



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**25<sup>th</sup> 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

**Closing Statement**

**by Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden**

**Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Excellencies,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding the First Preparatory Meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, please allow me to express my gratitude for all outstanding presentations, the vivid examples, the constructive discussions in the working groups, and all the ideas put forward over the last two days. This meeting, once again, showed the virtue of the OSCE, as a unique platform to bring different stakeholders together and connect them in an active dialogue.

The theme of this year’s Forum “Greening the economy and building partnerships” proves to meet the joint interest of all 57 participating States, by providing a combined focus on environmental and economic aspects of security.

This first preparatory meeting focused in particular on good governance, business partnership and economic participation.

As we have heard in the last two days, to flourish, business and economy need a sound regulatory and good governance environment, where corruption is tackled in an effective and strong manner. This requires, among others, a participatory approach among governments, civil society, the business community, and academia, in order to foster citizens' trust and social consensus on non-tolerance of corruption and the promotion of good governance. It also requires the State's adoption of comprehensive and long-term strategies aimed at creating national frameworks of economic policies, institutions and legislation, including transparency of budget making procedures and transparent and fair public procurement systems, in which business can thrive and the confidence of investors can grow.

Mr. Chairman,

Dr. Hans Jorg Schelling, Federal Minister of Finance of Austria, in his remarks, underlined the importance of co-operation in the fields of trade, transport, customs and energy, noting that security, economy and peace are not independent from each other. He also stated that there's a need for a new vision of a common economic space between Vancouver and Vladivostok, including North America, the EU, and countries to the East of EU, including Russia and Central Asia. My Office stands ready to continue supporting such a vision with targeted activities in those participating States asking for our support.

I would also like to recall other two important messages that I consider particularly relevant for us:

First, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Michael Linhart recalled that our continent is in danger of reverting back to the block-based division, not only in political sphere, but also in the economic sphere, and that the promotion of sustainable economic and trade relationships between participating States can contribute to rebuilding trust and confidence thereby strengthening stability and security in the OSCE region. This is what the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension is about: a bridge builder and a tool at the disposal of all participating States to promote stability, security and cooperation among themselves.

Second, Ms. Tatyana Volovaya, a Member of the Board for Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission, shared her practical observations on how close co-operation and integration could enhance the quality of governance and stimulate economic development. She also underlined a unique role of the OSCE, serving as a platform for dialogue and experience-sharing among participating States. In that regard, I believe that the recent adopted Hamburg MC Decision on Good Governance and Connectivity represents an excellent basis to continue discussing cooperation and integration issues. As rightly mentioned by Mr. Swoboda, economic connectivity should and could overcome conflicts and concerns and we, in the OCEEA, stand ready to facilitate and support these efforts by also exploring the possibility to initiate regular discussions on economic connectivity with the WTO.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ambassadors that preceded me, have already summarized the main suggestions and recommendations of this morning's Working Groups on possible areas where the OSCE could provide its support and where it could

increase its engagement, in the field of good governance, business partnerships and economic participation. I believe it is our responsibility to closely consider all these recommendations and integrate them in the further discussions throughout the Forum process, as well as on possible concrete follow-up activities to be implemented by the OCEEA and the field operations.

Let me assure you that my office, as laid down in several Ministerial Council decisions, will continue our efforts to promote dialogue and co-operation both among participating States, as well as among non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector on issues related to good governance, economic connectivity and their impacts on stability and security. Former Vice-Chancellor Dr. Busek called on moving from “think-tanks” to “to-do-tanks”. I could not agree more.

Before passing the floor to His Excellency, Ambassador Florian Raunig, for the Chairmanship’s concluding remarks and outlook to the second preparatory meeting, I would like to thank the Austrian Chairmanship, the Moderators and Rapporteurs, the Speakers and the Facilitators, the interpreters, the conference service staff, as well as my colleagues from the OCEEA for their joint contribution to the success of this event.

I also want to thank all of you, dear participants, for your active contribution, and to wish you a safe trip back home.

Thank you.