



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**THE 18th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

SECOND PREPARATORY CONFERENCE, MINSK, 15 MARCH 2010

**Opening Remarks by Goran Svilanovic  
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished participants,

I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming you all to the Second Preparatory Conference here in the fascinating city of Minsk. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Republic of Belarus for hosting this event and for the excellent cooperation my Office and I have experienced during the preparations of this conference.

Because of the multi-faceted character of the issues under discussion we have opted to start of today's discussions in the format of a **Panel Discussion** allowing us to define more accurately the challenges facing land transport security. Experts, representing different transport sectors and various disciplinary fields including private sector, have been invited to share their views on what are considered to be the key issues at stake. As the Secretary General rightly pointed out, **land-based transport** (covering road and railways) is considered by many to be the **weakest link in securing the international supply chain** while at the same time, and this is an important nuance, it is both a *vehicle* (often in the literal sense) as well as a *target* for terrorist attacks.

**Now, what can the OSCE do to tackle this issue?**

The first thing we are capable of, jointly with all of you present here today, is to diagnose, in other words to try to determine why land transport security tends to be the weakest link in the global supply chain.

When looking a bit deeper into the issue, the following observations can be made:

- There seems to be a lack of **inter-governmental bodies** dealing specifically with **land transport security**. While the security arrangements of civil aviation and maritime transport are regulated by ICAO and IMO respectively, inland transport remains largely a **national policy matter**. Whereas the security rules and standards in maritime and aviation sectors are clearly defined and decided within the respective intergovernmental regulatory bodies, such a harmonised and cooperative approach seems to be lacking in the land transport sector.
- In addition, security in the land transport sector, as opposed to in other segments of the supply chain, is highly fragmented in terms of number and nature of actors involved (transport authorities, customs, police, as well as the private sector to name just a few). Improving collaboration between these actors is therefore an absolute necessity.
- As well, the lack of a unified, co-ordinated approach can also be explained by the fact that there are no harmonized regulatory frameworks, legal instruments and conventions available that cover land transport security in its entirety. **The OSCE as a political organisation could be well placed to support UNECE and others in their endeavours to create a harmonized set of rules and regulations that could possibly fill this gap.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished participants

In addition to the ‘environmental’ and ‘transport of hazardous waste’ topics already emphasised by the Secretary General, let me now briefly turn to another building block of this year’s Forum process which is the need to make full use of **the potential of railway transportation** in the OSCE region, in particular in our **landlocked countries**. Indeed, in addition to road transport, the railway sector in our region has an enormous potential when it comes to cargo transportation over long distances, between continents, from Asia to Europe and vice versa.

A number of very concrete railway facilitation initiatives are currently ongoing, I would mention **two specific examples** which I consider particularly relevant and which will be discussed in much detail in the further course of the conference:

- The international railway community, well represented at our conference, is increasingly involved in **conducting demonstration runs of ‘container block trains’** across the OSCE region. A **block train** is a train in which all the wagons are shipped from the same origin to the same destination, without being split up or stored en route. Not only does this save time and money, it also avoids the hassle and delays at the ports of origin and destination as well as cumbersome and time consuming procedures at the borders. It enables railways to compete more effectively with road and internal waterway transport systems.
- A second issue which is high on the railway community’s agenda these days and about which we will learn much more tomorrow is the ongoing effort to promote the **harmonization of railway legal regimes and documentation**. Given the potential for **increased cooperation and ‘interconnectedness’ between railway networks across CIS and EU borders** this initiative is very promising and valuable and it goes without saying that the OSCE stands ready to contribute to and facilitate this process.

With these remarks I will end my opening statement. Thank you for your attention! I look forward to our fruitful deliberations over the next two days.