



**The speech delivered by Mr.
Tuncay Özilhan,
Chairman of the Board of TUSIAD,
at he meeting with
Mr. Papandreu,
The Foreign Minister of Greece**

**1 October 2002
Greece**

Minister Papandreou, good afternoon.

We are all very pleased to be here and have this occasion to share our views with you. I must note before I start my remarks that once more you stole the show in İstanbul at the Eurasia summit.

You are one of the architects of the rapprochement between our two countries. And you also know better than anyone else that at TÜSİAD we greatly value better Greek-Turkish relations.

We are confident that we will continue to address all outstanding problems between our two countries in the same spirit that defined the last three years.

We followed with great enthusiasm the rebuilding of trust between Turkey and Greece as you and your counterpart in Turkey, Mr. İsmail Cem worked hard at it.

Because of your work the relations between the two countries are relaxed, problems do not get out of control and the dialogue continues unabated. Our two societies feel closer to one another than at any time since the early 1950s.

We hope that this trend will be crowned by the co-hosting of the World Cup in 2008 by Athens and İstanbul.

We appreciate the support given to Turkey by the Greek government on the issue of Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU. You personally make many statements concerning this all-important issue for Turkey.

I wish to be very open with you. It is of utmost importance that the EU extend to Turkey an invitation to start negotiations at the Copenhagen summit.

We worked very hard to make sure that the legislative package on democratization was enacted in Parliament. We continue our efforts to make sure that the requisite regulations for harmonization are prepared and fully implemented.

We are concerned Mr. Prime Minister that the EU in general and the European Commission in particular may not fully appreciate the repercussions of the decisions they will make.

We are anxiously waiting for the Commission's progress report and the strategic paper that prefaces it. Should these offer Turkey less than a membership perspective, we fear that all our efforts will have been nullified.

The attempt to satisfy Turkey with newly invented concepts or the extension of a special status will have a shocking effect on the Turkish public. I suspect that a political backlash will then be in the offing.

Another issue that taxes EU-Turkey relations is also part of our bilateral agenda. We have made many public declarations supporting a just, fair and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. We want a unified island to join the EU.

We called on all the involved parties to do their utmost to bring this matter to a resolution. We also called on the EU to act and speak responsibly on Cyprus so as not to generate unnecessary friction.

Mr. Minister, we encourage you to continue your efforts to convince the EU to give Turkey what is rightfully hers are sincere. We will also continue to do our part in pursuing the matter in Ankara and in EU capitals till the last moment.

If we succeed in our efforts Turkish-Greek relations will flourish. Together our two countries have a lot to contribute to the peace and prosperity of all the regions of which we are a part.

Once more we thank you for your time and all that you have accomplished to improve Greek-Turkish relations.