



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE

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Statement by Mr. Andrej Benedejčič, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Head of Mission, on Decision on the Thirteenth Meeting of the Economic Forum at the 520th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 29 July 2004

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of Slovenia, I would like to thank the delegations for their constructive co-operation during the process of consultations regarding the proposed theme of the Economic Forum, as well as during the preparation of the decision before us, which we have just adopted. We also appreciate the support of the Bulgarian Chairmanship and are looking forward to further close co-operation with it.

As a Troika member and the incoming Chair, Slovenia attaches great importance to the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension. That is why we started early with consultations regarding the theme for the Economic Forum 2005.

Slovenia formally proposed the theme "Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons belonging to National Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE Area" at the Twelfth Meeting of the Economic Forum at the end of May in Prague. We were pleased by the broad support for and the clear consensus regarding the proposed topic.

We believe that this is a relevant theme, of equal concern for both countries east and west of Vienna. It is sufficiently broad so that a meaningful preparatory cycle can be arranged. It can also bring concrete results, without duplicating the work of other international organizations. Moreover, it deals with issues that, in our view, need to be addressed effectively within the OSCE. We therefore trust that the topic will attract high level of participation.

I would like to emphasize that the Slovenian delegation as well as the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities looked forward to this decision. Its adoption gives us the necessary guidance and time for a solid preparation of the Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

Our next step, in close cooperation with the Office of the Coordinator and the Participating States, is therefore the organization of three preparatory seminars that should take place in different OSCE regions. We would like to thank the delegations that have already expressed their readiness to host them. At this stage, special attention should be given to the first preparatory seminar, which is planned for early November. Since we believe that the review of commitments should be given greater attention, we also intend soon to propose the theme of the review session, which should be an important part of the forthcoming Economic Forum.

Finally, let me conclude by saying that we look forward to closely co-operating with all of you, with a view to making next year's Economic Forum in Prague a successful one.