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Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and
Environmental Activities**

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To: All OSCE Delegations
Partners for Co-operation
Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

Subject: Food for Thought Paper for the **Sixteenth OSCE Economic and
Environmental Forum – Part 2, Prague, 19 - 21 May 2008**

Attached herewith is a document consisting of the Food for Thought Paper for the Sixteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum – Part 2: “Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment”, to be held in Prague from 19 to 21 May 2008.

Food for Thought

The possible role of the OSCE in the follow-up to the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum

“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment”

Introduction

By adopting the PC.DEC/798 on the theme - “Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment” –, format and organizational modalities for the 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, participating States acknowledged that the maritime and inland waterways security and environmental challenges were interlinked, topical and salient on the international agenda and that addressing them would enhance regional security, promote a sustainable economic development and strengthen environmental protection in the OSCE area. The participating States embarked in a process aimed at identifying an appropriate role for the OSCE in dealing with maritime and inland waterways security and environmental issues and at generating follow-up activities.

The 16th Forum’s theme reflects the OSCE comprehensive concept of security. It is based on and implements the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, which was adopted by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht in 2003. It is also linked with the provisions of other OSCE documents such as the Brussels Ministerial Council Decision on Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE (MC.DEC/11/06), the Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security (MC.DOC/4/07), the Madrid Ministerial Decision on Follow-up to the 15th Economic and Environmental Forum: Water Management (MC.DEC/7/07), as well as with the recommendations of past Economic and Environmental Forum meetings, in particular the 14th and the 15th Fora.

The 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process consisted so far in two preparatory Conferences, held in Helsinki, on 10-11 September 2007 (SEC.GAL/191/07), and in Ashgabad, on 6-7 March 2008 (SEC.GAL/67/08/Corr.1), and in the first part of the Forum, in Vienna, on 28-29 January 2008 (EEF.GAL/3/08/Rev.1).

The Helsinki Conference discussed the international framework of maritime and inland waterways co-operation, focusing on environmental protection as well as on transport security. Regarding maritime co-operation, it looked into the Northern European and the Black Sea experiences. It also discussed the co-operation on transboundary water courses and rivers and the need for co-operation between different stakeholders. The Vienna Forum built upon the conclusions of the Helsinki Conference and brought the discussion to a political level. The Ashgabad Conference focused mainly on maritime co-operation in the Caspian and Mediterranean Seas, on environmental governance, on environmental and river basin co-operation in Central Asia, on port and container security, as well as on transport, transit and cross border co-operation in the context of landlocked countries.

These meetings brought together official representatives from OSCE participating States, representatives of international and regional organizations, the civil society, business community and academic community as well as OSCE field presences. The discussions contributed to defining more clearly the possible role of the OSCE. During these meetings many recommendations were put forward.

Objective

The aim of this Food for Thought paper is to provide an overview of the discussions and main suggestions which emerged from the meetings conducted so far, in order to stimulate and streamline the discussions at the Second Part of the 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (Prague, 19-21 May 2008) and to focus them on concrete follow-up activities. This is in line with past decisions, and in particular the Sofia Ministerial Decision 10/04 on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Forum, aimed at making it as result-oriented as possible.

This document is submitted to elicit reactions, comments and suggestions from the OSCE Delegations as well as from all the participants in the Prague Forum.

The OSCE approach

During the Forum process so far it was emphasized that the OSCE should aim at bringing added value to existing efforts towards increased co-operation in the areas of maritime and inland waterways. By contributing to strengthening and stimulating existing synergies and using its political leverage in this direction, the OSCE would play a positive role. Therefore, follow-up activities should in principle be developed in co-operation with relevant international and regional organizations or financial institutions.

In particular, the leading role and expertise of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was repeatedly mentioned with regard to a variety of maritime issues. It was recommended that the OSCE develop a partnership with the IMO in the maritime field.

As far as inland waterways co-operation is concerned, as well as transport and transit issues related to landlocked countries, it was recommended that the partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) should also be further strengthened.

Furthermore, the OSCE should also engage in partnerships with other stakeholders, including the business community, the civil society, and academia. It should as well promote a multi-stakeholder dialogue and participation as an important element of good governance.

Given the cross-dimensional nature of many issues related to the Forum's theme, the synergies between various units at the OSCE Secretariat level should be strengthened. As well, the co-operation and co-ordination between Vienna and the field should be enhanced.

