

**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and  
Environmental Activities**

**Vienna, 15 January 2008**

To: All OSCE Delegations  
Partners for Co-operation  
Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

Subject: Introductory Note for the Sixteenth OSCE Economic and  
Environmental Forum / Part I - "Maritime and inland waterways co-  
operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the  
environment", Vienna, 28 - 29 January 2008

Please find attached the Introductory Note for the Sixteenth OSCE Economic and  
Environmental Forum / Part I - "Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE  
area: Increasing security and protecting the environment", Vienna, 28 - 29 January 2008.



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE  
Economic and Environmental Activities**

**15 January 2008**

### **The 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

**“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area:  
Increasing security and protecting the environment”**

**Part 1 / Vienna, 28 - 29 January 2008**

### **INTRODUCTORY NOTE**

The first preparatory Conference for the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum took place on 10-11 September 2007 in Helsinki. On the basis of discussions some preliminary conclusions were drawn at the end of the Conference. It was stressed that the OSCE, within its general mandate of enhancing security and co-operation, early warning, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, can play a key role in mobilizing political will in participating States to address security, economic and environmental issues in relation to maritime and inland waterways co-operation. Taking into consideration the work done by other organizations in this regard, and the existing international and regional frameworks for co-operation, the OSCE could act as a facilitator and catalyst, contributing to strengthening synergies and the advancement of existing efforts. For example, the OSCE could support the ratification and implementation of legal instruments developed by partners such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

It was also highlighted that promotion of regional co-operation is of crucial importance and that the OSCE can stimulate synergies between various regional co-operation mechanisms and could support the promotion and exchange of best practices. Regional initiatives aimed at increasing security and reducing environmental risks such as the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (the Helsinki Commission – HELCOM) and the Black Sea Commission were discussed. The OSCE could, as well, both at headquarters and at field presences level, support capacity building activities in these areas. Such projects would benefit from co-operation with specialized international and regional organizations. The Helsinki Conference also emphasized that the OSCE can promote a multi-stakeholder dialogue, including governments, the business community, civil society and academia.

The first segment of the Forum, on 28-29 January 2008, in Vienna, will build upon the discussions and preliminary conclusions of the Helsinki Conference while identifying suitable recommendations for further follow-up.

Besides the opening and closing sessions, the Forum's agenda has been structured into an introductory session, four working sessions and a concluding discussion, which should highlight the role of the OSCE in follow-up to the Forum. Minister of the Environment of Finland, Mr. Kimmo Tiilikainen will make a keynote speech.

**The Introductory Session** will set the scene by introducing the international frameworks for security and environmental protection, the current status and future prospects in the OSCE region. The IMO, the European Commission and the UNECE will provide their experience and expert views including identification of existing gaps and areas where special attention and enhanced co-operation are required and where the OSCE can play a role.

**Session I** will address security aspects related to maritime co-operation. The Vienna Forum will discuss national, regional and international perspectives taking into consideration the multifaceted challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The debate should focus on how the OSCE could contribute to promoting co-operation in this area. The considerations presented below could serve as a starting point.

The Review of Maritime Transport, by UNCTAD in 2007, stated that international trade carried by ship had increased and totalled 7.4 billion tons in 2006. According to the IMO, shipping serves more than 90 per cent of global trade. National economies rely on the constant and predictable flow of goods. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to strengthen maritime security.

The OECD<sup>1</sup>, in 2003, estimated that over 46 000 vessels, yearly, service nearly 4 000 ports throughout the world. Maritime security faces a number of threats, resulting, among others, from possible attacks on ships or transport infrastructure, causing disruptions in the distribution and supply chain networks. Risks linked to maritime security also include smuggling people and/or weapons as well as using revenue from shipping to fund terrorist activities.

Theft of cargo from ships and ports is estimated at USD 30 - 50 billion per year. Through the increasing amounts of hazardous waste, the global economy has witnessed a flourishing waste-trade, which has raised a number of questions with regard to the security repercussions, both human and environmental, of such transactions.

The security and safety aspects of maritime transport will surely impact on trade, offering new challenges in both sectors. Recognizing the important role that enhancing container security can play in promoting international trade and economic co-operation, the OSCE participating States adopted two Ministerial Council Decisions (MC Decision 9/04 and 6/05).

**Session II** will consider the environmental and economic aspects of maritime co-operation. Maintaining and developing the economic role of seas and oceans while safeguarding a clean and sustainable marine environment represent a challenge to many countries in the OSCE area

At the first Preparatory Conference the importance for closer maritime and inland waterways co-operation, at all levels, between different actors - government agencies, the private sector,

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<sup>1</sup> Security In Maritime Transport: Risk Factors And Economic Impact, OECD Maritime Transport Committee, 2003

international financial institutions and the civil society - was discussed, with a view to develop coherent, integrated approaches to maritime policies.

The Vienna Forum could elaborate on:

- the assessment of obstacles to the implementation and enforcement of current international environmental standards, including monitoring and control systems;
- the development, implementation and enforcement of common security and environmental standards and regulations that could ensure a level playing field and that would not harm the competitiveness of individual companies or countries;
- the promotion of clean technologies and innovations towards a more environmentally sensitive maritime industry.

**Session III** will focus on security, environmental and economic aspects related to inland waterways co-operation and will provide an opportunity for exchanging information and regional experiences.

Transboundary water co-operation requires close co-ordination between river basin countries. In many cases, specific bilateral or multilateral agreements have been signed and Commissions set up for the benefit of a specific region and beyond.

Recognizing the need for co-ordination in addressing economic and environmental challenges related to river management, the International Commission for the Protection of Danube River (ICPDR) linked up with the Danube Navigation Commission and the International Commission for the Protection of the Sava River Basin, in order to initiate a cross-sectoral discussion process. This led to a 'Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environment in the Danube River Basin'. The Joint Statement summarises principles and criteria for environmentally sustainable inland navigation on the Danube and its tributaries, including the maintenance of existing waterways and the development of future waterway infrastructure.

The OSCE may continue to play an important role in facilitating co-operation and the sharing of experiences and principles of inland waterway co-operation, as demonstrated in the projects on the Sava, Dniester and Chu and Talas rivers.

**Session IV** will focus on promoting regional and inter-regional maritime co-operation on environmental threats to security. This session, starting from the discussions of the Helsinki Preparatory Conference, will further explore regional experiences related to maritime co-operation, with a special focus on environmental issues. It will identify ways and means towards promoting partnerships and sharing experiences and best practises through the OSCE.

Various inter-governmental maritime co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms are already in place in the OSCE region and represent good examples of well established instruments. Quite often, the similarities between the seas call for similar methodologies and tools for the protection of the marine environment. In particular, the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and the Black Sea Commission will be invited to share their views and experiences in this respect. Issues related to the Caspian region will be introduced as well, in view of the upcoming second preparatory Conference (Ashgabat, 6-7 March).

Discussions will address experiences with regard to the implementation of conventions and multilateral and bilateral agreements, policy harmonization and maritime transport and its importance for enhanced stability.

**The Concluding Discussion and the Closing Session** will bring together key ideas that will have emerged in the various sessions with the aim of discussing how the OSCE could contribute to strengthening maritime and inland waterways co-operation. Participants are encouraged to present ideas for concrete follow-up activities. The conclusions may be further elaborated in the Economic and Environmental Committee. Final conclusions of the Forum process will be drawn in Prague on 19-21 May 2008, which will be preceded by the second preparatory Conference, scheduled to take place on 6-7 March 2008 in Ashgabat.