

**21<sup>st</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
Prague, 11-13 September 2013  
Welcoming remarks by H.E. Jan Kohout, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the  
Czech Republic**

Mr Chairman,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you in Prague on the occasion of the twenty-first OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. Let me most sincerely welcome Minister Leonid Kožara, Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, the representatives of the 57 participating States of the OSCE, members of the OSCE Secretariat, as well as the representatives of Partners for Co-operation and of international organizations and other participants in this meeting.

At the outset, allow me to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to achieve progress and tangible results in OSCE agenda for the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Kiev. We truly hope that we can together overcome an impasse of last two years and will be able to adopt decisions in all three dimensions. We think that more needs to be done to enhance trust and confidence among OSCE participating States, more needs to be done to fully implement our own commitments and more needs to be done to address the most pressing issues, among others protracted conflicts.

Considering the preparations of the Ministerial Decision in the economic and environmental dimension (EED), the Czech Republic would value the adoption of decision empowering the role of civil society and promoting transparency and good governance. In our opinion the decision should build on previous EED work with some value added. In this regard, we see merit in the Chairmanship's aim to increase security and stability through reinforcing environmental good governance.

As to the EED in general, the Czech Republic promotes a clearer link to security in all programmatic activities of the OSCE in the economic and environmental sphere as well as the role of the economic and environmental dimension as Confidence-Building Measure.

Today we are here to discuss the aspects of possible improvements of environmental footprint in energy-related activities in the OSCE region. This topic is an important one and I wish us all that this year's Forum will be conducive to produce very concrete outcomes, such as conclusions and recommendations helping in participating States' efforts to deal with such complex issues.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, let me express my thanks to the Ukrainian Chairmanship and also wish every success to the Swiss incoming Chair.

I would like to wish you a pleasant and productive stay in wonderful city of Prague.