



**CULTURAL CORRIDORS OF SOUTH EAST EUROPE
COMMON PAST AND SHARED HERITAGE -
A KEY TO FUTURE PARTNERSHIP
A REGIONAL FORUM**

Varna, May 20-21 2005

**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. KAROLOS PAPOULIAS,
PRESIDENT OF GREECE**

(Summarized, the original text is not available)

- The President expressed his content from the participation in the meeting in Varna, which depicted the will of the leaders of the countries of South East Europe to have stronger cooperation in the context of the excellent initiative of Bulgaria to develop the cultural corridors of the region;
- Stated that the ethnical, historical and cultural wealth of the region was not a surprise, because for centuries, the region had been the crossroad between the East and the West, the North and the South and this had been a fertile ground for the exchange of ideas and experience, which had lately been put to hardships, because of economical and military crisis.
- Stressed on the fact that the system of the cultural corridors, which included natural and historical sites, and also the links between them, was a valuable instrument to encourage the specifics of the various cultures of this region and to assist the economical development through cultural tourism;
- Reminded, that tourism was an international language, which was comprehended by all countries of the world, by all peoples of the Balkans, who, through their historical development, have showed and proved able of giving and disseminating remarkable cultural heritage;
- Stated that Greece, by its policy and actions, had been helping for the integration of the Balkan countries in a united Europe of democracy, human rights, culture, tolerance and civilization;
- Shared the wish of Greece, that the Balkans in the 21st century be a region of peaceful living together, where being a good neighbour was the basic principle and way of communication. Added that this wish aims at the forming of a new image of the Balkans for the 21st century;
- Concluded by wishing all the best for the successful reaching of the goals of the meeting in Varna and expressed his gratitude to the Bulgarian hosts for the warm welcome and to UNESCO and the Council of Europe for their remarkable assistance for the implementation of the forum.