



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
“Greening the economy and building partnerships”**

FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING

“Good Governance, Business Partnerships and Economic Participation”

Vienna, 23-24 January 2017

OSCE Congress Centre, Hofburg, Heldenplatz, 1010 Vienna

Welcoming Remarks

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Mr Chairman,
Deputy Foreign Minister Linhart,
Minister Schelling,
Minister Valovaya,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this first preparatory meeting of the 25th Economic and Environmental Forum. This year’s Forum will mark a quarter century of thought-provoking and focused discussions on key economic and environmental issues closely linked to security in our region.

The OSCE has a long track-record of promoting good governance, accountability and transparency. We are engaged in activities that enhance the climate for business and investment, streamline regulatory frameworks, and counter corruption. We cannot effectively do this without closer links to businesses, and we are reaching out to them more strongly than ever before. We also are mindful of the need for broadening participation in economic decision-making and for maximising the impact of innovative entrepreneurs for job creation and economic participation. Sustainable economic development is essential to peace and prosperity in all our participating States.

As a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE can greatly contribute to developing strong coalitions aimed at implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals promoting peace, prosperity and partnerships. We should jointly strive to fulfil the 2030 Agenda’s ambition to “leave no-one behind”. Social exclusion, deprivation and wide-spread unemployment have dire consequences for individuals and societies as a whole. They are also among the factors that can fuel radicalization and violent extremism that lead to terrorism – one of the chief security challenges of our times.

In order to move forward together, we need to secure the engagement and participation of local communities and civil society, including women and youth, who are all too often

excluded or ignored but have a strong potential for generating positive change. Within societies and across borders, the OSCE can help encourage cross-dimensional and multi-stakeholder co-operation between the private sector, civil society and public authorities to enhance transparency and participation and to prevent and fight corruption.

The OSCE's work in this area takes many forms. We support the drafting and implementation of anti-corruption strategies, fostering cooperation between judicial authorities, law enforcement and anti-corruption bodies; we provide advice on myriad related issues, from promoting more transparent lobbying and eliminating conflicts of interest to ensuring rules-based and competitive public procurement; and we help to ensure public access to environmental information and more responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making in the environmental field by supporting a network of 60 Aarhus Centres in 14 countries across our region.

From a security point of view, corruption can have devastating consequences. Counter-measures such as suppressing money laundering are important not just to rein in its harmful effects on business and society, but also to limit its potential for financing other forms of crime that endanger our security, including terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities invested significant efforts to enhance our relationship with the private sector. Like Ambassador Linhart, I am also convinced that the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship Business Conference on "Partnership and Innovation for Sustainable Economies" later this week will be another important step in this direction. Business interaction and the trading of goods and services offer an excellent incentive for countries to overcome their differences. Mutually beneficial trade can help to de-escalate tensions and mitigate the risk of conflict. Enhanced connectivity and partnerships based on integrity and mutual respect are key ingredients for developing and sustaining good-neighbourly relationships.

The adoption last month in Hamburg of the *Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity* offers ample scope to further intensify such co-operation. With this mandate, the OSCE, through the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, will focus activities on good governance and anti-corruption, public-private sector partnerships, good governance in supply chains and potential for closer economic co-operation as a contributor to political trust. The OSCE can provide a platform to promote a more inclusive and co-operative approach across the Eurasian region. Areas for increased interaction and co-operation, both at a political and technical level, include: transport, trade, economic co-operation, customs issues and labour migration management.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without due consideration for our environment and the protection of our natural resources. The Astana Expo 2017 will be another opportunity to strengthen co-operation within the economic and environmental field and in promoting good governance, energy security, environmental protection and comprehensive security.

In closing, allow me to draw your attention to an OSCE Security Days event that I will host here in co-operation with the Mayor of Vienna on 30-31 March. The event will look into local approaches to global challenges by focusing on what cities can do to ensure they are

inclusive, safe and sustainable, from an economic, an environmental, a social and a security viewpoint. Good governance will feature strongly in the discussion as it is the key to making best use of limited resources and to achieving popular support for forward-looking policies that can help bring about sustainable economic development. With this OSCE Security Days event, I aim to encourage new partnerships in recognition of the important role that cities play in tackling many of today's global challenges.

Thank you for joining us today and for taking an active part in this meeting. I look forward to your practical suggestions on how to further enhance the OSCE's impact in building partnerships to foster good governance and greater economic participation.

Thank you.