

**Speaking Points EEF**

ENGLISH only

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**for the 2017 Austrian OSCE Chairmanship**

**Concluding Plenary Session-Follow-up to the 24th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

First, allow me to thank the Czech Republic for hosting this meeting here in Prague and the German Chairmanship as well as the OCEEA for its organization.

As the incoming Chairmanship, we would like to express our gratitude to the German Chairmanship for its efforts in strengthening the Economic and Environmental Dimension. We intend to continue and build upon the achievements of our German partners, with the overarching objective of both enhancing and deepening the Second Dimension in order to utilize its full potential with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

Consequently, the main theme of our chairmanship next year will carry the title „Greening the Economy and Building Partnerships for Security“.

On the one hand, the 25th Economic and Environmental Process will offer an opportunity to discuss environmental cooperation with a view to „Greening the Economy. Common challenges linked to the use of natural resources can bring people to work together towards a common goal; thus, we are convinced that environmental cooperation can act as a powerful tool for preventing conflicts and promoting peace between communities and societies. „Building partnerships“, on the other hand, aims to continue and build upon the concept of „Connectivity“ as put forward by the German Chairmanship.

As the title suggests, we would like to put equal emphasis on both economic and environmental security, while taking into account that the two topics, greening the economy and building partnerships, are also interconnected. Furthermore, we are committed to promoting the economic empowerment of women throughout all our economic and environmental activities.

To be more specific, we chose 4 sub-topics which were agreed to by the participating states:

- 1) Reducing environmental risks;
- 2) Resource efficiency & renewable energy fostering energy security;

- 3) Business partnerships and good governance for security;
- 4) Economic participation for strengthening security.

Allow me briefly to outline the main components of these 4 sub-topics. In the context of **reducing environmental risks**, we would like to discuss the potential to increase and deepen the role of the OSCE, our secretariat and our field missions to assist PS in their mitigation efforts.

Capacity building measures should include technological innovation, resource efficiency as well as sound legal and institutional frameworks. Sustainable public procurement, that is to say green and socially responsible purchasing by public authorities, as well as sustainable usage of shared natural resources and ecosystem services are crucial for us all. Moreover, we would like to deal with issues such as climate change and green transport. It is important to note that the effectiveness of these measures depends on strong political ownership and active engagement of all stakeholders including the government agencies as well as business and civil society. Partnerships among private, governmental and non-governmental actors are essential to make the green economy beneficial for all. As we have heard again yesterday, the Aarhus Centers, as well as the ENVSEC initiative, have greatly contributed over the years to environmental good governance and capacity building. Consequently we should all refocus on their achievements and double our efforts to support their indispensable work!

As regards the second sub-topic, **resource efficiency & renewable energy fostering energy security**, we strongly believe that resource efficiency, alternative energy solutions and green technologies have significant economic and environmental benefits, thereby contributing to energy security as a whole. As defined at the 2003 Maastricht Meeting of the Ministerial Council, energy security „requires a predictable, economically sound and environmentally friendly energy supply which can be achieved by means of long-term contracts in appropriate cases“. As national and international legal frameworks are essential for improving the investment climate in this area, we would like to discuss incentive schemes and legal frameworks that increase the share of renewables in the energy mix. Clean (carbon-neutral) and resource-efficient production processes, the shift to clean technologies through technology transfer and innovation as well as challenges of integrating renewables into national and regional energy systems need to be addressed as well. What is more, the emergence of energy regions with different regulatory regimes is widening

the scope for potential energy conflicts, which is why we also intend to reflect on the role of energy connectivity through trading and infrastructure.

With sub-topic No. 3, **business partnerships and good governance for sustainable growth**, we aim, on the one hand, at continuing the German concept of Connectivity in the areas of trade facilitation as well as transport and border management and the digital economy. On the other hand, it is our belief that the second dimension and, in particular, the connectivity concept should be utilized more efficiently to overcome and prevent conflict. In this context, as was mentioned by the Chairmanship, thanks to the Swiss Ministry for Foreign Affairs, we already organized a workshop together with the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies which focused on „Economic Connectivity in Conflict Regions“.

In cooperation with this renowned research institution, we plan to hold another workshop on 16 December, this time dealing with „Connectivity in Central Asia“, as well as a bigger conference on 6 and 7 March with the title „Common Economic Space between Vancouver and Wladiwostok: Trade Facilitation, Connectivity and Integrations“. We hope to follow up on these academic exchanges with an OSCE expert workshop on the same topic later in the second half of 2017, however well before the Ministerial Council in Vienna to create some input for a possible economic document.

As for the good governance part of this sub-topic, there can be no doubt that enhancing corporate governance based on business integrity and responsibility is essential in promoting a sound investment climate and sustainable growth. Here, the private and the public sector must join forces to prevent misconduct, tackle the various forms of corruption and exploitation of the labour force, including in supply chains, as well as to establish and preserve a culture of integrity and trust in doing business.

The last sub-topic, **economic participation for strengthening security**, includes one of the main focuses of the incoming Austrian Chairmanship, the prevention of radicalization. In our opinion, the Second Dimension can play a pivotal role in this regard as unemployment and a lack of economic prospects represent two of the root causes of radicalization.

We all know that education and investment strategies as well as good governance are the main supporting factors for business development and job creation. Therefore, it will be our goal to find ways to support new businesses, including start-ups as well as small and medium-sized enterprises and to promote partnerships for trade.

In addition, it goes without saying that the economic participation of women and youth is crucial.

Overall, we should address how OSCE participating States can support innovative businesses and entrepreneurship to foster job creation and growth, also against the backdrop of old and new barriers created by conflicts which need to be overcome by „Building Partnerships“.

After this brief summary of our planned activities and substantial priorities, I would like to conclude by giving a short overview of the dates and topics of the EEF Process. We plan to hold our First Preparatory Meeting of the 25th Economic and Environmental Forum in Vienna from 23-24 January 2017. It will focus on „Business partnerships, good governance and economic participation“.

Like the German chairmanship, we will most likely add another day on 25 January with a Business Forum, co-organized with the Austrian Trade Chamber and the Ministry of Economics. We hope that high ranking representatives of businesses and their interest groups from many PS will join us, to tell us about their perspectives and expectations to the OSCE to overcome barriers, foster connectivity and create new and lasting business partnerships.

Next, the Republic of Kazakhstan has invited the incoming CiO and PS to hold the Second Preparatory Meeting, which will deal with “Reducing Environmental Risks, increasing resource efficiency, renewable energy”, in Astana in June in order to create synergies with Kazakhstan’s World Expo on „Future Energy“.

Finally, the Concluding Meeting of the EEF will take place in Prague on 13-15 September 2017.

As declared by ambassador Koja, our head of delegation, at the opening session:

- it will be our ambition to reenergize the second dimension,
- to reinvigorate established roles
- and to also create new answers for new pressing challenges.

For this we will need more engagement of PS and also a stronger role for the secretariat and the field missions.

This clearly means also more financial and personnel resources!

After all: it will be for the benefit of our common security.

Thank you very much for your attention.....