

Speech Commissioner Danuta Hübner

Inauguration of the Atrium "Open Ledra Street" (TC)

- I am very honoured and delighted to be here with you to celebrate the renaming of the Atrium of the Committee of the Regions' headquarters building.
- Dear Luc Van den Brande, let me congratulate you for your excellent idea and initiative to rename such a central part of the Committee's building "Open Ledra Street" as a potent sign of your wish – and I should of course add the wish of all of us – that this street and all such streets must never be closed again.
- **It is a symbolic act through which the Committee of the Regions also reminds us in a timely fashion how important it is to trust the creative force of our citizens. How important it is to build tomorrow's Europe bottom up.**
- Ledra Street had been a symbol of Nicosia's division for 34 years. Its reopening constitutes an important step for building confidence between the two communities in Cyprus. And this confidence is much needed in order to achieve the final goal of reunification of the island.
- I warmly welcome the presence in this highly symbolic ceremony of the two local leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities of Nicosia. Ms Mavrou and Mr Doratli, I highly appreciate and am touched by your determination to work together. I share your belief in the importance of people-to people contacts and bi-communal initiatives for the improvement of life of all citizens.
- Facilitating rapprochement between the two communities in Cyprus is essential for the European Union. The Commission is supportive of all bi-communal measures pursued by the two communities and stands ready to facilitate them whenever and however possible, including through Cohesion policy
- This being said, by far the biggest contribution to prosperity across the island will surely come from and end to the division of Cyprus.
- **Let us unite here in the hope that the opening of "Ledra Street " the traditional commercial artery of Nicosia will soon like the fall of the "Berlin Wall" in October 1989, pave the way to the reunification of Cyprus.**