

## **P7\_TA(2011)0025**

### **An EU Strategy for the Black Sea**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2011 on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea (2010/2087(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional Cooperation Initiative’ (COM(2007)0160),
- having regard to the Council Conclusions on the Black Sea Synergy Initiative of 14 May 2007,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2008 on a Black Sea Regional Policy Approach<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area, adopted in Kiev on 14 February 2008,
- having regard to the Commission’s ‘Report on the first year of implementation of the Black Sea Synergy’, adopted on 19 June 2008 (COM(2008)0391),
- having regard to the Joint Statement launching the Black Sea Synergy Environment Partnership (Brussels, 16 March 2010),
- having regard to the Commission Communication on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2006)0726) and the Commission's intention to present the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2011,
- having regard to the Association Partnership with Turkey,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements concluded with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and to the ongoing negotiations on new Association Agreements, as well as to the respective ENP Action Plans,
- having regard to the ENP Progress Reports on Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine adopted by the Commission on 12 May 2010,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement concluded with the Russian Federation, and to the ongoing negotiations on a new EU-Russia Agreement,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 3 December 2008 entitled ‘Eastern Partnership’ (COM(2008)0823),
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of 7 May 2009,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 41 E, 19.2.2009, p. 64.

- having regard to the recent progress in the visa-facilitation dialogue with countries from the region,
  - having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2007 on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and the South Caucasus countries, as well as on the Integrated Maritime Policy,
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Regional Development (A7-0378/2010),
- A. whereas the Black Sea region is a strategic bridge connecting Europe with the Caspian Sea area, Central Asia and the Middle East and, further, with south-east Asia and China, and it is characterised by close ties and great potential, but also by diversities and rivalries; whereas the region comprises the EU Member States Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, the candidate country Turkey and the ENP partners Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the Russian Federation as a strategic partner,
  - B. whereas the Black Sea region is of strategic importance for the EU; whereas the Black Sea is partially internal to the EU and geographically mostly a European sea, which results in shared challenges and opportunities for the EU and the countries of the region, as well as in a common need to ensure that there is an area of peace, democracy, security, stability, regional cooperation and sustainable prosperity around the Black Sea; whereas a more cohesive, sustainable and strategic approach is necessary in the Black Sea region,
  - C. whereas the Black Sea region is a socially, culturally and religiously rich environment where intercultural and inter-faith dialogue should play a central role,
  - D. whereas the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) has had the merit of recognising the Black Sea region as strategic for the EU, together with the need for strengthened EU involvement in the area; whereas BSS results have so far been rather limited and no clear and comprehensive picture exists of the current implementation results of the BSS, exposing the EU to criticism that it lacks a strategic vision for the region and that it is applying a fragmented approach to implementation,
  - E. whereas no action plan has been drawn up setting out concrete objectives and benchmarks, and reporting, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up mechanisms, as asked for in Parliament's very first resolution on the Black Sea region,
  - F. whereas only one progress report has been issued, in 2008, which was not followed up with any regular reporting mechanism; whereas not many projects have been carried out and only a Partnership on the Environment has been launched to date,
  - G. whereas no ministerial conference has been held since 2008, highlighting the lack of

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 282 E, 6.11.2008, p. 443.

