

21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Increasing stability and security: Improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region”

Concluding Meeting, 11 – 13 September 2013, Prague

Concluding Plenary Session, Friday, 13 September 2013

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Closing Statement

by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk

Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the OSCE

2013 Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship

Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the 4th of February in Vienna we embarked on a thorough discussion of the environmental impact of energy-related activities within the 2013 Economic and Environmental Forum process. We have since had the opportunity to reflect on what can be done to address the often adverse effects of energy-related activities on the environment and thus to strengthen security and stability in the OSCE region.

I am very pleased to note that our discussions during the preparatory process of the Forum have culminated in dynamic and fruitful debates here in Prague. Reiterating what I said at the Preparatory Conference in April, we need to turn the environmental challenges stemming from energy-related activities into opportunities for closer co-operation. The Chairmanship is of the opinion that the OSCE can give a strong political impetus to facilitate such co-operation.

The Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities has already mentioned some of the key recommendations from the Concluding Meeting. I encourage all of us to carefully consider how these recommendations could be promptly translated into meaningful actions.

Let me, however, briefly highlight some of the most important discussions we have had in the past three days. First, many speakers have expressed their strong conviction that the OSCE can be an effective platform for dialogue and co-operation on promoting environmentally sustainable energy management. I am of the same opinion and firmly believe that the expertise and knowledge within the OSCE's Executive Structures, including its Field Operations, are a key asset for fostering transboundary co-operation.

Second, as our panel discussion on Wednesday underlined, the importance of enhancing transparency and good governance in the energy field - including through such multi-stakeholder partnerships as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) - is hard to overstate. Planning, financing and implementation of energy-related activities have been identified as areas deserving particular attention. In Dublin last year, the participating States reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening good governance and transparency. In this regard the involvement of civil society, academia and the business community are vital in supporting the development of more transparent and accountable national energy authorities and more responsible and environmentally conscious energy industries. It should be noted in this context that the OSCE has extensive expertise in promoting transparency and public participation in matters related to the environment and security and has already embarked on extending this expertise to the field of energy.

Third, let me recall a stimulating discussion we had this morning looking at how we can cooperate on new and emerging technologies to promote energy sustainability. A broad spectrum of diverse perspectives and insights brought in by our speakers from government, academia, intergovernmental fora and multi-stakeholder partnerships made this discussion truly valuable and rewarding. Clean production of energy, the deployment of new sources of energy, smart grids, sustainable transport, and energy storage solutions all have an important role to play in our efforts to reduce air pollution, to prevent other adverse environmental impacts of energy-related activities and to respond to the growing challenge of climate change. These new and emerging technologies, in synergy with sound, effective and transparent policies at all levels, can also contribute to making energy more affordable, reliable and sustainable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to warmly thank Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and his competent staff for their valuable contribution to the success of the 2013 Forum Process. The Economic and Environmental Forum continues to provide an effective platform for discussion capable of gathering both recognized experts and high-level policy-makers from across the OSCE region. Let me also extend my gratitude to the OSCE Field Operations for their support and reiterate my appreciation to the experts that have shared their knowledge with us.

Dear participants,

Thank you for your attention and active involvement in this Forum. The Chairmanship will work to strengthen our efforts in the field of energy-related activities and their impact on our environment.

I here-by close the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.