

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

Economic and Environmental Committee
1st February 2010

EU Opening Statement of the 18th EEF

The European Union would like to express, one again, its willingness to work together with the Kazakh Chairmanship to make the Economic and Environmental Forum 2010 a fruitful exercise. The Forum will certainly be interesting if it will enhance the cooperation between the participating States. And there is no doubt that transport and border management are issues where cooperation can be significantly increased. Looking at the OSCE area from Brussels, the European Union finds challenges in this field to the east and the west of Brussels.

The agenda and list of speakers for this 1st part of the Economic and Environmental Forum indicates that we may address this time the transport and border issues that have a relevance in particular for those participating States that are still in the process of developing modern border management. The session dedicated to the transport connections in Central Asia with a focus on border crossings with Afghanistan, will also help us all to realize the need to look at the regions adjacent to the OSCE area.

The EU welcomes the emphasis by the Kazakh Chairmanship and its focus on good governance in customs and border crossings serving as an essential tool for facilitating the movement of goods, services and people. And the European Union expects the discussion to contribute to increasing the cohesiveness of the OSCE area and enhance its security.

Modern border management is instrumental in facilitating the licit movement of goods and persons and helping to address criminal activity and threats to national and regional security. The EU is committed to support the implementation of the OSCE border Security and Management concept, in particular through introduction of the principles of integrated border management and the promotion of regional cooperation, in close cooperation with all stakeholders.

The EU has a number of relevant instruments and is willing to share its experience in this field with interested partners. In the next two days the European Commission will present the EU initiatives and actions aimed at improvement of border control procedures, integrity, security and facilitation of cross-border movement of goods, as well as specific supporting tools elaborated by the European Commission such as the Customs Blueprints.