



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Welcoming Remarks

by OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

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“Transportation in the OSCE area: Secure transportation networks and transport development to enhance regional economic co-operation and stability”

Mr. Chairman,
Minister Svoboda,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel de Gucht in welcoming all guests and participants to this second part of the 14th OSCE Economic Forum on “*Transportation in the OSCE area: Secure transportation networks and transport development to enhance regional economic co-operation and stability*”.

I would like to thank the Chairmanship for its commitment and efforts in support of the 14th Economic Forum, which is held in an enlarged format, reflecting the importance of transport as a major economic, social and geo-political issue.

Also, I wish to join the Chairman-in-Office in expressing our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Czech Republic and in particular to Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda for hosting this meeting in Prague.

The Economic Forum is the most important event organised by the OSCE in the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

In line with the Sofia Ministerial Council Decision in 2004 on Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Economic Forum, our objective has been to enhance the potential of political dialogue among participating States on a subject of strategic importance for all of us.

Our aim is that the Economic Forum should lead to specific and operational recommendations; some of which could be transformed into potential OSCE Decisions. We also hope to identify concrete projects for which the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities could be instrumental in finding partners and financing.

I am confident that we can achieve these objectives, particularly when I see gathered here today, numerous high level participants from the OSCE participating States; including not only representatives of the Delegations to the OSCE and Ministries of Foreign Affairs but also of Ministries of Transport and of other relevant institutions. The presence of OSCE Partners for Co-operation and representatives of civil society further strengthen this Forum.

As a platform for political dialogue, the OSCE can stimulate political will, promote regional co-operation and help identify concrete projects in close co-operation with other international organizations, which complement the OSCE with technical expertise and know-how.

I am delighted to welcome in Prague high level representatives of other international organizations. I salute in particular Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Mr. Marek Belka; Director General of the International Union of Railways, Mr. Luc Aliadière; and Director of Compliance and Facilitation, World Customs Organization, Mr. Michael Schmitz.

Our friends and partners from the UNECE are again providing a substantial contribution to our work in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. We also very much appreciate participation at high level from the International Labour Organisation; the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked

Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; the Secretariat of the Basel Convention; as well as the European Commission. We look forward to listening to prominent speakers from these organizations over the next days.

The participation of such reputed experts is a sign that the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Dimension is moving in the right direction and that strong partnerships and co-operation are being established with other international organizations in line with the catalytic role assigned to the OSCE by the Maastricht Strategy for the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Bernard Snoy, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and his team, for the outstanding work they have done in the preparation of this Economic Forum.

I wish all participants and guests a pleasant stay and fruitful debates. I strongly encourage you to participate actively in what, I am confident, will be a qualitatively outstanding meeting and to engage our speakers and panellists in an open dialogue.

Thank you for your attention.