



THE 18th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

(PART I, VIENNA, 1-2 FEBRUARY 2010)

Opening Address

**by Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov,
Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of the Republic of
Kazakhstan to the OSCE, OSCE Chairmanship**

(Monday, 1 February 2010, 09.30 -10 a.m.)

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

I warmly welcome all of you to Vienna and declare open Part I of the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, convened according to the Permanent Council Decision No. 898 under the theme of *“Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region”*.

It gives me great pleasure to see among the participants the distinguished representatives of the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation; high-level officials from ministries and agencies for transport, customs, finance and border police; representatives of various international, regional and non-governmental organizations; experts from academia and the business sector. Let me also welcome our distinguished keynote speakers, moderators, rapporteurs, and thank them in advance for their kind readiness to facilitate our discussions.

International land transport is a necessary condition for trade to flourish, which in turn leads to the advancement of economic integration and co-operation. Thus, transport contributes finally to the maintenance and consolidation of peace and stability. This is why the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE strongly believes that the Forum's theme should be one of the main priorities of the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Dimension. Good governance, improved security and facilitation of international land transport – they all contribute to strengthening security, stability, regional co-operation and economic development in the OSCE area.

The theme of the Forum is also close to our heart because for hundreds of years the territory of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian countries has been a natural bridge between East and West, with the Silk Road, a vast network of transport routes connecting Asia and Europe, running through our region. These historic routes served as a major conduit for the transport of knowledge, information and material goods between East and West and resulted in the first global exchange of scientific and cultural traditions. Today the great potential of the Silk Road region should be revitalized.

Many countries in the OSCE region, including landlocked developing countries, are trying to integrate into a globalized economy and its transport networks. This process requires meeting high standards of facilitation as well as security of transport. International land transport needs efficient border crossings without corruption, harmonized transport and customs regulations, well elaborated safety and security strategies and greater convergence at the regional and sub-regional level of transport policies. In my view regional co-operation on transport is a key factor that the OSCE should continue to promote.

In the modern world increasing attention is being paid to security of global supply chains. And transport experts often note that land transport still represents the weakest link in the global supply chains in terms of security, compared to aviation and maritime transports. I hope that our meetings in Vienna, then in Minsk and finally in Prague, will contribute to identifying ways to improve land transport security. In trying to achieve this we should involve both public and private sector in the discussions, overview the existing initiatives, balance security and facilitation measures.

These issues should be addressed with determination. I believe the OSCE can offer a broad and useful platform for exchanging views, sharing good examples and disseminating international standards. It can facilitate political dialogue on these issues and formulate a set of priorities and recommendations.

Before proceeding further in our Opening Session, I would like to make a few remarks about the Forum proceedings. Each session will be chaired by a Moderator. The Moderator's role is to manage the session and a key element in that regard is time enforcement for speakers and participants. Speakers were kindly asked to be brief and focused, and their presentation should not exceed 12-15 minutes. We need this arrangement to have enough time for discussion in each session. In our view, open, free flowing discussions are extremely important for the success of the Forum.

At this point, I would like to announce that we will progress directly to **Session I – The need to increase efficiency of international road transport in the context of the global economic downturn**. This Session will be chaired by **H.E. Mr. Azat Bekturov**, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Let me also kindly remind that the Kazakh Chairmanship will host a reception for the participants of the Economic and Environmental Forum today at 7 pm in the **'Palais Pallavicini'**. I look forward to welcoming all of you there in a more informal atmosphere.

The Opening Session is closed, Deputy Minister Bekturov, the floor is yours.