

## **Intervention by Mr. *Laszlo Borbely*, Minister of Development, Public Works and Housing, Romania**

Let me start by thanking the European Commission [and particularly the Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner] for organising this important event.

I think we all agree that this international conference on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a landmark event for the strengthened ENP. It provides us with the appropriate framework to discuss the way forward with our partners and commit ourselves to intensify our relations in the framework of a consolidated ENP, as a further proof of the ENP partnership principle.

The range and depth of our possible cooperation are generous, spanning from the economic field to people-to-people. We advocate working harder towards creating the conditions for the resolution of all outstanding aspects in the neighbourhood, from development issues to threats to stability, such as the frozen conflicts. We also welcome the visa facilitation agreements with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, it is important to open borders.

I will focus in my short contribution on the importance of the Black Sea Regional cooperation initiative within the ENP. The Black Sea states are related to the EU through different policy frameworks: the ENP ( for the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the three South Caucasian countries), strategic partnership (the Russian Federation), enlargement (Turkey) and membership (Romania, Bulgaria and Greece). Romania has long advocated increased readiness of the EU Commission to be involved at the regional level. We welcomed the Commission's Communication - the Black Sea Synergy, as a new initiative for consolidating regional cooperation. It recognizes the importance of the region for the EU, the challenges it faces and the importance of a flexible and enhanced cooperation.

We do support a Black Sea synergy as being a flexible framework that would allow various initiatives to involve important inter-regional elements, take shape into a concrete project proposal and eventually be put in practice. I would like to emphasize that result-oriented projects and the involvement of the regional actors are key criteria of the usefulness of this Community support.

Among the main cooperation areas listed in the Black Sea Synergy, Romania is first of all ready to actively support strengthening the contacts with the existing regional organizations. Secondly, we are eager to promote cooperation programmes. So far, under the aegis of the Black Sea Forum Romania has organized projects related to better understanding security risks, cross-border cooperation in civil emergency planning, strengthening civil society capacity in the region. These projects will continue for the short to medium term. Other projects that are going to be implemented in the near will target environment protection and raising awareness on its importance. In the area of trade we also support a gradual development of Free Trade Agreements, as already foreseen in the Black Sea Synergy.

Romania welcomes and strongly supports enhanced energy dialogue between the EU and the countries in the Black Sea-Caspian region. We believe the Black Sea

region can play an important role as a transit route towards the European markets and is, therefore, strategically important.

With regard to the ENPI – European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument – I would like to bring to your attention the importance that Romania attaches to the cross border cooperation programmes.

Finally, a message directed especially to our Mediterranean friends. Romania trusts that its views on the Black Sea are well-understood. It is a fact that 5 Eastern ENP countries are part of that region. But the Black Sea is not only a part of our neighborhood – it is a region that articulates three major neighborhoods of the EU – the South, the East and the Middle East. Therefore, the Black Sea should unite our neighbors rather than divide them.

I am confident that the ENP will be strengthened through our more pro-active and result-oriented joint approach. I look forward to debating together the ways ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our thoughts and plans for the future.