

Distinguished colleagues, dear friends,

I stand before you today not only as a member of the Hellenic Parliament, but as someone who comes from a region long shaped by geography — **a meeting point of peoples, faiths, and histories.**

In **Greece**, and particularly in **Evros**, a border region in the northeast, the importance of trust and coexistence is deeply felt.

Though often tested due to its geopolitical position, Evros also serves as a quiet but powerful **example of harmonious interfaith living**, where Christian and Muslim communities have coexisted peacefully for generations.

In regions like Evros, interfaith coexistence is not a goal — it is a lived tradition.

And it teaches us that mutual respect is the strongest antidote to fear.

Today, as we reflect on how to strengthen trust and embrace hope, **we must recognize that these are not passive ideals. They demand action.**

Trust is forged through **transparency, accountability**, and the courage to govern not only for popularity, but for justice.

It is built in how we legislate, how we protect minorities, and how we treat those who are different.

Hope, too, is a conscious choice.

It means believing in shared futures even when the present seems fragmented.

It is sustained **by educators who teach respect, by religious leaders who build bridges, and by young people who choose unity over division.**

But trust and hope remain fragile unless we embed them in the foundations of our societies: in our institutions, in our schools, in our political culture.

In the Greek experience — and especially in places like Evros — we see clearly that **borders may define geography, but they must not define our humanity.**

Dear colleagues,

Let us leave this gathering **not only with shared words, but with shared commitments.**

Let us build nations that do not fear difference — but draw strength from it.

Because trust is not naïve, and hope is not a luxury.

They are our responsibility — and our legacy.

Thank you.