four countries - Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, as well as Moldova were interested in closer cooperation to solve economic and territorial issues. So, a year after, in the summit of the Council of Europe, the presidents of these countries underlined their interests and participation in the TRACECA project and highlighted the importance of this cooperation for its potential future contribution to the security of European countries. This organization has helped to boost economic growth as well as realizing some regional projects in the Black Sea region. Furthermore, in 1998 the officials from those countries had a meeting in the US and the delegations demonstrated their decisions about some major aims that had to be fulfilled in the near future:

- 1) To support each other in cases of regional instability
- 2) To reduce all negative factors which the financial crisis in Russia posed;
- 3) To contribute to the improvement of oil deposits in the Caspian Sea as well as pipelines

that transport crude oil to Western markets in order to get more profit and spend it on solving regional issues.

No doubt, these brought the members of GUAM an array of advantages such as taking part in free markets and being active in the global world. However, it is unfortunate that the interaction among the members is decreasing day by day even though the organization still functions. Nevertheless, oil and gas pipelines as well as TRACECA are the major reasons for keeping relations close between the two neighbor countries of GUAM: Azerbaijan and Georgia. In addition to this, future projects will be able to enhance relations and contribute to the engagement of the South Caucasus with European countries.

Factors that Hamper Cooperation in BSEC

There exists an array of aspects that can either improve or hinder economic as well as political cooperation in the region of the Black Sea. In this part, we will observe the most serious problems and conflicts, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh problem between Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as the Crimea issue in Ukraine. Some of these even contain political disagreements, territorial conflicts, and military issues which can be considered as the reasons for the massive amount of civil deaths, other uprising conflicts, the threat to a prevention or destruction of present regional projects like Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, and Southern Gas Corridor as well as other problems that has the potential to slow down economic growth in the region of the Black Sea. Towards the end of the 1980s, a conflict erupted between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and later turned into a full scale war. Since then, armed forces have been a key part of the conflict and Azerbaijan and Armenia cut all diplomatic and economic relations between themselves. Turkey, as a major supporter of the Azerbaijani side in the conflict also closed down its border with Armenia. As a result, the Republic of Armenia has been blocked both from the East and the West for more than two decades and has been isolated from certain regional infrastructure projects. The fact that the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan bypasses Armenia can be explained by the intentions of Azerbaijan and Turkey to segregate Armenian participation from these projects. The

latest of such projects was the railroad line connecting Baku to Kars through Tbilisi and was not supported by the European Union for the above mentioned reason. Such developments can severely hurt the nations' economies and damage the cooperation of BSEC countries. Furthermore, attempts by international organizations or other powerful countries to find a solution regarding the conflict are undermined by the unwillingness of both sides to make any compromise. One of aspect which directly impedes the economic cooperation and regional projects in the region of BSEC is the fact that the border regions still suffer from sporadic skirmishes, in spite of the ceasefire contract which was signed in the 1990s by two governments.

Moreover, if we assume that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict did not take place, we envision a high level of industrialization in that region, as there exists enormous potential for tourism, metallurgical industry as well as agriculture etc. Such a scenario would make a great contribution to the present economic development and cooperation in the region of BSEC.

As a result of the war, nearly 60 percent of total GDP decline occurred during the beginning of the 1990s. Likewise, the Azerbaijan government observed a 43 percent decline of GDP in agriculture as well as a 60 percent decrease of GDP in the industry sector.

Table 2: Production level decreases after the Karabakh war in Azerbaijan

Products	grain	liqueur	potato	meat	milk
Production loss (%)	24	41	46	18	34

Source: International Policy Digest, 2017

Now let us analyze the situation of Armenia. After the war Armenia has not been experiencing economic improvement and by 1993, GDP dived to 47 percent of the level in 1990. Poverty line reached the level of over 50 percent in 1996. Due to the isolation of Armenia, Georgia became the only way for exports to Europe. However, when the Russia-Georgia conflict broke out in 2008, Armenia lost over 500 million USD due to the closed borders. Furthermore, Armenia lost the chance to be one of the transit countries in transmitting Azerbaijan

oil and gas which has made Armenia's energy security dependent on Russia.

Consequently, this great territorial problem disrupted political, economic and even cultural relations in the South Caucasus. Even, areas that contain rich deposits of natural resources, and potential industry sectors, are not used efficiently and this impedes economic growth in the region. In addition to this, due to the conflict, both sides invest a great part of their budgets on military spending, which could instead be spent on other sectors.

Secondly, we need to look at the Crimea conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This issue created many difficulties for the economic development and the reduction of trade level in the Black Sea region. Initially, the tendency and basic reasons should be focused on.

Viktor Yanukovich, the former president of Ukraine between 2010 and 2014, rejected an economic agreement with the European Union and instead accepted a new agreement from Russia. As a result, protests began in Kiev. Following this event, in 2014, after the fall of Viktor Yanukovich, Russia entered Crimea and referendum ensued. In this referendum, the majority of Crimean opted for joining the Russia Federation. A similar situation occurred in the Donbass region and lead to a civil war between the authorities in Kiev and separatist forces backed by Russia.

Now let us look at the economic and political issues as well as pros and cons that each country gained from that situation. Before the Crimea crisis, the territory was part of Ukraine and played a role in the Black Sea region. Following the referendum and the events in the Donbass sanctions were placed on Russia. This has hampered growth on the peninsula as both foreign and domestic companies avoid expanding their businesses in Crimea.

On the other hand, Crimean firms were forced to participate in the Russian market. However, this can impact prices as well as delivery times negatively because if we look at the map, there is currently no land connection between Russia and Crimea. So, because prices are now higher this reduces demand, discouraging suppliers. Meanwhile, products take more than 5 days to be imported, while

before the annexation, it took less than three days.

The number of tourists is also decreasing and this sector in the region is weakening day by day. The main problem is due to a lack of transportation infrastructure. The most convenient way of arrival is by air which costs a lot and makes holidaying expensive. Of course, tourists can come with other types of transport, but they are not comfortable. In addition to this, Russia applied a limited capacity of the air fleet, which means that only Russian airlines can fly to Crimea.

Though when Crimea was the region of Ukraine nearly six million tourists came, now it shows a downward trend and this situation is expected to remain the same at least in the near future. As Russian Federation uses the peninsula for military purposes rather than as a tourist resort, it leads to negative consequences for tourism as well as the small and medium businesses that are located in Crimea's southern coast. Certainly, this gives an array of disadvantages to the economy of not only Crimea but also the Black Sea region, notably higher unemployment rates.

Despite the conflict, as the region only includes 3.6% of the country's GDP in 2013, losing the peninsula does not have a massive influence on Ukraine. However, the loss of source of local energy, especially the company Chornomornaftohaz that is considered as one of the valuable firms which was expanding gas production in Ukraine before the takeover, will be costly.

Certainly, the conflict prevented Ukraine's significant projects that would be realized in the Black Sea, because in 2013 the government had planned to get natural gas from the Kerch Strait in cooperation with the British Shell company. Moreover, the agreement named 'Fleet for gas' occurred in 2010 between Russia and Ukraine. For this agreement, as Russia decreased the price of exported gas by 70%, Ukraine offered to lease the port to the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

Conclusion and Recommendations

At the end, we can say that the Black Sea Economic Corporation is an organization that has enormous potential but still has to prove itself. Its resolutions carry no legal binding status

and member states often have little to no incentive to impose them. Its presence is a positive development for the European nations as it is home to large oil and natural gas reserves and may help the Europe to diversify its energy sources. Such regional organizations are also a good way of preserving peace and security and prepare the member nations for larger and more globalized organizations.

The regional projects such as BTC or TANAP/TAP are vital for creating interdependence of the nations and strengthening the ties within the organization. However, the region is still in the process of "building" and currently lacks a common identity among its twelve member states. A number of regional conflicts are perhaps one of the biggest challenges that the organization faces today and it would be impossible for BSEC to successfully integrate these nations without addressing these conflicts. The organization can contribute to the negotiations by providing not only a forum for discussions but also creating international peacekeeping forces. Deployment of such forces in the conflict regions is more acceptable for nations involved in the conflicts (for example: Azerbaijan) than having peacekeepers of a specific nation (for example: Russian Federation).

The organization is mainly dominated by two politically, economically and militarily powerful countries: Russian Federation and Turkey. Thus their foreign policy objectives matter greatly for the future of BSEC. It is well known that Russian Federation would rather prefer integration towards itself, similar to the formal days of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, as the main supporter of the organization, Turkey has quite a different approach to the European Union today than in 1990s. When BSEC was newly formed, Turkey was seriously considering joining the EU, which effectively made BSEC closer to the values, structure and aims of the European Union. Today, the relations between Turkey and the EU deteriorated and the country is no longer planning to be part of the union. Despite having 3 member states that are part of the European Union, the probability of strong cooperation between BSEC and the EU is unlikely due to presence and leading role of Turkey and the Russian Federation. We have also observed close ties between these two nations during the last years, even to the extent

of Turkey disagreeing with its NATO allies. This situation makes Greece, Bulgaria and Romania lose their interest in the organization and uphold the decisions of the EU.

In order to further develop regional integration in the greater Black Sea region; the following political and economic steps should be taken:

- Creation of Free Trade Zones among the member states with similar levels of economic development can foster the competitive environment and increase the standards of production. Eventually the countries will be able to compete in larger and more developed markets and can integrate into the world economy without hurting local production;
- Attracting high levels of foreign direct investments to the region is clearly needed for economic development. Countries can achieve that by making the business environment more transparent and decrease trade barriers. Other member states can use the experience of Georgia, which currently ranks #9 on the Ease of Doing Business Rank of the World Bank (2017);
- Infrastructure projects that connect different member states are essential for the successful integration of the countries. A large, common and binding project beneficial to all sides should be accepted and be financed with the help of the organization and its member states;
- Member states should work together to get rid of double taxation, where personal income is taxed in two different countries;
- Necessary amendments must be made to the organization which would enable working groups to specialize in a specific area and prevent overlapping with rest of the groups. The decisions of these groups should carry a more serious legal status.

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VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

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I was born in 1985, on the 21st of November, in the town of Târnăveni, Romania. My educational process went smooth and I attend a prestigious highschool in Tg-Mureş, National College Alexandru Papiu Ilarian, where I studied foreign languages. Therefore I am fluent in English, French, Spanish and Italian. Further on I studied Communication and PR at Babeş Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. I took my Masters Degree in Agriculture, Climate Change and Food Security at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, where I am currently undergoing my doctoral studies in the field of Agroecology.



