



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
The Secretariat**

**25<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
“Greening the economy and building partnerships  
for security in the OSCE region”**

**SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING**

**“Greening the economy for sustainable development, security and stability”**

**Astana, 14-16 June 2017**

**Welcoming Remarks**

**Ambassador Vuk Žugić  
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I find it very symbolic that the Second Preparatory Meeting with its focus on *Greening the economy for sustainable development, security and stability* is taking place in Astana.

Seven years ago at the **OSCE Summit in Astana**, the participating States adopted the Astana Commemorative Declaration Towards a Security Community, reiterating their “*commitment to the concept of comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security, which ... links economic and environmental co-operation with peaceful inter-State relations*”. They also agreed that “*mutually beneficial co-operation aimed at addressing the impact on our region’s security of economic and environmental challenges must be further developed*”.

In 2011, one year after the Summit, Astana hosted another prominent event, **the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference**, attended by the vast majority of the OSCE participating States, which had *greening the economy* as one of its main themes. The Ministerial Declaration of the conference highlighted the need for strengthening efforts for the transition to a green economy and demonstrated the high-level commitment to take the lead in this transition. These commitments were further strengthened in the Ministerial Declaration "Greener, cleaner, smarter!" and the Pan European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy which were adopted at the **Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference** last year in Batumi.

I am confident that the outcomes of these events will guide our deliberations during this meeting. Let's make use of the **"Green Bridge" of Kazakhstan** to foster sustainability and security in the whole OSCE region.

Let me now turn to the sessions. The **first session** is dedicated to *enhancing resource efficiency and greening the economy*. It will provide an opportunity to elaborate on the benefits of greening the economy for sustainable development, security and stability in the OSCE region. These benefits are cross-cutting and substantial. The region already has a significant number of good practice examples in this area. Yet the potential for greening the economy can be more effectively utilized so that the environmental, economic and social benefits of this transition better contribute to achieving sustainable development and peace. Resource efficiency is an indispensable part in making the economy green and is also gaining an increasingly prominent role on the policy agendas in the OSCE region. The OSCE has repeatedly acknowledged the importance of resource efficiency in many key documents starting with the **1975 Helsinki Final Act**.

**Circular economy**, as a fundamental alternative to the dominant linear economic model, will also be discussed in this session. Greening the economy, resource efficiency and the circular economy complement each other in enabling participating States to address the challenge of climate change and to implement the Sustainable Development Goals more effectively. The private sector has a particularly important role to play in this context, including through the creation of jobs. These aspects, which are essential for greening the economy, will be in the

focus of Session I and we will elaborate proposals for areas where the OSCE can make a difference.

In **Session II**, we will focus on **renewable energy and its contribution to energy security** and green growth. Reliable and sustainable energy supplies form the basis of future growth and the stability and prosperity of our economies. The International Energy Agency predicts that fossil fuels will continue to dominate energy supplies for a while. Nevertheless, the role of renewable energy in the energy security equation is growing, driven by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the need to reduce carbon emissions. Astana seems to be the right place for the OSCE to discuss these issues. The world has come together in Astana to provide a vision of an energy future that will be a driving force for green growth and prosperity. I am personally greatly impressed by the breadth of technological progress and economic dynamism this EXPO 2017 has to offer.

Let us not forget, however, that many challenges remain. To make full use of the economic, environmental and security benefits renewable energy can offer, we have to remove existing barriers throughout the OSCE area. Making renewable energy a sustainable part of the energy mix requires good economic governance, the right incentive system, a stable investment framework to attract sufficient international financing and strong public private partnerships.

I am confident that during today's meeting we will hear concrete proposals and recommendations for the OSCE, on how to further strengthen co-operation and dialogue on energy security, renewable energy and green growth. Tomorrow's working group will guide us towards a path to action.

In **Session III**, we will discuss two topics that are at the heart of OSCE's environmental activities: **Reducing environmental risks** and **strengthening good environmental governance**.

Environmental risks can result from environmental degradation, unsustainable use of natural resources, mismanagement of waste, resource scarcity, pollution, as well as natural hazards. Combined with climate change, they pose not only a risk to the affected population, but also increasing challenges to policy-makers. Governing environmental issues and addressing environmental challenges to avoid negative impacts on security is a complex task. It needs

responsive governments and inclusive decision-making processes to avoid tensions and find sustainable solutions.

This is where good environmental governance comes in. My Office, together with the field operations, has for many years been engaged in fostering transparency, access to environmental information and dialogue among stakeholders as a means to build trust and enable co-operation. Non-governmental actors and **young people** play an important role in this respect, and the Session will provide an opportunity to learn how they can contribute to better environmental governance and foster co-operation.

The OSCE participating States are taking concrete steps to green their economies. They are adopting policies and measures to reduce environmental risks and enhance resource efficiency. They are redirecting consumption habits and production towards more sustainable patterns. They are creating green jobs, enhancing public participation and education for sustainable development. I am confident that this year's **Economic and Environmental Forum process** will play a prominent role in guiding the OSCE's support to these endeavours.

The importance of this preparatory meeting is hard to overestimate. I am looking forward to dynamic and comprehensive discussions over these two days. In this regard, I feel reassured by the commitment to **strengthening the Second Dimension** that has been demonstrated by many OSCE delegations during the Ambassadorial Retreat on the Second Dimension in May. The outcomes of the meeting in Astana can turn this commitment into practical recommendations for action to contribute substantially to the Concluding Meeting of the Forum in Prague in September. Furthermore, these outcomes will have a significant role to play in the context of deliberations of **a possible deliverable related to the environment** in the run up to the Ministerial Council in Vienna. My Office will further support the Austrian Chairmanship in the preparation of the Concluding Meeting in Prague.

Let me conclude by thanking our hosts - the Government of Kazakhstan- for their warm hospitality, and the Austrian Chairmanship for their leadership in this year's Forum process. I now look forward to our discussions in today's Sessions and in the Working Groups tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention.