

Texte Point d'ordre 1<sup>ère</sup> réunion préparatoire du Forum économique et environnemental 2016

Thank you Mr. Chair. As done on previous occasions, we wish to raise a point of order regarding the EEF linguistic regime.

Indeed and despite several demarches and formal letters on our part and on the part of other Participating States, the Rules of Procedures are not being respected.

According to the Rules of Procedure, the meetings of the OSCE, like the EEF and its preparatory and concluding meetings, must take place in the six official languages or, with the consent of the Participating States, without interpretation. I refer here to Chapter VI (a) h of the Rules of Procedure.

The current system applied in the first and second preparatory conferences of the EEF every year allows only for two languages to be used by speakers and members of delegations, namely English and Russian.

This so-called "practice" is not compatible with the Rules of Procedures. It does not rely on a consensual decision. The yearly PC decisions on the agenda and the modalities of the EEF do not contain any indication regarding the language regime.

Also, the EEF is not a single meeting but a process of three meetings, two preparatory and one concluding. All three meetings are convened as part of the EEF, and all participating States are invited and represented in all the sessions of the three meetings, which means that all the sessions of the three meetings that constitute the EEF are plenary, regardless of how they are named.

In June 2014 France, Germany Italy and Spain signed a letter to the Secretary General stating that the English/Russian system does not respect either the six language regime nor the regime without interpretation foreseen by the Rules of Procedure.

We reiterate that the interpretation from and to Russian should not be financed through the Unified Budget, but by contributions of the Participating States which are interested in having Russian interpretation.

Let us be clear: the current English/Russian system cannot at the same time be justified by the claim made by the Secretariat that the preparatory meetings are not a part of the EEF, and as such not "OSCE meetings" falling under the Rules of Procedure, and be financed on the Unified Budget. This must be borne in mind when approaching the next OSCE budget cycle.

Moreover, and in more practical terms, due respect to the 6 languages regime would allow for a wider participation of experts coming from across the whole OSCE region. This is especially relevant in the case of the EEF, given the technical nature of the issues that are discussed during its sessions.

Mr Chairman, we stated several times very clearly, both orally and in writing, that the so-called practice of the English/Russian interpretation regime should not continue to be repeated and asked for assurances that in 2016 the entirety of the EEF will respect the 6 languages regime.

We expect consultations to take place swiftly in view of solving this issue before the second preparatory meeting of the 2016 EEF.

This delegation intends to circulate the remarks made under this point of order in writing and include them in a formal letter to the Chairmanship in the near future.

I thank you for your attention./.