



United States Mission to the OSCE

24th Economic and Environmental Forum “Strengthening stability and security through cooperation on good governance”

Closing Statement – Second Preparatory Meeting

As delivered by Darren Perdue, Political Officer
Berlin, Germany
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On behalf of the United States, I would like to thank you, Ambassador Leendertse and the German Chairmanship, Dr. Yigitguden and the OSCE Secretariat, and to everyone involved for their hard work organizing this week’s events. Thank you as well to the German Federal Foreign Office for hosting us. And thank you to our moderators, who did a fantastic job, including Dr. Weidenfeld and Dr. Frey.

It has been quite an eventful week, with both the Connectivity Conference and this Second Preparatory Meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum taking place. The assembling of nearly one thousand people from civil society, academia, think tanks, business representatives, and government officials to discuss how we can use the OSCE and its Second Dimension as a platform for increasing economic connectivity and strengthening stability and security is a milestone event. Congratulations and thank you again to the German Chairmanship and OSCE Secretariat for your commitment to making this week’s events a reality.

The work that is already underway at the OSCE and within participating States – particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus – to increase economic ties among OSCE participating States by removing barriers to cross-border cooperation, supporting trade facilitation, and improving customs cooperation is vital, and has the full support of the United States. We look forward to continuing our engagement, both at the OSCE and in capitals across the region, in identifying how the OSCE can enhance these efforts, ensure that they are inclusive, and contribute to greater security and stability.

As we continue to explore the positive impacts to security and stability of stronger economic ties and greater connectivity, we believe that the European Union provides a highly successful and relevant example. At the heart of the EU is the strengthening of security, stability, and peace through closer connectivity and integration. Looking forward, we would like to see more discussion within the Second Dimension of the powerful model the EU provides.

In addition to discussing the many positive benefits of greater connectivity, we have also addressed some of the issues that can threaten connectivity. As Ambassador Baer

emphasized in the closing session of the Connectivity Conference, connectivity cannot exist in a vacuum. As OSCE participating States, we must ensure that we not only focus on building connected roads and railways, but that we also commit to implementing the rules of the road. The Rule of Law must be respected, including the rules-based international system that we have all committed to uphold and that serves the interests of every participating State. While the United States firmly believes in the power of the OSCE's Second Dimension to increase cooperation, the destructive result of conflict has the opposite effect. Simply stated, opportunities for greater economic connectivity are quickly destroyed when conflict occurs.

Madam Chair, through the insightful contributions of our expert panelists this week, we have been reminded of the myriad challenges in which each of our governments must effectively apply the principles of good governance. Chief among these is the ongoing challenge of fighting corruption. As OSCE participating States, we have all made a number of important commitments to fight corruption. These include the 2012 Dublin Declaration on Strengthening Good Governance and Combating Corruption, Money Laundering, and the Financing of Terrorism; and the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council Decision on Prevention of Corruption. As we look toward the remainder of this year's German Chairmanship, we hope to reaffirm our dedication to anti-corruption and build on previous commitments.

As part of our anti-corruption efforts, the United States strongly supports the Global Enterprise Registration effort. This initiative, which aims to register the companies in the informal economy that employ nearly 2 billion people, is an effective tool in combating corruption. By bringing companies into the formal economy, the Global Enterprise Registration (GER.co) can be an effective tool to reduce corruption, improve worker protections, increase tax revenues for governments, and enhance infrastructure development and the provision of government services. We encourage fellow participating States to participate. Our delegation would be happy to provide more details.

In addition to learning more about the fight against corruption, each of us has gained insight during this Second Preparatory Meeting into what our countries must do to improve our investment climates, facilitate trade, strengthen security in supply chains, and effectively, safely, and humanely manage labor migration. These issues are crucial to security and stability in our region.

Madam Chair, the United States looks forward to continuing our engagement in the Second Dimension and working on these important issues with the German Chairmanship, OSCE Secretariat, fellow participating States, OSCE field missions, civil society, other international organizations, and last but not least, the private sector.

In closing, let me again express our sincere gratitude to the organizers of this week's events for your tremendous work. To the German Chairmanship, you will continue to have our full support and engagement in the Second Dimension.

Thank you, Madam Chair.