



United States Mission to the OSCE

Closing Statement at the 27th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Concluding Meeting

As delivered by Political Officer Dustin DeGrande
Prague, September 13, 2019

As we conclude this week of rich discussion that sets us on the road to the Ministerial Council in Slovakia in December, I would like to thank Ambassador Zugic and his team for organizing, Ambassador Hasani for helping us start thinking about the Albanian Chairmanship's priorities for 2020, and Mr. Kantor for framing the Slovak Chairmanship's approach.

In our opening remarks on Wednesday, Ambassador Gilmore spoke about the main threats to the OSCE region's energy security and opportunities to reinvigorate our efforts in the Second Dimension. Today, I'll touch on what we heard this week and look ahead to the Ministerial Council.

The United States is the OSCE's single largest supporter, in actual resources, and we want the Organization to help us identify and take practical steps to advance our collective security. For that to happen, participating States need to engage. The United States would welcome consensus on thoughtful Ministerial Council decisions that address current day security concerns and challenges in the Second Dimension and provide guidance to the OSCE structures and states on how we can collectively address them.

The 27th Economic and Environmental Forum focused quite a bit on environmental themes. We welcome that discussion. The United States remains a world leader in providing affordable, abundant, and secure energy to our citizens, while protecting the environment and reducing emissions through job-creating innovation. It is also a world leader in protecting the environment and in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. U.S. net emissions dropped 13% from 2005-2017, even as our economy grew by over 19%. And we help our partners around the world to reduce emissions, adapt to climate change, and respond to natural disasters.

Slovakia told participating States that the Chairmanship's **priority** issue in 2020 would be energy security, and the food-for-thought paper indicated this would be one of two potential issues for a Ministerial Council decision.

We would have welcomed more than just one session at this meeting on this pressing and highly complex issue; that session squeezed in six speakers, leaving us little time for discussion. We'll need time for discussion in Vienna. We encourage the Slovak Chairmanship to ensure that participating States are able to share ideas on these issues well ahead of the Ministerial Council meeting in December, so we have a more well-informed common position.

The food-for-thought paper set out some promising ideas to start discussions. As we said in our closing statement from the EEF Preparatory Meeting in Bratislava in May, the United States believes there are real opportunities for consensus on energy security, despite the wide range of concerns and interests across our 57 states. Specifically, we should work together to ensure that our people have energy security, defined as: access to adequate, affordable, safe, and secure energy supplies. Ambassador Morningstar's keynote address highlighted some of the opportunities to make progress towards energy security through:

- Diversifying energy resources, sources, transit routes, and markets;
- Adopting new technologies to enhance the resilience, reliability, accessibility, and affordability of energy supplies;
- Improving reliability and resilience as well as conservation, not least to promote prosperity and development; and
- Protecting critical energy infrastructure from natural and manmade threats.

We also spent two sessions at the Forum on the impacts of the digital transformation on economies, societies, and governance. It is important that the need to address privacy and security risks and the "impact of digitalization on the lack of competition" cited in the food-for-thought paper should not be misused by some states to advocate burdensome regulations that restrict businesses, impinge on individual freedom, and inhibit the free flow of information on the internet.

We look forward to more clarity from the Slovak Chairmanship on how another Ministerial Council text on the digital transformation, as previewed in the food-for-thought paper, will advance the ideas upon which we have already agreed in Milan in 2018. If it does not, we would ask the Slovak Chairmanship to focus on other issues demanding our attention, including reviving the environmental crimes text that garnered support in Milan, or a similar one. We look to the Chairmanship to build into our approach for the Ministerial initiatives to focus the Organization's scarce time and resources on implementing existing commitments and holding countries to account when participating States disregard the commitments they have made. Looking ahead, we regard the discussion today on anti-corruption and good governance as essential to future work in this dimension as in others, and hope the Albanian Chair will take up this challenge.

Thank you, once again, for organizing and advancing these issues. We now look forward now to putting these discussions to work for the OSCE and participating States.

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