

Canadian Delegation to the  
Organization for Security & Cooperation  
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de  
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération  
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE  
COORDINATOR FOR ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES  
MR. BERNARD SNOY  
717<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
19 JUNE 2008**

Canada welcomes Mr. Snoy back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his substantive oral report. We would ask that, in future, written reports of the work of the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities be forwarded for Delegations in time to prepare an effective response.

Our delegation recognises that the OSCE has three dimensions to our comprehensive security concept and this includes economic and environmental aspects of security.

The Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities is pivotal in ensuring that the OSCE is an active and effective actor in this area. We have continually worked with this office to achieve this end.

In our view, in order to enhance the OSCE work in the second dimension, it is imperative that our efforts are focussed, build on existing strengths and as a guiding principle continually reaffirm contributions to security as a guiding principle. In that regard, our comments today apply equally to the work of the Coordinator's office as well as to the recent 16<sup>th</sup> Economic and Environment Forum.

It is our conviction that the OSCE would stay well within its mandate if it pared down its activities in this dimension to enhancing good governance and rule of law in the OSCE, using economic tools as confidence building measures and promoting environmental security.

This is not to say that we do not value the economic and environmental work of the OSCE, as Canada is the largest extra budgetary contributor to Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities - we will have given 5.2 million dollars to the Environmental Security initiative by March 2009.

However, we do believe the ambitious programming of the Office is spreading finite resources too thin. In the past, the OSCE has established a practice of choosing a new theme each Chairmanship. This has brought a certain level of dynamism to the second dimension, but over time the number of task and priorities have become unsustainable.

We have noted that the themes of the respective Chairmanships form the highest priority of Mr. Snoy's office and rightly so. However, new themes every year mean the resources of the OSCE will be continually stretched thin. Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate this practice. In that regard, we welcome the recent discussion by the "Quintet" to that end. Indeed, we would urge establishing strategic priorities for the second dimension, and the work of the Office, and look forward to such a discussion.

Further, our delegation would strongly caution against utilising Secretariat resources to seek and establish formalised partnerships. While Canada supports contact in appropriate cases, there must be a pragmatic and practical aspect to the external partnerships the OSCE pursues. Again, we believe the Office's resources might be spread too thin, and expectations raised with potential partners which cannot be realized. Indeed, existing partnerships might not be nurtured, due to the pursuit of newer ones. The Secretariat should not seek partnerships simply for the sake of partnership. Rather, relations with other international organisations should be functional, directed and all parties should benefit as well as have expertise to contribute.

We were pleased to read in the 2009 Programme Outline a clear statement of winding down rural economic development and SME promotion in favour of others for which participating States have expressed preference.

This is an excellent example of prioritisation, particularly as good governance and environmental security will be enhanced. The Office has begun to move in what we view to be a positive direction and we look forward to further consolidation of programming.

In closing, I would make some final comments about the mechanics or structures of the Economic and Environmental Forum. In our view, fewer keynote speakers (especially from outside the OSCE) on each panel, and more time for interventions and exchanges by participating States, might allow for more discussion at these events. Our sense is that the events are overburdened with outside speakers, and it limits the possibilities for exchanges amongst delegations, especially those who have high level representatives.

We would like to thank Mr. Snoy and his dedicated team for their ongoing work in this field.