visibility of, and strategic vision and political guidance for, the BSS,

- H. whereas the efforts so far, while commendable, have been severely hampered by poor administrative organisation, a lack of institutional and political commitment, and a lack of human and dedicated financial resources,
- I. whereas many developments have taken place in the Black Sea region since 2008, and while regional cooperation seems to be advancing in some technical fields, such as environment, education, research and technology, as well as in normative approximation, a number of challenges, such as protracted conflicts in the Caucasus and Transnistria, maritime security and search and rescue operations, militarisation, displaced populations and the deterioration of democratic rule, persist and have even gained in intensity,
- J. whereas the French Presidency's mission, together with action by the Member States, demonstrated the EU's commitment to containing and resolving the conflict in Georgia,
- K. whereas the Black Sea region is of geo-strategic importance for the energy security of the EU, with regard, in particular, to the diversification of energy supplies,
- L. whereas other EU initiatives involving the countries of the Black Sea region should not be seen as competing with, but rather as complementary to, the BSS,
- M. whereas the Commission has been asked to develop an EU Strategy for the Danube Region, which should take into account its close interconnection with the Black Sea region,
  1. Considers that, given the strategic importance of the Black Sea region for the EU and the rather limited results of the BSS, a strategy should be launched to enhance the coherence and visibility of EU action in the region and that the EU Black Sea Strategy should be an integral part of the EU's broader foreign and security policy vision;
  2. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to draw up a strategy for the Black Sea region in parallel with the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, thus defining an integrated and comprehensive EU approach to address the challenges and opportunities of the region, with a detailed action plan, clear objectives, flagship initiatives and benchmarks; believes that the strategy will make for effective coordination of activities and division of tasks;
  3. Reiterates its call on the Commission and the EEAS to carry out regular reviews of the implementation of the strategy by establishing concrete monitoring, evaluation, follow-up and reporting mechanisms; urges that the relevant European Parliament committees be consulted at key stages of this process;
  4. Recommends that consistency between EU-level policy and the national strategies of the EU Member States in the Black Sea region needs to be ensured;
  5. Stresses that the EU Member States must agree on clear priorities in order that a realistic and financially sound action plan can subsequently be drawn up, together with a corresponding system for assessing its effectiveness;
  6. Stresses that adequate human resources must be devoted to the task of achieving the objectives of the new strategy, particularly by taking visible account of that strategy in the

organisational structure and staffing of the EEAS;

7. Welcomes the launch of the Joint Operational Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin under ENPI and believes that the large number of applications received reflects a high degree of interest in joint cooperation projects in the Black Sea region; applauds the approval of 16 new projects by the Joint Monitoring Committee in November 2010; believes, however, that the slow pace of the programme's functioning reflects the shortcomings of the current funding mechanisms; points, in particular, to the legal difficulties relating to the need to fund participants from different financial instruments, and calls on the Commission to devise solutions to eliminate such obstacles; takes the view that investment projects could also be covered by the programme;
8. Calls for a Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme to be drawn up for the next programming period in order fully to address and continue the efforts to achieve all the objectives stated in the ENPI CBC Strategy Paper 2007-2013; emphasises that uniform terms governing applications should be laid down, thereby giving any legal entity in any participating state in the programme area the possibility to apply as lead participant; considers that all countries in Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme should be involved and encouraged actively to participate in the next programming period;
9. Is convinced, therefore, that the success of the strategy depends on the provision of appropriate and identifiable funding; calls for the creation of a specific budget line for the Black Sea Strategy, and for the development of efficient disbursement methods, tailored to the specific characteristics of the region, and controls on the use of the funds; encourages priority financing of small-scale development projects; calls on the Commission and regions to promote people-to-people projects in the framework of cross-border cooperation and to provide for and enhance the financing instrument of the Small Project Fund;
10. Stresses the need for a project-based approach with a view to including local authorities, business communities, NGOs or other civil society organisations (CSOs) in designing, joint ownership and implementation of Black Sea Strategy activities; emphasises the importance of monitoring Black Sea Strategy activities through the definition of benchmarks or other appropriate indicators;
11. Encourages the development of synergies between the various Union policies that come into play in the Strategy, particularly the Structural Funds, the Research and Development Framework Programme and the Trans-European Transport Networks, in order to ensure the sustainability of the actions financed; in that way opportunities created by one economic development initiative can be taken up by another, complementary initiative;
12. Regards inclusiveness and regional ownership as important principles of the EU approach towards the region and sees Turkey and Russia as partners which should ideally be properly involved in Black Sea regional cooperation; believes that the dual role of Bulgaria, Romania and Greece as both riparian states and EU Member States is essential to the success of EU policy in the Black Sea region;
13. Considers that in order to provide visibility, strategic guidance and high-level coordination, ministerial meetings between the EU and the wider Black Sea region countries should be organised on a regular basis and include all actors and countries in the region, including the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, the EBRD and the EIB; is convinced that an

institutional dialogue bringing together the EU and the BSEC could constitute a step towards creating a genuine partnership in the region; notes, however, that the BSEC seems currently to be facing structural difficulties and to be in need of rejuvenation and reform in order to become an efficient regional partner;

