

## **Opening Remarks**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues, and Dear delegates,

We are gathered once again in Thessaloniki for the annual SE Europe Energy Dialogue. Some 45 speakers and panelists from almost all countries of the region and from international organizations are participating in this year's event. A considerable amount of firepower, expertise and knowledge, which covers all areas of the energy sector, will be used in the short span of 2 days to unravel the intricacies and associations, the hidden and the more visible relationships of the region's energy agenda.

Obviously the question arises if there is an agenda. And if yes, who set it and what it is about. Frankly speaking I do not think that there is a coherent agenda as such. But if you examine carefully the present energy scene of the area but also study plans and projects, stated, or in and advanced the planning and execution stage, you will begin to see a pattern. And in my view this pattern gives credence to the belief that we are moving fast ahead towards monumental changes in the overall energy landscape. The until recently lethargic past of the region is fast giving way to a dynamic future. I therefore believe that we are now witnessing the region's rapid energy transformation and we can only look upon such developments with hope and expectations.

Today, Greece the host country of the Energy Dialogue, is undergoing through a most difficult and trying period not unrelated to cardinal mistakes of the past, an arrogant behaviour by the country's political elite and widespread complacency on the part of the electorate. In our meeting we shall obviously not going to debate about Greece's euro zone woes but we must be aware that economic developments do affect energy markets, their functioning and outlook. And in that respect the economy and the economic background will be very much in evidence in our discussions and deliberations. Over the next two days.

In the power point presentation that follows under the title **“Redefining SE Europe’s Energy Map”** I have tried to depict in an graphic way some of the most important developments per sector and in different countries of SE Europe. This is by no means an exhaustive presentation and is only indicative of what in my view is happening and which I believe is going to have some profound long term impact which will alter the region’s energy landscape as we know it today.