

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

**Economic and Environmental Forum
Prague, 24th May 2010**

EU Opening Statement at the final segment of the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum

The European Union is pleased to participate in the Second Part of the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. We view the discussions on 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" as a contribution to the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE. The Preparatory Conferences in Astana and Minsk and the First Part of the Economic and Environmental Forum in Vienna offered food-for-thought for our discussion on transport.

The EU welcomes the way in which the Kazakh Chairmanship has managed to include in the discussions the challenges facing the Central Asian landlocked countries in securing access to markets and the facilitation of transport at cross-borders, including Afghanistan. We support the Chairmanship's efforts to stimulate political dialogue, including at a sub-regional level, on the role of economic development and environmental protection in furthering and maintaining peace, stability and security.

The EU would also like to thank the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities for the food for thought paper on "Follow-up ideas to the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum". We take note of the ideas therein listed, as they will be discussed during the next meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee.

The EU believes that based on the current state of our discussions, the assessment of the follow-up work and role of the OSCE in transport cooperation and security should be based on a thorough examination of the level and degree of implementation of the Ministerial Council Decision adopted in Brussels in 2006 and the Ministerial Council Decision adopted in Helsinki in 2008, and on what the OSCE could further bring in terms of added value to the activities already implemented by other international actors. In this sense an evaluation by the OCEEA on the impact of the OSCE's activities in the field of transportation would be useful to allow participating States to engage constructively in view of a possible Ministerial Council decision on the follow-up to the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum.

The European Union expects from this EEF to progress in the identification of challenges related to security aspects of transport. The development of responses to those challenges, if not already underway, should be a matter of discussion within and with relevant international organizations, with the aim of avoiding duplication and overlapping of activities. With the help of the Secretariat we believe that we should look on how and what kind of specific role and activities the OSCE could perform in this particular domain.

Mister Chairperson,

The European Union believes that economic development, also through transportation, needs a comprehensive approach where sustainable development is fully ensured. The integration of environmental and social considerations into the economic development is in this sense crucial. The OSCE in its Economic and Environmental Dimension can contribute to such integration, respecting the leading role played by the competent international organisations. This could also be done in the transport sector, by promoting good governance, by facilitating and monitoring the implementation of political and legal commitments and by integrating transport development and environmental concerns.

The EU would like to recall its vision of the Second Dimension of the OSCE, namely, that it needs to be more effective, provide a tangible contribution to security, and focus on those activities where it can provide added value.

The Chairmanship's report on the future orientation of our dimension and the ongoing discussions at Committee level are in this sense instrumental towards these goals. We appreciate the efforts of the Belarusian Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee in identifying a common denominator among all participating States. In line with MC.DEC/4/09, that we adopted by consensus in Athens, we believe that a continued attention to the recommendations contained in the report is needed in order to make a valuable contribution to improving the effectiveness of the Second Dimension.

The European Union reiterates its belief that the review of the implementation of OSCE commitments is an important contribution to the fulfilment of the Maastricht OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. This part of the EEF will also provide an opportunity to discuss the state of play regarding the implementation by participating States of OSCE commitments in the field of transport. We would like to thank the UNECE secretariat for its valuable report on the implementation of our commitments and for the cooperation with the OSCE in the development of a "Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings".

Finally, we would like to thank the Czech authorities for hosting the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum and for their warm welcome here in Prague. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Kazakh Chairmanship and to the Office of the Co-ordinator for their efforts in organising this Forum. We are looking forward to interesting and fruitful discussions during the days ahead.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y NORUEGA, al igual que ARMENIA, se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.