



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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

**Concluding Meeting of the
20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

Opening Remark

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Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

*Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me warmly welcome all of you to Prague, to the Concluding Meeting of the 20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. It is a privilege to address such a distinguished audience.

The theme of this meeting – *Promoting Security and Stability through Good Governance* - proposed by the Irish OSCE Chairmanship and supported by all 56 participating States, provides, without any doubt, a great opportunity to enhance the continuity and the consistency to our work in the economic and environmental dimension. The Forum process aims at stimulating political dialogue, generating momentum, strengthening partnerships, formulating ideas and recommendations. I am confident that this year, once again, the Forum deliberations will in the end lead to a reinforcement of commitments undertaken by our participating States. I am also convinced that both my Office and the OSCE Field Operations will find enough food-for-thought enabling us to strengthen our engagement on the ground in this priority area which is good governance. There is a lot to do in this field across the OSCE region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are building on solid ground. Throughout the preparatory process, during the preparatory meetings in February and April, high level representatives and experts from the public and private sector, the civil society and academia, as well as from regional and international organizations, formulated already a number of valuable suggestions related to countering money laundering and the financing of terrorism and promoting good governance and combating corruption in support of socio-economic development. The outcomes of the preparatory meetings enabled us to better understand the challenges we are facing, the perspectives of different stakeholders, and the options we have to advance co-operation on this very topical and important issues.

Let me now underline some of the key conclusions and suggestions for the way ahead as they emerged from the preparatory meetings. I will be brief and I also encourage you to consult the *Food for Thought Paper* (EEF.GAL/19/12) prepared by my Office.

Let me also mention that a number of proposals for further consideration by the participating States are also included in the Report on the review of implementation of commitments prepared for this year's Forum – *Strategic approaches to corruption prevention in the OSCE region* – which will be presented and discussed in the following session. Let me take this opportunity and thank the author of this report for her excellent work.

The first meeting in February in Vienna focussed on countering money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It was noted that, given the global nature of the phenomenon, only a proactive and consolidated action of all stakeholders, public and private, both domestically and at the supranational level can be effective.

The OSCE shall continue to build upon its previous engagement in the area of AML/CFT and, *inter alia*, advocate the implementation of international standards such as the FATF Recommendations; provide, in co-operation with partners, technical and methodological support to conduct National Risk Assessments; develop and deliver tailor made capacity building activities, for example to strengthen national financial intelligence units, or to support the development of necessary legislation pertinent to AML/CFT. As a geographically wide political forum, the OSCE has an added value in accentuating the efforts on strengthening regional inter-regional co-operation by facilitating exchanges of best practices and experience.

In Dublin in April, participants in the second preparatory meeting discussed ways and means of advancing good governance principles and combating corruption in support of socio-economic development. From the outset, the importance of effective and full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption was highlighted. There is a need to step up efforts in all areas covered by the convention – prevention, criminalization, international co-operation and asset recovery.

As well, another key conclusion is that effective anti corruption strategies require a holistic and inclusive approach. Multi-stakeholder co-operation at various levels can be instrumental toward achieving good governance and fighting corruption in the OSCE region. In particular, the capacity and the role of civil society organizations should be strengthened. The OSCE, including through its field presences, should continue to provide support in that regard. At the same time, international organizations, including ours, should serve as facilitators at regional, sub-regional and inter-state dialogue to give an impetus to trans-boundary co-operation and exchange of best practices and ideas.

The OSCE could also contribute in strengthening public sector integrity. Model codes of conduct for public officials, helping governments to better regulate public procurement, enhancing institutional capacity, promoting open, transparent, responsive and accountable government, supporting efforts to build effective asset recovery systems, are just some areas for possible future engagement.

In doing all of the above, the OSCE will continue to co-ordinate and develop synergies with partner organizations such as the UNODC, OECD, the Council of Europe, European Union, the World Bank and the IMF. A number of recent events illustrate the value of such a co-

operative approach. To name just a few, let me highlight the *Regional Seminar on Promoting Local Government Reform and Good Governance at Local Level*, held last December in Kyiv in tandem with the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, the *National Risk Assessment workshops* held in Astana, Bishkek and Belgrade together with the World Bank and the *Expert Seminar on Asset Declarations for Public Officials* organized in May in Bishkek, jointly with the OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

More recently, in fact last week, in Vienna, together with the UNODC and the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative of the World Bank and the UNODC, we organized a *Seminar on Identifying, Restraining and Recovering Stolen Assets in the OSCE Region*. While this topic will be discussed in greater detail tomorrow, let me just underline the importance of putting in place effective asset recovery systems for the credibility of national and international anti-corruption and anti-money laundering efforts. We learnt that although progress has been made in recent years, much still remains to be done and for moving forward more swiftly stronger political will is needed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's Forum process has already generated relevant recommendations for the OSCE in the field of good governance. Here in Prague we should consolidate these results and pave the ground for a successful Ministerial Council in Dublin at the end of the year. In that regard I commend and fully support the efforts of the Irish Chairmanship towards building consensus on a possible Ministerial Council Decision on good governance. I also want to voice my highest appreciation for the excellent co-operation with the Chairmanship along this year's Forum process.

Dear Participants,

I would like to end my intervention by highlighting two additional issues.

This year is an anniversary edition – the 20th – of the Forum. To celebrate that, we put together a brochure highlighting the Forum's history, its achievements to date, the thematic areas covered. In my view the Forum remains a useful instrument providing strategic direction for our work in the economic and environmental dimension and a fundamental link between various activity areas and different stakeholders. Increasing its effectiveness has been and should continue to be a constant preoccupation of delegations and of my office.

We have also set up a small exhibition displaying cartoons, drawings and posters from various public campaigns on anti-corruption in the OSCE region organized by various international and civil society organizations. We want to raise awareness on the scourge of corruption and on its pervasive effects and at the same time to recall the commitment enshrined in the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension "...to make the elimination of all forms of corruption a priority . . .".

I hope you will enjoy it and I believe it will give you additional food-for-thought.

I am looking forward to our discussions.

I thank you for your kind attention.