



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The 19th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Promotion of common actions and co-operation in the OSCE area in the fields of development of sustainable energy and transport”

Druskininkai, 4-5 April 2011

**Second Preparatory Meeting
(Development of Sustainable Transport)**

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

Dear Vice Minister Staras,

Dear Vice Minister Meilunas,

Mr. Mayor,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here together in this beautiful resort town of Druskininkai on a spring day with great facilities - what better way to start this Second Preparatory Meeting of the 19th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. Let me thank our host, Lithuania, the 2011 OSCE Chairmanship, as well as Goran Svilanovic and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for putting together an interesting and stimulating agenda and distinguished group.

This meeting, as part of the broader Forum process, is dedicated to the promotion of common action and co-operation in the field of sustainable transport. It is an area of work that enhances the continuity of the OSCE approach in the economic and environmental dimension from Chairmanship to Chairmanship. It is an issue that can contribute to advancing regional and sub-regional co-operation across the OSCE region.

Along with sustainable energy issues – the other main building block of this year’s Forum – transport is of crucial importance to all participating States. While the energy sector by

definition underpins economic activity, the transport sector provides fundamental cross-sectoral communication channels, brings people and businesses closer to each other, and facilitates trade, thus making development and growth possible and helping to spread prosperity. This is true at the national level, at the regional level and more broadly.

What is the OSCE's contribution in this field, and how can we add value to the efforts of others?

The OSCE takes pride in providing a unique platform for political dialogue, an active forum on a wide range of security issues, including economic and environmental questions. We also value the first-hand local knowledge and experience we gather through our network of field operations, and the diverse membership of our Organization, which brings together 56 participating States and 12 Partners for Co-operation from five continents.

The OSCE consistently emphasizes the importance of co-operation and synergy with other international and regional organizations promoting networks for focused action. It engages constructively in promoting co-operative, integrated and sustainable transport solutions through inclusive dialogue, involving multiple stakeholders in government, the private sector and civil society.

The OSCE can support and facilitate regional co-operation, and it can act locally. With regard to today's specific topic – the development of sustainable transport – I would like to share with you a couple of examples of the work that we do.

In recent years we have contributed towards the implementation in the OSCE region of the "Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries." Promoting the co-operation between landlocked countries and their transit neighbours not only benefits the nine landlocked developing countries in the OSCE or two of our Partners for Co-operation, Afghanistan and Mongolia, but generates positive effects for all of us through transport and trade facilitation across the Euro-Asian land mass.

Another example of the OSCE work is a Training Seminar on Prevention and Detection of Illegal Transboundary Waste Transportation and their Disposal, conducted in June last year by the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe with support from the Office of

the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities. This issue is an emerging challenge in many parts of the OSCE region. It may have serious environmental and health related consequences and is also often linked with other transnational organized crime activities.

I am certain that the Co-ordinator, as well as the representatives of OSCE field operations who are with us today will give you further examples.

In the field of transport, we have developed strong partnerships with other organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). We have worked with them to promote the International Convention on the Harmonization of the Frontier Control of Goods. The OSCE has also provided support to the work of the Euro-Asian Transport Links Project (EATL) – Phase II, the most recent example being an Inter-Regional Workshop co-organized in December 2010 in the port of Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan. We would like to see cooperative efforts such as this continue to expand.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE's engagement in promoting transport co-operation is already a success story. But in order to maintain this positive momentum, we must constantly adapt in response to new and evolving challenges.

Last year, under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum also focused on transport issues. We discussed the impact of the financial and economic crisis on the transport sector, and the potential of transport co-operation and cross border facilitation in underpinning economic recovery. Today, although we can see positive trends in global freight, many questions and uncertainties remain:

- Will the recovery be sustainable?
- Will we face an energy crisis?
- Will new technologies be developed fast enough and prove economically viable?
- Finally, is the pre-crisis model sustainable or do we need to put something fundamentally new and innovative in place?

Some of these issues are not new, but the urgency of addressing them has never been clearer.

On the one hand, states need to co-operate more closely in removing obstacles to cross-border trade and designing innovative inter-modal and logistical solutions. This is the way to turn international transport into an effective tool facilitating economic development across our region. Of course, we also need to bear in mind the environmental consequences of our activities. We should adopt a comprehensive approach, which advances transport efficiency and sustainability from both an economic and an energy and environmental perspective. We have to take new initiatives to fill the gap of exchanges that exists at the heart of Eurasia by comparison with other areas.

In this context, let me mention the 2006 Brussels Ministerial Council Decision on Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE (MC.DEC/11/06). This decision is based on the recommendations and conclusions of the Forum process. It emphasizes the linkages between transport development and the environment as well as the importance of promoting environmentally sustainable transportation choices. It encourages participating States to consider signing, ratifying and effectively implementing international agreements aimed at reducing the negative impact on the environment of economic activities, and in particular of transport activities. This decision also calls on participating States to apply and share best practices in the field of technological progress aimed at reducing the negative impact on the environment of transport activities.

We therefore need your ideas and your inputs.

I am confident that this meeting will help us to have a clearer view of existing needs and possible ways forward in promoting the sustainable development of transport across the OSCE region. I hope that it will also be instrumental in defining the role of the OSCE in this regard and that in the end we will have a stronger sense of initiative, co-operation and responsibility in carrying out our common goals.

I wish you an interesting and fruitful dialogue! Thank you for your attention.