



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Remarks of the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Ján Kubiš,  
at the  
Annual Meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
Geneva, 25 February 2004**

**ITEM 5 : The UNECE's Co-operation with the Organization for Security and  
Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**

Mr. Chairman

Ms. Executive Secretary

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman and to the UNECE Executive Secretary, Ms. Brigita Schmögnerová, for inviting the OSCE to the UNECE Annual Meeting and for placing the item on co-operation with the OSCE on the agenda. I consider this yet another sign of recognition of the fact that the OSCE and UNECE are indeed becoming privileged partners for co-operation. This opinion – and expectation – is regularly underlined by the OSCE participating States in both the Permanent Council and its Subcommittee on Economic and Environmental Activities and is reflected in numerous OSCE decisions and documents.

Discussing co-operation between our two organizations and its modalities is very timely at this stage of their development marked by an increase of tasks and often competing demands for resources under the often promoted zero growth budget requirements in both organizations while they undergo a thorough internal reform, reflecting also the changing world. In this, both organizations should – in the ideal world – benefit from the fact that they have almost identical membership and thus the best conditions, that under their guidance – ideally identical in Geneva and Vienna – tasks would be defined and distributed and

resources would be adequately allocated based on the mandate, comparative advantage and already existing pattern of co-operation of both organizations.

First of all, I would like to thank the UNECE and its staff for the co-operation and excellent support provided to the OSCE in recent years, in the form of contributions to review sessions of the Economic Forum; contributions to numerous seminars and conferences, such as the recent one on globalization and security; as well as the joint organization of the Villars seminars or joint high-level workshop on the “Economic Dimension of Security in Europe” to take place here in Geneva on 8 March 2004, as well as the highly valuable UNECE contribution to the new OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht last December.

The introduction by Ms. Schmögnerova, as well as the UNECE background note on cooperation with the OSCE drafted for today's meeting, outline very clearly the key elements of the bilateral relationship between our two organizations. Also from that document it is obvious that our efforts are complementary in many ways. It is therefore only consistent and logical that we should consider intensifying our cooperation also by jointly addressing the challenges and tasks outlined in the new OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

As the OSCE Strategy Document outlines, we are facing a series of new challenges in the Economic and Environmental Dimension, among them a range of new threats to security and the environment. This is why the OSCE participating States have agreed on a set of new commitments, objectives and tasks for the OSCE, which will affect our activities over the coming years. Given that the UNECE has been a natural and reliable partner for cooperation in the past, OSCE participating States tasked me to conclude an arrangement with the UNECE which will set a framework for our future bilateral cooperation. Indeed, in the new OSCE Strategy Document, 55 Ministers of Foreign Affairs, representing also your ECE countries, decided to further strengthen the existing partnership between the OSCE and the ECE. Throughout the OSCE Strategy Document, the ECE has been prominently mentioned several times as a key OSCE partner. The Foreign Ministers *inter alia* explicitly expressed the expectation that the ECE will continue to play a supporting role in the review of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension.

The Strategy Document covers a wide spectrum of commitments, tasks and objectives. Good governance, economic integration, access to markets, trade, transport, finances, environment and education, early warning and conflict prevention are among them. The regular review of the implementation of assessments of specific threats to security commitments in the economic and environmental dimension, called for by the Strategy and other OSCE documents, is among the important tasks of the OSCE participating States, assisted by the Office of the Coordinator and other OSCE bodies.

Yet, the OSCE's capacity to carry out the implementation of the new Strategy Document review alone is limited, which is why cooperation with other international organizations, and in particular with the UNECE, who has been our traditional key partner in this, is so important. Other organizations are also called upon to co-operate and provide assistance in furthering the objectives of the new Strategy Document, such as the OECD, the Council of Europe, the WTO, the EBRD, UNDP or UNEP. Such co-operation is crucial, given that the OSCE is a political security organization, which provides it with a distinct mandate to cover economic and environmental threats to security, but it is other organizations that possess the necessary technical expertise and work in areas where they have comparative advantages. Therefore the OSCE intends to solicit input and assistance from a wide range of partner organizations.

In order to implement the new Strategy Document and, in particular, to carry out as complete a review of its commitments as possible, the OSCE will approach other partner organizations with the aim of establishing working relationships to assist them in their tasks. All partner organizations mentioned in the Strategy Document have received this document and some already indicated their readiness to co-operate with us and the ECE takes a lead also here. The resulting arrangements will require careful coordination in order to avoid duplication.

