

## **Joint Statement**

### **of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area**

1. Foreign Ministers of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area met in Kyiv to initiate the Black Sea Synergy cooperation. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Viktor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine.

2. Ministers identified significant challenges and opportunities in the wider Black Sea area, which may require coordinated action at the regional level. They agreed that greater involvement by the European Union can increase the potential of Black Sea regional cooperation. Ministers welcomed the Black Sea Synergy Initiative of the European Union as an important tool to achieve this goal.

3. Participants agreed that the primary task of the Black Sea Synergy is the development of cooperation within the Black Sea region and also between the region as a whole and the European Union. The different aspects of the Synergy will be discussed, agreed upon and implemented by the interested countries in a fully transparent and flexible manner, based on mutual interests.

4. The Black Sea Synergy will benefit from the European Neighbourhood Policy and other EU policies applied in the relationship with countries of the region. EU support to Black Sea regional cooperation is aimed at producing tangible results in a number of priority areas. This includes the development and interconnection of transport, energy and communication infrastructure, responding to increasing trade, investment, traffic and information flows as well as rapidly evolving transit needs. Ministers declared their intention to promote the dialogue between energy producers, consumers and transit countries aimed at ensuring fair access to energy resources and markets, enhancing energy security and environmental sustainability. They will support regional transport cooperation with a view to improving efficiency, safety and security. Ministers agreed that the Black Sea Synergy offers a framework to improve coordination between relevant EU and regional policies as well as wide-ranging programmes such as the development of major trans-national transport axes, the Motorways of the Sea or the Black Sea Ring Highway.

5. The Synergy should contribute to better coordinating specific environmental programmes, notably those focusing on tasks relating to water quality. It should also invigorate the dialogue on Black Sea maritime policies and facilitate efforts to establish regional fisheries management cooperation in order to ensure sustainable use of Black Sea fishery resources. Black Sea regional cooperation should also provide a framework for building capabilities to cooperate in combating climate change and in preventing and managing natural and man-made disasters in the region. Black Sea countries and the European Union will develop region-wide activities to strengthen

cooperation in the fields of migration, law enforcement and the fight against organised crime building on the activities of cooperation arrangements already in place, by ensuring added value and avoiding duplication. Increased EU engagement in Black Sea regional cooperation has the potential to bring benefits also in the fields of trade, science and technology, research, culture and education as well as employment and social affairs.

6. Ministers took note of the wish for a possible visa facilitation perspective and the role of enhanced mobility in promoting the development of trade and economic relations.

7. The Black Sea Synergy could benefit from Black Sea partnerships, involving various stakeholders from the EU and the wider Black Sea area.

8. Participants agreed that the Black Sea Synergy would be a useful means to strengthen the democracy and respect for human rights and to foster civil society.

9. Protracted conflicts impede cooperation activities. Therefore participants emphasized the need for their earliest peaceful settlement on the basis of the norms and principles of international law.

10. The Meeting took due regard of the importance of parliamentary activities in promoting regional cooperation.

11. Ministers welcomed the first steps of the Black Sea Cross-Border Cooperation Programme which supports civil society and local level cooperation in Black Sea coastal areas.

12. Participants stressed the need for proper funding of priority regional cooperation programmes. Co-financing should apply as a general rule. In this context, the regional activities of the International Financial Institutions, most notably the EBRD, the EIB and the BSTDB, could offer new possibilities along with financing coming from the EU and from countries of the Black Sea area.

13. The Ministers recognised the important role played by regional organisations and initiatives, particularly by the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Ministers noted with satisfaction that the European Commission has obtained observer status in BSEC and has engaged in practical interaction with it in several fields. Black Sea Synergy will take due account of the work in BSEC and will at the same time remain open to all appropriate cooperation possibilities provided by other regional bodies and initiatives, including those in the Danube region, a key area to strengthen connections between the EU and the Black Sea countries.

14. Participants considered that this Black Sea Synergy Meeting is the beginning of a long-term regional cooperation endeavour offering new opportunities and increased stability and prosperity to citizens in the wider Black Sea area and the whole of Europe.

Ministers expressed their gratitude to Ukraine for the excellent preparation and organisation of the Meeting.

Kyiv, 14 February 2008