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**14th OSCE Economic Forum:
Norwegian food-for-thought paper on
a possible workshop on Transport, Security and Environment**

**Experience of regional cooperation in the High North
to promote safe and secure multimodal corridors
while protecting a fragile environment**

Identifying best practices

Background

On the occasion of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Ljubljana on 6 December 2005, Mr Jonas Gahr Støre, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed support for the initiative taken by the Belgian Chairmanship-in-Office to propose transport as the theme for the Economic Forum in 2006. He expressed Norway's readiness to contribute actively and to share the experience that has been gained in the Nordic region and in the Barents Euro-Artic region.

During the various preparatory meetings and the first part of this year's Economic Forum, a number of regional challenges related to transport have been identified and debated. Transport and logistics are key elements of trade and economic development for all countries and regions. They are crucial in providing access to markets. Landlocked states face particular challenges in this respect. Today poor logistics, combined with political tensions, hamper trade and sustainable development in parts of the OSCE area. In addition, the transport sector is facing new security risks and the various transport modes have different effects on the environment. These issues need to be more systematically addressed.

The necessity and the benefits of regional cooperation in the area of transport are obvious:

- All participating States and regions have an interest in “the development of transport networks in the OSCE region which are efficient and integrated, free of avoidable safety and security risks and sensitive to the environment.” (OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty First Century, section 2.1.14). The establishment of corridors through countries and regions can facilitate trade and enhance economic growth.

- At the same time, regional cooperation on common standards and exchange of data are crucial to enhancing security and safety. In particular, safety issues in international maritime transport in sensitive areas need to be addressed multilaterally due to their trans-boundary nature and effects.
- The continuous increase in road traffic in the OSCE area is causing congestion and putting additional strain on the environment. To the extent possible, multimodal corridors should therefore be designed in such a way that more freight is transferred to the maritime and rail sectors. However, the damage to the environment, particularly from the maritime sector, may be significant in the event of an accident. Prevention of accidents, preparedness for environmental disasters and emergency response systems to deal with oil spills are essential in order to protect the environment and public health, and to secure the livelihood of fishing communities.

Together with its partners in the Nordic region and in the Barents region, Norway has developed mechanisms for regional cooperation on these interrelated areas — development of multimodal transport corridors, security and environmental protection. These mechanisms appear to have made possible significant progress in these three areas, although clearly more needs to be done. At the Baku Preparatory Conference, Ms Selvig, Director General in the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, made a presentation entitled *Environmental risks linked to increasing maritime traffic in the High North* and outlined the approach taken by Norway and other countries towards developing safe and secure transport corridors in that region.

Proposal

As a follow up to the 14th Economic Forum, Norway proposes to organise a workshop in which it and its partners in the Nordic and Barents regions could share their experience of regional cooperation in the High North to promote safe and secure multimodal corridors while protecting the region's fragile environment. This experience may be of particular interests to other OSCE participating States (and possibly to the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners) that are facing similar challenges in other regions (e.g. the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea areas). It could encourage the adoption in these areas of best practices that take account of the requirements of transport development, security and environmental protection.

The workshop Norway is proposing to organise would be aimed at experts in the field.

It would take place in the town of Tønsberg, which is located on the Oslo Fjord, from 16 to 18 October, and would include a visit to the Norwegian Coastal Administration's Department of Emergency Response and to the main contingency depot where Norway stores equipment for emergency response to oil spills.

The workshop could be dedicated to presentations on relevant projects related to transport corridors and regional cooperation, such as:

- the multimodal Northern East–West Freight Corridor
- the Northern Maritime Corridor and its link to the Northern Sea Route (Northeast Passage)

- regional transport cooperation under the Arctic Council
- transport cooperation under the auspices of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council
- the Interreg-financed project *Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region*
- regional cooperation, specifically on oil spill preparedness and on emergency prevention, preparedness and response (and maritime disaster management in general) in the High North region
- the organisation of traffic surveillance, monitoring and routing of ships in the High North region
- public participation in developing coastal action plans

The second part of the workshop would be dedicated to examining comparable existing mechanisms of regional cooperation in other parts of the OSCE area to promote multimodal corridors, ensure their safety and security and protect the environment against similar risks of oil spills and other disasters. Special attention would be given to multimodal corridors that combine maritime transport in the Baltic, Mediterranean (in particular Adriatic), Black and Caspian seas with inland transport modes, and to existing regional cooperation mechanisms to promote transport safety and security and environmental protection.

Outcome

The desired outcome would be the start of a cooperation process between Norway and its partners in the High North and countries in other OSCE areas that are facing similar problems. It would involve experience sharing and the promotion of best practices, and could, for instance, lead to training projects in the areas of environmental impact assessments, disaster prevention and emergency preparedness and response. Follow-up meetings with a limited number of participants could be organised on specific subjects.