



EUROPEAN UNION

25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Concluding Meeting Prague, 6-8 September 2017

EU Opening Statement

The European Union and its Member States wish to thank the Czech Republic for hosting the 25th anniversary meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum. We also thank the Austrian Chairmanship and the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Žugić, and his team for organising this meeting, as well as the keynote speakers for their presentations.

This year we have already discussed various aspects of "Greening the Economy and Building Partnerships for Security in the OSCE Region" at several occasions. Both topics are highly important for the EU and reflect the potential of the OSCE to contribute to security and stability in our region through activities in the 2nd dimension. We appreciate the balanced focus the Austrian chairmanship has accorded to economic and environmental aspects of security.

In this context we reiterate our commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to the Paris agreement on climate change. Both are about social, economic and environmental development, and thus also very much about security as reflected in the OSCE comprehensive approach to security.

We thank the chairmanship for the food for thought papers on possible Ministerial Council Decisions. We support the intention to work on two Decisions on "promoting economic participation" and on "greening our economies and fostering environmental cooperation". Both areas bear potential for enhanced common efforts within the OSCE area. Being a regional security organisation and a forum for political dialogue, we regard the OSCE as well-placed to facilitate the

exchange of best practices and to stimulate further compliance of participating States with international commitments in these fields.

We have read with great interest the study by UNECE on "reaping the security benefits of greening the OSCE economies" and thank Ol'ga Algayerová, Executive Secretary of UNECE, for outlining its main findings.

We appreciate that throughout the 25th Economic and Environmental Forum and in related meetings we have had the opportunity to engage with a large variety of relevant stakeholders including from the business community, civil society, OSCE field operations, Aarhus Centres, and other international organisations. Such interaction is crucial in order to ensure that our work stays relevant.

We look forward to fruitful discussions in the coming days. Let me assure you that the EU and its Member States are ready to constructively engage in discussions and negotiations here in Prague and in our work leading up to the Ministerial Council in Vienna.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.