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**EU and Turkish Perspectives on Black Sea Regional Cooperation**

**CLOSING REMARKS BY TUĞRUL ERKİN,  
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Dear Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have finally come to the end of this two day conference where we had the opportunity to hear and discuss different perspectives on the Black Sea Region from a range of experts and decision makers from the European Union, state authorities, think tanks, business and civil society organizations and financial institutions. Within this framework, I also had the opportunity to express my views to the name of the Energy Working Group of Turkish Industrialists' and Business Association, TÜSİAD underlining the importance of the Wider Black Sea Region including inevitably the Caspian for the energy security of Europe and the critical role that can be played by Turkey as a secure energy corridor. I believe that all the speeches and presentations we heard and the discussions we had were quite interesting and useful and I hope they enabled us to do some further reflections in our minds regarding the importance of this region.

I consider that there is a consensus among all of us present here that the Black Sea Region located at the junction of all the old continents of the world has a strategic importance and an immediate concern for the prosperity, stability and security of Europe more than ever before.

The Black Sea Region is a big and more importantly a fast growing market with a high potential, an energy and transport hub and an area where different cultures meet. However, besides these big opportunities, big challenges for the Region also exist due to frozen conflicts. Overcoming the challenges of the Region require certainly coordinated action at regional level and prioritizing cooperation in some key areas such as energy, transport, environment and trade.

### **TURKISH INDUSTRIALISTS' AND BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

From a business perspective, taking into account the huge opportunities in trade and investment, there is certainly a mutual interest in cooperation on regional level among business community. Creation of properly functioning, solid business organizations which would advocate for functioning market economies and further economic integration is

certainly necessary for our Region. After all, business can play a critical role and become the driving force behind the transformation of the Region and its integration with the globe. Within this framework, the “Black Sea Synergy” of the European Union announced within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a very timely initiative taking into account the increasing importance of the Region and will surely open a new window of perspectives for Europe. A long term, coordinated, coherent and effective strategy with clear targets and identified common interests and potential fields of action should definitely be set by EU for developing cooperation both within the Region and between Europe and the Region. There is high interest in including all the regional actors especially the civil society to identify priorities.

Last but not least, taking into consideration the energy security of the continent, the scope of our actions should go further than Black Sea to include especially the Caspian and Central Asia.

Well, thank you very much for your attention. I hope that the Black Sea Conferences of the Southeast Europe Association will continue with the support of business organizations like TÜSIAD and UBCCE in the future.