The domain of research for my Phd thesis tackles the matter of control of pests and diseases for raspberry and blackberry under organic farming conditions. Organic farming is the only agricultural system that provides resources for a healthy environment, protects and enhances biodiversity and does not compromise the future generations chances for a better earth and a more secure natural landscape. Thus my work is focused on means and practices that are approved by organic farming and can offer the right tools for farmers to raise better crops. Also ecological agriculture offers wonderful business opportunities not only for Romania but also for other countries from the Black Sea area.

Introduction

Seen from above, our planet offers a unique view: an infinite blue with wonderfully painted pieces of land rising for the waters, enhancing the mystery and the beauty of our world. Water is one of the essential components of life itself, without oxygen and water the world would not exist. While human beings can survive quite a lot without food, they can only live up to a few days without water. Water, covering approximately 70% of the surface of the earth, is mostly represented by rivers, seas and oceans. These geographical elements have played an important role in the history of Earth. All great civilizations that left a mark upon our world, developed and flourished in the proximity of water: the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Byzantines, the Vikings etc. Over time, people have been fascinated by the sea and by what can be found on its other shore. This genuine curiosity led people like Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama, Cristofor Columb, Sir Francis Drake, Emil Racoviță and many others, to engage themselves in dangerous sea expeditions in order to discover new worlds and business opportunities.

Europe offers a variety of marine basins that proved to have a major impact on the economic, cultural and political agenda of the recent years. The EU identified its sea basins as: The Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, North Sea, the Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean. Each region has its uniqueness due to the states that related to each sea basin, that bring their own distinctive traits and mold the region to enrich its value. Every sea basin has been enjoying a personalized development strategy that tackles all the aspects that concern it. Thus special policies for marine management were issued in order to improve the situation for each littoral state, including the non-EU states. In 2012 the EU Commission issued a document: Blue growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth and ever since new update and progress were made for a coherent strategy that includes an economical sector that offers over 5 million jobs. Opportunities in this sector are far from being exploited to their maximum and each region must take the matter into their own hands and secure their chances for a better economical outcome for each state involved.

(https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth_en)

Before the European Union's approach on sea basins development, some littoral states have expressed their will and need for cooperation in this field and set themselves into alliances. One of the most fruitful alliances, made before the participation of EU in this field, is the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. As stated on its official site www.pabsec.org, The BSEC came to life on the 26th February 1993, in Istanbul, where representatives of the Parliament of nine countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and Romania,) adopted the declaration that marked the birth of this organization. Today the organization also includes Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia as its members. In its attempt to develop the Black Sea region the BSEC made efforts to expand its influence and awareness among member states and to create an approachable strategy that can guarantee long-term benefits for all the actors involved.

Although both strategies proposed for the Black Sea basin, one coming from the BSCE and the other from the EU, seem similar in approach, the means may differ. Both organizations seek the economic, political and cultural development of the sea basin but the economic resources offered by the EU's agencies are available only for the member states, in this case: Romania and Bulgaria. Also policies and other cooperation mechanisms developed by the European Commission are applicable only for member states. As far as culture is concerned, one cannot address such a complex matter including only the states that reach Europe's borders and leaving in a shadow the other important members of the Black Sea region that are not necessarily littoral states and are situated across European borders. Although BSCE Organization includes a larger variety of states and offers a more detailed insight of the matter, the economic input is less substantial than the one the EU can bring.

Both strategies are complex and tackle the matter in a sensible way and none should outplay the other. The states can take advantage of the advanced expertise and good practices the EU proved along the years. In addition, the states can access funds to create and develop those fields that all members of the Black Sea region

can benefit from. Although recent events and declarations from important EU members, like France, say that a change is about to come and Europe will advance as a two-gear machine, one must not feel threatened or rejected. More than likely it is a signal, due to the new challenges- terrorism, economic crisis, and immigration- that regional development enters a different era. Each state must seek its best interest by developing and strengthening alliances with its regional partners and that solitude in the terms of development is not a reasonable option.

The BSEC organization is a complex cooperation alliance with an active role over the past 25 years. It expands its influence over two continents and covers a massive area of 20 million square kilometers and touches the lives of 335 million people. It rivals in outreach with the Mediterranean Sea basin that is the largest European basin. Although the member states of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization do not have the same economic and political influence as the Mediterranean littoral states, they have the advantage of sharing a mutual space and interest with an influential state like Russia. This is an opportunity to develop economic relations with a very large business market and to expand bilateral relations in this sense. The PABSEC have launched projects that target different areas of cooperation taking into consideration the demands of a globalized world. The strategy concerns different aspects to which new ideas and suggestions will be given in the current paper. The areas that will be taken into account are roughly divided in these sectors: **political, economic, commercial, cultural and social.**

In order to celebrate 25 years since the foundation of the BSEC organization, a summit was conducted in Turkey where a declaration, re-establishing its „Magna Charta”, was issued. At this moment we are all welcomed to participate and thus help perfect a strategy that we can all benefit from, as members and citizens of the Black Sea Basin. This multidisciplinary approach will give added value to the cooperation strategy and will validate any honest and progressive action in this respect.

As far as the **political** aspect is concerned although we can notice a stable evolution over the past years, recent events

demand us more caution and a better cooperation from all member states. Threats like political inconsistency in laws and actions, inadequate public political speech, lack of vision, have proven to be as dangerous as terrorism and organized crime, for national stability. All member states must work together and make sure to provide a secure political background for business companies and long term investments. All parliament members must take serious measures to provide coherent legislation for harbor activities and customs regulations. Investors are more likely to settle down in a country where the legal system for maritime commerce offers stability. When talking politics one must take into consideration the geo-strategic position of the region or country one is referring to.

The Black Sea region is politically perceived as a Balkan matter due to its political tensions and its sad conflict history. The history mentions the Balkans as a gunpowder barrel and proved itself to be very destabilizing in all aspects for the whole European region. In order to avoid these terrible incidents in the future democratic measures and policies must be enforced in the whole region and peace and understanding must be sought by all member states. Governments play an important role in maintaining social stability and conducting good and protective policies for its citizens. Also expanding diplomatic relations and creating common projects of actions in different areas, as well as promoting the same democratic values and transparency in the political process is a must. “No to corruption”, “no to people traffic”, “yes to technology” are just a few ideas that can bring the member states together to fight for a good cause and to deepen their cooperation.

Due to its regional geographical position, the Black Sea offers the ‘intermezzo’ between two continents. Furthermore, as far as politics is concerned, it mediates between two superpowers: Russia and the USA. The littoral coast is the display for NATO military capacity, the Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase in Romania, the Deveselu shield, are the USA's avant-garde, and for Russia also, the Black Sea fleet and the new hotspot for military power- Crimea. In this context, one must try to understand better the political and military power. Geopolitical analysts say that it is of most importance to identify the problem and to evaluate its

dimension and to offer solution for acute issues. Analyzing the political hierarchy in the Black Sea region, we identify Russia as the major and most powerful actor. Russia has a “hard power” that can overwhelm any European opponent. But in this era of enlightenment and technology, using just your military capacity to control it is not enough to secure your supremacy. Being on top means combining the ‘hard power’ with the ‘soft power’. We can translate the term ‘soft power’ as the sum of capacities and relations that can influence other states in your favor, other than military capacity. Russia already has good and profitable economic relations with regional states. Therefore when creating good political regional relations all states must take into consideration the balance of power and realistically place themselves in order to project sustainable relations and efficient policies with other partners in the region.

Romania and Bulgaria play a double role as EU members and BSEC members. This is a huge advantage for a country to be able to accomplish good cooperation with so many states and to increase the chances for a better development in the future. They can provide good insight for both organizations and help create a more balanced development strategy as they can compare and contrast for positive results the two experiences as members of both organizations.

Economy is the heart of every nation. If economy is strong and stable, states’ thrive and progress is reached more easily. **Economic** relations in the Black Sea region have always existed. A recent project conducted by the EU, called OLKAS, has shown that strong economy and commerce used to be developed in the region from de Aegean to the Black Sea. In the Middle Ages the sea side ports were strong economic forts (during the Byzantine Empire). As time passed the Industrial Revolution opened the era of a new sector in economy: the industry.

Transitioning from the Industrialized Age to the Modern one, the economy of littoral states, mostly the ports' economy, evolved from manufacturer's businesses to hard industry of ship making and oil and marine mineral exploiting. The old mission of ports as centers of manufacturing industry has changed because the hardware industry had moved inland and the ports were left exposed to economic difficulties

and unemployment. A new economic role must be given to ports and most of them took the economic opportunity of logistic businesses and tourism.

Nowadays an important role in maritime economy is played by the fishing sector, the mineral resources, and the oil extraction. Creating good infrastructure for ports, like modern docks with good security and easy access facilities, accommodation and restaurant facilities for working personnel, roads and means of rapid and high-standard transportation for fishing businesses, organizing local fish markets in the port attracts the big buyers by identifying and promoting the niche natural fauna and flora that only the Black sea region can offer. The oil and mineral exploiting sector is controlled by the private sector and special regulations must be enforced for a sustainable exploitation. In this sector there already are bilateral relations between different Black Sea countries that have ongoing contracts.

The Black Sea is the second largest region rich in oil and natural gas. Since we know that hydrocarbons are an asset for every state, one must master the economy in this sector as efficiently as possible. Another sector of the energy is the renewable energy. In Romania large investments were made in the eolian sector which provides consistent income to the economy. Other types of energy can be exploited, like the solar or ocean thermal energy.

The sea offers a very rich marine world. The flora can be researched and used in different domains like the food industry or pharmaceuticals. Also, the marine soil can offer rich mineral content that can have a multitude of uses. The Dead Sea mud is famous for its cosmetic properties and generates great profit to the cosmetic industry. The Techirghiol mud in Romania was also proved to have mineral properties that can be further researched and promoted, the sapropelic mud found there is known for its beneficial effects on the neurological system as well as on skin conditions.

Logistics are the new destination of ports as a consistent economical segment. Due to international raising commerce, shipping has become a key factor for this sector. Economy can benefit from the taxes applicable in this

field. But in order to become sustainable for shipping operations a port must be well connected to infrastructure and close to important commercial markets. In this sense, Constanța port is the open gate for many companies operating in this economy sector to reach the whole Europe due to its strategic position. Yet there is much to be done regarding the good practices and harbor facilities and infrastructure.

