

**STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE HOLY SEE
AT THE 24TH OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM:**

*“STRENGTHENING STABILITY AND SECURITY
THROUGH CO-OPERATION ON GOOD GOVERNANCE”*

PRAGUE, 14 -16 SEPTEMBER 2016

Mr. Chairman,

The Holy See welcomes this opportunity to address the participants of the 24th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, and takes this opportunity to congratulate the German Chairmanship on its efforts in organizing this important event.

The agenda of this Forum and its two Preparatory Meetings have sought to create synergies between good governance, a favourable business climate and sustainable economic development. Although the Holy See does not claim a specific competence in these fields, it raises its voice whenever the legitimate interests of humanity and the common good are affected by governmental or economic practices and endeavours. The underlying principle for the Holy See is that the values and principles of humanity, in particular respect for the dignity of every person, subsidiarity and solidarity, should serve as the bedrock for social advancement, even when this would require additional resources and to be at the expense of economic gains.

At present, the OSCE region and the world are facing, inter alia, two specific challenges within the field of the second dimension: social exclusion and environmental degradation. Both have a significant and deplorable impact on economic life and threaten our common home. Natural disasters, at times, add to these challenges or make their resolution more complicated.

As Pope Francis has pointed out in his Encyclical Letter “*Laudato si*” this planet “is falling into serious disrepair.”¹ It is, therefore, paramount that economic advancement makes the sustainable use of natural resources a central consideration. Sadly, this principle seems often to be disregarded, as the Holy Father has clearly deplored: “Degrading the earth, stripping it of its natural forests, contaminating its water, its air, its land – these are sins.”² He also draws attention to the fact that the “worst impacts of climate change will be felt by developing countries, the gravest effects of pollution of air and water and the environmental destruction of plants, forests, soils and rivers will be suffered disproportionately by the poorest people and the poorest communities.”³ This should not bring us to believe, however, that the territory of OSCE’s participating States is immune from these negative effects, or that ignoring these realities is an option.

¹ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si* (24 May 2015), 61.

² *Ibid.*, 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 48.

Many of the OSCE participating States are facing an extraordinary inward migration of people fleeing from wars and persecutions, as well as from poverty and exclusion, and even natural degradation and disasters. The Holy See is grateful to all those who show solidarity towards the needy. It should be clear to everyone that the problems arising out of the refugee and migration crisis will accompany us for a long time and that a renewed sense of co-operation and solidarity is the key to lasting solutions. Both states and civil societies are now called for action. As well as solving the root causes of the crises, the challenge is to integrate the newly arrived into the political and economic environment existing in the receiving states. Every effort should be exercised to find the right balance between the moral responsibility to protect the rights of citizens and to ensure assistance and acceptance of migrants.

Mr. Chairman,

A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human person at every level is a society that has the common good – the good of all people and of the single person – as its primary goal. The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity and equality of all people.⁴ In an economy working for the common good no one should be left behind, no state, no group of society, nor refugees or migrants.

Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity: solidarity between rich and poor, between employers and employees, solidarity among nations and peoples. “International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this.”⁵

Our Delegation would therefore like to encourage the participating States to join efforts in fighting the “globalization of indifference”, which causes so much suffering and hardship in our world today. The present scenario of profound transformation of human work calls even more urgently for a global development of solidarity that is capable of involving every region of the world and, in our context, of OSCE’s participating States. The new realities that are having such a powerful impact on the productive process, such as the globalization of finance, economics, trade and labour, must never violate the dignity and centrality of the human person.⁶ Within the structure of agreed commitments and actions taken by our Organization the Holy See would like to urge OSCE’s participating States to seek new measures for the sustainable use and sound management of natural resources, for a juridical and economic system which is orientated on the common good and the good of the individual, as well as to redouble efforts to put an end to social and economic exclusions.

In closing, the Holy See would like to expressing our support for the incoming Austrian Chairmanship’s desire to continue focussing on these issues under the heading of “Greening the Economy”.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

⁴ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church (2004), 164.

⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992), 1941.

⁶ Compendium, 321.