14. Deplores the fact that the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership has been adversely affected by regional tensions and, as a result, has not yet been established; considers that such a Forum could play a role in generating ideas and fostering dialogue among regional actors;
15. Believes that the Black Sea Strategy should be developed at all levels of regional cooperation; welcomes the parliamentary cooperation established between the EU and the Black Sea countries;
16. Recognises the importance of regional and local authorities and stakeholders for the planning and implementation of the strategy, given their close links with the territory and with local people; calls, therefore, for their needs to be identified and for them to be fully involved in the strategy;
17. Welcomes the creation of the Black Sea Civil Society Forum and encourages strengthened cooperation between local authorities, civil society and business; calls on the Commission to provide enhanced support for civil society, including CSO networks; underlines the role of the non-governmental sector in ensuring both the effective implementation of Black Sea Strategy activities and the success of confidence-building measures;
18. Stresses the complementary nature of the BSS and the Eastern Partnership, and calls on the Commission to make positive use of the differing approaches of the two initiatives and to clarify, at all levels, how this substantial degree of complementarity is to be exploited; calls on the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to ensure that the EEAS effectively coordinates the various initiatives and instruments deployed by the EU in the wider Black Sea region;
19. Welcomes the development of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, which is to be completed by the end of this year, and calls for it to be endorsed and for a start to be made on its implementation in the first part of 2011; emphasises the need to extend the EU Strategy for the Danube Region towards the Black Sea region; points out that the sustainable development of the Danube region will further enhance the geostrategic importance of the Black Sea region; consequently, while acknowledging the differing nature of the regions and the distinct geographical focus of the two strategies, considers that they should be complementary and mutually reinforcing;
20. Stresses that the main objective pursued by the EU and the Member States in the EU Strategy for the Black Sea Region should be to establish an area of peace, democracy, prosperity and stability, founded on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and providing for EU energy security; considers that good governance, the rule of law, promotion of respect of human rights, migration management, energy, transport, the environment, and economic and social development should constitute priority actions;

### ***Security and good governance***

21. Recalls that the Black Sea region needs active policies and long-lasting solutions to cope

with the considerable regional and transnational challenges facing it, such as protracted conflicts, displaced populations, bilateral disputes, closed borders and strategic rivalries leading to militarisation and proliferation of arms, weak institutions and governance and the deterioration of democratic rule, cross-border crime and trafficking, border and movement management, and poor maritime security and safety;

22. Stresses the vital importance of establishing, encouraging and developing good-neighbourly relations between the Black Sea countries as a premise for successful cooperation, and regards it as unacceptable that the region should still be facing the problem of closed borders between neighbours;
23. Believes that the EU can and should play a more active role in shaping the Black Sea security environment; calls for enhanced EU involvement in regional strategic dialogue, and EU cooperation with its strategic partners on security issues and on conflict prevention and resolution, in accordance with international law; stresses that the full development of the Black Sea Strategy is also linked to concrete progress towards the peaceful resolution of unresolved conflicts; calls therefore, on the EU for more direct engagement and to take a leading role in the negotiations and peace-making processes, to step up confidence-building measures and assistance programmes with a view to establishing the basis for lasting, comprehensive settlements, and to alleviate the consequences of conflicts for local people; applauds the work of EUBAM and EUMM;
24. Calls on the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to step up efforts to encourage Russia to comply with the six-point Sarkozy Plan to stabilise and resolve the conflict in Georgia;
25. Points to the need to strengthen monitoring systems and invites the EU to develop an early-warning system as a conflict-prevention and confidence-building tool in the Black Sea region, to avoid destabilisation and conflict-escalation; calls for the focus to be on concrete cases rather than general expressions of concern; calls for consideration to be given to confidence-building measures such as public disclosure of arms sales and naval military activities; expresses particular concern at the extension of the port agreement for Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea and its possible impact on stability in the region;
26. Calls on the EU to take steps to establish a regional legal framework and mechanisms to deal with the proliferation of arms in the Black Sea region;
27. Calls for cross-border crime and trafficking, in particular in drugs and human beings, and illegal migration to be tackled in the Black Sea Strategy, also calls for a further strengthening of cooperation on border and movement management;
28. Stresses the need for better management of migration in and from the Black Sea region through the enhancement of the political, economic and social integration of immigrants, on the basis of the principles of the EU's Global Approach to Migration;
29. Notes the increase in the number of accidents at sea in recent years, involving human casualties and environmental damage, and the inability of the riparian states to carry out coordinated and successful rescue operations; in that connection, calls on the EU to use the Integrated Maritime Policy to coordinate search-and-rescue and accident-prevention activities in the Black Sea region; calls for the establishment of a Black Sea surveillance strategy;

30. Believes that a security strategy for the Black Sea region should also incorporate the objectives of improving governance, democratic rule, respect for human rights and state capabilities; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to mainstream initiatives on institution-building and democratic governance, which are indispensable for any state wishing to develop successfully; emphasises that the objective of improving governance, the rule of law and state structures in the former Soviet states of the region is in itself a security strategy, since total or partial state failure and political stagnation create the conditions for external interference and transnational threats;
31. Stresses that the EU strategy for the Black Sea region must place major emphasis on defending human rights and enhancing democracy throughout the region, which should include promoting successful cooperation among its non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders;
32. Notes that increasing respect for human rights and democracy around the world is among the EU's priorities; points out that human rights violations are a daily occurrence in occupied South Ossetia and Abkhazia; calls on the EU, and particularly the EEAS, therefore, to respond actively to all kinds of human rights violations in the Black Sea region;
33. Emphasises the important role that the OSCE plays in the region and regards it as essential that the EU should cooperate with the OSCE in the areas of institution-building, the rule of law, election observation, media freedom and democracy and human rights;

#### ***Energy, transport and the environment***

34. Considers, on the one hand, the Black Sea region to be of strategic importance for EU energy security and the diversification of the EU's energy supply and, in that connection, reiterates the pressing importance of a coherent strategy for the Black Sea region; on the other hand, considers cooperation in the areas of energy, transport and the environment to be crucial to the harmonious and sustainable development of the region; welcomes the launch of the Environment Partnership, while eagerly awaiting the launch of the two other partnerships, on transport and energy; calls for their swift and efficient implementation; takes the view that the development of a common legal framework at regional level would be of great benefit in terms of more effective cooperation and synergies on these issues; believes that the establishment of, and support for, professional and institutional networks could enhance the capacity for cooperative and efficient decision-making;
35. Emphasises the need to strengthen multilateral energy cooperation in the Black Sea region, for which the WTO and the Energy Charter Treaty provide the key principles; supports full market and regulatory integration on the basis of EU energy and environment legislation and encourages the participation of countries in the wider Black Sea region in the Energy Community Treaty and EU, EIB and EBRD assistance for the modernisation of energy infrastructure in the Black Sea region;
36. Emphasises the importance of Member States taking a common approach towards the Black Sea region, with a view to achieving the EU's long-term objective of security of energy supply and stability in its neighbourhood;
37. Recalls the need for more vigorous action by the Commission in support of measures to diversify gas supply and for a common normative framework to promote a transparent,

competitive and rules-based gas market; calls on the EU, at the same time, actively to develop cooperation with States in the Black Sea region and offer them greater opportunities to support energy projects of interest to the EU; welcomes, in that connection, the accession of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to the Energy Community;

