

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

**Economic and Environmental Committee
2nd February 2010**

EU Closing Statement of the 18th EEF

The European Union thanks the Kazakh Chairmanship, the Secretary General of the OSCE, the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and the OSCE staff for having organized the first meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum in Vienna.

We have greatly appreciated the presentations of the speakers, highlighting the *importance* of transport in the context of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security and specifically its impact on the economic development of participating States and Partners for Co-operation, with a special emphasis on cooperation in specific regions.

A number of speakers have focused on good governance and anti-corruption. We have welcomed this. As the chair knows, this is a priority for the EU. We think that further efforts can be made in promoting good public and corporate governance, and transparency at all levels, in deepening regional cooperation, including in regions suffering from unresolved conflicts.

The need for cooperation and partnerships to improve transit potential and access to markets is evident. The EU stands ready to promote regional and subregional cooperation, and to assist landlocked countries and regions in overcoming their transport problems.

As confirmed during the last two days of discussions, a great deal of work on transport and transport-related issues has been going on in international bodies and networks. Exchanging good practices can serve to enhance cooperation and develop more efficient transport connections. We have also seen the importance of being receptive to the needs of entrepreneurs in order to foster the development of trade and prosperity. Public Private Partnerships are of great importance in transport-related issues, we can build on these initiatives, for instance by supporting the endeavors of specialized international actors. Non/governmental organizations can also play a very helpful role in shaping and monitoring transport-related policy-making and administrative performance.

We also think that reopening roads and railway border crossings can restore confidence in areas affected by unresolved conflicts. The OSCE can continue to support forward-looking projects in this regard.

We note only limited attention has been given to the security aspects of transportation. We hope that we will have the opportunity to discuss these issues in more detail in part two of the Forum. Attention should be also given to the environmental aspects of transport.

The EU took note of proposals of Participating States and Partners and welcomes initiatives and concrete steps to address the most pressing problems. We have also appreciated the specific focus on Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, the EU attaches great importance to the integration of the work of the OSCE's field operations and their respective economic and environmental officers in the Forum process and in the work carried out in the Economic and Environmental Committee. We therefore welcome their active participation and look forward to further strengthening the links between the Committee in Vienna and the field presences. We also would like to commend the participation of active representations of the business community, and of non-governmental organizations, in this Forum.

The EU believes that the OSCE needs a more efficient economic and environmental dimension to materialize its full potential for confidence building.

We look forward to fruitful discussions in the months ahead and are grateful to all participants for the impetus given to this debate.