The Black Sea is often referred in economic terms as a cluster. Although the BSEC organization is a parliamentary one, the access is open to all actors in the economic, technological, political, social, educational and scientific field. The financial resources offered by the member states through the BSEC Development Bank are insufficient to sustain such a complex project for a long period of time. Involving the private sector to participate actively in the implementation of the regional strategy is mandatory for a healthy economic environment. The sea marine cluster is a body of work that needs the participation of all the actors involved.

One of the largest and most important sectors in the economy of the region is agriculture. The role that agriculture plays is crucial, as most of the goods that the littoral states trade are coming from this sector. Agriculture has the potential to bring the most profit for the regional economy if marketed and promoted wisely.

Since political issues are hard to tackle at a regional scale, each country has its own internal difficulties and a tremendous history of conflict, what is left as a trigger of positive evolution is economy. As stated before, agriculture has the potential to make a difference in the economy of each regional state, as most of the economies of the Black Sea corridor are mainly agrarian. In Romania 30% of the working population is active in the field of agriculture and more than 60% of the population lives in the rural areas.

Food has always defined our culture and influenced life itself. It is a common Eastern custom to discuss and clinch deals over a dinner or a meal. Hospitality in this part of the globe has always meant sharing food with guests. Foreigners are welcomed –up to this day— with the traditional bread and salt. Thus food is still a

means of life and agriculture is the way of living for most of the peoples living in this beautiful landscape adorned with the Black Sea, the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Producing food can be taken to a higher level and can cover not only the state or regional needs but can be successfully exported throughout the world. One must seize the opportunity the global market has to offer and focus more on the positive outcomes rather than on the difficulties that feeding a hungry world can bring.

Food security is one of the main issues on the global political agenda nowadays. This is also a concern for the member states of the BSEC organization. Our way of eating has evolved in time and the technological advances are seen, on one hand, in the fact that we are living an era of abundance, and on the other hand, these super processed foods are lacking nutrients and show poverty in the aspect of food quality. The global chain market changed the way people eat and their culinary preferences. The main tendency is for uniformity and for slowly losing the authenticity of the traditional, local, agricultural products. Now it is the time for a food revolution, for producing and eating locally, in order to ensure food security, financial, social and cultural abundance. These are the things that are needed the most and must be emphasized by local economies to build a strong sector and to cooperate for a regional agricultural landmark.

Creating a strong agricultural sector for the regional economy is a hard work and involves the joined venture of all the big players in the field. Of course, the role of the governments is to ensure a stable political and economic environment for both public sector and private one. Since most of the companies working in the field of agriculture are private they can easily join their capabilities and resources creating long term partnerships that are profitable for every company involved. When a joined venture is created every company shares the same risks and benefits, thus they are more likely to work harder and transparently to achieve their goals. This type of business instrument is largely used with success in the western economy and can be implemented in the Black Sea region as well.

The Black Sea region, beside the richness found in the sea itself-gas, oil, mineral, and fish- offers the opportunity of practicing a niche type of agriculture: organic, BIO or Ecological agriculture. The natural biodiversity and soil natural fertility make this region a heaven for Ecological Agriculture. Also the traditional foods, authentic taste and traditions, beautiful scenery and landscape, are a trigger for tourists.

The good-practices in many EU countries have shown that organic farms and short-chained agricultural selling systems are a key to success. Promoting small agricultural businesses and certifying the products obtained as Ecological or BIO and implementing the short-chained food systems are a way to create many jobs and to save the small farmers that are now struggling to make a living. In order to accomplish that, each state must promote and create awareness among its members regarding this type of agriculture and support farmers in the process of certification. Most of the farmers in this region already practice a family based agriculture using traditional methods and techniques and almost no chemicals, suitable for Ecological Agriculture. Today there are many financial programs offered for farmers that want to develop a BIO business in agriculture.

It is important for every member state to make a SWOT analysis and develop a sustainable plan for development in this sector. States like France, Italy, and Germany offer us many example of good-practices that can be replicated with success (AMAP in France aims to sustain the traditional agriculture and so does GAS in Italy). Short food chains play a huge role in achieving this goal.

The short food chain was in the past the way for agricultural commerce that guaranteed the autonomy and chance of welfare for the producer. At the same time, the buyer could benefit from food knowledge at a much higher level than other types of food chains. The challenge for the modern world is to balance the food production and distribution so as not to dehumanize the agricultural act itself. The tendency is towards a modern agriculture where robots and IT programming will replace human labor. Discussion around short food chains transcends national space and reaches a world policy level where corporate interests and

manipulation play decisive roles in the food education and education of the population. The desire for control acts on the same old "divide et impera" pattern to limit the influence of short food chains. Promoting and expanding short food chains at national, regional, continental level is a way to counterbalance a growing world that shows little concern for the environment and natural resources. (www.foodlinkscommunity.com)

The Black Sea region offers a good example of short food chain economy as far as agricultural exchange and commerce is concerned. For hundreds of years littoral states, and not only, have engaged in maritime trade relations to make a profit from agricultural products. Agriculture was the main sector that could bring prosperity in the past. Goods such as cereals, wine, oil, animals, fruits and vegetable, and other secondary products, were successfully traded among the regional states. Historic accounts and discoveries show us that maritime commerce was very strong in this area. This legacy can be exploited and promoted as a cooperation tool for every member state.

In a practical way starting with the definition of the short food chain we are able to create a strategy for the Black Sea region. In 2009, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in France made a plan to promote this short food chains and in this document it was given a short and effective definition of the term: „ Un circuit court est un mode de commercialisation des produits agricoles qui s'exerce, soit par la vente indirecte a condition qu'il n'y ait qu'un seul intermédiaire” (a short chain is a way for the producer to sell directly his agricultural products or to sell them indirectly at the expense of a sole intermediary).

Short food chains are made up of many activities designed to ensure the sale of products and services obtained from agricultural activities. Thus, each type of direct sale is a link which, connected with the others, makes up a quality food chain. We cannot discuss quality without having a holistic approach to the agricultural phenomenon. So when we sell an agricultural product we also sell the story behind it or with all the details that make it: social, human, cultural, geographic, visual, organoleptic, nutritional, technological, ethical aspect.

We have the following types of sales within the short chain: direct sale on the farm (i.e. farm store, B & B farm as a way to develop also agro-tourism, U-pick farm or "pick-your-own" for the wine and fruit and vegetable sector), direct sales in permanent agri-food markets where the local public can buy first hand fresh quality products, agro-food sales at occasional fairs, festivals, traditional events, etc. where producers can meet other short chain representatives and can settle commercial relations, direct sale in own stores, direct sale to cooperatives- this is a very efficient practice in the whole world but people in our region are often skeptical because of the sour taste the Communist regime left them regarding this form of association, local producers warehouse, direct sale with delivery at the client's home; and indirect sale through online stores, e-shops that offers a worldwide market opportunity. Also, a number of complementary activities (agro-pedagogical, culinary agro-tourism, social services, traditional manufactured goods etc.) within the farm can be undertaken to promote the goods produced and to obtain additional income. (www.reseau-amap.org).

The short food chain is characterized by diversity. It can take many forms of production and distribution from traditional manufacturers' markets to delivering weekly baskets with agricultural products to online stores, all with the sole purpose of bringing the producer and the consumer in the same context. The European Union has authorized a paper that offers good-practice examples from all over the world that can be an inspiration for us. The European Rural Review offers the readers the opportunity to see that most often, these farmers are multiplied by their mobilization in Producer Associations, LAG- Local Action Groups. These initiatives create multiple opportunities for capitalizing on local agricultural potential. This is a method that can be applied in any sector of agriculture: kettle breeding, fishing, apiculture, milk industry, poultry industry, meat processing industry, field crops, fruit and vegetable, wine production.

Direct sale to individuals is the simplest form of direct producer-consumer trading. This method allows the consumer to receive information directly from the producer regarding the origin of the product, its cultural and culinary value. This type of sale can also be done via the internet, provided that the seller maintains the

relationship with the customer. Further on, collective direct selling refers to formal and informal collaboration between manufacturers to sell their products together in collective associations. Their buyers are part of consumer associations that buy products directly from farms where they are obtained or from collection centers where various agricultural producers and cooperatives organize their products sales. Another type of direct sale is the consumer-producer partnership that "allows consumers to play a more active role in setting up and sustaining the local farming system within their communities." This type of community-supported farming, CSA, has a major impact on communities because the consumer participates in and sustains the food production, financially, through agricultural labor, etc., but receives agricultural products instead. This is a way in which the consumer grows fond and identifies himself with the product and with the farmer. (www.repositorio.cepal.org).

The Black Sea offers huge resources to develop and sustain a massive network of short food chains. Each country participating in the BSEC Organization has its unique gastronomy and savory foods and drinks that can turn them into landmarks for culinary tourism. As states on the littoral coast of the Mediterranean Sea are worldwide known for the Mediterranean diet, which was proven by many research studies to have great health benefits, so can the states in the Black Sea region be. In order to achieve this ample project, with the participation of all members, research must be conducted to identify those culinary elements that make up a Black Sea regional diet and to see how people can benefit from it. We already know that olive oil and a moderate consumption of wine can bring to our diet a plus and can maintain a good health. Also fresh and healthy foods that are ecologically or organically grown are most suitable for our diet. These are all agricultural products that are already found in our region. We can only better the way we present and market agriculture in the region, as it holds the capacity to generate huge profits.

Commercial activities and trade date back in the Byzantine era and were one of the most important traits of the Black Sea basin. Nowadays commerce is an ongoing activity that involves all the sea regional states and one of the biggest actors on the market, China. Although

the products coming from Asia are not based on spices, opium and fabrics like silk, as in the past, this sector is still strongly represented by the fashion industry. Fabrics and clothes coming from China are only equaled, if not surpassed, by the commerce with technology. The project in which the BSEC organization is involved tries to remake the famous Silk Road emphasizing its touristic importance. Although this is a method to bring together 34 countries through touristic interests, still the commercial aspect of the matter is perceived as of foremost importance.

Legislation and regulations in the commercial sector are being updated and upgraded by all regional states and this leads to a more efficient trade ethic. Through commerce many important and necessary goods can enter the borders of a country but if there are not strict rules and laws many undesired goods like trafficable ones, drugs or weapons can also come in. Elaborating a coherent and uniform maritime and harbor legislation in all BSEC member states can create a strong and durable good-practice background for commercial companies. Also a special care must be given to the offshore operations of trading companies that can try to hide either dirty money or illegal activities.

