



**Presentation by Ambassador Oľga Algayerová
The Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee to the Permanent
Council, 23 January 2014**

Mr. Chairperson, Dear Colleagues,

Firstly allow me to all of you wish a successful year 2014. I hope we can all accomplish in the year ahead of us further progress in many outstanding issues, including in the Second Dimension. I would like to thank the Swiss Chairmanship for giving me trust and confidence to Chair the Economic and Environmental Committee this year again and further continue and proceed with our systematic work in the Committee.

I present here also my sincere thanks to the previous Ukrainian Chairmanship for its devoted work during the last year and proud to say quite a successful year in the Second Dimension. Two Ministerial Decisions we adopted in Kyiv last December, also with the support of all of you, give us a mandate to be more involved and active in issues, as environment, energy efficiency and natural disasters and its impacts which are all very important for security of our citizens and communities. I am very pleased to see the topic focusing on “environmental challenges” among the priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship.

Dear colleagues,

After conducting discussions with the Swiss Chairmanship and OSCE’s Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities and after the discussion during the yesterdays’ Committee meeting we have suggested that the work shall focus on the following topics this year:

- 1. Mechanisms to assess money laundering risks and improve capacity to recover stolen assets in the OSCE area*

The Irish Chairmanship in 2012 devoted a great deal of effort and attention to money laundering and corruption-related issues. A set of key recommendations in this area, endorsed by experts from OSCE participating States, was produced by Seminar on Identifying, Restraining and Recovering Stolen Assets in the OSCE Region. Additionally produced the OSCE Handbook on Data Collection in support of Money Laundering and

Terrorism Financing National Risk Assessments has already been presented to and used by numerous countries in the OSCE region, and it is currently being translated into Russian language. Both activities raised awareness of money laundering and asset recovery issues and therefore we see an opportunity to tackle and discuss the reached targets along with the remaining work of the OSCE and its participating States in these areas.

2. Gender and environment

The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality which tenth anniversary we mark this year calls for integration of a gender perspective in OSCE activities and projects, across all three dimensions of security. It is therefore timely to devote attention to the topic of gender and environment, and discuss what we have achieved in the Second Dimension. We will particularly focus on how the environmental issues and its commitments introduce further into practice and identify further action for their implementation. We also may explore opportunities to further deepen the integration of gender aspects in the OSCE's environmental activities through an increased co-operation between the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and the Gender Section. The "Gender and Environment Guide" and the "guidelines for gender mainstreaming in Aarhus Centres" are already representatives of this good co-operation.

3. Public-Private Partnerships to address economic and environmental challenges

Public-Private Partnerships have proven to be an innovative tool to gather necessary funding and invest in areas such as transport, infrastructure construction and maintenance, energy efficiency, hazardous waste management, water infrastructure, etc. Such partnerships at the national and regional levels can be instrumental in bridging government agencies, business community and civil society. This topic will showcase good examples from the OSCE region and explore potential for OSCE's active engagement in promoting such partnerships.

4. Sharing best practices on sustainable water management

Sustainable water management and water scarcity are among the priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship in the Second Dimension. This will be reflected in several events throughout the year. At various occasions, the OSCE participating States, have already committed themselves to contribute to sustainable water management including through the 2003 Maastricht Strategy for the Second Dimension as well as in 2007 in the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Security and the Ministerial Decision on Water Management. There are more than 150 shared river and lake basins in the OSCE area. Due

to this reality many states have to agree how to distribute water resources among themselves, how to manage navigation and water use, and how to reduce pollution. Nowadays sustainable water management remains a challenge, even more important than ever – given the impacts of climate change on water availability. We feel that this topic may provide a platform to share our experiences in order to identify approaches to meet the future challenges of sustainable and secure water supply.

5. Implementation of the Ministerial Decisions 5/13 on “Improving the Environmental Footprint of Energy Related Activities” and 6/13 on “Protection of Energy Networks from Natural and Man-made Disasters”

The OSCE activities in Energy Sustainability and Security for 2014 will reflect continuity in activities undertaken during recent years, including the latest Decisions on energy adopted in December during the Ministerial Council in Kyiv. In line with the Decision on “Increasing Stability and Security: Improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region”, the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and the Field Operations will continue their activities to support the exchange of best practices and build capacity in the areas related to environment and energy sustainability and security. The Decision on “Protection of energy networks from natural and man-made disasters” is an important step towards more effective coordination of protection measures among the participating States and the exchange of good practices in this domain. As we have experienced in some participating States since the adoption of the Decision the scale, frequency and severity of natural disasters gain on intensity and therefore I very much welcome the Swiss Chairmanships’ priority focusing on more reliable management of natural disasters. Protection of energy networks from natural disasters and also manmade failures are significant part of the overall topic.

Economic and Environmental Forum this year will focus on environmental challenges, including natural disasters, within the topic “Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting cooperation and security in the OSCE area”. As have already been mentioned, when adopting the two Decisions in 2013, impacts of environmental challenges, including natural disasters, have a direct negative effect on different areas – from economic losses to lives claims, or energy disruptions. Addressing and exchanging best practices on the prevention, preparedness, emergency response and recovery related to environmental challenges and natural disasters, promoting partnerships and initiatives covering environment and security issues and promoting environmental good governance will be tasks which can help us to be better prepared when such events strike. Strengthening

of disaster resilience and regional cooperation may be areas where we commonly can find a consensual space, understand the needs of others and finally may diminish overall negative impact of such events. And it can be a progressive step to further strengthen our overall security and trust. First Preparatory meeting of the Forum will be held next week and in this occasion I would like to welcome you all to participate.

Dear Colleagues,

Many times we have heard that the OSCE should strengthen its role in the Second Dimension and be more active in different issues. Main topics outlined today as water management, environmental challenges, natural disasters and energy issues set out the areas where we may cooperate further and use it for potential strengthening of the work of the Second Dimension and our overall security, prevention and confidence building. We hope that dealing with the presented topics and further inclusion of the civil society and immediate responses of our Field missions also during the meetings will also help us to be an effective organization reflecting the realities of the 21st century. We cannot avoid discussions within the “Helsinki+40 process” noting that the process should be fully used to enhance the future role of the Economic and Environmental Dimension. Allow me to mention a novelty for this year – an aim to organize a retreat which should reflect on the Helsinki +40 process with regard to the Second Dimension. We want to have secure region and let us therefore consider appropriately the role of the Second Dimension as a substantial pillar of OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security.

Thank you for your attention and I am looking forward to your responses, pragmatic and effective cooperation this year again.