38. Emphasises the urgency of establishing the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, which will contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Eastern Partnership and will thus have a positive impact on issues relating to energy security;
39. Recalls the EU's aim of diversifying routes and sources of supply, as well as the drafting of an EU common energy policy; reiterates the importance of the Southern Corridor projects, in particular the fundamental importance to Europe's energy security of the EU strategic priority project Nabucco and of its swift realisation; takes note of the South Stream project; stresses, further, the significance of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) transportation to Europe, in the form of the AGRI project and the development of LNG terminals in Black Sea ports, and of the Constanta-Trieste Pan-European Oil Pipeline;
40. Urges the Commission to conclude agreements with the potential supplier countries for the Nabucco pipeline by the end of 2011;
41. Considers that the Energy Infrastructure Package shortly to be put forward by the Commission must place great emphasis on the proposed energy projects in the Black Sea region; draws attention to the fact that the transit routes which cut across the states in the region can significantly improve the EU's security of supply;
42. Emphasises the potential offered by renewable energy sources in the Black Sea region, which could make a major contribution to a secure energy future at global level and to sustainable economic growth, and calls on the Commission and the Black Sea riparian countries to unlock this potential;
43. Calls for the EU-Black Sea region partnership to include transfer of knowledge and technology in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and technical support for grid design, and points out that energy saving is the key to increasing security of supply; supports research into alternative energy sources and, in particular, renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy savings, which are essential if we are to face the challenges of climate change and contribute to the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
44. Supports the continued development of initiatives under the TRACECA and INOGATE programmes; calls on the EU to strengthen further its support for infrastructure projects in the region, directly and through the coordination of other contributors and investors;
45. Considers that, for the purposes of international trade and the transport of hydrocarbons in the region, it is essential to develop the EU's Black Sea and maritime Danube ports, including oil and gas terminals and intermodal transport infrastructure; considers it necessary to modernise infrastructure in the Black Sea region and establish connections with European transport corridors; calls on the Commission and Member States to expedite the completion of priority trans-European transport projects along axes 7, 18, 21 and 22, as provided for in Annex II to Decision No 884/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 amending Decision No 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and their progressive assimilation with the TRACECA corridor, the central axis, the south-east axis and the

international maritime transport routes, as defined in the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on 'Extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries – Guidelines for transport in Europe and the neighbouring regions' (COM(2007)0032) and of Pan-European Transport Corridors 8 and 9;

46. Calls on the Black Sea riparian states to conclude a memorandum of understanding on the development of Black Sea maritime corridors and asks the Commission to open a TEN-T budget line with funding for Black Sea maritime corridors similar to those which already exist for the Baltic Sea, North Sea and Mediterranean Sea maritime corridors;
47. Welcomes the action taken to extend the EU Common Aviation Area to Black Sea countries; calls on the Commission to pursue the dialogue with the Republic of Moldova concerning the liberalisation of its air transport sector and swiftly to open negotiations for the Republic of Moldova's accession to the EU Common Aviation Area;
48. Stresses the importance of the Black Sea as a natural resource and expresses great concern at the environmental situation in the region emphasises the need for a balance to be struck between economic development and environmental protection, and the need for a common approach to this challenge, and stresses, therefore, the need for full implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution;
49. Calls on the Commission to prioritise the requirements of energy efficiency and protection of the environment and climate when funding infrastructure projects, which should be based on a positive environmental assessment; recalls the challenges resulting from the effects of climate change for the Black Sea region, and therefore urges increased cooperation among the Black Sea riparian countries, especially in the field of emergency prevention;
50. Calls on the EU to include the Black Sea region in the Integrated Maritime Policy and, in particular, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) on an equal footing with the other European basins; the EU should make all the necessary diplomatic efforts to persuade the Black Sea states outside the EU to comply as closely as possible with the principles of the CFP; emphasises the importance of creating a separate common stocks management body for the Black Sea and of applying the mechanism of multiannual management plans;

