



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Report by the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Samuel C. Laeuchli  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 19, 2008

We would like to welcome Mr. Snoy back to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his thorough report on the activities of the Economic and Environmental Committee.

We heard some interesting ideas at this year' Forum about the direction and focus of the Economic and Environmental dimension of the OSCE.

As a number of speakers at the Forum observed, the OSCE could help improve implementation of International Maritime Organization conventions by raising awareness and generating political will. The OSCE could usefully supplement efforts to achieve several International Maritime Organization priorities and initiatives.

Also, the OSCE could help with national legislation that facilitates implementation of existing conventions, including encouraging individual countries to put some real enforcement muscle behind the conventions.

The exchange of best practices related to maritime issues between regions also seems like a reasonable and manageable role for the OSCE. The variety of countries represented in the OSCE makes it an ideal forum for sharing experiences and developing guidelines for maritime issues, with due consideration for work on these topics within the IMO and other multilateral organizations and venues.

Finally, with respect to the challenges of land-locked countries, the OSCE might help facilitate trade and transport by harmonizing customs and border management procedures. The idea of developing a "Handbook on Best Practices at Border Crossings" may deserve further consideration, taking into account standards and responsibilities of the World Customs Organization and other multilateral organizations.

These are all areas where the OSCE has expertise and can provide added value. We look forward to hearing from other delegations how these suggestions or others might be translated into decisions that we can consider at the ministerial this December in Helsinki.

Mr. Chairman, the United States agrees with others who have suggested that it would be useful for participating States to engage in a larger debate about the future direction and programs of the Second Dimension. We also wonder if the selection of an annual theme is actually yielding the results we desire, or instead is only leading to a diffusion of effort that deflects the Organization and the Secretariat from concentrating on a limited number of issues where it can achieve concrete results.

We continue to believe that we should concentrate the OSCE's collective energy - and its resource allocations - on what this organization does best in the Second Dimension, and that is promoting rule of law and good governance, and helping to put into practice rules and regulations that aid in the fight against corruption, organized crime, and money laundering.

The United States believes that refocusing our efforts on these core activities can help to raise the investment climate throughout the OSCE region, and by extension, the level of prosperity and security that we all enjoy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.