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19th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Promotion of common actions and co-operation in the OSCE area in the fields of
development of sustainable energy and transport”

Concluding Meeting, 14 – 16 September 2011, Prague

Opening Session, Wednesday, 14 September 2011

Welcoming remarks

Egidijus Meilūnas

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Minister Schwarzenberg,

Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to welcome you, on behalf of the Lithuanian 2011 OSCE Chairmanship, to the Concluding Meeting of the 19th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. This important event is devoted to one of the main priorities of the Chairmanship, the **development of sustainable energy and transport**.

We have endeavoured to promote effective and pragmatic activities geared towards ensuring long-term progress in the Economic and

Environmental Dimension. We have also supported the efforts to define a complementary role for the **OSCE in the field of energy security**.

In this regard, we have to acknowledge the important groundwork carried out in the past years under previous OSCE Chairmanships. Let me just recall the 2009 Athens Ministerial Decision on Strengthening Dialogue and Co-operation on Energy Security, followed in September 2010, by the Special Expert Meeting on Energy Security in Vilnius, and by the OSCE Secretary General's Report Concerning the Complementary Role of the OSCE in the Field of Energy Security.

Over the next months, we should concentrate our efforts on setting up, under the auspices of the OSCE and within the existing frameworks, a **Task Force on Energy Security**. This **idea** was proposed in the Secretary General's Report. The Task Force would connect political and expert-level experiences and would underpin the OSCE-wide dialogue on this extremely important topic. We see special role of the Task force in providing ideas and concrete proposals for the confidence building; development of early warning mechanisms for energy security; facilitating dialogue; promoting good governance and transparency in the energy sector, as well as sustainable energy solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the main subjects of today's meeting - **sustainable energy** - is closely related to energy security. Long-term energy security largely depends on the sustainable production and consumption of energy. The issues at stake are complex and interlinked. This is why we have to adopt a broad view of energy security.

A thorough analysis is required in order to find the best solutions for diversifying sources, routes and technologies for energy production and distribution, enhancing the protection of critical energy infrastructure, promoting transparency and good governance in this area.

We strongly believe that such interrelated challenges as climate change, effective resource management and energy efficiency can and must be addressed at the same time. This is the way to obtain concrete results and to facilitate the achievement of our long-term goals in the field of energy security.

I am particularly satisfied that all **key elements of sustainable energy development**: energy efficiency, effective national policies, good governance and transparency, regional co-operation will be addressed and discussed during our Forum.

Looking at the other topic of this Forum - **development of sustainable transport** - I would like first of all to point out that transport and transport related issues have been in the focus of past Economic and Environmental Forum meetings. We expect that this Forum will contribute to developing a common vision on how to tackle various transport related challenges. I am glad that during today's meeting special attention will be dedicated to the direct connection and **interdependence between transport and environment**.

The development of sustainable, efficient and environmentally friendly transport can increase the competitiveness of the economies of OSCE participating States. At the same time, sustainable transport can

contribute to alleviating important environmental problems, and to the creation of better of healthier living conditions for our citizens.

The relevance of sustainable energy and transport for our everyday lives has been highlighted, once more, by the level of interest manifested by photographers and the general public for the **photo contest** organized in connection with this Forum. You have a possibility to take a look at the finalists' photographs in the main lobby downstairs.

I also have the pleasure to invite you all to the special side event devoted to the presentation of the **Lithuanian tourism sector**, which will take place today just after the closure of the meeting and before the Chairmanship's Reception.

Dear participants,

It is our big hope that this Forum will generate useful and substantial recommendations, and that at the Vilnius Ministerial Council in December our ministers will be able to adopt a decision to consolidate the OSCE's engagement in the economic and environmental dimension.

So let me finish by wishing you all an interesting and fruitful discussions, which should lead to very practical proposals and innovative ideas.

Thank you.