

SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY MINISTER OF STATE, H.E. BEŞİR ATALAY AT THE BLACK SEA FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND PARTNERSHIP TO BE HELD ON THE 5TH OF JUNE 2006 IN BUCHAREST

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address the Summit of the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership in Bucharest. At the outset, I wish to thank H.E. Traian Basescu and the Romanian authorities for the warm hospitality extended to the Turkish Delegation.

After the end of the Cold War period, question was posed on whether it would be possible to turn the Black Sea area into one of cooperation and shared prosperity. In this context, Regional States soon started to discuss how to create an area where persons, capital and goods would move freely, in which initiatives for cooperation would come from bottom upwards rather than the opposite, thus allowing States to form the legal framework for such cooperation. Today, we have some strong mechanisms designed to create a stable, peaceful and prosperous region.

Regional cooperation usually paves the way for a better understanding of one another in the region. We consider The Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership as yet another contribution to our efforts in transforming the Black Sea into a sea of peace and stability.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Black Sea Region is the focus of increasing strategic, geopolitical and security interests. These interests necessitate taking stock of the challenges faced in the region. Indeed, the challenges stem either from the characteristics of the process of globalization or from the difficulties peculiar to the region. Management of borders, illegal migration, human trafficking, economic migration, accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons, smuggling of drugs and organized crime are on top of the list. In fact, it would not be a mistake to observe that, the transition from Cold War into an

era of security and stability is not yet complete. The impact of globalization with its impressive and inevitable momentum, impervious to the needs of countries in transition, has contributed to a widening of the gap between the poor and the rich, between the developing and the developed, thus becoming another, perhaps more indirect factor having a negative effect on the Black Sea Region.

In this context, it is possible to conclude that “security” is no longer the sole preserve of the military. Human, economic and environmental security have become complementary components of politico-military security. In line with the newly emerging understanding of security, focus is shifting from the security of the State to the security of the individual. The sustainability of the prosperity of the societies, which lies also at the core of the existing economic cooperation instruments within our region such as the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), is likely to acquire greater significance for the security and stability of the region.

We all know that The BSEC Charter underlines the Organization’s contribution to security and stability as being primarily through economic co-operation. Indeed, BSEC serves as a model of cooperation, bringing together countries belonging to different cultures and to varying historic experience, through cooperative activities, thereby trying to bridge differences and develop common vision for the future of the region.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

While mentioning economic cooperation within the Black Sea region, we observe also big changes in our economic and commercial life which occurred in the past two decades. With economic transition and return to the economic growth throughout the former Eastern Bloc, commercial traffic across, into and out of the Black Sea took off. The revival of tourism has resulted in new flows mainly from upper riparian countries to the ports and tourist attractions of the Mediterranean. Two new pipelines built in 1990’s pump Caspian oil to Black Sea ports whence it is carried to markets in Europe and elsewhere. The Blue Stream underwater gas pipeline from the Northern Black Sea shores to the South has formally become operational last year.

In essence, the Black Sea has been transformed into a busy commercial thoroughfare connecting Europe’s heartland, via its southeastern shores, to the Caucasus and other parts of Asia.

In the framework of rapidly increasing economic and commercial ties among the Black Sea countries, the existing cooperative mechanisms such as the BSEC may also be instrumental in promoting growth, as well as facilitating the Region's integration with the wider European structures.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, this Forum is not designed to deal directly with topics related to maritime security in the Black Sea. However, I would like to touch upon this issue, since the preservation of security and stability in the wider Black Sea is a priority for all of us and remains largely related to a safe and secure maritime domain.

In this context, our intention should also be to make use of the existing initiatives and mechanisms to the extent possible, since they contribute significantly to the climate of confidence not only among the coastal states, but also in the wider region.

One of these regional initiatives in this field is the BLACKSEAFOR, whose objective is to contribute to the further strengthening of friendship, good neighborly relations and mutual understanding among the Black Sea littoral States. We should expand the scope of activities of the BLACKSEAFOR in order to adapt it better to the evolving security environment and further contribute to global efforts in combating terrorism and countering the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Another initiative is the Operation Black Sea Harmony, which was launched by the Turkish Navy in March 2004 in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions in order to conduct periodic maritime surveillance and reconnaissance operations and provide deterrence against terrorism and other potential illegal activities or asymmetric risks and threats in the Black Sea maritime area.

This Summit gives us a good opportunity to reiterate the importance of enhancing confidence and security in the Black Sea, and therefore, the document on "Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Naval Field in the Black Sea", which constitutes a unique example to establish a regional confidence and security building regime in the naval field should be also mentioned on this occasion.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This afternoon, the workshops will discuss topics on how to improve good governance, trade and environment in the Black Sea Region. These topics are of importance for us.

In this connection, we are of the view that, within our region, the most important problem which would hinder economic growth is the current account deficit faced by almost all of us. This avoids us from entering into a closer international financial cooperation. The first remedy which comes to mind for countries in similar state is to so reorganize the international economic structure as to bolster exports. Increased inflow of foreign direct investments from abroad could serve as a key factor. However, we have to keep in mind that, in today's favourable international financing, investors should consider their investment from a global point of view. Therefore, the first thing to do for us, should be to evaluate how much attractive our Black Sea Zone is for foreign direct investment. In making this evaluation, we should realize that, cooperative efforts for the protection of environment, good governance, state of law, confidence and security building measures, anti-terror and anti-organized crime measures are indispensable elements for investments to come, because these measures lay out the basis to attract capital from international markets, to generate growth, employment, and to promote peace and stability.

The existing mechanisms of cooperation within our region deal extensively with these issues. Time has come to encourage their efforts.

Thank You Mr. President.