In this ultra-developed era that we live in, commerce has been taken to a next level. If in the past we could only talk of commercial goods that were being traded physically, today we have the technology trade. This new type of business created large amounts of money and has easily expanded due to the internet. Everyone who has access to an internet connection can order almost anything from everywhere. This is a wonderful liberty that we have nowadays but if misused it can turn into a nightmare.

The Black Sea has been a gate for commerce used from Antiquity by both European and Asian states in order to expand their markets. This wonderful geographical scenery found itself at the crossroad for two worlds. Due to these intensive commercial relations, the cultural background has pregnant shades left by this trade. Moreover when a good was brought from a far land, the buyer not only got the product itself but also the cultural print and information that were encoded in the product.

Although commercial relations are still strong between Black sea region states and ports are important in this matter, cultural relations are also relevant and can strengthen the cooperation in the area. The cultural heritage is very rich in this space and research and multidisciplinary projects must be set out to identify the cultural landmarks. The BSCU Organization is doing a great job by maintaining such close relations within member states and emerging into so many projects that create a good cooperation and understanding among states.

The **cultural** aspect is the definite perspective of a geographical space. One cannot exist outside a culture. The Black Sea region is a wonderful mélange of strong cultures: the Hellenistic culture, the Slavic culture, the Muslim culture, the European and the Asian culture to some extent. For a non-Black sea region inhabitant this can create the mesmerizing effect that a peacock creates on his admirer. It can be quite overwhelming to perceive so many cultural traits in such a distinctive but rather small geographical area. This unique trait of consistent and diverse cultural heritage can be a boost for promoting the region.

For a coherent strategy that can have a cultural impact, first, we must identify what brings us together and afterwards raising awareness among member states, that they share common traditions, beliefs, history, geography and resources, and to grow their fondness towards them. A great tool is touristic management. In order to get people to agree on a common cultural heritage they must get to know each other and this is easily done through tourism. Also cultural exchange and educational mobility programs for students can make a difference. Encouraging the informational transfer and participating in international research programs also bonds people and institutions.

Ports were the spaces where most cultural exchanges took place. Now sellers do not have to travel themselves to ports, in order to clinch a deal, there are commercial companies that take care of that, and thus the cultural importance of harbor cities has declined. A good idea would be to give a new life to those areas of the ports that are now abandoned due to the moving inland of the hardware industry, by transforming them into creative hubs. There are

many examples of abandoned factory sites or production sections that were redesigned by artists that moved their workshops there and hold artistic exhibitions, concerts etc.

Black Sea cities have their own gastronomic culture that is unique. Gastronomy is very important for a region and there are countries or cities that are known for their culinary art. Bourgogne is a region in France well known for its wine. Tourists visit it from all over the world and participate in wine tasting guided tours. Provence in France is visited not only for its lavender fields but for its gastronomy that created a cultural hallmark called „la joie de vivre” (the joy of living, a lifestyle that is being promoted by the French authorities as a cultural trait). The Black Sea region can also promote its wines, Romania, Moldavia, and Georgia are famous for their vineyards and culinary savory dishes: fish soup, stuffed cabbage rolls, Turkish delight, Bulgarian pickles etc. are highly appreciated. Also the Danube Delta, among other sites in the Black Sea region, is included in the UNESCO heritage and this only is a wonderful tourist attraction.

Creating a regional brand that is very suggestive and easily spotted can help to create a coherent image of the region. This brand can be used on local, regional products and services as a distinctive and authentic mark of the area. PR and good communication technologies can help to create an unforgettable and distinctive aura for the region, enhancing its potential.

A culture evolves through science and renewal. Many people are ready to experience other cultures and to embrace them through science. We live in the era of hi-tech and life included very quickly all the gadgets and commodities technology has to offer. The BSEC organization can promote its projects and beliefs through modern technology such as apps. A cultural project can be set for all undergraduate students from the regional member states to help them better understand the history and culture of this region. This can be done on a game app, since children are very keen on games, and take them through different levels of knowledge in order to complete the game. Also this type of game app can be used on the historic sites that students get to visit so that they will learn through a game, where they can catch and find

different „treasures” with information, important things on the culture of Black Sea region.

Educational and cultural projects like ERASMUS or COMENIUS programs have proved to be very efficient in helping young people better understand European culture, languages and values. Likewise the BSCE has started mobility projects that aim at knowing better the Black Sea region for young people and for academic staff. As an improvement to these efforts, disseminated seminars with information regarding the BSEC's projects could be held in universities all over member states as well as workshops where ideas for new projects would be found. Also technical universities can offer great working force and can be an opportunity for recruiting future professionals. Each member state could create a special department in the Education Ministry for marine research and innovation, this will help generate specialized work force for this sector.

Beyond any political and economic cooperation plan, the BSEC Organization has a **social** mission. The peoples living in the BSEC region have faced over time terrible difficulties. The two World Wars had as main battlefield the Black Sea region as we know it today and left huge traces of destruction. Also the Balkan conflict, the Caucasus animosities and all the political instability left traces on the peoples' lives. Among other aspects, like political and military conflict, poverty and famine did a terrible harm to peoples living in the region. There are member states that are struggling to get back on track after they have survived military conflict and peace is very necessary. Maintaining stability and peace, promoting good understanding among states is crucial for a sound social background. Assuring each citizen's security and peaceful living gives each individual the ability to persuade one's dreams and to reach one's maximum potential.

All the projects and actions of the BSEC should be “for the people, and by the people”. In recent years a massive flood of trained and skilled workforce left the Black Sea region for other, more developed, European countries. In order to stop this migration one must offer well-paid jobs and good working conditions as well as a calm social climate. Measures and policies must be adapted at the market needs to better serve the people living in the regional states.

Immigrants from the EU have adapted themselves very quickly to the European culture and this could be because they lost their national feeling in this global world.

Well-trained personnel have also left the blue economy, leaving this sector exposed. As stated before through investments in the educational field by developing marine research and identifying gifted students and helping them to specialize in this field is the best way to attract work force in the blue economy. Knowing what the sea has to offer in terms of resources is also an important indicator that can shape the dimension of the blue sector.

Creating a social and cultural identity to which Black Sea regional members can relate is an important aspect in keeping them from leaving their countries. If there would be a strong regional identity and good working opportunities within the Black sea region, all migration could be done in the region, thus the benefits will stay and bring added-value to the regional economy.

The regional member states have worked together to stop illegal migration, have offered emergency assistance during difficult times, like the attacks in Turkey or other catastrophes. Humanitarian emergencies like the lack of a medicine or good medical infrastructure to treat diseases, not trained enough medical staff, call for a joined effort to create a modern and high standard medical unit in the region. The project of a multidisciplinary hospital that combines the newest research, high-end technology and trained workforce would be necessary. The Black Sea region has the resources and the capabilities to build a regional hospital complex that can offer the best health care, available for all citizens of every member state. Of course, legal issues regarding health care insurance must be well established, so that everyone that owns health insurance active within the BSEC organization limits could get medical care.

Well educated and healthy people are the desires of every state and this can help every nation to take giant leaps towards progress and prosperity.

Since the BSEC organizations have important ongoing projects that cover most areas of cooperation and are open to suggestion and new ideas, in this paper, an attempt was made to

offer personal views and insight to some matters. Most sectors are covered by grants for research and innovation, a fact which shows the desire to improve cooperation and to create a sustainable strategy for the future.

In conclusion, one of the largest sectors that can influence the Black Sea region for the better is the economy. Creating good policies and a safe and predictable business environment in the region can be of interest on the part of the large companies that act in the blue economy. Port regulation must be the same throughout the whole region for more transparent and safer commercial relations. Commerce and trade used to represent the strong points of the Black Sea ports but this changed with time and now the main activity concerned is the logistic business. Other new dimensions can be added to the littoral cities by changing the appearance of the ports by creating a modern infrastructure and by allowing creative hubs to develop their workshops there. Organizing events like art exhibitions or concerts can revive the life of the old medieval ports and can make them even more attractive for tourists.

Building a strong network for local farmers to establish short food chains, so that authentic products found only in this region can get notoriety is a smart way to promote the region. Also using e-commerce and creating cooperatives that can sell their products to other associations of consumers that support locally grown foods is another good tool. The Black Sea region could be marketed as a gastronomic destination for tourists that what to experience the authenticity of the region by eating natural and BIO produced goods and admire the landscape and the simple life in many agro-touristic facilities. These agro-touristic facilities must be constructed using local materials and old traditional building techniques to create an authentic feeling and experience for the

consumer. Creating a regional brand for the Black Sea region is mandatory to generate a strong and distinctive image. By using new technology like apps and IT games children can get acquainted with the culture and history of this area and thus the regional values can be promoted.

Social aspects like stability, peace and health care are very important to grow the regional power and influence. Cooperation for finding and employing well-trained personnel in the blue economy and attracting in the Black Sea region the workforce that is likely to emigrate to Europe will bring gain and added-value to the BSEC organization. Establishing a large regional hospital with modern technology and skillful personnel and creating an integrated health care insurance system for all the member states will be a great asset to the whole region.

These are just a few modest views on how the BSEC organization can develop its projects for the future. In the past 25 years, good communication and consistent efforts have proved to be successful in implementing the objectives that the organization has had so far. New challenges and opportunities that will be managed in a good manner through state cooperation within the Black Sea area rise on the horizon. Keeping the peace and understanding between states will provide a proper environment for economic, political, commercial, social and cultural growth.

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NEW CHALLENGES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS: SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG CITIZENS; INTEGRATION WITH MIGRANT COMMUNITIES, AND ACADEMIC COOPERATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS

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Alexandros Iliadis Castillo, (Athens, 1987) is a Greek Sociologist coming from a diverse and multicultural family: his brother is Bulgarian and his sister is Cuban, while his mother is Chilean and his father is Greek (although he was born in Czechoslovakia after the Civil War). Thus, he grew up in Greece, Czechoslovakia, Canada, and Chile, where he did his bachelor degree. At the moment, he is Coordinator at the Chilean Agency for Higher Education Quality Accreditation, focusing on internationalization of higher education and national qualification frameworks.



In order to return back to his roots, he took his MA studies at the International Hellenic University in Thessaloniki, Greece, with his final theses titled: “Social Networks and Transnational Practices under Forced Migration in the Eastern Mediterranean”, carried out in the Greek Island of Lesbos-Mytilene.

As a heir of the great struggles of the Cold War (Latin-American and Chilean dictatorships, Eastern Europe regimes, Greek Civil War Diaspora), he has focused on a topic that nowadays calls our attention once again: forced migration, refugees, human rights, as well as institutional responses to these phenomena.

