



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

16th Economic and Environmental Forum Vienna, 29th January 2008

EU Closing Statement

The European Union thanks the Finnish Chairmanship, the Secretary General of the OSCE, the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and the OSCE staff for having organised this interesting Forum.

We have greatly appreciated the presentations by the various speakers highlighting the strategic importance of maritime and inland waterways transport and specifically its impact on the economic development as well as the ecosystems of participating States and Partners for Co-operation. The presentations have illustrated the links between questions of maritime and inland waterways transportation and the OSCE concept of comprehensive security. Environmental security aspects have also been duly addressed.

A great deal of work on maritime and inland waterways transport and transport-related issues has been going on in international bodies and networks. The OSCE can build on these initiatives, inter alia by supporting the endeavours of specialised international organisations in the field of maritime and inland waterways transport, by promoting good governance at all levels, by deepening regional and interregional cooperation, by facilitating awareness raising and the exchange of views and best practices among participating States, including in countries suffering from unresolved conflicts, and by assisting landlocked countries and regions in overcoming their transport problems. Involving all stakeholders, including the private sector and NGOs, is key in these processes.

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We have heard many case studies and learned about best practices and the experiences of participating States, in particular those from Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus. The EU has taken note of numerous proposals made by participating States and partner organisations and welcomes all initiatives and concrete steps which could address the most pressing problems. We are looking forward to the concrete conclusions by the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities on possible future actions by the OSCE.

As we have heard in the last two days, the EU has a number of instruments that are of relevance to the topic of the Forum. These are the Central Asia Strategy, the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy, and the future Maritime Policy. The EU is willing to share its experience in these fields with interested partners, including in the framework of the Economic and Environmental Committee.

The EU attaches special importance to the environmental activities carried out by the OSCE field operations. We are pleased that many OSCE Economic and Environmental Officers from the field operations came to Vienna to take part in the Forum and we would encourage them to be more actively involved in the future. We would be pleased to hear their ideas in the Economic and Environmental Committee on how to follow up on the discussions of the Forum in their specific regions.

We hope that all States will act upon the conclusions that have been drawn during the Forum. We look forward to continuing our discussions in the framework of the Economic and Environmental Committee, during the second preparatory conference in Ashgabat and the second part of the Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague.

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The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

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