The OSCE involvement may be envisaged at various levels, as the need may arise: at 'OSCE wide' level; at regional, sub-regional and transboundary level; as well as at national and local level.

1. Action at ‘OSCE-wide’ level

Given its political mandate and wide membership, the OSCE could be instrumental in **promoting, in its region, a political dialogue, a policy debate as well as the implementation of commitments** related to the theme of the Forum. The OSCE is well placed to mobilize political will, raise awareness and bring relevant issues to the attention of decision makers.

Further **co-operation with the IMO** could be envisaged in a number of areas such as: combating invasive species transfer; developing oil spill response capacities; the possible application in the OSCE region of the Marine Electronic Highway Concept. It was also suggested that the OSCE could seek intergovernmental organization status with the IMO and could consider negotiating and signing a MoU to formalize its co-operation with the IMO as it did with the UNECE.

The co-operation with the UNECE could be enhanced in areas such as: transport and trade facilitation; inland waterways; transport of dangerous goods. The proposals made by the UNECE in the report on the review of implementation of commitments, focussing on dangerous goods (EF.IO/11/08) should be considered.

Strengthening the **co-operation with the EU** could be sought in the areas of inland waterways and maritime co-operation as well as good governance.

The OSCE could advocate the need for an early ratification and an **effective implementation of relevant conventions**, legal instruments, regulations and standards. It could also be instrumental in collecting and compiling data and information from its participating States regarding implementation and compliance. It could consider making an interdisciplinary analysis of the political obstacles to the ratification and full implementation of these international agreements.

Among the most important legal instruments on which the OSCE could focus, one could list: IMO Conventions such as the Ballast Water Management Convention, MARPOL, etc.; UNECE Conventions; the Basel Convention; the Ramsar Convention; the UN Convention against Corruption, instruments related to maritime security and integrated supply chain management such as the ILO/IMO Code of Practice on Security in Ports, the IMO’s International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code and the World Customs Organization’s (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards (as well as, possibly, the revised Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention).

The OSCE could also promote an integrated approach between various conventions relevant for maritime and inland waterways co-operation.

The OSCE could be instrumental in **facilitating and guiding a policy debate among its participating States and Partners for Co-operation** regarding issues such as: the links between climate change and maritime and inland waterways transportation; maritime security issues, including resilience, multi-layered security approach or managing risks. Workshops on such topics could be envisaged.

2. Action at regional, sub-regional and transboundary level

The Forum process emphasized that maritime and transboundary waterways issues are most efficiently addressed by using a regional and sub-regional approach. The OSCE could give a **political impetus to existing co-operative arrangements**.

In this context, the OSCE could in particular promote coordination and harmonization at regional level of maritime and inland waterways related policies and the development of bilateral and/or regional co-operation agreements as well as of joint bodies to tackle common problems.

The OSCE could contribute towards the exchange of best practices between regions and across various sectors such as environmental protection, trade, transport and good governance, economic activities related to the theme of the forum.

2.1. In the maritime field, the OSCE could strengthen co-operation with regional organizations such as HELCOM, the Black Sea Commission, Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Caspian Environmental Programme (CEP), and other organizations from the Mediterranean or Adriatic Seas. Among the issues that should be prioritized, are: preparedness and response capacity to combat oil accidents, including the transfer of technology; environmental issues; save and rescue operations, including joint emergency responses; security issues, in particular supply chain security.

For the **Caspian Sea region**, the importance of close co-operation between the littoral States was stressed, in particular with regard to environmental matters, oil spills preparedness and response and emergency preparedness. The important role played by the Framework Convention on Protection of the Marine Environment in the Caspian Sea (Teheran Convention) as well as by the Caspian Environmental Programme (CEP) was emphasized.

The OSCE could support the ongoing efforts and develop a partnership with CEP, also involving the IMO, and other organizations, including private sector organizations and the civil society.

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) Eastern Caspian assessment could be instrumental in determining priorities.

In the **Black Sea region** a follow-up Chairmanship Conference on “The Safety of Navigation and Environmental Security in a Transboundary Context in the Black Sea Basin” will be organized in Odessa on 24-26 June 2008. The main aim of the conference will be to enhance co-operation in the region, facilitate the exchange of experience, identify current challenges, and contribute to integrating efforts towards a more effective implementation of international conventions. Regional organizations such as the BSC and BSEC have been invited to contribute and it is expected that the Conference will identify some further possible follow-up activities.