Aiming to offer feasible solutions to global challenges and combining his professional background, he proposes to strengthen local sovereignty enhancing integration mechanisms, along with international cooperation and mobility. To divulge new evidence and good practices on these topics, he has been invited to several congresses and roundtables, such as the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees congress (CESSMIR), and the Canadian Sociological Association Annual Conference (CSA-SCS).

After 25 years of non-stop parliamentary work under the umbrella of economic cooperation, the countries of the region have reached a level of stability and common objectives that lead to the consolidation of the BSEC community as a regional power.

These efforts should now lead to active policies in other fields of social life, such as higher democratic standards (participation, public engagement of citizens, among others), academic cooperation (research groups, quality, mobility and internationalization), and integration policies for transnational migration influxes, which might increase along the years.

As the region slightly becomes a key one within international relations, these goals are vital in order to take an independent and consolidated position in the agenda, as well as for bringing benefits to its people. Since better democracies and cooperation trends enhance economic aspects and both work as a synergy, we should all take these new challenges and place them as a core commitment for the next years.

Introduction

When the delegates for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) first signed the agreement for this institution, they could hardly project the non-stop work for the next 25 years. The world was coming out of serious struggles in which the Black Sea region was one of the main actors, although its role was not as a protagonist, but as a passive observer of what was occurring around. Nonetheless, one of the clever steps the region took was the creation of the Black Sea Economic Community (BSEC) in 1992, as a regional body tending to unite the hopes and dreams of its citizens and governments. The inscription of the Parliamentary Assembly is somehow a branch of this step and constitutes since then a vital structure (PBSEC, 2018).

However, the PABSEC and other corpora have gone through different stages in the last 25 years, from an active role and several agreements, to a more spectator role where not much has been said. One of the problems faced have been the overlapping of some bilateral agendas versus an integral agreement or arrangements of main goals as a region should do (Tassinari, 2006).

Other issues are related to external agendas and their aim to apply their politics into the region through some countries, which has led to a proxy agreement but also to a categorization of neighbors. These agendas have had several commitments, from environmental care and protection, to military assessment and international integration. However, when approaching to the region, a kind of lack of comprehension has raised and no fructification has been raised since the European part has always had a clear focus that Black Sea countries do not place as their main goals. Thus, the region is a crossroad but not a main capital in foreign interests (Tassinari, 2006). Of course, the region cannot forget its own open conflicts, or the so called cold ones. This has also interrupted the efforts for consolidating an international agenda among the region (Jackson, 2004).

Nonetheless, after these years, the parliamentarian, academic and political bodies have understood the importance of walking together and carrying out a separate string agenda, where economic cooperation doesn't really have to be subdued to the political agenda,

and that the people of this multicultural region have more in common than differences.

When not economic, one of the principles that have helped to push the agenda along these years is the principle that democratic countries lead to better solutions and collaboration. To work properly, this principle has to be embedded in the core of societies and not only at top levels or in formal ways. The proposal of this essay is indeed, an initiative to consolidate cultural ties, through the emergence of new paradigms such as social and cultural capital, cooperation, and solidarity as complements to the democratic structures.

On the other hand, and to make it applicable, I hereby propose that the region has reached some mature and that the next step is the collaboration and homologation of some activities. Always in the side of public policy, the higher education level is a clear space where these features can be displayed properly. Moreover, we propose an integrated system to assure higher education quality through collaboration among the main actors, leading to an internationalization process that would enhance the position of the region as a key player in several areas.

Finally, the need of arranging some principles over the emigrational crisis must be actively included in the agenda for the upcoming years, since this crisis is occurring at our step doors and will probably increase, not only due to the instability of our neighboring countries, but to the global trend of migration itself. Moreover, with the recent agreements arranged by the European Union, most of transnational migrants and refugees will soon start to knock our doors. This, somehow, challenges the multicultural past of the region, but it also becomes a great opportunity to integrate new actors in a developing region, using the best of their skills and the best of our featuring.

For instance, enhanced participation of local population could lead to find solutions to domestic problems, taking out the heavy state backpack to solve each one of these issues (security in the barrios, cultural affairs, and local councils for sanitary issues, among others). Only an empowered community can take these challenges and the costs go straight under the rates of bureaucratic procedures. Here, public

projects managed by local communities have been the key to solve these problems.

On the side of collaborative work along higher education and internationalization, this could also be an instrument for integration in an inter-cultural sphere with a diverse population in terms of religion, cultures, costumes, etc. Moreover, internationalization could be the answer to ease mobility and to integrate new educational migrants from other spheres.

The PABSEC must play a vital role in the coming years, leading to the discovery other dimensions of economy, or aiming to bring these categories into an economic field to improve the situation of the region. Thus, all perspectives should be brought into account, not only the purely economic ones. The challenge here is also to make all these policies dialogue as a social synergy.

Background

The PABSEC and the BSEC are supranational institutions uncharged of the economic, educational, and political relations of the Black Sea region. This geopolitical association is a powerful actor, among one of the central ones of a global world (PABSEC, 2018).

In a world of continuous change, there was a clear need to enhance cooperation among countries in the region. Even with a relatively small GDP as compared with other alliances, such as APEC or EU, the region has one of the main sources which feed Europe and Asia with energy. Thus, its vital role has been underestimated along the years, previously seen as a peripheral actor, when, indeed, it's now becoming the engine of the world (BSEC, 2018).

For many years, the Black Sea region was left behind in the international agenda due to many reasons, such as the struggle its neighbors were passing through, or the importance to build bridges with some of its key actors, such as Turkey or Russia. However, this has been left behind and new approaches are vital in order to understand the dynamic of the region.

Actually, this "leaving behind" policy has some positive externalities, such as the development of a common identity (which is still under construction), leading the region to cooperation in formal and informal levels (states and citizens, respectively). In a world under a

single-pole power after the fall of the so-called socialist wall, it wasn't such a disadvantage to rescind of the attention of our neighbors, as the EU. This leads to a kind of independence that until nowadays is part of the independence of Black Sea region in terms of public policies (Aydin, 2005).

As Jackson (2004) said, common regional problems have cooperative regional solutions and this should be the case for the Black Sea. However, over time, the region has been on the verge of being an autonomous empowered region or a European hinterland, under the excuse of solving security problems.

Indeed, along these years, the cooperation with the external powers has faced two problems: the internal struggles every some years, and the external approach of the European Union to consolidate its own position giving the guidelines of how to behave as a regional counterpart. Both, neighboring and in-house struggles have had the particularity that they have not touched cultural or economic ties of the region, thus, permitting an uninterrupted work of the parliamentary assembly (Aydin, 2005). In sum, there is a wide perspective with great quotes of independency that can still be reached: an independent route that stays apart -although dialogues- with neighboring policies.

First level of action: enhancing social capital and people's networks

An overview to social and cultural capital

Social capital is a concept born under the sociological framework with a great impact in public policies and policy makers, since it is a versatile component, engaging people's abilities and state initiatives. We can describe it as the accumulation of experiences and knowledge disposed in a shape of social networks (Bourdieu, 2008). This is a differentiating component among communities, such as currency, but not so easily transferable; thus, social capital, as any other type of capital, is applicable to several forms of production and accumulation (Fine, 2001). In other definitions, the social capital is constituted by all the actual or potential resources associated to the possession of a durable relation network, of institutionalized mutual knowledge, as resources that belong to a specific people's group (Bourdieu, 2008).

Meanwhile, cultural capital is the accumulative production of knowledge disposed in a determined social space, which receives feedback from this “space” only if, within it, there are determined practices and habitus. Thus, if the cultural capital is disposed in a context where this knowledge is not recognized, and where its holder (the person) doesn’t have the contacts and networks, it becomes more or less useless. In other words, the social capital is the people’s capability to fix permanent relationships using their cultural capital guided under a same framework or space. These relations must be fixed under the necessity of creating social change and enhancing their situation, as well as generating differentiation among other social groups.

Putnam (1993) defines social capital as the “paths of social organization such as confidence, norms, and networks that help efficiency of social groups easing coordinated actions (Putnam, 1993 in Kliksberg, 2000). Here, one of the indicators of social capital and its enhancement would be the reciprocity, confidence, participation, as markers of responsibility and compromise. These elements can be disposed in a formal way (elections and politics) or in an informal framework (markets in Istanbul or in Armenia-Azerbaijan border).

James Coleman (1990) defines the social capital as the relations and networks to which a person ascribes, putting in them much more effort to obtain resources and reach goals that in other way would be impossible to get. Expectation and obligations are fundamental since from expectations I measure the effort I will put in one specific group (market place v/s university or bachelor degree).

Finally, other authors define more precisely social capital as the set of norms, institutions and organizations that promote confidence and cooperation among people, in communities and in the society as an overall. These conditions of confidence and cooperation can reduce costs of transactions, create public goods and to facilitate the construction of social actors and wealthy societies (Durston, 2001). However, social capital has its own risks, such as competitiveness among different groups with same features or exclusion of others. Accumulation of social networks here is a powerful instrument to enhance groups, but it could play a harmful role in the dispute for new

resources among groups. In the other hand, social capital needs to have intention to influence the public sphere so it can keep accumulating. If any group is engaged in its own goals without bringing into account the environmental factor, it might lose ties with the community. Finally, if social networks are seen only as an economical investment and not as shareable experiences within and among groups, we also lose the focus. If one member of the group takes all the representation and has all the contacts for fixing better prices, contacts with authorities, the knowledge and speech (or other soft skills), the group also stays behind without accessing to the profits.

To overcome these risks, social capital should be understood as the set of relations that create extensive relations with two main components: equalitarian participation within the group, not to create sectarianism or social exclusion. Thus, it is necessary to create horizontal ties within and among groups. A family that has ties with local power (politics) and that uses these ties to prevent others to receive public benefits will never succeed due to the lack of confidence among the other members of the barrio, community or neighborhood.

Social capital: individual and collective

Individual social capital is understood as the networks and contacts that a sole individual creates and which are useful in specific moments of his life; they are much more related to an individual’s social relations (Coleman, 1988). On the other hand, we can observe collective social capital as the social institutions (formal or informal) that fix activities among inhabitants of a community and how these institutions (practices, costumes, relations between organisms or associations) are constituted as an extensive and complex network, within a community, reinforcing the role assigned to each one of these institutions (union, trade chambers, neighborhood councils, sportive teams, etc.).

