



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Introductory Remarks
by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
Bernard Snoy**

The Sixteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Part 2 / Prague, 19 - 21 May 2008

**“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area:
Increasing security and protecting the environment”**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in welcoming you all to this meeting. At my turn, I also wish to express my warmest thanks to our Czech hosts and to the OSCE Prague Office for all the efforts they have put into the preparations for this event.

My gratitude and appreciation go as well to the Finnish Chairmanship of the OSCE. We had an excellent co-operation with the teams in Vienna and Helsinki and together, I believe, we managed to build a solid foundation for the deliberations during the next days and for the follow-up activities that would be implemented based on the Forum's recommendations.

It is an honour to welcome the high ranking representatives and participants from the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, from partner International Organizations, NGOs, the business and academic community.

I am also very pleased that the OSCE field presences are widely represented and certainly will play an active role in our deliberations. The Economic and Environmental Officers as well as the other colleagues from other units in the Secretariat are key partners for my Office. We do have to work closely together in order to implement our comprehensive mandate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The two preparatory Conferences in Helsinki and Ashgabad as well as the first part of the Forum in Vienna highlighted the relevance of the theme of this year's Forum - "*Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment*".

These meetings were instrumental in identifying a number of priority issues and possible follow-up activities. They once again stressed that partnership and co-operation are at the very heart of the OSCE's activities, especially in the economic and environmental dimension. Partnership and co-operation are key elements and the guarantee for success in tackling security and environmental challenges related to maritime and inland waterways.

My Office together with the Finnish Chairmanship prepared and circulated a Food for Thought paper on the possible role of the OSCE in the follow-up to the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum. The Forum's Annotated Agenda also raises some questions that could be addressed during various sessions. The purpose is to stimulate the debates and contribute to generating valuable recommendations.

Let me now briefly refer to the substance and the proceedings of this second part of the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum

Tomorrow, the Review Session will focus on commitments related to governance and transport issues, with a special focus on environmental governance and transport security, including relevant international conventions and international co-operation initiatives. Both the UNECE, our traditional partner in this endeavour, and the IMO, the leading organization in the area of maritime co-operation, submitted substantial inputs ahead of the Forum. I want to commend the authors of these reports and I encourage all of you to contribute to the

process of identifying ways and means to strengthen the implementation of existing commitments, based on the findings of these reports. The key question is how the OSCE could contribute to the ratification and effective implementation of relevant international conventions, legal instruments and standards developed by the UNECE and the IMO.

The session following the review session will be dedicated to discussing prospects for overcoming challenges faced by landlocked developing countries in the OSCE area. Building upon the work already undertaken by the OSCE, in co-operation with partners, as a follow-up to the 14th Economic Forum and the Brussels Ministerial Decision on Future Transport Dialogue, we shall see what could be our next priorities and actions. In our view, a comprehensive approach towards border crossing facilitation stands as a relevant and topical area of focus, where the OSCE could bring added value.

Plenary Session III tomorrow afternoon will focus on security related issues. The preparatory process highlighted the need to strengthen the implementation of relevant conventions, the need for better coordination and exchange of information in relation to maritime and inland waterways transport security. The OSCE could also play a role in facilitating a wide policy debate on these issues and in enhancing the public private partnership in addressing security issues. It is acknowledged that the private sector can play an essential role in that regard.

The next session will discuss the emerging environmental threats to security. With regard to maritime issues, ranging from invasive species to oil spills, from land based pollution to the effects of climate change, and so on, the answer should be a closer co-operation between the littoral States. The OSCE can give a political impetus to existing regional processes and should work closer with regional organizations such as the Black Sea Commission, the Caspian Environmental Programme, or HELCOM. The IMO should remain a key partner in all such efforts. The OSCE should also strive to build a strong partnership with private sector initiatives such as the Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI). I do believe that concrete proposals will be formulated during the Forum and that we will be in the position to develop and implement joint activities in the near future.

In this context I would like to draw your attention to the follow-up Chairmanship Conference on “The Safety of Navigation and Environmental Security in a Transboundary Context in the Black Sea Basin” which will be organized in Odessa on 24-26 June 2008.

Regarding inland waterways co-operation, the OSCE should build on its existing experience and partnerships and continue to promote bilateral and regional co-operation. In Central Asia for example, the needs for an integrated approach to river basin co-operation and water management is high and the OSCE could play, I believe, a constructive role.

On Wednesday we will look closer into issues related to the key role of good governance. Issues such as oil spills preparedness and response, public-private co-operation, partnerships and co-operation at regional, national and local levels, the involvement of the civil society, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) principles, the role of research, training and education, will be taken up by speakers in that session. Promoting the principles of good governance is a field in which the OSCE has accumulated a great deal of expertise. I am looking forward to a debate on how good governance could be further advanced as far as maritime and inland waterways co-operation is concerned. I am looking forward to seeing various ideas and suggestions become more concrete and specific.

Last but not least, the Forum's agenda includes a Concluding Debate in which you are encouraged to participate actively. The main goal is to identify, together, the conclusions and recommendations for possible follow-up.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has become a tradition to release, on the occasion of the Prague Economic and Environmental Forum, the annual Activity report of my Office. I am pleased to present the report covering the period June 2007 to May 2008.

This report refers to the current issues and recent developments in the Economic and Environmental Dimension, including the 16th Economic and Environmental Forum process.

Good Governance activities in the areas of combating corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing as well as on strengthening of legislation and promotion of international standards are also highlighted in the report.

Our work over the last year also included activities aimed at investment and business development, transit transport development and border crossing facilitation, energy security dialogue, labour migration governance and anti-trafficking.

Environmental security and co-operation was an important area of focus. Recent activities in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative as well as follow-up activities to the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum - “Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management” – are also featured in the report, along with activities towards promoting environmental governance, raising environmental awareness, implementing the Aarhus Convention, or managing hazardous waste.

I would like to note that the adoption by the Madrid Ministerial Council of two important documents, namely the Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security and the Decision on Follow-up to the 15th Economic and Environmental Forum: Water management, contributed significantly to the development and consolidation of our environmental portfolio.

The Activity Report also highlights various activities conducted by the OSCE Field Operations. Over the last year we stepped up our efforts towards enhancing the synergies between Vienna and the field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am looking forward to hearing our distinguished keynote speakers and then the comments and interventions from the floor. I am looking forward to an interactive and enriching dialogue.

I thank you for your attention.