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TO THE OSCE, AT THE 2010 OSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 19 October 2010

Economic and environmental dimension (EED)

Session 2: The OSCE's role, including its field presences, in fostering stability and security and enhancing co-operation and integration in the area of its responsibility through co-operation with other international, regional, subregional organizations and initiatives as well as NGOs and the business community; the way forward

Distinguished colleagues,

From the outset the OSCE has proved itself to be an effective forum for dialogue among its participating States and the adoption of decisions on pressing problems concerning European security. It is thanks to the efforts of the Vienna-based organization that inter-State relations have been expanded to include new areas of co-operation.

The economic dimension is one of the three pillars of the OSCE and the future of the Organization will depend in no small measure on the extent to which this area will be able to take into account the interests and concerns of the participating States and organize its work in a productive manner.

We trust that the review of the economic and environmental commitments taking place at this Conference will make it possible to eliminate bottlenecks, rectify the existing interdimensional and geographical imbalance and give an additional impetus to co-operation among the participating States in the economic and environmental protection field. We believe that the agenda of the second basket needs to be filled with truly pressing issues in keeping with the Organization's capabilities and expertise. It is therefore worth giving thorough consideration to whether our Organization is able to bring added value to topics like minimizing the impact of the financial and economic crisis or the effects of climate change, which are important but at the same time more suited to specialized forums.

It is important not to allow our Organization – a universal forum for developing the collective will of the participating States – to turn into an instrument for exerting influence on individual countries.

We firmly believe that if fresh impetus is to be given to the serious development of the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension it must be done by stepping up practical co-operation with international economic organizations, regional organizations and financial institutions on the basis of the Platform for Co-operative Security approved in 1999. There are many ways of doing this, ranging from expanding the practice of joint project implementation to consolidating contacts with experts from specialized organizations by inviting them to meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee. In this way, it will be possible to avoid overlapping of activities and eliminate possible duplication of effort.

We see no sense in creating new, and moreover intrusive, early-warning and conflict-prevention mechanisms. There is no point in reinventing the wheel. The procedure for involving the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities in the Organization's anti-crisis efforts is clearly set out in the Maastricht Strategy Document (paragraph 3.1.3). We believe that this is the most acceptable method because it provides for complete transparency and accountability to the collective decision-making bodies of the OSCE in the form of the Permanent Council. Changing this method through the introduction of additional elements would effectively give the OSCE expanded powers and undermine the principle of consensus-based decision-making.

We need to increase the overall effectiveness of the Economic and Environmental Forum and to strengthen its ability to generate original ideas and practical proposals, which could subsequently form the basis for decisions adopted by the OSCE's decision-making bodies. In this connection it is important to ensure that further steps are taken exclusively on the basis of the mandates outlined in the collective decisions, which reflect the complete range of interests of the participating States, and are not based on the wishes of individual countries or aimed at advancing the agenda of certain integration associations.

The situation in the wake of the financial crisis requires a change in the way we approach discussions. The main thrust of the work should be a lively interactive exchange of views on the key problems facing the OSCE rather than dry statistical reports on the implementation of commitments.

There is no universal mechanism for solving all the existing problems, but it is extremely important to share the experience gained. The items on the agenda in the economic and environmental dimension should be examined not only in the context of potential threats to security but also as an aspect of multilateral, regional and subregional co-operation and a possible basis for strengthening mutual trust among States. Here too the OSCE can and must play a significant role.

On the whole, we are satisfied with the work of the Economic and Environmental Committee. This body represents a fairly effective mechanism for permanent dialogue among the participating States. We trust that the introduction of meetings to review commitments in the second dimension will make it possible to expand the framework for co-operation and will enable greater allowance to be made for the effects of economic and environmental problems on security developments in the OSCE region.

We believe that the efforts of the OSCE field presences in the economic and environmental field should be strictly in accordance with their existing mandates and in response to requests from the authorities in the host countries.

It is important to introduce the practice of regular reports to the participating States by the mission staff who deal with economic and environmental issues, setting out the main areas of their work and future plans. It may be possible to do this during the planned meeting to review the commitments in the second dimension. We believe that a system of mandatory reports like this, delivered in person, would help to strengthen co-operation between the missions and participating States and make for a more rational identification of needs and allocation of resources.

Interaction with the OSCE Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation must be based on the Organization's existing mandate and potential, guided by the leading role of the United Nations, taking into account the efforts of other organizations and proceeding from the real needs of the OSCE participating States, particularly in adjacent regions. Transferring the OSCE's work to the territory of partner States is inadmissible. We are ready to examine various plans for enhancing the internal and external co-ordination of the OSCE's efforts in areas of collaboration with the Partners for Co-operation on the understanding that they do not entail the creation of separate structures within the Secretariat.

The OSCE's activities within the framework of joint initiatives with other organizations – in particular the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) – must be carried out exclusively at the request of the host countries. This applies in full measure to the work of the Aarhus Centres and other non-governmental organizations operating within the OSCE's area of responsibility.

Altogether, the achievement of these objectives, combined with efforts in other areas, will make a real contribution to strengthening security and stability throughout the OSCE area.