



**Concluding Meeting of the
20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

**Closing Remarks
Ambassador Eoin O'Leary**

Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the OSCE

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

We have reached the concluding session not only of our meeting here in Prague but of this the twentieth Forum process. Over the course of three meetings we have discussed extensively the importance of good governance and the crucial contribution it makes towards security and stability. We have had an ambitious agenda and covered an extensive range of issues.

Our discussions have benefited from the insights and wisdom of a vast range of experts and stakeholders. On behalf of the Irish Chairmanship, I would like to express our thanks to all those panellists – both speakers and moderators – who have taken of their time to participate in the meetings, particularly this week's event. Your contributions have been central to our dialogue.

Whilst we conclude the Forum process today, I hope we are only at a staging post in terms of the response by OSCE participating States to the imperative of delivering better governance for our citizens. OSCE participating States sent a clear signal last year of the importance they attach to this issue by deciding to make good governance a topic of high-level dialogue in the OSCE once again through the Forum process. Now OSCE participating States should consider how they can move beyond this and translate dialogue into action. This session offers an opportunity to discuss precisely this question.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Our Ministers should address this issue at the Dublin Ministerial Council. As delegations will be aware, the Irish Chairmanship has put forward some initial proposals already in the context of our food for thought paper issued in July. We have been developing these proposals and will be reflecting on these in light of the recommendations from this meeting in the coming days. We will be issuing a more detailed text in the next few weeks, which we will use as the basis for the first stage of discussions on a text to be agreed in Dublin at the Ministerial Council.

The Irish Chairmanship has been encouraged as we have listened to discussions here in Prague that our own thinking appears to be in alignment with the views being expressed by the delegations and perhaps I can highlight some of those areas.

Firstly, the importance of implementing existing commitments. It is clear from what has been said that there are many valuable frameworks already agreed relating to good governance issues. There is no need for the OSCE to add another new framework or mechanism. However, implementation remains a challenge – be it because of lack of capacity or political will. On both counts the OSCE can assist.

The crucial importance of anti-corruption strategies and institutions to fight corruption has also been highlighted. These must be adequately resourced and protected from undue interference if they are to be able to carry out their important work.

Regional cooperation is another critical component, particularly to efforts aimed at tackling problems like money-laundering and terrorist financing, which proliferate where governance is weak, or in facilitating asset recovery. The OSCE offers a platform for networking and for facilitating coordination, both between states and between relevant international actors and other stakeholders.

Finally, there is a need to constructively interact – and indeed increase the level of interaction – with civil society, the private sector and the media in efforts to promote good governance and combat problems such as corruption. The central concept of good governance is inclusivity and the participation of all members of society in decision making. We will not

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

remain true to the concept of good governance if we do not reflect this perspective in our commitments and our actions.

This is not an exhaustive list of the recommendations or themes emerging from our discussions, but I believe they are some of the pillars a new OSCE document should be built around.

Before opening the discussion I'd like to pass the floor to Mr. Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, for his own reflections on our discussions as well as perhaps a summary of some of the recommendations emerging from the sessions which have been identified by our rapporteurs.

(...)

Thank you, Goran for that comprehensive review. The floor is now open.

DISCUSSION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many ideas have been expressed at this meeting. These can indeed serve as basis for a substantial follow-up to the Forum as well as for a document to be adopted in Dublin. I would ask all delegations to engage constructively in the negotiations on a Ministerial Council document. We share a common goal and I am confident that it will prove possible to reflect this in consensual language in Dublin.

Before I conclude I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, the incoming OSCE Chairmanship, for his intervention. As participants were informed, the theme of next year's Forum will look at the environmental footprint of energy related activities.

I would like to congratulate Ukraine on identifying another pertinent issue for dialogue on. Energy related activities and their impact on the environment, can undoubtedly pose a threat to security. As Ambassador Prokopchuk noted, this is another area where good governance is

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

also crucial, whether by enabling citizens to have access to information and participate in decision making or in ensuring transparency in processes and economic decisions. We look forward to receiving further information in due course on the topics for discussion in each meeting and to beginning discussions in earnest during the Ukrainian Chairmanship.

Dear Participants,

As I mentioned at the outset this Forum process has benefited significantly from the contributions of our excellent speakers, panellists and moderators. There are a number of others without whom this particular meeting and the Forum process more broadly would not be possible.

I would like to warmly thank our host, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, for inviting us to use this magnificent venue. I think you would all agree with me that it is a delight to have the opportunity to spend time in this beautiful city.

Thank you to the OSCE Prague Office for all the practical work which goes on behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of this event here each year.

I would like to thank our rapporteurs for providing us with summaries of our discussions to allow for further reflection and deliberation.

Another vital contribution has been the work done by interpreters.

Thanks as well to the Economic and Environmental Officers from the OSCE field presences for their recommendations of speakers and input into the different sessions.

But most of all I would like to express my gratitude for the work of the Office of Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, led by you Goran. I would like to thank you for the excellent support and cooperation the Irish Chairmanship have received in the planning and organisation of this year's Forum. Perhaps if you permit me I might single out the staff of the Forum Unit in your office, Gabriel Leonte, Edelmira Campos-Nunez and Andrea Gredler, assisted this year in particular by the Head of the Governance Unit, Nina Lindroos-Kopolo, and commend them for their outstanding work. Although I might add that there are many

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

other colleagues from your Office here who have also contributed significantly and we are grateful for all their efforts.

To conclude perhaps I can repeat the quote from Vaclav Havel that Mr Mrcela reminded us of in the opening session:

“Vision is not enough, it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs”

As you return home from Prague lets think further on how we as OSCE participating States can step up.

I wish you a safe trip home and look forward to continuing this conversation.

The Forum Meeting is now concluded.