



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretariat

**Co-ordinator of OSCE
Economic and Environmental Activities**

Vienna, 23 June 2005

**Report to the 560th meeting of the Permanent Council
on the 13th meeting of the Economic Forum
“Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons belonging to National
Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable development in the OSCE area”
Prague, 23-25 May 2005**

**Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,**

Since this is my last address to the Permanent Council allow me to use this opportunity to make some remarks on the OSCE's second basket on a personal basis built on my three years and three months experience. But before doing so, I will of course follow the agenda and give you a briefing about the 13th meeting of the Economic Forum last month.

Talking Points – Economic Forum

As you know, the Forum - “Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons belonging to National Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE area” – took place in Prague, between 23 and 27 May 2005.

The Forum gathered 450 participants from the OSCE participating States, the partners for co-operation and the Mediterranean partners for co-operation.

OSCE ODIHR, HCNM and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as well as 15 OSCE field presences participated in the meeting.

18 international organizations also took part in the Forum.

Numerous documents and presentations have been circulated during the Forum. Most of them will be published on a CD-Rom which will be soon available.

The Consolidated Summary of the Forum has been circulated under EF.GAL/33/05. The Forum produced several recommendations for follow-up. My office has already circulated a paper presenting some preliminary ideas on the way forward (EF.GAL/34/05). An initial discussion on this paper took place in the Sub-Committee on 17 June. Of course, we need more time to carefully study all the recommendations and together with the Chairmanship identify the best ways and means to implement concrete activities, so that in the next weeks a more comprehensive plan could be developed. I am looking forward to hearing your ideas and proposals and I assure you that we will dully take them into consideration.

Before referring to the substance of the deliberation in Prague and to these follow-up activities already identified by my office, allow me to express my thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the Forum.

First of all I want to thank the Slovenian Chairmanship who proposed the Forum's topic and was very much involved in the preparations. The Chairperson of the EESC, Blazka Kepic had an important contribution and I want to thank her personally for her dedication.

I thank as well our Czech hosts who like in the past years provided excellent working conditions and warm hospitality.

As you know, for the review session the UNECE prepared a comprehensive and very professional report on the selected cluster "Integration, Trade and Transport". This is fully in line with the MoU between our two organizations and I appreciate very much their co-operation.

Regarding the main theme of the Forum we also received great support from IOM and International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) as well as from the Office of the HCNM and I am looking forward to continuing co-operation with them.

I also want to thank you, delegations, for your contribution during the preparatory process and at the Forum. I hope you will also support the envisaged follow-up activities of which I would like to highlight the major ones.

- Action Plan or Strategy for managing migration issues for possible adoption at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Ljubljana in December 2005

This follow-up idea of the Chairmanship received broad support during the Forum.

The OCEEA, in co-operation with a number of experts who had been involved in the preparatory process for the Forum, will propose an initial draft of such a document reflecting the issues discussed. The structure of such a document could be presented to the EESC by the summer recess.

- Statement of Principles for the integration of persons belonging to national minorities to be endorsed at the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana in December 2005

This initiative was brought up by HCNM. My office stands ready to work together with the Office of the OSCE HCNM to formulate a proposal for such a statement of principles. A draft document could be presented to the EESC for discussion in September.

- **Advisory Group to the OCEEA on demography, migration and integration issues**

This “Advisory Group” could take the form of a network of experts with whom we have already established good working relationships during the preparatory process. They would be involved in various follow-up activities.

- **Regional workshops**

The Forum emphasized the importance of regional co-operation and of identifying regional solutions to challenges related to demographic trends, migration and integration (which often have a regional dimension). To that end, the OCEEA is ready to organize a regional workshop addressing the needs of countries in the CIS region and is now in the process of identifying the most appropriate topic(s) for such an event. Such a workshop could be organized either by the end of 2005 or during the first half of 2006.

- **Establishing a discussion forum for the participating States by broadening the mandate of the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking to incorporate demography, migration and integration related issues**

It was suggested during the Forum by the Norwegian Ambassador that such a broadening of the mandate would strengthen the role of the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and co-operation and that it would also represent an opportunity to keep the above-mentioned issues on the OSCE’s agenda. If participating States so decide, the OCEEA stands ready, within its competences, to provide assistance to the work of such a group.