2.2. Regarding inland waterways co-operation, the Forum process indicated that addressing environmental challenges should be a priority. The Vienna Forum recommended the promotion of the Danube example in other river basins. The OSCE could, for instance, help replicate the Joint Statement on Transport and the Environment.

A number of other concrete proposals were made during the previous meetings, such as: the continuation of the Dniester project; the development of concrete activities following the assessment work in the Amu-Darya river basin (one delegation offered to host a sub-regional seminar on the Amu-darya basin, later in the year); further supporting the development of a project to manage flows distribution from the river Pripyat to the Dnieper-Bug canal.

With regard to river basin co-operation and water management, **Central Asia should be a priority region** for the OSCE. In the region, existing agreements need to be updated. There is also a need for transparent information exchange. The transfer of international experiences and know how would be beneficial and the OSCE could be a useful facilitator.

Building the co-operation of the countries in the region with Afghanistan was furthermore emphasized as an important element.

The regulation of the energy / water nexus and the development and improvement of water saving strategies in the region were mentioned as areas for future OSCE involvement.

It was highlighted that the EU Central Asian Strategy adopted last year might open perspectives for co-operation.

2.3. As far as **addressing the needs of landlocked countries, in particular in Central Asia**, it was emphasized that, based on its experience developed following the 14th Economic Forum, the OSCE could be an important political forum for regional dialogue on issues related to transport and transit among countries. It should strive to promote a multi-stakeholder dialogue as well.

The OSCE could continue to support the implementation of the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action. To that aim, the OSCE could enhance co-operation with UNECE, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), WCO, UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (UN SPECA), Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), Asian Development Bank/Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (ADB/CAREC), Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) etc.

As was already emphasized during the 14th Economic Forum, the OSCE could play an important role in enhancing regional co-operation towards the development of efficient international multimodal transport corridors. It could be instrumental in promoting the exchange of experience between the EU and the Central Asian States.

The OSCE focus should be on facilitation issues and the harmonization of legislation governing border crossings. It could contribute to a more effective implementation of existing instruments and enhance the regional know-how through capacity building. Addressing corruption should be another important part of these efforts.

In this context, it was stated that the development of a Handbook on Best Practices at Border Crossings would be a natural consolidation and extension of the OSCE engagement to-date.

3. Activities at national and local level

At national and local level, OSCE activities in addressing maritime and inland waterways security and environmental challenges would mainly consist of **capacity building and awareness raising**. The OSCE field presences would play an important role.

The OSCE, including through its field presences, and, joining forces with expert international and regional organizations, could participate in the development and delivery of capacity building or training programs at various levels. Among the thematic areas that could be envisaged, could be: oil spills preparedness and response; river basin management; customs good governance and border crossing facilitation; strengthening the implementation of various security related or environmental conventions, combating the threat of invasive species (e.g. with IMO on the Global Partnership Program).

In particular, the OSCE, in co-operation with partners such as the IMO, OSPRI (Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative), CEP, BSC etc., could develop capacity building programmes contributing to the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea Region, in particular with regard to oil spills preparedness and response.

The OSCE could also continue to support 'Aarhus Centres' and new 'Aarhus Centres' could be established in the Caspian Sea region. A network of Aarhus Centres on the Caspian could be envisaged. 'Aarhus Centres' should contribute to raising public awareness of the ecological problems of the Caspian, provide the public with quality ecological information, encourage civil participation, provide trainings and facilitate dialogue. The OSCE could, *inter alia*, promote awareness of the effects of pollution and other human activities on the environment, assist in public information and awareness raising activities.

The next steps

At the end of the Second Part of the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague, the Chairperson of the Forum will present summary conclusions and policy recommendations drawn from the discussions.

Later on, in Vienna, the Economic and Environmental Committee of the Permanent Council will further analyze these recommendations.

The OCEEA, based on the Forum's recommendation and on the guidelines received from Delegations, will present to the EEC a more detailed list of possible follow-up activities.

It has to be noted that the implementation of such activities will require funding beyond the resources available in the Unified Budget. Therefore, voluntary contributions will be needed.

Eventually, the Permanent Council and/or the Ministerial Council may take the decisions required for the appropriate policy translation and follow-up activities.