

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Water Governance in the OSCE area-increasing security and stability through co-operation

Concluding Meeting

Prague, 13-16 September 2015

Concluding statement

Armenia

Mr. Chairperson,

As we have approached the final stage to the EEF, my delegation would like to offer its vision of the way forward aimed at reflecting our discussions on various aspects of water governance into new commitments. Those commitments should be relevant in terms of evolving challenges and core values of our organization - security and cooperation.

Our discussion clearly identified the global climate change as the main challenge to water governance. This evolving challenge shapes new context and framework and it could be addressed only through joint efforts of security and cooperation.

Global climate change reveals different vulnerabilities and among those is water scarcity. Apparently, under these circumstances there could be a temptation to increase operational values of water resources. We have seen that even in this meeting own vulnerability had been invoked to justify unilateral action in trans-boundary context. However, unilateral action aimed at resolving own possible water scarcity at the expense of other OSCE participating states may pose security threats.

We have agreed at the level of the Heads of States that security in the OSCE area is indivisible and no participating state can become more secure at the expense of others. This principle is more than relevant in trans-boundary water governance since drastic reduction of water supply may eventually constitute a security threat. Our organization is entitled to address security threats in the name and through cooperation.

We agree with the recommendations that were put forward here by our panelists on the imperative to increase trans-boundary cooperation particularly in the time of global climate change.

The absence of bilateral relations should not give license for unilateral actions. Same goes for the lack of trust. If there is no trust then it should be gradually built and trans-boundary water cooperation is not only challenge but opportunity in this regard.

In our view, comparative advantages of the OSCE have been well elaborated in this forum. As in other cases on water governance, the OSCE remains a platform of discussion particularly in situations where other channels of communication and deliberation do not exist.

With this in mind I would like to express my appreciation to all panelists and delegations, particularly those who entered into dialogue with us regardless whether we can agree with their points or not. We firmly believe that the OSCE can take up these discussions and build on them cooperation that can address mutual concerns.

Let me conclude by thanking the Serbian Chairmanship, the Office of the Coordinator of the OSCE economic and environmental activities, incoming German Chairmanship and the Czech Government for very successful and important outcome of the Forum.

Thank you