### ***Economic, social and human development***

51. Believes that the economic, social and human development of the region as a whole should be promoted; attaches particular importance to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region; points out that the region has extraordinary natural resources which can encourage rapid economic growth; stresses that the proper management of these resources is vital to the facilitation of such development;
52. Stresses that further liberalisation of trade and the intensification of intra-regional trade are essential to the economic development of the region; stresses the importance for the local populace and for the region's trading partners of establishing an area of economic opportunity and prosperity in the Black Sea region; stresses the need to combat fraud and corruption so as to make the region more attractive to investors; emphasises the importance of cooperation in the field of tourism and of port and coastline development; supports the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy, whose aim is the socio-economic development of maritime regions, but views with regret the fact that its Black Sea dimension is poorly

developed; welcomes the results achieved in the area of cooperation on education, research and technology; endorses once again the goal of promoting social development and a strong civil society; stresses that the EU should proceed further in its dialogue with the countries of the region on visa facilitation;

53. Is convinced that the EU should play a greater role in the Black Sea region by offering the countries in the region more prospects for closer integration with EU policies; stresses that opportunities for trade liberalisation and the creation of a free trade area in accordance with WTO principles should be carefully considered, thoroughly examined and promoted;
54. Draws attention to the longstanding EU-Russia strategic partnership and the two countries' common interest in enhancing bilateral trade and investment, in facilitating and liberalising trade in the global economy and in strengthening and developing competition, including in the Black Sea region;
55. Recognises that the global financial crisis has hit the Black Sea region hard, bringing both a period of growth averaging 6% per annum and the inflow of foreign capital necessary for the further economic development of the Black Sea States to a sharp halt, and has put the region's financial system under extreme stress; emphasises that this needs to be addressed by strengthening financial and banking regulations, improving fiscal credibility and transparency, fighting tax fraud, tax evasion and corruption, intensifying regional cooperation and enhancing coordination among regional organisations such as the BSEC;
56. Encourages the development, in the context of the Strategy, of an integrated approach and the use of the well-established principles of the EU's Cohesion Policy and Neighbourhood Policy, which can help deliver effective results while facilitating the capacity-building process for regions which are lagging behind; in particular, believes that cross-border cooperation between regions should be enhanced, in order to tackle common problems through coordinated action; points out that the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) offers a suitable cooperation framework for structured, multi-level governance; calls on the Commission to explore ways of better coordinating the various European instruments providing for cross-border cooperation at the Union's external borders;
57. Points out that the exchange of best practices between regions is of pivotal importance for all areas of cooperation, in that regions with long experience of developing and implementing projects could help other regions to improve their performance;
58. Regards the improvement of the administrative capacity of all local and regional stakeholders in the Black Sea region as vital in order to ensure the efficient implementation and sound financial management of EU projects, greater transparency and accountability, and balanced territorial development across the region;
59. Emphasises the importance of visa facilitation and the mobility of persons in the region and urges the Commission to consider establishing preferential visa schemes for businessmen, academics, young people, local officials and other groups with a view to enhancing contacts across the whole region, in particular as far as confidence-building is concerned; encourages the development under aegis of the EU of joint projects relating to the promotion of cultural heritage and tourism in the region;
60. Believes that programmes promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue need sustained

encouragement in order to promote cooperation in the region, that joint initiatives in the field of education and media are much needed in order to create and consolidate meaningful links between the and the opinion-formers in the region, and that initiatives such as the Black Sea Universities Network provide good examples of how academic interaction can trigger positive synergies in the region; calls for the strengthening of academic and student networks, e-infrastructures and collaborative research projects; welcomes the initiative to establish and support a College of the Black Sea to foster the emergence of a regional elite which sees cooperation as a natural method of tackling common challenges;

61. Acknowledges the results of the Black Sea Interconnection project to establish a regional research and education network in the wider Black Sea region and its link to GEANT, and calls on the Commission to continue to support research projects in the Black Sea region, such as HP-SEE, SEE-GRID, SCENE, CAREN and BSRN;

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62. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and all the Black Sea countries.