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**Romano Prodi President of the European Commission Visit to Bogaziçi University Bogaziçi University Istanbul, 16 January 2004**

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**SPEECH/04/20**

**Romano Prodi**

**President of the European Commission**

**Visit to Bogaziçi University**

**Bogaziçi University**

**Istanbul, 16 January 2004**

Rector, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here today to address this distinguished audience, in this unique and cosmopolitan city. Istanbul looms large in the history of the civilised world as a great political, intellectual as well as artistic centre. Few cities in Europe reflect so many centuries of shared history and identity. And it symbolises economic power, vigour and the emergence of a modern society.

It is a pleasure to be here at Bosphorus University. With its strong international background and its reputation for excellence stretching back over a century, Bosphorus University is well known for preparing outstanding young professionals. Many of its famous alumni have left their mark on Turkey's public life.

**The challenges ahead**

Powerful shifts are changing the world and Europe. Globalisation, technological innovation and demographic changes are creating new opportunities and challenges but also all kinds of disorders that could give rise to conflict. The question that we have to ask ourselves is how do we respond to these challenges? At a global level it is essential that international organisations such as the United Nations and World Trade Organisation function efficiently, and that there should be agreement on a

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regulatory framework to ensure a common approach on these major issues.

The EU accepts its share of responsibility for maintaining peace and fostering more equitable development in the world. In fifty years of building Europe, we have acquired the political and the institutional experience that has enabled us to enlarge the membership of our Union from six to 25, and soon to more. The Union is the most successful example of democratic governance in the globalisation process.

We owe a great debt to the European leaders who fifty years ago laid the foundations for the European Union. The community they helped to build was based on reconciliation, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. The overwhelming majority of our citizens can now enjoy levels of stability, security and prosperity never experienced by previous generations.

### Europe's values

Freedom has always been and remains Europe's unifying principle: it is a principle that allows every man and woman to give the best of themselves, to have a real opportunity to build for themselves and their families lives with dignity, to feel that they are an active part of a thriving community and democracy, to work, to live in a pleasant environment and to be protected against the serious risks that life can bring.

But freedom also means responding decisively to those who seek to curtail it, and to events that endanger the cohesion and solidarity of our societies. Europe must guarantee security while abiding by the principles of freedom and justice. Together we must find solutions to the problems we all face, such as terrorism, international crime, and illegal immigration. We live in a pluralistic society where there should be no room for xenophobia or discrimination against those who are different from ourselves.

### The Istanbul attacks

The recent terrorist bombings that hit Istanbul killing innocent women, men and children filled us all with shock and dismay. It also reminded us that there are those who would like to deprive people of freedom. It is therefore essential that we remain determined in our efforts to combat terrorism. It is a threat to us all and we need to address it through mutual co-operation. Turkey's measured and efficient reaction to the terrorist attacks has earned respect from the international community.

### Europe as a provider of security

Without peace there can be no freedom, no justice. Europe's vocation to export peace and prosperity to lands which have witnessed the horrors of conflict has been confirmed by the success of the present enlargement.

From the Baltic to the Balkans, Europe is demonstrating in tangible terms what it is capable of doing as a regional power, for international security and stability. If the Balkans are to cease being the source of international crises they have been for centuries, responsibility lies with Europe. But we shouldn't forget that Turkey too plays an important role in stabilising the area, actively participating in EU missions in Bosnia and FYROM and contributing to NATO forces in Kosovo. In July 2003 the Turkish armed forces took over command of the South-Eastern Europe Peacekeeping Force for two years.

But in order for stability and prosperity to be sustainable they must also extend to the areas around us. Achieving this is a crucial EU interest, just as it is a crucial interest for our neighbours. This is the rationale behind the European Neighbourhood policy. We propose a new partnership based on shared values and enhancing economic development, interdependence and cultural links for those neighbours for which accession is not on the agenda.

### Turkey in the enlargement process