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**OSCE 12th Economic Forum
(Prague, 31 May - 4 June 2004)
Opening Session**

**Statement by Mr. Gilbert Dubois,
Head of the OSCE & Council of Europe Unit,
Directorate-General External Relations,
European Commission**

Minister, Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to address the 12th Economic Forum here today. I will be brief.

Let me first express my satisfaction at the positive developments in the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension during the past year.

A year ago, we were in the midst of complex negotiations on the structure of the new Strategy Document which was finally adopted in Maastricht. At the end of the day, we were unanimous in selecting the broad concept of economic and environmental good governance as the centrepiece of the strategy in order to complement the commitments of the 1990 Bonn Document on Economic Co-operation.

The theme of this 12th Forum – “New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Cooperation” - is of fundamental importance for all of us. The facts and figures presented at the Dublin preparatory seminar and elaborated in UNECE’s report are to be discussed tomorrow. They clearly demonstrate that the amount of foreign direct investment to a given country is the ultimate reward for its success in transposing the basic principles of good governance to the local circumstances.

Today, we are taking another step forward in considering how to implement that Strategy. It will require a lot of constructive work and consultation and co-operation with other institutions to agree upon credible programmes, based solidly in the areas in which OSCE can add value, which will, in turn, translate the Strategy into practical and result-oriented activities. We believe that this must be done in close collaboration with the major donors, such as the World Bank, UNDP, EBRD, USAID and the EU, to ensure that the efforts of the international community complement one another in an active and coherent fashion.

We continue to support the endeavours to make the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension a basic tool in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In order to succeed, however, we are bound to narrow down the focus to a limited number of projects which can be implemented by the Economic Coordinator’s

Office, the field presences and, in most cases, in good cooperation with other organisations and institutions with specialized knowledge and experience.

The European Commission is ready to continue its cooperation with the Economic Coordinator, as well as with OSCE field presences. We expect the Strategy and the implementation measures, which we will decide on, to guide the work of the field presences in the Economic and Environmental Dimension, in an effective manner. We are looking for the creation of synergies and the avoidance of duplication. This implies that all organisations, institutions and other parties present here today, including participating States planning to provide voluntary contributions, keep in their minds the goal of avoiding duplication and looking for the OSCE value-added of any planned new measure.

We expect this 12th Forum, the first after the adoption of the new Strategy Document, to give further impetus to the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension by focussing on priority areas for future work.

Thank you for your attention.