As outlined in the Strategy Document, some OSCE participating States will also require assistance in their reform efforts to allow them to complete their economic transition and to integrate successfully into the world economy. Here our partner organizations are also expected to help. Many other tasks and objectives are mentioned in the document, e.g. in the area of early warning or monitoring and reporting.

With regard to the UNECE the Strategy Document mentions, *inter alia*, explicitly that

- OSCE Participating States "expect that UN Economic Commission for Europe will continue to play a supportive role in the review of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension."
- OSCE Participating States wish to see "future monitoring and review of the economic and environmental situation in the OSCE area" by the UNECE.
- "The annual review at the Economic Forum will include both a general review of implementation of commitments *vis-à-vis* key EED documents and a focused review with regard to a relevant selected topic."

In addition to providing annual assessments for the Economic Forum, the UNECE, according to the new Strategy Document, may report, when appropriate, on the results of its monitoring in accordance with the arrangement to be agreed. It will be invited to take part in the discussions in the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Subcommittee, which will follow up the review of implementation of commitments at the Economic Forum, as well as in discussion of other UNECE reports.

As I stated earlier, the participating States requested me "to conclude an arrangement with the UNECE to provide a basis for future monitoring and review of the economic and environmental situation in the OSCE area...". It is obvious that this effort – under the close supervision of our members - will take some time and will require consultation within the two organizations and also with other OSCE partners.

Therefore, Ms. Schmögnerova and I agreed at our last meeting on 29 January 2004 in Vienna to establish a joint intra-Secretariat task force (which was set up two weeks ago and led on the OSCE side by Mr. Swiecicki, Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities) with the aim of preparing detailed modalities of such an arrangement and of our future cooperation, covering three areas: the specific situation of this year's Economic Forum and the review of the implementation of the commitments report traditionally prepared by ECE; long-term ECE contribution to the OSCE annual review of the implementation of

commitments as well as an agreement on broad OSCE-EU co-operation to be formalized in an MoU.

As a first step, we would like to agree on an interim arrangement concerning this year's OSCE Economic Forum. Such a transitional arrangement should enable a substantive review of OSCE commitments at the Economic Forum this spring, with the expected expert input and report prepared by the UNECE more in line with the ECE contribution in previous years and less as a more comprehensive review, as requested by the new Strategy Document.

Based on such an approach, the Economic Forum this year could comprise:

- A “general review” of the main OSCE Strategy Document Commitments, which could take place in the shape of an open session at the Economic Forum, in which the participating States and various partners, including international organizations, experts, representatives of the business community etc. can participate and raise questions and observations regarding all commitments in the Strategy Document.
- A focused review of a specific topic in fields close to the themes of this year's Economic Forum, e.g. in the areas of investment promotion and stimulation, SME development and human potential development.

The exact agreed priorities, scope and modalities of the ECE contribution to this year's Economic Forum will emerge, I hope, soon from the work of the task force (its first joint meeting is envisaged today here in Geneva) and will be then communicated to the ECE members – OSCE participating States for their consideration. In parallel, we will consider with the ECE a long-term arrangement in support of the Economic Forum, notably for our co-operation in monitoring and review of the implementation of commitments and, finally, modalities of our overall co-operation in the economic and environmental dimension in the years to come.

The scale of the tasks ahead of us this year and in the future is highly challenging and requires re-evaluation of the activities performed so far as well as certain re-distribution of resources. The countries that, within the OSCE framework, adopted the new Strategy Document should consequently provide adequate resources for its implementation. If and as necessary, additional resources, using the appropriate channels and decision-making processes, should be provided not only to the OSCE but to its partner organizations, notably the UNECE. I hope that member States of the UNECE will act on such requests and provide

the necessary support, which would enable the UNECE to fulfil fully the expectations expressed by the OSCE participating States.

To conclude: the OSCE considers the UNECE its prime partner for joint work, and it is grateful to the UNECE for its excellent support and long-term co-operation, from which both organizations and their members benefit. The OSCE is highly committed to continue, strengthen and formalize its co-operation with the UNECE, notably in implementing the new Strategy Document and in other areas. We all look forward to working with you, with Ms. Schmögnerova and her colleagues to this end.

Thank you for your attention.