



United States Mission to the OSCE

Opening Statement at the 27th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Preparatory Meeting in Bratislava

As delivered by Dustin DeGrande, Political Officer
May 27, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, fellow delegates, representatives, and distinguished guests. I would like to thank the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship and OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities Ambassador Žugić for organizing this second preparatory meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF).

In 2003 in Maastricht, participating States agreed on the need for “a predictable, reliable, economically acceptable, commercially sound and environmentally friendly energy supply.” The Maastricht strategy committed us all to “encourage energy dialogue and efforts to diversify energy supply, ensure the safety of energy routes, and make more efficient use of energy resources.”

The energy environment has changed dramatically since then. On the one hand, digitalization has opened new avenues for public responsiveness and cooperation; technological advances have improved energy efficiency, opened new markets, and brought down the cost of renewables; and countries are integrating energy networks across regions. On the other hand, Russia – contrary to its Maastricht commitments – has weaponized its energy resources like gas and nuclear on which so many countries rely, and as we again heard in this morning’s welcoming remarks, and it has tried to strangle competition. Increased cooperation and digitalization have made networks vulnerable to cyberattacks, and public corruption across the OSCE region has stymied many citizens’ access to much-needed energy at affordable rates.

Despite these changes, the United States still sees space for the convergence of ideas in the broad area of energy security. We look forward to sharing some of these thoughts today, as well as to hearing from expert panelists and other delegations about where they see room for consensus.

Finally, we welcome the Slovak Chairmanship's recognition in this meeting of the importance of listening to the private sector on energy issues. This is why we invited Phillip Harris, the CEO of Tres Amigas, which is one of the driving forces behind the world's largest competitive wholesale electricity markets. Also joining us today is Elliot Roseman from the U.S. Energy Association – which represents 150 public and private energy related organizations, corporations, and government agencies. USEA's leadership efforts have helped spread energy connectivity across the OSCE region.

Once again, the United States thanks the Slovak Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator for your hard work organizing this week's preparatory forum. We look forward to a serious and targeted discussion this week and into Prague as we strive to fulfill our mandate to improve security and cooperation in the OSCE region via the Second Dimension.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.