From collective social capital we find communitarian social capital, which is fixed by groups of people. This is the capability of the people to reach resources in a much more effective way than if it was individually. The characteristics of the people, their community, the local identity and collective memory play a vital role in the people’s configuration and the features of their institutions.

Some dimensions of social capital

Participation

Participation is a fundamental element in the definition of social capital, since through this procedure (participating), inhabitants meet themselves, they know each other, share experiences, take care and learn about their local needs, as well as of programs and public policies. It has a direct implication in the levels of confidence of the population. People take the risk to participate and to take decisions when they know these decisions will have an impact in their community's life.

Citizen participation

This is the most known form of participation and it's defined as the ways of interaction between civil society and State. One of the modern mechanisms that citizen participation takes is related to the assessment of public policies, engagement in public budget, performance of participative budgets (through projects and so others) (Cunill, 1991). Since this sole dimension is too complex, it has been a consensus to categorize it in several levels.

Information

This factor constitutes the first step to engage the individual, not only in the public-state, but also in the public-community sphere. The flux of the information, dissemination, the opportunity and synchronization of accurate information are pillars of this stage, as well as transparency.

Consultant

This level is related to the appreciation of the community to the public policies and programs over some action courses. In general this level of participation is quite low in societies where state power is bigger than civil strength, since the "state" wouldn't like to be judged by outsiders. Nonetheless, referendums are fitted into this stage and they could ease the way to perform a public policy, or to measure the acceptance and perspective of the people. This level is placed under the shape of technical consultancies to expert panels, and under the form of communal assemblies or municipal referendums (OIT, 2004)

Co-decision

Here we find a real participation of the community in the decision level. The opinion has a binding relation to the authority, so it's not only about listening to the people but placing

their needs in the public agenda; it's not about receiving the information by the people but executing their ideas. People can also co-execute the public budget of a municipality or a province through participative projects. Latin-America, under a hard neoliberal system, has used these initiatives to take out the bureaucratic backpack of the state affairs, transferring these responsibilities to the population. Cultural, social, sportive, or micro-economic initiatives are placed under this scheme. Other sources we can see are the public bids launched in several aspects by the European Union. Nonetheless, at a micro-level, these initiatives have been somehow restricted.

Co-management

This is the most advanced step in the participation level, although it is the less used, since the friction between state agents and social sphere. It needs a high commitment from the state actors to share the management, and periodical review of each part of public actions. It also needs a high responsibility from the pure "social" actors, assessing budget disposal. The work ethic, the eventual antagonism between actors and state representatives, the client age use to this level (such as others), might become a problem and sometimes it could be used just to counter the legitimate power from the state. However, in modern communities it could lead to an active engagement among the private, public and communitarian sphere.

As we can see, participation at a citizen (or civilian) level has many benefits, such as the renewal of the legitimacy of state power in communities, and to ease the flow of public decisions with the salute and acceptance of the community. This undoubtedly leads to confidence of the community in itself, the disposal of hidden knowledge among social agents, but also gives a push to trust in local authorities at a more familiar and close level. Nonetheless, it can also lead to subdue social life and social capital through client age use and instrumental purposes. One of the main risks is to finish co-opting social actors through directional and vertical practices. Under authoritarian structures and leaderships, this would consolidate the dependency of the people to the state and private power, more than enhancing their skills and possibilities to overcome their troubles and struggles. Thus, an enhanced ethic from both parts needs to be placed.

Communitarian participation

The popular participation has somehow a different scope to understand this phenomenon. For some (Poveda, 1992), it is the participation that comes from below. For others, it focuses on the same problems, but under a two-direction dialogue, skipping the verticality of the state initiatives. We also find more elements related to the people and family to improve their situation.

Indeed, the communitarian participation resides in the locality, the family, and friendship relations. It is not a matter of following paths under a state scheme. It is much more about changing more immediate situations, where the participation within a group could help in a better way than participating in the public-state system. Here, people don't even need to count on the state in any of its forms. This is born by the people and it counters each level of citizen participation:

- At the information level: it brings the necessities of the people up to see them without the state or government officers needing to inform people of any initiative.
- At the consultancy level: it performs its own consultancies among the community when authoritarian local governments are not able to see the needs of the people.
- At the co-decision level: people take their own initiatives and place them in the public space, along with the whole community but having the account of the state only for administrative purposes.
- At the co-management level: people and organizations do not go to the state, but rather prefer to build their own system of self-governance, autonomy and own resources.

Thus, the communitarian participation can be understood as the process of transformation of individuals regarding their own necessities and the ones of their communities, creating a sense of responsibility, related to their own welfare, as also the capability of acting conciseness and constructively in the development of their lives (Poveda, 1992).

It differs from citizen participation since it carries two main characteristics: the participants of the organization constitute a continuous social process where they elaborate, execute, control and asses the decisions that they are aware of. Thus, their behavior is often much more critic. In other words, the actor is able to identify its problems on their own terms, without the

mediation of public downwards policy schemes. Some elements (not stages or steps) are:

Identification of necessities

This process is related to the actor and the relation with their environment, as well as the capacity to self-educate seeking to supply the necessities one identifies.

Coordination among organizations, and among institutions

As said before, the community has to coordinate its different organizations under the general umbrella of shared goals and commitments. On the other hand, accomplishing an administrative role, institutions should dispose the facilities to ease the way of communitarian organizations (giving free spaces for meetings, for instance).

Coordination among organized people and institutions

Organized people and institutions must have a communication channel based in the conscience of the people and their responsibilities. The state institutions must also have recognized and legitimate institutions to dialogue with the people.

Participation in policy making institutions

This element refers to the participation in regional and local institutions, as well as territorial and communal, where there must be decisional centers which integrate organizations and actors.

Undoubtedly, this model also presents some failures. For instance, some communities do not present or haven't developed the capability of identifying by themselves their needs, or some others present sentiments of disarray to the place where they are at a specific time (people who go to other cities or countries to work, but are much more worried on sending remittances to their countries than participating in social life).

Besides, in places where the presence of the state is almost invisible, this could be used as a great tool, but also as a way of disseminating odds and other sentiments against the local power.

However, the sense of giving the actors, the people, and their organizations, the tools by themselves, is something to remark. Finally, the

communitarian citizen is deeply social, since one doesn't have a previous identity before one's community. In other words, "the self is not prior to its ends"; one doesn't escape one's history. An individual doesn't choose one's values and later negotiate one's social scenario, because belonging to a social scenario is the scenario that defines one's values, from which a person can decide and judge (Ovejero, 1997 in Garcia, 2001).

Cooperation and solidarity

Cooperation is deeply engaged with reciprocal activities that come from confidence, and happens due to shared goals among individuals of a specific locality (Durstun, 2002). Nonetheless, it doesn't carry a rational strategy. As Valdez (2006) states, cooperation doesn't exist as a specific strategy, detailed, or consents, on behalf of the individuals or on the side of productive communities. It's not a component that arises from the precedent productivity, but from historical and social conditions. Thus, cooperation arises when actors identify an opportunity given by the circumstances.

Solidarity, meanwhile, is referred to the collaboration among subjects that pursue different goals but have the intention to help each other even when not sharing the same commitment. This altruist component is much cleverer in critical situations. They are not necessarily embedded in a capitalistic productive scheme, but, under principles and sentiments of fraternity, cultural similarities, identity, common membership that are not transferrable to the economic field.

Social capital presence in the Black Sea countries

As we have seen, social capital is a core component in the Black Sea countries and has had a long presence over centuries, becoming in a fundamental part of its multicultural shape. Even when in times of war, social networks among people have enhanced and prevented them from falling into the spiral of violence that governments have taken.

Moreover, this presence has been a key player overcoming poverty and social struggles. In other words, when the economic capital hasn't been able to show up, it is the social networks among people, families and communities the one that shows to convert social relations into economic revenues and profits

(Argeantopoulos). The story of the region shows that informal institutions are, more than a counterpart to formal issues, "the" way of living.

To give some examples, the region, after the fall of the socialist regimes, had the opportunity to reunite families and villages with a same root (traditions, ethnically similar, costumes). This showed how historical roots boosted economic life in formerly depressed places. Sharing common spaces, participating on the margins of the state (without countering it), and placing ancestral knowledge into specific places (the market of Armenia, Azerbaijan) also shows how contacts, social networks, embedded with trade affairs in a lower level, have been able to help people in needed cases.

Thus, social capital, which has already come from below, could be reinforced and encouraged through the situation.

Second level of action: the migrant question and integration policies

By the end of 2017, migration has reached 244 million people in the world, which means the 3.3% of the world population (OIM, 2017). Moreover, around 65.6 million people fall into the category of refugees or forcedly displaced (UNHCR, 2017).

What migrants face once they reach their destination remains unknown in terms of integration, assimilation, acculturation process, and other issues. Many of them face symbolic discrimination, depending on their social class, gender, or the reason of their migration (Tijoux, 2015). This leads to the creation of new categories, re-victimization, among other stereotypes (Tijoux, 2017).

Moreover, in the field of education, there is a gap in the information that still needs to be filled, so we can create inclusive policies and not only to rely on scholarships or mobility initiatives. In this sphere, we have been watching academic migration from a general scope and we haven't gone into it. For instance, we know there are about 4.5 million migrant students (IOM, 2017), but we do not know how many of them are facing real struggles and who are part of mobility programs. We also know that about 49% of student graduate from their bachelor program in the OECD countries (OECD, 2017), but we do not know how many migrant students finish their career in this same area, nor the

reasons of their defection or success. In other words: we know some students are not in the same situation than a typical interchange student, but the most of the times, services are displayed only for the latter.

In order to find harmonic solutions to the “what comes next” problem, government, institutions, civil organizations and people must play the role of integrating transnational communities in all places we find them. As public institutions (in terms of public role), universities should be one of the main actors, not only training new academic staff to focus on this issue, but also generating instruments to build an upward assimilation processes (Portes, 2001).

A global world needs integrated instruments to quantify but also to qualify the phenomenon, tracing life trajectories, (quantitative and qualitative approach). This could be applied only once or could have just a few versions, instead of repeatedly interviewing persons, under the risk of victimizing them. On the other hand it could lead to effective educative practices to a better assimilation process, without subduing their potentiality or own skills.

Migration in the Black Sea: the reasons behind a hard journey

The Black Sea region is one of the main actors in this new refugee crisis. It is said that over 3 million people are waiting on the Turkish shores to reach a boat to navigate towards the Aegean Islands. Like Turkey, Greece is also a key role player in this situation. Indeed, the EU-Turkey agreement of March, 18th, 2016, places these both countries at the center of a migration influx that hasn't stopped since then, although some numbers have gone down in the last two years.

On the other side, not only Lesbos Island (known as Mytilini) has been in the center of this situation, with over 10.000 refugees inhabiting this land, and over 4.000 people in the infamous refugee camp of Moria. Indeed, other islands such as Chios, Samos, have also been touched by the refugee waves, fleeing not only from Syria (where Turkey has had an active role since 2016), but from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and African countries such as Ethiopia, Somali, Algeria and so others. By the end of this essay, some 450 people had reached Mytilini, Lesbos Island, between March 21st and 30th, 2018.

Among the “refugees” we actually find people who could be denominated just as transnational migrants, who wanted a better opportunity for their lives and therefore made the route (a typical route to get into Europe for many years), getting somehow trapped in a kind of limbo at the moment of the signature of this agreement (which came into terms after 2 days of its signature, March 20th, 2016).

However, this brings into account some hidden issues over the past decades. With the arise of the so-called methodological nationalism, countries of the region (newly independent from socialist regimes and others such as Greece and Turkey), lost their multicultural component, since now some aspects such as welfare, civil rights and others, have come to be a limited resource that couldn't be shared with all who came across a county's border. Thus, restrictive measures carried out by the countries themselves, and highly encouraged by the European Union) in its neighboring policy, have seen the light in the Black Sea countries.

The arise of methodological nationalism

We stand for nationalism and methodological nationalism, not in a typical way, coming from culture, ethnicity or religion (which are also a strong component in the region), but when coming from the notion that the state is the agent uncharged of delivering benefits to its nationals and citizens, such as health care, access to education, free movement, speech liberties, and others.

This issue rose strongly after the fall of the wall and it could be the reason of why former socialist countries are now somehow against great migrant influxes such as the ones we are living now. On the one hand the poor condition they still afford, and on the other, the universality of their social system could easily collapse. However, countries with a liberal tradition also face new flows of migrants as a problematic task, since they are not prepared to assimilate this change (nor are they prepared to assimilate the new incomes).

European Union and the securitization paradigm

Since one of the main goals of migrants is to reach Europe (central and north), the agenda

for Black Sea has focused on placing this region just as a buffer zone to control these migration influxes. The European scheme of securitization has been responsible for leaving the BSEC as a spectator, working as a contractor to build European walls. Moreover, the securitization scheme is highly related to migration, linking this category to terrorism and traffics.

From its benchmarks organizational models, either from the outside-in or the inside-out (Tassinari, 2006), European Union has placed security and open markets as the main requirements to become a friendly neighborhood. Perhaps, the lack of a strategic approach has been the responsible for this hegemonic and sometimes imperial approach to the region. Years of exclusion and with the attention on its own, and later towards Russia, there was not much time to take care of the Black Sea countries, nor to treat them as a serious, autonomous and independent counterpart in a global world. This agenda has been met, however, enthusiastically by the Black Sea countries, which have also placed security and migration as one of its main goals to control.

To sum it up, the migration crisis has lost importance in the PABSEC agenda as such as in the other organisms of the BSEC institution since its own priorities have led to ensure their inhabitants, failing to meet a so-called “historical responsibility” to its own neighbors. This has also meant the loss of its multicultural components or at least to relegate it behind the first row of priorities. On the other hand, the stronger establishment and European Union agenda has placed this region as a subsidiary place for its own interest, making it to counter migration flows through inhuman means, under the paradigm of securitization of its own borders (not even the Black Sea countries ones).

Some answers and many questions

Probably, as the Black Sea consolidates its agenda(s), the migration flow will stop knocking at the doors of Europe and further influxes will call up to our countries, as part of a global system. In order to catch this on time, it’s necessary to apply integration policies on time, so we don’t receive this impact as a hit in the face without answers. When migrants cannot reach Europe, they do not plan getting back to their countries, but to somewhere else. That somewhere else will be fixed along their historical memory and past ties and it could

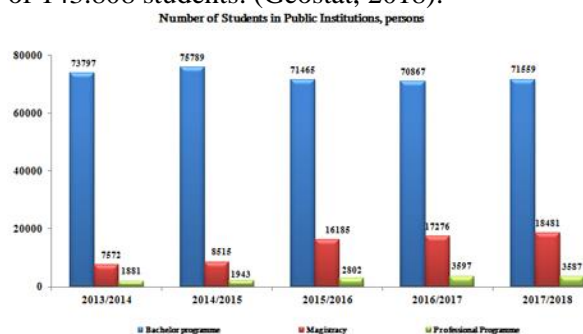
easily be this region. As the autonomy and prosperity reach our countries, more and more people will feel attracted by its culture, by its people and, moreover, by its developing economy.

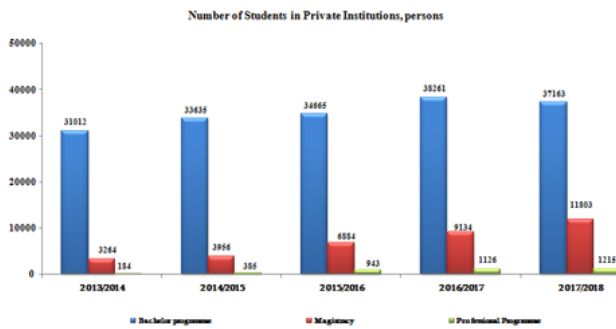
I believe that there are not many options left in these cases and that the risk of disturbs is quite closer here than in any other part of the world nowadays. Since the securitization paradigm (met jointly by the EU and the BSEC) has failed, we cannot manage violently (in any of its forms) this issue, but, trying it diplomatically and with peaceful means should lead the region to become a global power in terms of recovering its multicultural component, housing people from abroad, and enhancing its productivity and economy with fresh labor qualified hands. The investment stays here.

Third level of action: educational affairs, meeting up the challenges

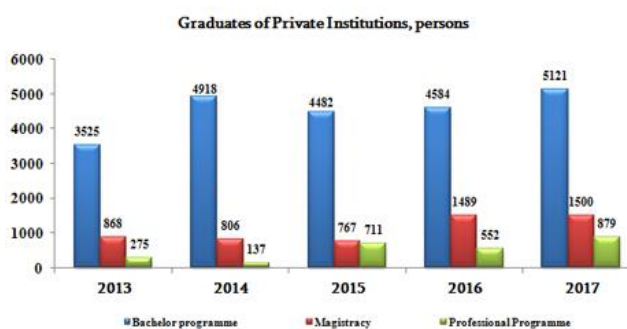
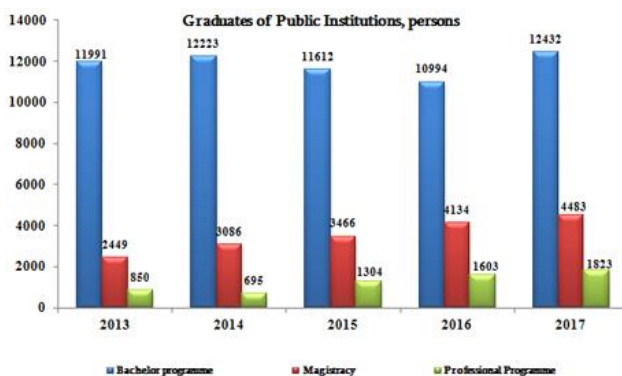
The increase of educational coverage by the Black Sea countries is a clear signal of its developing present and future. Thus, much more efforts must be placed in this area, from multi-lateral organizations within the scheme of the Black Sea countries, such as the PABSEC.

A short glance at Georgia (it was the only country with easier access to statistical accurate data) gives a clear path of what is going on with its inhabitants. In Georgia, the number of students in higher education increased from 83.250 students between 2013 and 2014 to 93.627 in the public sector, while the private, rose from 34.430 to 50.181 in the same time span. While the increase was over a 12, 4% in public institutions, in the case of private ones, this number raised a 45, 7%. In 2017, the foreign enrolment was about 14, 2%, this is, 10.074 out of 143.808 students. (Geostat, 2018).





Meanwhile, the graduated of each kind of institutions have also undergone a high increment. In the case of public institutions graduate (bachelor, master, and professional level), the numbers go from 15.290 in 2013 to 18.738 in 2018, which means an increase of 22,5%. For the private sector, the outcomes have passed from 4.668 to 7.500 students, which means an increase of 60, 6%.



In the case of Turkey the numbers change a little bit, but also show the increment of the enrolment in higher education institutions.

New challenges in the field of higher education

Quality accreditation, a regional system

Quality assurance is a great challenge over the whole world and the policy makers of the region should be aware of it. Better systems to assure quality and to make universities

accomplish national interests are vital in a world where the economy of knowledge looks closer and closer. Since the debate about quality has been wide and sometimes confusing, we will use the term as fit for purpose. Nonetheless, some indicators must be arranged. We hereby dispose some examples according to the institutional level.

Quality at the higher education institutions

When talking about institutions, quality must have into account some dimensions such as the requirements of the environment, since the students will develop their skills in an out-wall place. Some other indicators and markers are:

- Infrastructure of the University and facilities to the students;
- Number of incomes in terms of students;
- Number of outputs in terms of students, graduate rate, among others;
- Welfare system and scholarships for different activities;
- Number of professors and its relation with the number of students;
- Traineeship and skillful professors. Skills according to the level of education.
- Contact with the environment. Public relations with other institutions, labor market and scientific field. Also, internationalization affairs.

Quality at programs

When talking about programs, quality has to be assured with some differences, but nonetheless it must be a comprehensive exercise to assess each dimension of the careers, no matter if they are bachelor or graduate level. Some factors to determine quality are:

- Definition of the program (applicable or academic);
- Objectives and egress profile;
- Subject and curricular structure;
- Methodology and learning process;
- Egress rates and times to graduate;
- Environment contacts and internationalization;
- Professors, productivity and labor stability.
- Welfare system and scholarships for different activities;
- Auto-regulation and self-evaluation.

A regional system of quality accreditation is a challenge that the region and the PABSEC

must take this into consideration, since this effort could easily lead to homogenous programs, nonetheless referred to their proper necessities and distinctive markers among each country. This is the starting point for academic mobility and upgrading programs and techniques. The region counts on the advantage of acceding to quality systems that have already been proved in the world and have showed successful.