- **During the Economic Forum, we learned how diverse and innovative policy solutions are explored by participating States faced with mounting migratory pressures. The exchange of information on successful and effective practices is of key importance. Therefore, my office proposed to prepare a Handbook on effective practices in managing labour migration within the OSCE area (and Mediterranean and Asian partners).**

It could be a useful source book for policy-makers and public administration officers dealing with labor migration issues as well as for ngos, academia, general public interested in this topic. The OCEEA in cooperation with IOM is currently developing a project proposal that will be presented to the delegations in September.

I would like to thank Delegations that already provided information about their policies. It helps us to prepare the content of the handbook.

- **Expanding existing activities**

Finally, the OCEEA will expand existing activities or launch new ones to better incorporate responses to challenges posed by demographic trends, migration and integration of persons belonging to national minorities. This encompasses migrant information centres in countries

of emigration, awareness raising and exchange of information, promoting the implementation of international conventions and, in the environmental field, awareness raising about environmentally induced migration.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

It has been 3 years and 3 months since I took over the helm of the office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. When I came, my office merely organized the Economic Fora and preparatory seminars. Since then, we have been able to develop concrete programmatic follow-up activities to Economic Fora, be it in the domain of good governance, the environment, trafficking, human resource development, SME. I believe that the OSCE has found many areas, gaps in which it adds value to what international economic organizations are doing.

But despite what all others and OSCE are doing, threats of new divisions across the OSCE area, threats of failing states, of unfinished transition to market economies have not disappeared. Let us be aware that countries that succeeded in economic transition were highly motivated and disciplined by the prospect of the EU membership, they received substantial technical and other support, were located in geographic proximity of the EU, and spent “only” 50 years under communism. Those that still struggle with challenges of transition are usually in much worse position by all these accounts. So we cannot be complacent. Much more needs to be done. The gap between the have’s and have-not’s needs to be bridged within the OSCE family if we want to reduce tensions and possible future conflicts and modern types of threats to security: illicit migration, transnational crime, trafficking in human beings, etc.

Participating States achieved a great thing, agreed on the Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. This document sets up broad and up-today commitments. Review sessions on the commitments set by the OSCE should be further extended not only to help identify problems with compliance but also in order to identify necessary measures to overcome shortcomings. UNECE is a perfect complimentary partner to work on reviews. To that purpose, as we know, the MoU with the UNECE secretariat has been signed. But we have a problem here. UNECE is somehow reluctant to reallocate more of its existing resources to the cooperation with OSCE and requests more funding. Participating States should look into this matter.

Another matter of substance I would like to raise concerns economic costs of conflicts. There are still a few political frozen conflicts unsolved in the OSCE area. OSCE could perhaps assess economic costs of these conflicts in terms of lost GDP, losses to trade, to investment. Politicians as well as general public should be aware of the economic costs of unsettled conflicts. In other words how much can be gained by settling the conflict. Turning attention from historical animosities to potential economic gains, may contribute, I believe, to the settlement.

I also believe that the Co-ordinator’s mandate should be strengthened so that he or she could bring to the attention of the pS any obstacle, found East or West of Vienna, that are impeding economic co-operation, fully fledged transition to the market, development of the common economic space.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you, Ambassadors and through you your predecessors with whom I worked. My particular gratitude goes to four Chairmanships: Portuguese, Dutch, Bulgarian and Slovenian. Let me also use the opportunity to thank our outgoing Secretary General, esteemed Ján Kubiš, for his friendly guidance, all very obliging colleagues with the Secretariat, including conference services, interpreters and OSCE Institutions with which I had very good working relationships, Heads of OSCE Missions, and of course Economic and Environmental Officers in the field who are doing an excellent job in often difficult conditions, and last but not least my excellent team from my Office, dedicated, competent, full of ideas. I wish all of you a successful cooperation with my successor, who, I am sure, with his long-standing experience, will be able to further develop the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension.