



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

**Opening Remarks  
Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**

**Second Preparatory Conference  
to the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
Minsk, 15 March 2010**

Dear Ambassador,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

It is an honour to take part in the opening session of the Second Preparatory Conference to the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I am delighted to be in Minsk and to enjoy the warm hospitality of our Belarusian hosts (despite the cold weather outside!). Thank you.

On behalf of the OSCE Secretariat, I join previous speakers in welcoming to this Conference the representatives from national governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, as well as the OSCE field presences. It is a pleasure also to welcome our distinguished speakers, moderators and panellists. We look forward to your thoughts and ideas to guide our discussions.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Transport matters. Attention by the OSCE to the importance of transport received strong emphasis in 2003 with the OSCE *Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension* adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial Council. The Strategy Document is our starting point. In it, indeed, the OSCE participating States identified transport as a priority area for co-operation and encouraged the “development of transport networks in the OSCE region which are efficient and integrated, free of avoidable safety and security risks and sensitive to the environment.”

This is the third time that the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum addresses a transport-related theme. Momentum is gathering in this area. The participating States are taking strong steps to promote more efficient transport links between their countries and to facilitate transport and trade. Our attention has been drawn to the example of the establishment of the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation. In this respect, I wish to underline the significance of the location of our meeting today. Belarus stands at the crossroads of major East-West and North-South transit and transportation routes.

Much more is required from individual countries and in cooperation with their neighbours and partners.

The transportation sector faces challenges from all sides. The sector has been hit hard by the global economic downturn. We discussed these issues at our recent Forum meeting in Vienna in February. In many countries and regions, physical and non-physical barriers continue to hamper transport and trade, causing delays and unnecessary costs. We hear constant complaints from the business sector on these points. The OSCE has sought, in close co-operation with partners such as the UNECE, to address these issues by promoting good governance in customs and in other border agencies and by facilitating the exchange of best practices between our participating States. It is only natural that these topics remain high on this year's Forum agenda.

There is a strong security dimension here. International terrorism and transnational organized crime pose serious threats to the transport sector – indeed, to our common stability and security. Recent years have seen ruthless terror attacks on trains and urban transport means – in Madrid, London and the Russian Federation, with tragic results. Many more -- *fortunately unsuccessful* -- attempts have not made the headlines. The risk is ever present.

Inland transport faces a complex range of security risks. These include thefts of vehicles and of high-value goods, illegal border crossings, the trafficking of dangerous substances and/or hazardous waste, attacks on critical transport infrastructure such as tunnels and bridges. The list is daunting.

Inland transport has been noted as the weakest link in the global supply chain. Relative to ports and airports, inland transportation strikes many as being under-protected. This increases overall vulnerability. It is time that we pay more attention to the multiple facets of the security of inland transport. Our aim should be to promote a comprehensive, integrated approach that would involve the public and the private sector, along with relevant international organizations.

We are keenly aware of the leading work on transport security undertaken by the UNECE. OSCE activities are complementary to these, as well as those undertaken by other partners. The 2010 Economic and Environmental Forum process has been designed to provide an opportunity to strengthen points of synergy and deepen cooperation. There is a need for better co-ordination and exchange of information with regard to transport security issues and standards.

The OSCE can offer a platform for dialogue on these issues. It can also implement concrete activities. I draw your attention, for instance, to the project developed by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities together with the OSCE Office in Minsk and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, to build capacity for combating illegal transboundary transportation of hazardous waste. This project promotes inter-sectoral co-operation and seeks to improve capacity for the prevention and detection of the illegal waste transportation in Eastern Europe. I am convinced that other regions and countries could benefit from the positive experience that we have developed in key areas.

We face the additional challenge of tying work on the transportation sector to wider, global concerns. It is vital we step up efforts to identify ways to make the transport more environmentally friendly -- to make it *greener*. We all agree that we need better, faster, more efficient transport. We also want clean air and landscapes, and to mitigate the environmental impact of climate change. We have no choice but to engage with all of these objectives at the same time. Promoting environmentally sustainable transportation choices, environmentally friendly and innovative transportation systems, vehicles, fuels, and technologies – these are vital parts of this process.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I wish to encourage you to make fuller use of the platform for dialogue and action that the OSCE offers.

The comprehensive mandate of the Organization and the diverse tools that we have developed can be put to more use. I look forward to your thoughts on how to promote stronger cooperation among the participating States, how to foster deeper synergies with other organizations and stakeholders, and how to strengthen good governance at all levels, including inside the Organization itself.

Thank you.