



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **21<sup>st</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum 1<sup>st</sup> Preparatory Meeting**

**Vienna, 4 – 5 February 2013**

### **EU Closing Statement**

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The European Union would like to thank the Ukrainian Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator for organizing the first Preparatory Meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum and the distinguished speakers for their presentations.

We have listened to a number of interesting presentations and thank especially those speakers who suggested areas of possible concrete engagement by the OSCE. We were particularly pleased that the discussions were open to representatives of civil society and academia and we valued very much their contributions to our discussions.

The EU shares the view outlined in the background paper for this meeting that good governance is key for developing appropriate natural resource management policies. We welcome the focus that was given to good governance issues during this meeting and took note of the many contributions that highlighted the importance of this issue.

We share the view pointed out by several speakers that a vital component of good governance is strengthening public participation in decision-making processes. This is crucial to enhance transparency in our policy making. The Aarhus Convention is an important international commitment in this regard and one that we particularly welcome OSCE

engagement in support of. We welcome continued partnership between the OSCE field operations and local Aarhus centres in support of this goal. Aarhus centres provide - together with other initiatives which also presented their efforts in this area - an important platform for multi-stakeholder dialog between civil society, the private sector and governments and thereby play an important role in awareness raising, capacity building and facilitating political dialogue and thus confidence building.

We have also heard how important good governance is in the area of extraction of natural resources for sustainable development, peace and security. We value multi-stakeholder initiatives of governments, civil society and private companies such as EITI with the aim to strengthen governance by improving transparency. They are critical tools in the fight against corruption.

We would welcome proposals for further engagement by the OSCE in the area of good governance and transparency. We believe that the OSCE has developed expertise and can add value in this area. The Ministerial Declaration on good governance adopted last year in Dublin offers a good foundation when considering future endeavours by the OSCE in the field of environment and energy security. We are looking forward to further discussions on the importance of good governance in the natural resource sector in subsequent Forum meetings this year and also as we consider what issues might be tabled at the Ministerial Council in Kyiv.

A final issue that we attach particular importance to is the topic of environment and security. We have heard some very interesting presentations concerning climate change and its influence on the stability

and security. Increased competition over resources may lead to instability, especially in already fragile regions and may cause conflicts. We agree that the OSCE as a security organisation has a role to play in this regard and would welcome further deliberations in this context.

Finally, we would like to thank the Ukrainian Chairmanship and the OSCE CoEEA and his staff for preparing this first meeting.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Andorra, align themselves with this statement.