



**Speech by Terry Davis,
Secretary General of the Council of Europe
at the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership
Bucharest, 4-6 June**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

My message to the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership can be summed up in one single sentence - the Forum should be a workshop not a talk-shop.

The underlying motive of this initiative is to put the Black Sea Region firmly on the map and to accelerate its economic, social and democratic development. In doing so, you can count on the full support of the Council of Europe. The world is ready for the Black Sea Tigers, but for them to roar and show their teeth, we need more than words.

I encourage you to be innovative, bold, decisive, practical and specific.

The Black Sea Region is bursting with possibilities for development, but to release its full potential, it must find a way to deal quickly and efficiently with some of its endemic problems. In the run up to this Forum, President Basescu spelled out the list of the most pressing security problems for the region: frozen conflicts, smuggling of drugs and weapons, human trafficking, cross-border organised crime and the undermining of democratic institutions through abuses of human rights.

These are difficult and complex issues. However, I am encouraged by your resolve to deal with these issues immediately and effectively, and not only nationally, but also through regional co-operation. The Romanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe - as you know, it ended three weeks ago – was an excellent example of how to get things done through competence, determination and hard work.

All the countries surrounding the Black Sea are member States of the Council of Europe – and this is an asset and an opportunity. Economic and social progress requires good governance, and good governance is impossible without a properly functioning democracy, full respect for human and minority rights, a coherent and modern set of laws and an

impartial, honest and effective judiciary. You do not need a lecture, and you will not get one from the Council of Europe. What you will get, if you ask for it, is our political support, advice and practical assistance.

Most of the countries in the region also aspire to become members of the European Union, and while this is not part of my brief, I want to state clearly my support for these ambitions.

However, although membership is important, we must not forget that, at the end of the day, Brussels – and Strasbourg for that matter – are only institutional reflections of a reality which must be built here - in Bucharest, Sofia, Yerevan, Chisinau and all the other towns and cities across the region. What defines Europe, apart from geography, is a common set of values and the extent to which we succeed in bringing these values to life for the benefit of the people citizens.

This Forum can help to make all this happen. It can benefit the participating countries, but also benefit Europe as a whole. If we want our unity to be deep, and not simply broad, we must build up from the local and regional level, and not down from the top.

Thank you very much.