



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

15th Economic and Environmental Forum

Prague, 23 May 2007

European Union Closing Statement

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. This year's Economic and Environmental Forum in Vienna and Prague and the two preparatory conferences in Bishkek and Zaragoza gave us an opportunity to reflect upon the links between environment and security, a topic high on the international agenda.

The review session provided us with a good opportunity to discuss some of the commitments of OSCE participating States in the field of the environment. We appreciate the approach adopted by the UNECE and would like to thank them for their valuable report, as well as for their repeated commitment to intensify co-operation with the OSCE.

We thank the Spanish Chairmanship for providing us with a first draft of the Environmental Security Strategy, with a view to it being adopted in Madrid. We were pleased with the first discussions here in Prague. The draft contains many interesting ideas and covers a broad range of environment and security issues, including the effects of climate change. It will now be important to identify in which specific fields the OSCE, as a platform for political dialogue or through concrete activities, can play a positive role, and what synergies can be created by co-operating with other international actors.

The EU is ready to engage constructively in these discussions. We believe that the envisaged strategy should be based on the Maastricht Strategy for the economic and environmental dimension and make best use of the many concrete examples of

successful cooperation in our region, including those of the ENVSEC initiative. We attach great importance to good governance, sustainable development, peaceful cooperation and confidence building between neighbouring countries.

We appreciate the fact that this Forum was attended by a number of experts from OSCE participating States, international institutions and non-governmental organisations. We welcome the participation of the economic and environmental officers of the OSCE field operations. We also welcome the fact that for the first time a fully-fledged session with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation took place.

Let me add a few words concerning next year. Finland has presented its theme for next year's 16th Economic and Environmental Forum on maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area. It contains clear links to the issues discussed in the two previous fora under the Belgian and Spanish Chairmanships. We value the cross-dimensional aspect of the theme as well as the strong focus on environmental issues, and welcome Finland's intention to build on close cooperation with other international institutions. We support the proposed theme and are looking forward to a timely decision on the theme.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the European Union would like to thank the Spanish Chairmanship, the Office of the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and his dedicated staff for the organisation of this conference. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the Czech hosts, whose warm hospitality helped us to work efficiently during the last three days.

The Candidate Countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia, EFTA country Norway, a member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.