



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
First Part
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Ambassador,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

It is an honour to address this opening session of the First Part of the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I am pleased to see so many representatives from OSCE participating States and the OSCE Partners for Co-operation. The presence today of representatives from international organizations, the private sector, and from academia and NGOs is especially important.

The theme that we have joined to address -- “promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region” – requires precisely such a wide and inclusive dialogue. This Conference reminds us again of the unique platform role that the OSCE plays in building networks to focus political attention on technical questions of great importance.

When H.E. Minister Kanat Saudabayev, the OSCE Chairman in Office, addressed the OSCE Ambassadors two weeks ago in this very hall, he underlined this meeting and this theme as a priority for the Kazakh Chairmanship.

The theme of transport is not new to the OSCE. Transport development and security was high on the agenda in 2006. OSCE Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted a Decision on a future transport dialogue. Since 2006, the OSCE has consolidated its role in addressing transport related challenges. The Organization has developed a strong partnership with the UNECE, and engaged closely with other partners on transport issues.

The adoption by participating States of the *OSCE Border Security and Management Concept* in 2005 was another important marker. The Concept is a comprehensive and far reaching document that cuts across the three OSCE dimensions of security and sets out a clear vision for the role of the OSCE in strengthening border security and management. Safe and secure borders that are also friendly are vital for the health and security of the participating States.

The importance of the theme of transport is difficult to overstate. Transport is a key economic sector. This is especially so in the current global context. States remain driven by concerns to overcome the crisis, underpin economic recovery and stimulate growth. In this situation, facilitating transport can really pay off, by offering reliable solutions that ripple throughout all economic sectors. It is obvious but worth repeating: transport links people and businesses together, it facilitates the exchange of goods and service between cities, regions and countries. Transport is a job protector and a job creator -- for entrepreneurs, farmers, service providers and industry. It is also a revenue generator. This is vital for Governments.

These reasons have driven OSCE action to promote regional co-operation with regard to transport and transit matters, and to provide assistance for addressing the non-physical barriers to transport and trade. These issues are important for all 56 OSCE participating States, but they gain special urgency for landlocked developing countries. It is very good that the Forum devotes one session to the question of providing access to sea ports for landlocked countries.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE area has seen constant change in border-related issues. The European Union has created a space where people, goods, money and services can move freely across national borders. At the very same time, in other parts of the OSCE region, state-building processes have seen the definition and creation of new borders. New agencies and institutions have been created to manage border related issues, and new crossing points have been opened. These have been complex tasks for States, where external assistance has played an important role.

For its part, the OSCE has held jointly with partner organizations a significant number of capacity-building and awareness raising workshops. We have focused attention on promoting the implementation of key international legal instruments and convention. Their implementation is vital, because it has direct impact on improved management of border crossings. National and regional training seminars have been held in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, throughout the South Caucasus and in almost all of the Central Asian capitals. The OSCE has engaged representatives from ministries of transport, customs officials and also the private sector. These workshops have been organized upon the request of national authorities. Feed-back has been positive. The OSCE has been encouraged to continue its efforts.

A single important principle underpins OSCE work in this area – this is that borders should not represent barriers to legitimate trade, that it is vital to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between transport, customs, border police agencies, both nationally and across borders, and that is important to engage in this process with the private sector.

Such cross-ministerial, cross-sectoral and cross-border engagement is needed, because border-related challenges are so complex and diverse. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office participated in the London Conference on Afghanistan last week, and reiterated the desire to deepen OSCE engagement with this Partner Country. Improving border security and management between the Central Asian States and Afghanistan is a strategic question for all OSCE participating States. I am very pleased that one session of the Forum is dedicated to improving security and efficiency of transport connections in Central Asia and with Afghanistan

Excellencies,

Just as transport and border related issues require inclusive approaches in Governments and between States, the OSCE approach should continue to be cross-Dimensional. As Secretary General, I will seek to enhance further co-ordination between Secretariat departments the Institutions, and the Field Operations working in the areas of transport, fighting terrorism and borders. In this respect, I wish to underline the opportunity that is represented by the MC Decision 2/09 on *Further OSCE Efforts to Address Transnational Threats and Challenges to Security and Stability*.

Distinguished Participants,

I look forward to our discussions over the next two days, and especially to practical suggestions that may arise to develop further international networks and partnerships in this vital area.

Thank you.