

TRABZON DECLARATION:
Change and Continuity in the Black Sea

Adopted at the meeting of
the Forum of Architects of the Black Sea Region (FABSR)
Trabzon, 16 May 2009

The professional organizations of architects from the Black Sea region represented at the FABSR meeting in Trabzon:

- noting that the Black Sea region is currently subject to a transformation process, where there is a need to maintain a balance between the continuity and change in urban and rural settlements;
- reminding that the Caucasus region has always suffered from interventions of imperial powers and tensions because of its strategic importance in world politics and economy;
- drawing attention to the adverse effects of globalization on the local building and urban culture of the region;
- recognizing the enlarged definition of the Black Sea region, not only surrounding the coastal line but also within the boundaries of the whole hinterland nourishing this geography;

Reiterates the concerns and commitments made in their previous Tbilisi, Batumi, Sochi, Sofia and Istanbul declarations about:

- protection and improvement of tangible and intangible cultural and architectural values as an integral part of the Black Sea region's identity;
- preservation and strengthening of the coastal line;
- maintaining higher standards in the living environment of the people living in the region and developing the quality of architectural education in that frame;
- development of common projects between regional countries, cities and towns to overcome the escalating pollution in the Black Sea originating from the rivers, energy production plants and maritime activities;
- environmental damages caused by large-scale infrastructure projects and irregular building facilities;
- prevention of supplementary transportation routes and energy transfer lines and nuclear energy production plants in the region; on the contrary, introduction of alternative means of energy production.

Focusing on the themes of “culture and identity” and “tourism and architecture” in the Trabzon meeting, FABSR members also announce following concerns and commitments:

- Our region is a cradle of diverse origins, cultures and civilizations, which creates the unique identity of the Black Sea. In this respect, individual examples of cultural and architectural heritage are not only the property of a single country, but also owned by the whole region and the humanity. FABSR calls for the development of a regional plan regarding the protection and improvement of cultural and architectural heritage, in line with international regulations about the protection of cultural and natural heritage.
- Tourism is both an opportunity and a threat for the improvement of urban and rural settlements in the Black Sea. Recognizing the value of undiscovered nature and culture in the region and opening these beauties to world tourism can offer wonderful opportunities. Coastal and plateau tourism are the common wealth of the regional countries, which are also valuable assets for the world. With the world tourism flows, our region is facing the danger of losing its unique local qualities, as well as the threat of standardization and monotony. FABSR calls the Black Sea countries to elaborate a common set of laws on sustainable tourism development in the region. FABSR also emphasizes the significance of focusing on cultural tourism as much as the coastal tourism and calls for the promotion of cultural routes within the region.
- Our region is prone to political tensions and armed conflicts due to its geopolitical situation. In the case of armed conflicts, first of all we are worried about the lost people, who have lived together in this geography for centuries no matter of their diversity and differences. And in the second place, such armed conflicts cause destruction of our living environments, as well as natural and cultural heritage. Our geography has the capacity to calm down the aggressions resulting from this tension and to re-settle peace, with its underlying harmony based on common history and culture. Being aware that we will continue to live together in this geography as we have done for centuries, we need to act with sensitivity, empathy and common sense. FABSR members call the Black Sea countries to act in accordance with the international law on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict.

With this declaration, FABSR addresses the central and local administrations, universities and research centers, professional and cultural organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Black Sea region to take into consideration in their actions the concerns and suggestions announced in this declaration. FABSR members are determined to work in collaboration for protecting and developing heritage and values based on the long-established common history and culture of the region.

Signed on 16 May 2009 in Trabzon by authorized representatives of:

Armenia

Azerbaijan

Bulgaria

Georgia

Romania

Russia

Turkey

Ukraine