



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

24TH OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Strengthening stability and security through co-operation on good governance”

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Berlin, 19-20 May 2016

Opening Remarks

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden

Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Chairperson,

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the 2nd Preparatory Meeting of the 24th Economic and Environmental Forum in Berlin. I am delighted to see more than 200 representatives from the 57 participating States and the Partners for Co-operation, from governments, business and international organizations and civil society have joined us here in Berlin to discuss the very important topics of the agenda over the next two days.

Allow me also to express my special thanks to our keynote speakers as well as to the other distinguished panellists and moderators who have accepted our invitation to be part of this meeting.

Let me also welcome our OSCE colleagues working within the Second Dimension who have come from our field operations.

Moreover I would like to congratulate the German OSCE Chairmanship for the very successful business conference which gathered different actors across the OSCE area under the umbrella of “connectivity for commerce and investment”. It shows the great interest that participating States attach to a good business climate for the promotion of economic co-operation and good governance.

We, in the OCEEA, place high importance to the priority of “Connectivity” given by the German Chairmanship with its links to economic development and governance, including migration governance. We are delighted to contribute and offer our experience and expertise in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Economic and Environmental Forum is the main meeting within the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE. Its objectives are to raise awareness and to stimulate

the political will of the 57 OSCE participating States in dealing with economic, environmental and security related challenges, to share best practices, as well as to provide the dialogue with representatives of International Organizations, the business and academic communities and the civil society.

In this respect, this 2nd Preparatory Meeting is an important gathering since it will address economic security issues that require mutually beneficial solutions for the OSCE, while, at the same time, managing interdependency between participating States.

The topics of the next two days sessions are of high significance.

A positive investment climate and economic development are impossible to achieve without **good governance**. Lack of an independent regulatory and institutional framework and competent public administration lead to economic loss and inefficiency, abuse of available resources and potentially to political instability and civil unrest. Procedural impediments and bureaucracy at border crossings and in **trade and customs** process all too often hamper international trade and foreign investment, creating high costs for trade transactions and delays in the cross-border movement of goods. Governments need to further enhance their efforts to make sure regulations and requirements are as accessible, transparent and accountable as possible thereby eliminating loopholes for corruption and the use of discretionary powers by officials. These are some of the key conditions that need to be in place in order for countries to create an attractive business and investment climate and ultimately enhance the economic development of our region. This will be the focus of Session II.

Session three will look at **corruption** as one of the current greatest threats to security and stability in our region. Indeed, corruption undermines democracy, erodes the confidence of citizens in governmental institutions and impedes social and economic development. The OSCE has rightfully placed preventing and combating corruption, together with money laundering and the financing of terrorism, as a key priority of its work. Impartial and efficient judicial and regulatory systems that minimize opportunities for giving and taking bribes, offer effective mechanisms for reporting corruption, and prosecute offenders from both the public and private sectors create the conditions for an attractive business and investment climate. Transparent and predictable procedures in such areas as setting up a business, acquiring licenses, and bidding for procurement contracts, encourage investment and competition which lead to economic growth, greater employment opportunities and more efficient spending of resources. Public private partnerships are needed for banks and other financial services to report suspicious activities pertaining to money laundering and terrorist financing, and for companies to implement business integrity systems.

Dear Colleagues,

Tomorrow we will address “**Good governance in logistics and supply chains and in Labour Migration**”.

Mobility of goods, talents and skills are integral aspects of the overall concept of “connectivity of this Forum.

Indeed, today’s globalized economy is characterized by complex supply chains of goods and services, with both materials and labour sourced from all around the world. It is important to keep in mind that supply chains being “the sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of commodities” are not just abstract processes but require robust production,

transport and logistics infrastructure; streamlined trade, transit and business procedures; as well as a well-trained protected and efficient labour force. These three components are the main topics for discussion of what promises to become a very interesting and rich thematic discussion before devoting attention to **good migration governance**.

Examining the contribution of migrant workers to economic development, stability and security through circular and return migration will be the focus of Session V and VI. Indeed, building fair societies, grounded on decent work, transparency, equal access to opportunities should represent our vision when thinking of the future of inter-connected economies.

In a world where one out of seven persons is a migrant, we should work together in order to make migration a key factor for economic development and growth for countries of origin, destination, the private sector and the migrants themselves. There is a strong need to address dysfunctional labour migration policies that do not allow the most suitable allocation of human resources and skills where they are needed. The smooth and safe circulation of goods, services and financial assets should be matched with the safe circulation of individuals, talents and skills.

Dear Colleagues,

I believe that there is a constant need to further enhance co-operation among participating States and other international actors active in the area of good economic governance.

In this respect, I would like to underline our willingness to better assist the participating States in addressing the multiple challenges we are facing in the OSCE area, and that we will discuss in the coming days.

Henry Ford said that ‘Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success’.

Connectivity in a long-term perspective can only be achieved together. We are very much looking forward to the next two days to continue our positive exchanges.

We will continue our close collaboration with you and our partners.

Dear Chairperson, Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by wishing you a very productive meeting and in thanking the German Chairmanship for its warm and wonderful hospitality.

Thank you for your attention.