



EUROPEAN UNION

20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Prague, 12 September 2012

EU Opening Statement

1. The EU and its member states are very pleased to participate in the concluding meeting of the 20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. We welcome “Promoting Security and Stability through Good Governance” as main priority of the Irish Chairmanship for the EED this year. The promotion of the rule of law, good governance, transparency and fight against corruption are the main priorities of the EU in the Second Dimension. The preparatory meetings in Vienna and Dublin, as well as thematic discussions at the EEC and specialized workshops and seminars organized by the OCEEA offered food-for-thought for our discussions in the coming days.
2. The participating States agreed in the OSCE Maastricht Strategy for the EED that good governance at all levels contributes to prosperity, stability and security. The concept of good governance should ensure that Governments will be more transparent, more accountable, effective and efficient and responsive to the present and future needs of their societies. The lack of good governance leads to flourishing of negative phenomena like corruption, money laundering, organized crime and financing of terrorism. They undermine economic development and expose states to greater security risks.
3. Negative aspects of weak governance like money laundering and terrorism financing cannot be addressed by one participating State alone. During the Forum's deliberations it was emphasized that these challenges require an

active involvement of all countries and all relevant stakeholders. We pay attention to international cooperation in the area of AML/CFT and continue to promote ratification of the relevant international legal instruments. Countering terrorist financing is regularly on the agenda of bilateral meetings with key strategic partners. We believe that the targeted discussions on AML/CFT issues in the OSCE context will raise awareness and contribute to intensifying the engagement in effective implementation and use of AML/CFT regimes. Thus the OSCE could continue to play an important role as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue. The discussions during this year's Forum revealed that the implementation of international instruments and standards and their effective utilization are of key importance in order to achieve progress. The OSCE could in this context play a role in capacity building in order to support participating States in their national efforts to comply with international standards and commitments related to AML/CFT.

4. As it was stressed several times during this year's Forum, corruption remains one of the biggest challenges for a number of participating States. Corruption is one of the particularly serious crimes with a cross-border dimension. It is often linked to other forms of serious crime, such as trafficking in drugs and human beings, and can be adequately addressed in particular through international cooperation. We are looking forward to presentation of Mr. Boratynski who will speak about the EU anti-corruption policy in the afternoon session today. During the Forum process we have received an overview of international and national efforts and instruments in the field of combating corruption, such as the UNCAC of the UNODC, the work of the OECD and the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) as well as efforts at the EU level in the fight against corruption. The OSCE is a forum for political dialogue, thus it could play a role while encouraging political support for initiatives promoting good governance and tackling corruption. The OSCE could also facilitate the exchanges of best practices and stimulate further compliance of participating States with international commitments.

5. During the previous EEF discussions the necessity of a comprehensive approach to the topic of good governance was emphasized. The participants stressed a need for a stronger inclusion of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, private and public sector and free media in tackling corruption and promoting good governance. We support strengthening the role of civil society, including free media, through regular dialogue, awareness raising, capacity building and use of best practices to enable them to act as supervisor and partner in dialogue on issues relating to good governance with national governments.
6. We are aware of the multifaceted nature of good governance and maintain an integrated and comprehensive approach to it. As we have seen throughout this year's Forum, good governance impacts considerably on other policy areas and issues on the agenda of the EEC and challenges of mutual concern, such as border management, the management of natural resources, development policies, labour and gender policies, energy sector and regional cooperation. Also cross-dimensional links to issues relevant to the work of other OSCE committees and institutions, such as tackling the trafficking in drugs, human beings and small arms and light weapons have been highlighted. The links to areas such as the promotion of democracy, human rights and rule of law are immediate and therefore crucial in our efforts.
7. We are at the beginning of the final part of the 20th EEF. Our deliberations will be based on contributions and assessment of recommendations made during our previous meetings. Our next step after the concluding part of the EEF will be the preparation for the Ministerial Council in Dublin. We look forward to the interesting discussions in the days ahead and encourage the distinguished speakers to put forward concrete proposals for the OSCE to engage in the area of promoting good governance and transparency.

The acceding country CROATIA^{*}, the candidate countries MONTENEGRO, ICELAND^{**} and SERBIA, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

^{*} Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.