



“Energy Cooperation & Environmental Protection in the wider Black Sea area”

Athens, 29 November 2011

Dear Director,

Honourable Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome our distinguished guests and participants to the Second Round Table Discussion on Energy Cooperation and Environmental Protection in the wider Black Sea area that is taking place within the framework of the “Hellenic – Azeri Green Energy Forum”.

At the initiative of the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the ICBSS, the Hellenic –Azeri Green Energy Forum aims at promoting the two countries as partners in dialogue for beneficial cooperation in the field of Green Energy; and to build up sustainable structures and networks for further collaboration within the wider Black Sea area. This Round Table Discussion will concentrate on the promotion of Hellenic-Azerbaijani relations in the field of economic cooperation within the context of environmental protection and energy cooperation with a view to promoting environmental friendly policies and the adoption of a clean energy model in the wider Black Sea area.

The Black Sea area, Ladies and Gentlemen, constitutes a valuable natural asset of global importance vulnerable to human interventions that unfortunately, has to deal with severe environmental threats and future risks. Through this initiative, our primary objective is to exchange valuable information and good practices as an effort to raise awareness and to mobilise all relative parties with a view to promoting regional

cooperation so as to establish a clean energy model; an eco-friendly system for the wider Black Sea area.

Currently in South Africa, the international community has come together once again in the battle against climate change impact; and what can anyone hope for is that cooperation and good faith will prevail. Therefore, it is in my strong belief that such initiatives for the promotion of regional cooperation will raise awareness that will eventually result in successful cooperation at an international level as well.

The ICBSS, a related body to BSEC and its acknowledged think-tank, is promoting the adoption of responsible environmental policies as a precondition to sustainable development. Within this context, the Centre's new perspective is closely linked to the environmental dimension of the Black Sea region. Already developed by the previous Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship under the motto a "Green Black Sea", the environmental aspect runs through all of our objectives and actions.

Concluding, I would like first of all, to thank the Center for Strategic Studies, and especially Dr. Gulshan Pashayeva, for their kind cooperation and support of this initiative. I trust that this will mark the beginning of a productive and fruitful cooperation between the two Centres.

Finally, allow me to express my special thanks to our Sponsors for their support in successfully organising this event: the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Public Gas Corporation, the Research Institute for European and American Studies, Repower Greece, Euractiv and the Hellenic State Aid Institute.

I would like to wish all, a very productive and fruitful roundtable. Thank you all for coming today.

Now, please allow me to give the floor to the Secretary General of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Konstantinos Papadopoulos.