



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ΣΧΕΔΙΟ ΟΜΙΛΙΑΣ ΚΟΥ ΠΡΩΘΥΠΟΥΡΓΟΥ
ΣΤΗ ΣΥΝΑΝΤΗΣΗ ΑΡΧΗΓΩΝ ΚΡΑΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΕΩΝ
(Μόσχα 25 Οκτωβρίου 1996)

Mr. ~~Chairman~~ *President*

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I participate for the first time in such an important Meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and I take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks to the President of the Russian Federation and to you personally Mr. Chairman for the initiative to convene this Conference. I would also like to express my thanks for the warm hospitality, that I and the members of the Greek Delegation have enjoyed during our short stay in the beautiful and historic city of Moscow. ✓

Since ancient times the Black Sea region has been a cradle of different civilizations and a crossroad between Europe and Asia, where populations of different ethnic and religious origin have been living together. Periods of peace and stability were succeeded by long periods of conflicts and war. Despite this, the Black Sea area has always been famous

for the commercial transactions and economic ties forged among the peoples of the region. Greeks have always been present in this area and have contributed to the establishment of multifaced ties with the nations of the Black Sea. Today in building a new world, the economic interdependence of our countries is a fact that needs solidarity, confidence and peace, so that our cooperation may blossom. ✓

The countries that are represented here today, I am sure can meet the challenges of the present and at the eve of a new millennium I believe that, all of us, we can intensify our efforts in creating a new era of freedom, stability and good neighbourly relations, which will be beneficial to the prosperity and the well being of our peoples. ✓

Greece attaches great importance for the development of our economic cooperation and the activity of more than 2.000 Greek companies and enterprises operating in various countries of the BSEC area constitutes the best proof of the eagerness of the Greek entrepreneurs in establishing new bridges of cooperation with the business communities of the BSEC participating states. For us this geographic region is a vital one for seeking opportunities of cooperation and we believe that there is a lot of space for the businessmen to join hands and promote mutual cooperation, to the benefit of all the states of the area. We have to create the conditions for this cooperation and more is to be done

My country -as a founding member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation- considers it of a great geopolitical and geoeconomic importance. Since 1992 and more particularly during the Hellenic Presidency of the BSEC which ended in May 1995, we have spared no effort to promote the goals and targets of this initiative and we have actively participated in all the Ministerial Meetings, the High Level Meeting of Bucharest and the Meetings of the subsidiary organs, where important decisions have been taken, affecting the future of this cooperation. However, many issues and problems still remain to be solved in the years to come by common and concerted action. ~~To this effect~~, we are doing everything we can in finding solutions acceptable to all our partners.

Greece, according to the relevant Ministerial decisions, is the host country of two significant bodies of the BSEC, namely the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank in Thessaloniki and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies in Athens. Moreover, at the end of this year, we are also going to host in Athens the Conference of the Representatives of the Academic Communities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. It is expected that, through this Conference, in which distinguished scientists and scholars from all the countries of the region will participate, the BSEC process will acquire a new dimension.

Concluding, I would like to stress that the Hellenic Republic, as a member of the European Union and a founding member of the BSEC, will make full use of its traditional experience in democratic institutions and with the support of the European Union will continue to play its positive role in further promoting the cooperation with all the participating states of the BSEC. However, allow me at this point to remind that the region is faced with serious conflicts and that there are signs of new tensions to arise. My government, guided by the values of democracy, the rule of law the international treaties and the respect of human rights, principles which are also included in the founding documents of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, will continue working for the establishment of peaceful coexistence of all peoples of the region. I hope that in a climate of friendship, mutual understanding and with good faith, we shall be able to achieve the goals and targets of the BSEC initiative and we will succeed to create a new era of prosperity and well being for all our peoples and particularly for the generations to come.

Thank you,

The document we agree with the Moscow Declaration and stress the need of strengthening the institutional and legal framework. I want also to stress the development of regional cooperation.