



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Introductory Remarks

by OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

**The Sixteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
Part 2 / Prague, 19 - 21 May 2008**

**“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area:
Increasing security and protecting the environment”**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome the guests and participants to this second part of the 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on ‘Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment.’

I wish, first, to express my deep gratitude to the Government of the Czech Republic for hosting this meeting in Prague. I wish also to thank the Finnish Chairmanship for its commitment and efforts in support of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension and this year’s Forum process.

The programme of the Finnish Chairmanship for 2008 is driven by three ideas --continuity, coherence and co-operation. These are, indeed, valuable guidelines for the work of the OSCE.

Continuity refers to the constant effort of all participating States to implement the commitments, tasks and recommendations, as they have been agreed to in relevant OSCE documents. In this regard, the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum is an example of excellence. It builds on the foundations set by two previous Fora – the Forum in 2006,

which dealt with transport development and security, and the Forum in 2007, which focused on sustainable development and environmental security.

Attaining the objective of coherence also requires sustained efforts by all parts of the OSCE family. The theme of this Forum is a good example in providing for an integrated approach to economic, environmental and security issues. Follow-up activities after the Forum should involve closer co-operation between units in the Secretariat, including the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the Action against Terrorism Unit, the Borders Unit and others. The OSCE Field Operations will have a vital contribution also to make in this regard.

The third guiding principle for 2008 is that of co-operation. This, of course, is a core OSCE value, and it is the objective that drives our daily activities. Discussions thus far in the Forum process have agreed that issues related to maritime and transboundary waterways are most efficiently addressed through regional and sub-regional approaches. I believe that the OSCE can play a vital role in this respect -- in supporting regional co-operation initiatives and in fostering the exchange of experiences between regions.

A strategic objective is also to strengthen co-operation with partner organizations and develop new partnerships.

I am delighted to welcome to this Forum Mr. Marek Belka, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra (the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), Ms. Karla Peijs (European Co-ordinator for inland waterways), Mr. Gaetano Librando (representing the International Maritime Organization), and Ms. Anita Mäkinen (from WWF). I am pleased that you will be speaking in the Introductory Session. Distinguished representatives of other organizations, such as the World Bank, the World Customs Organization, the Caspian Environmental Programme, will share their knowledge and ideas in the following sessions.

Our friends and partners from the UNECE provide –once again-- a key contribution to OSCE work in the Economic and Environmental Dimension, in particular by submitting a

report for the session on the review of implementation of commitments. The UNECE report focuses this time on the transport of dangerous goods.

I highlight also our strong co-operation in the areas of transport, environment and energy under the SPECA Initiative. We have recently initiated a new joint project, also with the contribution of the WCO and other organizations, to develop a Handbook on Best Practices at Border Crossings. We will be in a position to present the Handbook to the next Prague Forum.

We will continue close co-operation with the UNECE in the area of water management, in particular in Central Asia and in promoting the Aarhus Convention. In this regard, I would note that the OSCE will organize a side event on "Aarhus Centres: Platforms for Participation, Cooperation and Partnership" during the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in Riga, Latvia, on 11-13 June 2008.

We are deeply committed to continuing co-operation with the UN Office for Landlocked Developing Countries in addressing the challenges and needs faced by the landlocked developing countries in the OSCE region and towards strengthening the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

The IMO has submitted two comprehensive documents for the session on the review of implementation of commitments. These focus on efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and on IMO environmental treaties. In the preparatory process for the Forum, the IMO participated substantially and made a number of proposals for future co-operation. I am confident that we will engage soon in active partnership with the IMO, and that concrete joint activities will be taken forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This 16th Economic and Environmental Forum represents the OSCE at its strongest -- as a network for innovative co-operation between multiple actors on complex security questions.

Identifying and addressing challenges related to maritime and inland waterways co-operation requires just such a partnership of relevant stakeholders. Governments, international organizations, the business community, academia and civil society must, indeed, join to work together. The presence today of many representatives from the private sector and civil society is a positive sign.

The OSCE stands ready to work more with the private sector in areas of mutual interest -- such as enhancing supply chain security, oil spills preparedness and response and more generally the links between transportation activities and the environment. Joint activities should be envisaged and could be co-funded.

I am confident that we can achieve our shared objectives.

The Forum process should lead to operational recommendations and concrete projects, for which the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities could be instrumental in finding partners to complement the OSCE with technical expertise and know-how as well as financing.

In this respect, the Food for Thought paper, circulated last week by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, seeks to provide an overview of key suggestions that have emerged so far and on which we seek your reactions.

Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Bernard Snoy, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and his team, for their outstanding work in preparing the Economic and Environmental Forum. I thank also Ambassador Jaromir Kvapil and the OSCE Prague Office for their constant support and dedication.

I wish all participants and guests a pleasant stay and fruitful debates.

Thank you for your attention.