



**Brief introduction by Mr Victor TARHON, President of Tulcea County Council,
on behalf of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSRC) to the CPMR Political
Bureau meeting in Gijón, Asturias on 15-16 February 2010.**

President Martini,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first to thank our host, President Vicente Alberto ÁLVAREZ ARECES for his kind invitation to Asturias and for his warm hospitality.

On behalf of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSRC) and its interim President Mr Constantinescu, President of the Constanta County Council in Romania, who unfortunately was not able to attend our meeting. I am glad to be able to represent him and make this introduction to you.

Mr Constantinescu, BBSRC Vice-President since the Rhodes 2008 General Assembly, replaced the elected President of the BBSRC Mr Georgios Tsiotras, former Secretary General of the Greek Region of Central Macedonia, following his resignation last October due to the election held in Greece and the governmental change of power to the Socialist Party Pasok.

New General Secretaries have been appointed to the 13 Greek regions last December, with whom we are looking forward to a strong collaboration. At the same time, I would like to inform you that as announced by the Greek Prime Minister, Mr Papandreou, an institutional reform on local and regional governance will take place in Greece, so there will therefore be elected Presidents and regional councils in the 13 Greek regions. The elections are foreseen for 4 November 2010.

With great confidence, I would like to welcome the new Secretary General of the CPMR, Mrs Eleni Marianou and wish her good success in her important task. At the same time, I would like to praise her initiative to include in the Agenda of our Political Bureau meeting, a session on the presentation of the geographical commissions' work programmes and activities. This will enable all CPMR member regions to access information on the important work carried out at the level of the CPMR geographical commissions and in this way have a more coordinated approach of the work of the CPMR as a whole.

Dear colleagues,

The most important accomplishment of our Commission since the Gothenburg CPMR General Assembly is the decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) to grant Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status with BSEC to the CPMR, represented by its Balkan and Black Sea Commission. This important decision will give our Commission the opportunity to take part in the BSEC inter-governmental meetings in important areas for the regions of the Black Sea such as transport, the environment, etc. It is the first time that the voice of the regions will be heard with regard to the official policies of the BSEC member states.

As to future activities, we are in the process of organising the next BBSRC General Assembly which is expected to take place in Varna, Bulgaria, during the Bulgarian BSEC presidency in office. During the Varna General Assembly the new BBSRC President and Vice Presidents will also be elected for a 2-year term. The topic of the General Assembly will be the BSEC policy for the coordinated development of the Black Sea Ring Highway which is a very important project for the wider Black Sea area in general.

I would now like to give the floor to Mr Anthony Papadimitriou, BBSRC Executive Secretary, whom I thank for his work as BBSRC Executive Secretary, for a more detailed presentation of the major activities of our Commission since the Gothenburg General Assembly and our work plan for future activities. At the same time, I would like to ask him to make a brief presentation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation the BSEC.

Thank you for your attention.