



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **30<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

**8 – 9 September 2022, Prague**

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#### **EU Opening Statement**

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1. The European Union and its Member States are pleased to participate in the Concluding Meeting of the 30th Economic and Environmental Forum. We thank the Polish Chairmanship, as well as the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and his team, for organising this meeting. We would also like to thank Secretary-General Schmid, Minister Rau and Minister Lipavský for their opening remarks, which gave us a glimpse into the scope of the discussions we will be engaging in over the next two days.
2. This year's Economic and Environmental Forum, focusing on sustainable economic recovery, presents a valuable opportunity to consider efforts to emerge stronger and more resilient from crises from different perspectives. The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken our countries across the OSCE area to its core and disrupted our societies and economies, disproportionately affecting groups that were already more vulnerable at the outset. In response, the EU adopted the largest stimulus package ever financed in Europe. More than half of the €1.82 trillion package will support modernisation, fair climate and digital transitions to ensure that Europe bounds forward.
3. Since 24 February, economic recovery also needs to be put into the context of Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people, which risks jeopardising our efforts to build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the most dramatic ripple effects of this war has been the impact on food security for millions of people across the

world. The separate agreements reached on 22 July, which allow the exportation of Ukrainian grain to resume, are critical steps to reverse this negative course. Its success will depend on the swift and good faith implementation of the agreement. The EU, for its part, is mobilising over 7.7 billion Euros until 2024 to support the most affected partners around the world and is working closely with our Member States to further step-up these efforts.

4. In Ukraine, Russian bombs keep falling, destroying not only schools and hospitals but also countless lives. We are fully aware that immediate financial assistance is now essential for immediate relief. The EU and its Member States have played and will play their part. But we also have to engage substantially in the mid- and long-term reconstruction of Ukraine's economy and build a better, more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for the next generation. Massive investments and strong co-operation are needed to live up to this extraordinary challenge. Europe has a special responsibility to be at Ukraine's side every step of this way. This is why the European Commission has proposed to set up a reconstruction platform to map investment needs, coordinate action and channel resources, in support of an ambitious reform agenda.
5. As this year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Economic and Environmental Forum, we welcome that a panel discussion later this morning provides the opportunity to look back at the many achievements of this Forum. More importantly, we also have to look ahead and discuss the future orientation of the Forum, as well as the broader role of the Economic and Environmental Dimension in achieving comprehensive security, in the current challenging context.
6. In the subsequent three sessions, we appreciate that this meeting brings together speakers from various backgrounds to discuss different aspects of sustainable economic recovery, from good governance, green investments, sustainable management of natural resources and climate neutrality to energy security, connectivity, human capital development and the role of technologies. In our meetings today and tomorrow, we will discuss opportunities for reinforcing resilience, green growth, sustainability and recovery in our societies and economies. Setting off on the path to recovery, we would like to stress the

importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, of involving civil society and the private sector, and the need to empower women to build a better, more resilient, inclusive, gender equal and sustainable future.

7. In conclusion, we would like to express our continuous support to the Polish Chairmanship and we are looking forward to fruitful discussions over the next two days.

The Candidate Countries MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Countries BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\* and GEORGIA, the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.