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The Canadian Forum on Southeastern Europe works closely with embassies of the region, including those of Greece and Turkey. Among its associated partners are: the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Delegation of the European Commission to Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada.

The international conference "Southeastern Europe: Moving Forward" gathered over 150 scholars, diplomats, government officials, NGO representatives, business people and students at Lord Elgin Hotel, on January 23 and 24, 2003. The conference was organized around five panels and included speakers from the Government of Canada, the Delegation of the European Commission in Ottawa, the Presidency of the European Union and the governments of participating embassies. In addition, it included participation of leading Canadian experts on Southeastern Europe.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

The objective of the conference was to identify and analyze current political and economic trends with the goal of drawing attention to positive achievements, cooperative efforts and current challenges, as Southeastern Europe enters a new phase of development which should bring improved prospects for political and economic development, and a more conducive environment for business activity.

Perspectives from the Government of Canada

"Now there is real, tangible hope for progress. We've clearly turned a corner," said **Paul Dubois, Assistant Deputy Minister for Europe, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada**, referring to the countries of Southeastern Europe. He argued that the key to this change was the consensus on integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, such as the EU and NATO, and full acceptance of the values these institutions represent. In his opinion, the question is not where the region is going, but only "how fast." Mr. Dubois underscored that Canada strongly encouraged this evolution: Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was the first NATO leader, for example, to argue for a robust enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Canada thinks that institutions such as NATO and the EU should embrace all Europe, this process promoting peace and prosperity and reinforcing the democratic values Canada lives by. Canada's interest is well served by this development, said Mr. Dubois: to the extent that Europe's economy, for instance, expands, Canada's can grow too. The countries of Southeastern Europe can become new motors of a new, broader Europe, adding diversity and vigour to it: a New Europe would, thus, be constructed. Canadian businesspeople could take advantage of new markets and the political and security partnership with Europe would be strengthened.