Internationalization of higher education

Since regional engagement and local strengths are vital for competing in a global world (Labriandidis), internationalization (or regionalization) of higher education is a dimension of quality that I would like to stress, since it could also lead to integration within the region students, but could also give some answers to migration flows, meeting up social and cultural capital with integration and inter-cultural practices.

Steps towards the internationalization of higher education always start with some individual contact, but the idea is to start with joint-research programs among professors and researchers. Cooperation then gets a push towards formal agreements evolving towards other matters, such as mobility and exchange. In one or other case we see some common paths, such as studying abroad, exchange, academic mobility, and others (De Witt, 2011).

Internationalization, however, needs to be feed backed at two levels: internationalization at home and internationalization abroad. For the former, we understand initiatives such as curriculum development and the possibility to have an “internationalization of the curriculum”, taking particular subjects to be shared among several universities. For the term of internationalization abroad, we find credit and degree mobility, academic exchange and global talent search, cooperation among universities, and also competition.

Internationalization at home	Internationalization abroad
- Internationalization of the curriculum	- Credit mobility
- Global methodology for teaching	- Degree mobility
- Global citizenship at knowledge	- Academic exchange
	- Student mobility
	- Cooperation as a strategy
	- Franchise operations

Adaptation of internationalization, at “Internationalization of higher education” EU

Some pre-steps should have to be arranged in order to acknowledge these possibilities, such as a common language or the recognition of qualifications that have been gained abroad, once the student or the professor comes back to his/her country. Thus, a political willingness must be displayed, such as economic support, social and cultural changes and a shift in the paradigm of scholars and administrative personnel of universities, focusing on internationalization as a strategic alliance that involves all main actors.

Some myths about internationalization (Knight, 2011; De Witt, 2011)

- Foreign students as internationalization agents: “more foreign students on campus will produce more internationalized institutional culture and curriculum”.
- International reputation as a proxy for quality: “the more international a university is (...) the better its reputation”.
- International institutional agreements: “the greater number of international agreements or network memberships a university has the more prestigious and attractive it is”.
- International accreditation: “the more international accreditation stars an institution has, the more internationalized it is and ergo the better it is”.
- Global branding: “an international marketing scheme is the equivalent of an internationalization plan”.

This simple scheme shows that internationalization is a great endeavor but perfectly reachable in the context of the BSEC countries, since the region is comprised of 12 countries, some of which have already reached quality assurance and accreditation systems and also are engaged into regional and international schemes of higher education. The experience of these countries, even holding international universities, and with great number of international students, can be used as a benchmark or at least as a reference.

Research center to provide elementary documentation and investigations according to the commitments of the PABSEC

As part of the conclusions, the PABSEC should adopt a research center to consolidate all the research of the scholars of the region and of the civic community. This could work as a permanent body to advice parliamentary bodies assisting the assembly.

This could be divided in the same committees that the assembly holds, giving prospective students a good and high quality, stimulating internship students to apply their skills and knowledge at every level.

We should think of this as part of a global world where other regional organizations are working thoroughly, through traineeships, internships, job placements and other initiatives to engage the scholar world with public policies.

Conclusions: The proposal to the Parliamentary Assembly Of The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)

As we have seen in the pages above, the consolidation of the region depends strongly on the labor that the parliamentary assembly can do to bring into reality the initiatives that governments sign. Moreover, the continuous practice and the level of action situate delegates in a face-to-face level, confronting the needs of the people but also the resolutions of presidents and prime ministers.

Along this essay I have proposed three levels of action that are likely to develop the region and that one way or another, should pass through close examination and approval of the assembly. A social and citizen level to enhance the touch and links with people vis-à-vis, focusing on the enhancement of social capital in the base of social life; an extra level regarding the migrant crisis, searching for solutions and integrating them when this becomes a necessity and no other solution is found; and an international agenda regarding the internationalization and quality assurance of higher education as a pattern to demonstrate the consolidation of social, cultural and political ties among the countries of the region. Moreover, these three levels are able to transfer culture, knowledge and integration into economic incomes for the region, although it is not necessarily the commitment we are looking for.

Social life level: technical proposal regarding social capital

The work at this level has to assure, first of all, the odds from public sphere to the action of states and governments, confidence strengthens social capital in all terms and the commitment here has to do with decentralizing the power of the state, delegating marginal responsibilities to the people. A two-way confidence has to be built first of all. Some of the initiatives in this level could be:

- Local councils to assess and help municipalities and local governments in matters such as culture, sportive necessities, security.
- Participation in local hospitals and health attention centers, to evaluate and create new areas of focus, bringing specialists in those areas (for instance, a place with much more female population might need the presence of gynecology specialists).
- Participation in public bids in order to delegate part of the public budget, with high control over the allocation of the money given, through strict control and periodical assessment.
- Local referendum to know how the population wants to distribute the public budget after providing for basic necessities.
-

Migration level: the migrant question and how to ease their life

As we have stressed, migrants are rounding the region and sooner or later will be at our doorsteps. It can be due to the closure of the European Union borders (as a necessity) or due to the economic and political improvement of the region (as one opportunity). Thus, some actions could be taken, such as:

- Commissioning surveys to characterize refugees and transnational migrants. The distinction here has to be clear, since refugees are running out of their home countries, while transnational migrants look for a better place. Nonetheless, this characterization must not lead to discriminative policies, since in both cases we can find skilled people willing to stay on the margins of their homeland. Those who are not could easily be trained in the needs hosting countries might have.
- As said before, training programs for asylum seekers. This can lead to both

positive externalities: on one hand they would be much more prepared to find hosting countries, and on the other hand, if they have to keep staying in the Aegean shores, they can fit into our labor market in a better way.

- Research and studies regarding their social and cultural networks, how they came here, under whose guidance. This helps to understand comprehensively their background and in some cases it assures their own stability.

The higher education level: improving quality as a pre-factor for internationalization

This initiative could be one of the most difficult in terms of coordination, but one of the easiest in terms of the institutions' agreements and the existence of the educational committee in the PABSEC. Thus, it should be one of the main commitments for the projection of this committee and for the assembly as well. The steps are described as below:

- The establishment of a permanent committee to decide accreditation systems according to standards or criteria
- The establishment of quality markers using the international experience and the reality of the region
- The measurement of indicators at universities and higher educational level, by independent organisms that can assess universities and/or programs.
- Internationalization initiatives at a first stage, such as:
 - o Student mobility
 - o Academic exchange
 - o Flexible curriculum
 - o Credit mobility
 - o International summits in order to establish new touches and contacts
- Internationalization initiatives at a second stage such as:
 - o International agreements between recognized universities;
 - o Strategic alliances between research centers in the region;
 - o Curriculum flexibility and credit mobility.

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THE BSUN CONTEST FOR STUDENTS On: ***“Twenty-five years of the Parliamentary Cooperation in the BSEC Region - Views and Perspectives for the Future”***

Background

The parliamentary cooperation in the region has a long tradition. But, after the adoption of the Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) on 26th February 1993, in Istanbul, the Parliamentary cooperation entered in a new place by uniting the efforts of the national parliaments to pursue the following aims: to secure the understanding and adoption, by the peoples, of the ideals and aims of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; to provide a legal basis for economic, commercial, social, cultural and political cooperation among the member countries; to enact the legislation needed for the implementation of the decisions taken by the Heads of State or Government or by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs; to provide assistance to the national parliaments so as to strengthen the parliamentary democracy; to promote the cooperation with other international and regional organizations. Which are the most significant achievements up to now and what kind of future perspectives have to be taken into consideration?

The objectives of the Contest:

- To provide a unique opportunity for young students throughout the Black Sea Region to take part in a regional educational project;
- To promote a sense of regional belonging among young students from the 12 BSEC Member States through their participation in a competition on topic of mutual interest;
- To give young students from various backgrounds a platform to express their views about our region and their dreams for the future.

Technical requirements:

- The composition must reflect the competitor’s own writing and original thinking and any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly.
- The essay must be written in English language
- The essay should be between 6,750 and 9,000 words, with Times New Roman font size 12 points.

The deadline for submission was May 1st, 2018.

The essay have been evaluated and selected by national committees in every Member State, by May 2018. The winners have been invited to the PABSEC 51st General Assembly to be held during 19th-21st June 2018 in Tirana, where they have been awarded diplomas. Their travel and accommodation expenses have been covered by the PABSEC PERMIS. The winning essays are published in this special issue of the BSUN International Journal “Letters from the Black Sea”.

The competition schedule was as followings:

1. STAGE I - Announcing of the competition - January 2018
2. STAGE II - Closing date for submitting the essays - May 1st, 2018
3. STAGE III - Evaluation - May 2018
4. STAGE IV - Announcement of the winners - June 2018
5. STAGE V - Prize awarding at a special ceremony during the 51st PABSEC General Assembly, in Tirana, on 21st June 2018.

The final evaluation process has been carried out by an independent group of professors that have been selected by the BSUN International Permanent Secretariat. The evaluation procedure followed the description as it was presented in the public announcement at:
<http://www.bsun.org/?task=events&id=153&web=bsun>

Evaluation form

Name of the Student:

Title of the Essay:

Criterion	Maximum awarded points	Description	Awarded points
Vision			
Vision	15	The student has a well-formed, insightful vision of the topic.	
Relevance			
Identified problems	15	The student has correctly identified the problems in the Black Sea Region.	
Solutions	15	The student has offered appropriate solutions to the problems.	
Arguments	10	The student has provided valid arguments for his/her affirmations.	
The degree of novelty of the solutions			
Novelty	5	The student has come up with new, feasible ideas. Utopian ideas will not be awarded the full number of points.	
Clarity and coherence			
Clarity	5	The ideas are clear.	
Coherence	5	The ideas are expressed coherently and in an organized manner.	
Structure			
Length & Citation	5	The essay should be between 1,500 and 3,000 words excluding the main title, front sheet info and any bibliography. All quotations or uncommon facts are appropriately cited.	
Originality	10	The essay is an original, unpublished work, written by a single author.	
Style and grammar			
Style	5	The essay is a good read.	
Register	5	The student has used the formal register.	
Grammar	5	The student has a good use of grammar.	
TOTAL			

Additionally, a selected group of 23 essays have been checked with an antiplagiarism software and an individual report has been attached to each essay. In the second phase, which was developed based on the results from the selection committee and the results from the antiplagiarism software.

At the end of the evaluation process there were selected 10 essays proposed in a ranking order. The final decision for the attribution of the prize was taken by the PABSEC Standing Committee based on the proposals of the Evaluation Committee.

The international journal
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