



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Promoting security, stability and economic growth in the OSCE area by preventing and combating corruption through innovation, increased transparency and digitalization”

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10-11 September 2020

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám 5, 118 00 Prague
via Zoom as well as physical attendance at the venue

Concluding remarks

Ambassador Vuk Žugić

Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Madame Moderator
Ambassador Funered,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking all distinguished representatives from the participating States, speakers from academia and private sector, distinguished moderators and our international partner organizations, as well as colleagues of the OSCE Field Operations for participating and actively contributing to this Concluding Meeting of the 28th Economic and Environmental Forum.

In particular, I would like to thank the 2020 OSCE Albanian Chairmanship for the excellent co-operation with my Office.

This year's theme proposed by the Albanian Chairmanship has proved to be of great interest to all participants coming from different countries, fields of expertise and backgrounds and, once again, confirms the pertinence and relevance of the approach we have undertaken. We have covered different aspects of good governance, and identified the challenges and strengths to better understand and address the needs of our stakeholders.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize something that has been repeatedly stated during the whole Forum process: the importance of co-operation among different stakeholders that can consistently let us advance in our efforts to promote security and stability in the OSCE area through better governance, increased transparency, innovations and digitalization. I am pleased to have witnessed such a common understanding throughout the whole Forum process.

Let me also point out the crucial role of digital technologies and innovations in improving governance and in combating and preventing corruption. Many speakers have highlighted how digital tools are helping governments to provide services to citizens in a quicker, safer, and more reliable way. We elaborated on the role of digital tools, including open data, in making administrative processes more transparent and safer against manipulation as well as reducing the risks for corruption.

This year's Economic and Environmental Forum cycle provided also an important opportunity for us to dwell deeper in the area of preventing and combatting corruption in the field of natural resources and environmental protection, including the importance of the rule of law, good governance and transparency in ensuring a sustainable use and management of natural resources as a contributor to enhancing welfare, improving public health, preserving biodiversity and promoting green economy in the OSCE region, as prerequisites for the promotion of security, stability and economic growth. At the opposite, we have heard from a number of speakers, about the challenges associated with and the implications of the mismanagement and degradation of natural resources in the economic, environmental or the public health spheres. These include implications for disaster preparedness, for the overall fight against corruption and for achieving sustainable development.

Addressing this topic comes more timely than ever and is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, in particular given that the effective governance of natural resources is key for ensuring the sustainability of results achieved so far under the set SDGs.

Last but not least, I would like to underline the importance of strengthening international co-operation in the fight against corruption, including in the area of management of natural resources as a means towards ensuring security and stability.

We have heard from a number of speakers about the importance of having effective international mechanisms in place aimed at promoting good environmental governance principles and addressing the challenges associated with corrupt practices in the field of natural resource management.

During our discussions, we also touched upon the importance of engaging youth, civil society organizations and the private sector. It is indeed in the interest of all of us to have a well-informed and dynamic youth and a good functioning public sector, able to contribute to reform processes undertaken in legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks. In this regard, our Office stands ready to support activities by participating States aiming at promoting the public-private-partnership and international co-operation.

Dear colleagues,

Our debates have confirmed that integrity and accountability reinforced by innovations and new digital tools are key elements for the successful promotion of good governance and the effective fight against corruption. This has shown the great potential of digitalization to promote security, stability and growth in the OSCE region.

However, our discussions on this topic do not end here. I would like to encourage all participants to reflect on ideas and recommendations stemming from this meeting, while trying to shape follow-up engagements and activities. I would also like to invite participating States to take the discussions and elaborations further, translating the Forum's conclusions and recommendations into political engagements aiming at reinforcing our commitments in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. I am sure that this year Forum process has provided all of us with additional insights in the area of good economic and environmental governance as well as in preparing the discussions that we will have in the upcoming weeks, ahead of the Ministerial Council in Tirana in December this year.

In conclusion, let me ensure that we look forward to work closely together with the incoming 2021 OSCE Swedish Chairpersonship, and, once again, let me thank the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its exceptionally warm hospitality, despite the unprecedented constraints posed by COVID-19 related restrictions during this year, the 2020 OSCE Albanian Chairmanship, our colleagues from Conference Services, the Documentation Center in Prague as well as our ICT team for their invaluable support, and our interpreters for having facilitated our deliberations.

I wish all of you a safe trip back.

Thank you.