

**H.E. Daan Everts** | *Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office*

**11<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic Forum on “Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons: National and International Economic Impact”.**

*Prague, 20<sup>th</sup> till 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2003*

**Summarising Remarks**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me state as a very general remark that we have had an Economic Forum that gave all of us a lot of interesting and pertinent information, insights and plenty of opportunities for exchange of views, both in- and outside our scheduled meetings. It may not have been as interactive as some of us would like it to be, but that comes with the size and format of such a conference. Nevertheless, as an informational, ‘educational’, awareness raising event, this Economic Forum has served a very useful purpose, both here in Prague and in our various capitals. However, if we want this or any Economic Forum to be truly successful, then it has to be more than simply educational and should lead to practical follow-up in terms of concrete steps and measures. This desired follow-up will require very diligent and hard work, starting tomorrow. If one thing is clear from our discussions, it is that a lot of work lies ahead of us, with regard to the elaboration of the New Strategy Document on economic and environmental challenges as well as the preparation of a practical, organisational response to the pervasive, OSCE-wide problem of Trafficking.

The reports of the rapporteurs of the working groups provide good guidelines for focused efforts in Vienna, by the various Groups of Friends, by the Secretariat, especially the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities and by the Chairman-in-Office. What should we expect?

First, let me begin by mentioning some of the interesting results in the area of Trafficking. In the past few days we have looked at the issues of Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons, from various perspectives. The progress with regard to government

policies was addressed and it was pointed out that although much has already been done, much more remains to be done. Take for instance the necessity of signing and ratifying the UN Convention against organised crime and its various Protocols. Many countries have done so, but other are still struggling with the technical and judicial issues. We should step up efforts to have this minimum condition met. Also, in terms of more detailed anti-trafficking legislation and policies, country specific gaps and needs should be identified and addressed. Here, international cooperation – region-wide and sub-regional – should be encouraged. As the discussions have shown, considerable and very varied experience has been gained over the past years, experience that can be shared in many different ways. As we are facing a common problem, it is only logical that we should share solutions. In this connection it would be good to make knowledge of useful experiences, of successful approaches and activities, better more accessible. The idea of a handbook of best practises has been mentioned in this regard.

It will not surprise you that I would like to draw your attention again to the proposal of the CiO for a Special Representative on trafficking, who, in his advocacy role, should strengthen the political commitment and oversee the implementation of the Action Plan and other concrete OSCE measures. This would not be an operational role, and definitely not overlapping with the good work and activities already undertaken by the OSCE institutions, like the ODIHR, or the field offices. His role could, however, be usefully combined with that of roving missions that would identify country-specific issues and problems and potential remedies, OSCE-wide. The proposal will be further elaborated and explored in capitals and in Vienna in the forthcoming weeks.

We have also looked at the business community, their role, their responsibility, and learned of some very constructive initiatives that contribute to combating trafficking. Again, this calls for exchange of best practices and increased dialogue between governments and the private sector. Governments cannot successfully wage the fight against trafficking by themselves. International conventions, national legislation, efforts for training and awareness raising, do not suffice if not the private sector is also actively involved. The business community is an important ally, particularly in the transportation sector, in banking, in the chemical industry, in the world of travel- en employment-agencies, etc. etc, where the day to day impact of trafficking is experienced. They see what is happening right in front of them.

They know where the pain of victims of trafficking can be found and they too have a vested interest to keep organised crime and trafficking activities outside their legal businesses. An encouraging example of where progress has been made, but still needs to be further stimulated, is the work on the role of arms brokers. We must continue that work and use it as an example for other sectors.

The issue of involving all relevant actors, brings me to another important point: the role of NGO's. And I am not only referring here to the major international NGO's, but also to those working at grass-root level, which try to discuss with national governments the possibilities for small arms destruction programs, or which assist the reintegration processes of victims of trafficking in human beings – to mention only a few examples. The OSCE is traditionally a forum where NGO's are welcome and are considered natural partners. They too are faced with the dilemma that, whatever wonderful contribution they provide to combating trafficking, their efforts never seem enough. I could see the OSCE function as a helpful catalyst or honest broker to assist NGO's, west and east of Vienna, to work together, share experiences, create twinning relations, help establish and broaden a network of anti-trafficking NGO's. As I have stressed before and will continue to do, we are in dear need of concrete results and concrete action. This could be a very pragmatic way to achieve tangible results.

I just mentioned a few ideas that came to mind in the period of preparation for this Forum, as well as from the discussions of the last days. Many more have come up, which among other things, should contribute to the finalisation of the new OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, to the further work of the Forum for Security Cooperation on the OSCE Small Arms Document and of course to the program of work within the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension.

On the more general task of the OSCE in this dimension, I would like to recall that this year will be particularly significant. In about six months, we shall have to submit to the upcoming Maastricht Ministerial Conference a New Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, indicating the economic and environmental challenges that affect security and stability in the OSCE region. The key issue is here to strike a balance between the wider economic and environmental challenges facing the OSCE region and the more

specific areas where the OSCE can make a difference. Valuable input has been received for this document, which will help the drafting in the coming weeks and months. This includes the suggestion to make use of a high-level panel of experts. The co-operation of international organisations, like UN-ECE, traditionally a key partner of the OSCE in this dimension, has once again been sought and met with a most collegial, positive response. I like to pay tribute to the admirable efforts of the Belarussian Chairman of the Group of Friends, and express appreciation for the various contributions from participating States and international organisations, and of course commend the work of the Economic Sub-Committee. As we heard from one of the keynote speakers, Maastricht has become a famous name in terms of international economic relations, as the Maastricht Treaty was adopted here, which led to irreversible progress in European economic co-operation. So it should provide a promising setting for the new OSCE document. Once adopted, it should be the base of an improved annual review of the implementation of second dimension commitments, as called for by the Porto ministerial and again suggested by one of the delegations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me take the opportunity now, as Chairperson of this Forum to thank all those who have worked extremely hard to make the XIth OSCE Economic Forum a success. I call it a success with the caveat that the final verdict depends on the quality and timeliness of the follow-up.

Of course first of all I would like to show my appreciation to the Czech hosts of this meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Mares, Minister Svoboda and all the members of their staff. Let me also thank Mr. Swiecicki and this staff of the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, as well as Mrs. Hunatova and her staff of the OSCE office in Prague and the Conference Services. And of course the untiring interpreters who have made long days and hours for this Forum. Finally, I would like to thank all of the participants, who contributed to the results of the last few days. Results, I said it before and will say it again, that will have to be transformed into action, in the OSCE participating States and inside the OSCE organisation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I now formally close the XI OSCE Economic Forum.

