

**MINISTERIAL MEETING
DANUBE-BLACK SEA: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP
FOR INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT
(Bucharest, 23 February 2007)**

**Statement of Mr. Traian BASESCU
PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA**

Allow me to welcome you in Bucharest and to wish you success during the Ministerial Meeting.

Once Romania and Bulgaria have become an European Union members, EU covers almost the entire European peninsula. A common maritime space has been created. Not only that the European economy has become a maritime economy, but also the vicinity of the European Union defines itself, first of all, also through maritime spaces: Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Atlantic Ocean. Within this maritime continental space is included a transcontinental fluvial dimension generated, on the one hand, by the natural existence of the Danube river and, on the other hand, by the existence of a wide navigable ways, such as Rhine-Main-Danube Canal and Danube-Black Sea Canal.

In this context, new pressures operate on the aquatic geography of Europe. I would like to mention some of them.

First of all, the specific of the European Union structure generates a strong need for a transcontinental mobility and also for the re-localization of the citizens and the activities, especially thanks to the four rights regarding the circulation of the persons, goods, services and capital on the internal market of the European Union.

Secondly, we have to mention the pressures generated by the future power sources of the European Union. Even if Romania has appreciable hydropower resources confronts itself with the power problem. The maritime dimension of the European Union shows us some viable solutions. The European Union is surrounded by the biggest natural gases reserves in the world. In addition, it is situated close to the areas which are rich in oil. The future of the European Union regarding the power issue depends on the North Sea area and the Mediterranean Sea area. But the future of the European Union regarding the power issue

depends especially on its connections with the Caspian area, which means a new strategic dimension of the Black Sea region.

Thirdly, the globalization generates pressures in terms of values. The ideals of democracy make us, present generation, more jointly, but also united with tomorrow generations. The only development process we accept is the sustainable development process. As a result, we want all to benefit from the social-economic development results, including the neighbours of the Europe, across the Black Sea. We also want to see that the future generations enjoy the beauties of the Danube Delta, the only delta in Europe.

Fourthly, we are pressed by our mistakes from the past. Maybe today the climate tells us that we have mistaken too much. Here, in Romania, we have winter for thousands of years. Snow has always meant wealth, rains in Romania has always meant wealth. Today, rains mean floods, which are difficult to be controlled and have effects which are hard to be evaluated at the beginning of each year.

In fact, the European Union has a big problem: the efficient quantitative water management, on the one hand, but especially the efficient qualitative water management. Certainly, the solution is not to reduce the development. But we can't stay passively at the pollution increase on the Danube and in the Black Sea.

We are all convinced that there are solutions. It is obvious that we need interdisciplinary approaches and coherent public policies. We need a better planning and scheduling, we need better laws; the Water Framework Directive needs to be respected and implemented, but it is necessary, especially, to have political will and co-operation among localities, states and regions, among citizens and authorities. The role of the international organizations is essential. The Danube and Black Sea Commissions have to be supported by each member state. Good co-operation for the environmental protection at the eastern border of the European Union should be an example for a better co-operation at political level, so that the entire region to become a stabile and prosperous one for all neighbours.

I personally express my hope that the time of unilateral approaches in this part of the European Union has passed and the good-faith partnerships are the most solid guarantee of the prosperity of the region. The enhancement of the co-operation for the protection of the aquatic

environment in the Danube river basin and the Black Sea basin is crucial for the future development of the countries we represent here today.

In addition, this intensified co-operation can be a proof of the European Union leadership, regarding the protection of the environment, in general and of the fluvial and maritime basins, in particular.

First of all, the main effort has to be ours, people who live in the Lower and Middle Danube basin and near the Black Sea. Here, the development level is lower than in the rest of the Union, here are less financial resources. We are members of a community for which the solidarity represents a fundamental value and the countries in our region are entitled to hope, to believe in the solidarity of the entire European Union with the environmental issue in the Lower Danube and in the Black Sea.

Thank you!