



EUROPEAN UNION

22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Concluding Meeting

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014 EU Closing Remarks

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Swiss Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities for organising the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, as well as the Czech authorities for hosting this event. It has been our pleasure to take part in the Concluding Meeting of the Forum here in the beautiful city of Prague.

We would like to thank all speakers who put forward concrete proposals during the whole Forum process for further OSCE engagement in the area of disaster risk management complementary to the work of other stakeholders and international fora. We are also grateful for the Food-for-thought paper as prepared by the Chairmanship prior to our final meeting outlining some specific proposals for further consideration. We stand ready to engage actively in discussing these proposals. At this point, let us highlight some of the ideas put forward which we see worth considering.

- Disaster risks, aggravated inter alia by climate change, pose not only threat to security but also offer opportunity for cooperation on disaster risk management across borders and regions which could contribute to building trust and confidence and thus reduce tensions and potential conflicts.
- The OSCE could use the work of its field missions and the wide network of Aarhus centres to further promote awareness raising on disaster risk reduction, the access to information on climate change and disaster risks, facilitate public participation in risk management and related natural resource management and contribute to increased capacities of communities on disaster risk reduction.
- The OSCE in cooperation with other partners within the ENVSEC initiative could continue to play a role in supporting the implementation

of specialised conventions dealing with cross-border issues, such as UNECE conventions on EIA, transboundary waters, access to information etc., as well as in facilitating cross-border preparedness in addressing environmental challenges and thus contributing actively to building trust and confidence among the OSCE pS.

- Concerning the role of the OSCE in post-2015 HFA: The EU and its Member States are actively engaged in negotiations on the new framework; the OSCE should not duplicate efforts at global level but should support them. Potential areas for further OSCE's engagement can be seen in activities towards supporting the implementation of the new framework by generating political will as well as by knowledge and experience sharing and facilitating exchange of experience across the OSCE region; Improving accountability, transparency and governance by awareness raising on DRR through OSCE field missions and Aarhus Centres as well as by building partnerships between different public authorities and relevant stakeholders, including local level actors, civil society and the private sector is another area for OSCE's engagement.
- Importance of mainstreaming of DRM into some OSCE activities within the Second dimension, such as environmental governance, sustainable use of natural resources, security implications of climate change.

Finally, we would like to thank the incoming Serbian Chairmanship for presenting the topic of the Economic and Environmental Forum for the next year. We appreciate the choice of the theme focusing on the topic of water governance in the OSCE area. The pertinence of the topic of water security and its relevance for the OSCE's work given the mandate and the broad membership of the Organisation was highlighted also during the last Security Days event of 8 July. We look forward to continuation of these discussions and hope that the next year's EEF will not only take stock of OSCE's work and achievements in the field of water and security but also identify further areas for its future engagement in responsible transboundary water management, natural and man-made disaster prevention measures etc.

Thank you for your attention.