

THE SOFIA CHARTER

on

the current condition, evolution and immediate measures in
favour of pursuing sustainable development of the Black Sea and the
Black Sea coast, adopted at the Sofia meeting of the
Forum of Architects from the Black Sea region

May 15th, 2006

The Black Sea aquatory, its coastlines, together with the adjoining territories, which are historically, environmentally, economically and socially linked with the sea, constitute a large and complex territorial structure, standing beyond individual national concerns whose sustainable development requires an active cooperation between all countries from the Black Sea basin. Established with the initial intention of studying the separate aspects of this process and stimulating such a useful interaction, the Forum of Architects from the Black Sea region currently unites the national architectural unions of Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. At their meetings held in Batumi and Sochi in 2004 the representatives of the member states discussed and endorsed respective addresses to the Governments of their countries (Batumi), as well as decisions for mutual activities (Sochi), thus defining the key objectives of FABS.

This Charter is building on the Batumi and Sochi documents and should be seen as their logical progression to the purpose of meeting the dynamic geopolitical, ecological and social challenges in the contemporary world: the expansion of the European family, the advance of democratic societies, the higher bids in tourism, the active economic ties between the Black Sea countries and the intensive appropriation and urbanization of the coastal zones, accompanied by a general deterioration of the environmental situation.

By this current Charter, FABS turns to the Parliamentary and Governmental bodies of the above countries, local governance administrations, international institutions, non-governmental organizations, scientific associations and units, in an effort to draw their attention to the most urgent measures to be taken for achieving an integrated management and regulation of the Black Sea's aquatory, its coastline and the Black Sea basin as a whole, towards a further sustainable development.

In its Charter, FABS recognizes as key points the implementation of the following activities :

- a) developing an international information network for the Black Sea basin, which would provide data concerning the basic parameters of its environment: natural, geographic characteristics, current state, degree of utilization and latest development of coastlines, cultural and historic heritage, urbanization, etc.
- b) discussing and preparing drafts of international agreements (on a unified legal basis) for regulating the condition and usage of the aquatory and the coastal zone.
- c) Combining the efforts for elaboration of a strategy intended to enhance the economic, transport and tourism-related contacts between the countries with a Black Sea outlet.
- d) Encouraging proposals for the creation of a system of immediate measures (urban planning, legal, socio-economical, etc.) for protection of the Black Sea coast's cultural and historical heritage.
- e) Drawing up a regional plan for integrated Black Sea management and development.

The national unions of architects from, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, represented in the Sofia meeting, commit themselves to put all their efforts in distributing and promoting this document, as well as to draw the attention of all public institutions and other authorities that might be interested. They also declare their Professional concern and readiness to launch the necessary activities and participate in an international, Parliamentary and public (non-governmental) initiatives, related with the protection, harmonious structuring and sustainable development of the Black Sea coast.