**KTTO: “We are looking forward to celebrating next year’s “Europe Day” in a context where the Turkish Cypriot businesses will be enjoying the full rights and benefits of the EU membership”**

*“World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.”*

These words of the then French foreign minister Robert Schuman in his declaration made on the 9th of May 1950 which laid the first foundation of today’s European Union have never been more valid than now. Not only for the EU itself which is confronted with serious challenges; migration, security, rise of extremism and financial instability among others, but also for the settlement of the long standing Cyprus dispute.

Today, many elements are coming together that can either make the Cyprus problem more complex or contribute to find a comprehensive solution to the benefit of all. Like the founding fathers of the EU who took the very first steps of the European project in establishing the “European Coal and Steel Community”, political will and creative efforts should be put forward to put an end to this long-standing dispute and turning the elements of conflict into a common opportunity. Not only for Cypriots themselves but for the peace, security and stability of the whole region and the EU.

Ever since its founding, the EU has set a profound example of what synergy and cooperation can yield, and the EU member states benefited enormously from the fundamental freedoms brought about by such unity. However, 12 years after the accession of the divided island of Cyprus into the EU, Turkish Cypriots are still being deprived of all the full rights and benefits enjoyed by EU citizens. This unfortunate state of affairs on the EU territory defies the fundamental principles of the EU and does not contribute in any way to the efforts of reaching a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus, thus should be mended.

The challenges that the EU is confronted with today can only be overcome by preserving its unity and defending its common values and principles which led to its success. Its “EU”policies towards the Turkish Cypriot Community and the solution of the Cyprus problem should also be guided by these very values and principles.

Mindful of the instrumental role of economics and economic cooperation in achieving peace and reconciliation, our Chamber will continue its efforts of promoting the development of the Turkish Cypriot economy as well as the economic cooperation between the two communities on the island. The success of which would necessitate the increased level of commitment from the EU as well as other parties concerned in preparing the Turkish Cypriot Community for a solution and EU integration.

Our Chamber trusts that the efforts to prepare the Turkish Cypriot economy for EU integration will be increased and hopes that the comprehensive settlement talks will yield a successful result. Consequently, we are looking forward to celebrating next year’s Europe Day in a context where the Turkish Cypriot businesses will be enjoying the full rights and benefits of the EU membership. Turkish Cypriots who remain committed to the comprehensive settlement and the founding values and principles of the EU deserve nothing less.