

Vladimir VORONIN, President of Republic of Moldova

As delivered

Statement by H.E. Mr. Vladimir Voronin, President of the Republic of Moldova at the Summit of the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership Bucharest, 5th June 2006

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A Romanian statesman said, some time ago, that the Black Sea is the best of all the neighbors of Romania. Mr. Traian Basescu, President of Romania, the host of this Summit, to whom I address all my thanks for the excellent organization of the event, seems to have found a most delicate historical retort to the statement his distinguished fellow country-man made, in his endeavor to turn the Black Sea from a symbolically exemplary neighbor into a symbol of good neighborhood, productive dialogue and long-lasting partnership between the countries of the region. Being one of Romania's neighbors and a good friend of You, all, let me salute you and address my warmest good wishes to you.

Even if our presence, today, in Bucharest, were merely formal and we did not bring into discussion the common issues of the countries in the basin of the Black Sea, the simple fact of being present is a sign of our constant interest for the regional collaboration. Judging by the draft of the Joint Declaration, proposed by the host of the Summit, as well as by the atmosphere prevailing in the hall today, we have the chance to launch a regional process of strategic importance at this meeting.

In times gone by, there were drawn and redrawn different borders. Some of them were so hermetic, that any dialogue between countries had been excluded for tens of years. Today, all of us live a remarkable historical experience, when a new border, namely that of the European Union which lies between us, is not longer a line of fault, a Berlin Wall or an Iron Curtain. In my opinion, the Black Sea Forum, which is organized on the most important segment of the European border, is a connecting bridge, a common space, where old and young democracies meet and the democratic area enlarges.

Through such regional initiatives, the New Neighborhood Policy, launched by the European Union, could get clearer outlines, gain new facets and be permanently adjusted to the steady changing realities. Thus, the Black Sea Forum could and should become a laboratory for elaborating and turning into account efficient mechanisms for cross-border cooperation.

The Republic of Moldavia clearly and decisively declared its main course for the European integration. The political class of Chisinau gave up long ago requesting insistently that our country be included, immediately and at any price, into the enlargement plans of the European Union. On the contrary, our political class united its efforts in coherent actions aiming at adjusting the legislation in accordance with the *acquis communautaire*, improving institutional reform, consolidating the administrative capacity, elaborating and implementing efficient mechanisms for law enforcement.

We learn how to do our homework tenaciously, we learn from the practices of other countries but also from our own experience, how to become credible and reliable partners for our new allies. We try to convince our old friends and allies that the actual political course of the Republic of Moldova is not an act of unfriendliness in relation to them.

We are strongly convinced that the course adopted by our country is the most trustworthy way for the consolidation of democracy, the creation of a functional market economy and the insurance of the regional security. These opportunities can be offered, at present, only by the European Union.

European integration and the preservation of the unity of our country represent priority objectives of the national interest of the Republic of Moldova. If the first objective ensures the best perspective for the development of my country, the second one has also a vital importance for us because the survival of our state is unconceivable in the absence of its unity,.

Our membership in regional and international organizations, our participation in European and international processes and initiatives make sense only if we succeed in harmonizing our national interest with the interests of the other participants in these organizations and initiatives. This is why, I think that it is nothing much when we incidentally formulated, in the Joint Statement, that unresolved conflicts in the Black Sea region represent a challenge to the security and stability in the region.

Secessionism has often had similar appearance and essence, but the reasons of this phenomenon have been differed most of the times. For instance, the Transdnierster secessionism, the Republic of Moldavia has to confront with, is provoked and supported from the exterior. We can no longer leave this situation under cover. We are convinced that only by stating this officially and bluntly, we can approach to a quick resolution of this conflict.

I think that the Joint Statement, which lays the grounds for an important process in this area of Europe, has to tackle the issue of secessionism in a categorical and non-ambiguous manner. Only in this way, reliable and efficient solutions to the conflicts could be found later.

Dear Colleagues,

I am trustful that, through joint efforts, the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership can become a process of a special importance for the European destiny of the participating states. We have clearly stated our interest for this Forum and I give you my assurances that the Republic of Moldova will be a very active and full of initiative actor.

Thank you.