



EUROPEAN UNION

24th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum First Preparatory Meeting Vienna, 25 – 26 January 2016

EU Opening Statement

The European Union is pleased to participate in the first preparatory meeting of the 24th Economic and Environmental Forum, and would like to thank the German Chairmanship and the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and his staff for organising this meeting. We also thank the keynote speakers for their insightful presentations.

Looking ahead, throughout this year the Economic and Environmental Forum, as well as many of our Committee meetings will focus on several important aspects of good governance. Good governance in the environmental sphere contributes to secure and stable societies.

The EU recognises the close linkages between good governance, including in the environmental sphere, and economic development and competitiveness. The Circular Economy Package adopted by the European Commission in December 2015 aims to boost global competitiveness, foster sustainable economic growth and generate new jobs through transition to a more sustainable use of resources. We believe that by rethinking the way we produce, work and buy we can generate new opportunities and create new jobs.

We welcome that this meeting brings together different aspects of good environmental governance, including economic development and competitiveness, legislation and its impact on business and investment, transparency and access to information, good governance in the raw materials sector, resource efficiency and green economies, and sound waste management.

We look forward to interesting and fruitful discussions in the next days. The OSCE, as a regional security organisation, is well placed to facilitate and enhance dialogue and cooperation on good governance in the environmental sphere, taking into account the link to security.

Finally, we would like to thank the German Chairmanship for opening the first Economic and Environmental Forum meeting of this year.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA, ARMENIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.