



## The Meeting Between Three Municipalities from Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria

20th-23rd August 2001



**T**he town of Egiros, in the Greek provins of Thrace, is historically a melting pot, characterised by various ethnic minorities and with a great cultural and religious diversity.

**I**t was within this context that the town in 2001 took the initiative to twin itself with the town of Kesan (Turkey), followed in 2001 by the town of Tupolovgrad (Bulgaria). The same year also sor the twinning together of these two latter towns. Thus the bilateral relations originally proposed by the small Greek municipality have now been confirmed and extended at a trilateral level.

**T**his resulted in the highly symbolic meeting of the three towns, which took place from the 20th to the 23rd of August 2001 in Egiros. This conference has been considered a good example of the involvement of small and peripheral municipalities. The town of Kesan has 42,758 inhabitants, while Tupolovgrad and Egiros have 7,000 and 4,850 respectively.

**M**oreover, the ambitions behind this tri-national meeting, hosted by Greece, was to allow Bulgaria and Greece, two countries applying for entry into the EU, to get acquainted with the working logistics of the Community, and especially to help them take part in the Community programmes. Finally, the meeting had the long-term objective of developing economic co-operation, particularly in the field of agriculture.

**D**uring the course of this four-day exchange, questions of the multicultural character of the region were brought to the fore. The meeting was conducted in the form of a conference, led by working groups, dedicated to "the protection of the environment and the development of the tourist industry within the framework of the EU". The four days were interspersed with visits to protected sites (natural resources and habitats) and to the agricultural infrastructure of the host municipality.

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Countries involved : Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria.

Persons involved : 48 Bulgarians and 25 Turks