

*Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
Turkey, 23-25 October 2009*

Message from H.E. Mr. Mehmet Ali ŞAHİN, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey



On behalf of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, I would like to welcome all distinguished guests to Istanbul, 2010 European Capital of Culture, a city which brings civilizations together.

It gives us great pleasure to host the “4th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean”, where colleagues from around the region gather to finalize the activities of the previous year and determine the calendar for 2010.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey aims at creating an international atmosphere in which countries of the world enjoy peace and prosperity based on good relations, stability, and cooperation.

For this purpose, our Parliament gives utmost importance to enhancing relations at all levels with parliaments that represent nations and strives for conducting an efficient parliamentary diplomacy.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, which believes in the importance of the contribution of parliaments in providing solutions to today’s problems and preserving peace and stability, actively contributes to organizations instituted to this end.

The Mediterranean region hosted many civilizations throughout the history of mankind and played a unique role in the improvement of the democratic system. The most obvious sign of this is that the world’s oldest democratic parliament is located in Patara, a small town affiliated to Kaş, a district of the city of Antalya.

As the parliaments of the Mediterranean region have such a longstanding democratic history, I strongly believe that the work we will perform together for our common future is of great importance.

In today’s world where all local and global components are more and more interrelated, Mediterranean parliamentary diplomacy offers a fresh approach to international diplomacy, based on its common and rich historical heritage.

Turkey has always supported and will continue to support initiatives towards enhancing cooperation and dialogue in the region.

Distinguished Colleagues, I wish that you will enjoy your time in Istanbul, bridge among different faiths and cultures and with a history of thousands of years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines, representing the name Mehmet Ali ŞAHİN.

Mehmet Ali ŞAHİN