



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NORTH MACEDONIA
TO OSCE, UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION IN VIENNA

CIO.GAL/62/23
5 September 2023
OSCE+
ENGLISH only



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Vienna, 04 September 2023

Dear Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

Following the invitation letter CIO.GAL/58/23 circulated on 3 August 2023, please find enclosed the draft agenda for the “2023 Prague Forum on the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE” and a concept note.

I would like to remind the colleagues that the deadline to register for the Conference is the 6 September.

Yours sincerely,

Ambassador Igor Djundev
Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council

To:

- **Heads of Delegations of the OSCE participating States**
- **Heads of Delegations of the OSCE Partners for Cooperation**
- **OSCE Secretariat**
- **Heads of OSCE Institutions and Field Operations**



2023 Prague Forum on the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE

“Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through achieving sustainable development, and resilient and inclusive economic growth”

Prague, Czech Republic, 14-15 September 2023

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám. 5, 118 00 Prague

DRAFT AGENDA

Thursday, 14 September 2023

09:00 – 10:30 Opening Session

Statements by delegations

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee/Tea break

11:00 – 11:10 Report of the OSCE High-Level Conference on Climate Change

11:10 – 12:30 Session I: Intensifying co-operation to combat climate change for sustainable and climate-resilient development

Selected Topics:

- Regional responses to tackling climate-related challenges
- Early warning and strategic foresight to foster preventive and risk-informed policy-making in a changing climate
- Fostering holistic climate action: Mainstreaming climate change into policies strategies, and institutional frameworks
- Regional co-operation for preparedness and response to climate-related hazards

Discussion

12:30 – 13:30

Buffet Lunch

13:30 – 14:30

Side Event “Strengthening good governance and climate resilience in Mongolia” – organized by the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the OSCE and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

14:30 – 16:00

Session II: The role of new technologies in enhancing economic resilience, promoting good governance and preventing corruption in the OSCE area

Selected Topics:

- Digitalization in the era of increasing public spending: risks and opportunities new technologies can offer to prevent and mitigate corruption in public sector
- The use of open data and the role of non- governmental actors in preventing corruption: best practices from across the OSCE region
- Open Data for good governance: examples of transparent and efficient data driven decision making across the OSCE area
- Good Governance: identifying best practices for promoting transparency, accountability, and participation in public institutions
- Role of new technologies, blockchain and virtual assets in increasing transparency and accountability

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30

Coffee/Tea break

16:30 – 18:00

Session III: The role of supply chains as well as trade and transport facilitation for sustainable development and food security

Selected Topics:

- How to make cross-border trade more sustainable considering the critical role of ports and rivers
- The role of alternative transport routes to foster supply chain resilience and food security
- Connectivity initiatives along the Middle Corridor to foster inter-and intraregional economic co-operation and security

Discussion

18:30 Reception hosted by the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship of North Macedonia

Friday, 15 September 2023

09:00 – 10:00 Side Event “Smart and sustainable cities: strengthening co-operation” – organized by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities jointly with the city of Prague, the city of Basel and Drees & Sommer

10:00 – 11:30 Session IV: The importance of addressing the disaster risk management cycle in preventing and mitigating potential damage from natural or human-made disasters, to promote co-operation and joint action

Selected Topics:

- Consequences of the Kakhovka dam and HPP destruction
- Promoting the establishment of early warning mechanisms and fostering joint responses to disaster, as part of the OSCE’s efforts to diminish tensions
- Strengthening disaster response and ‘building back better’ in the remaining years of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda

Discussion

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee/Tea break

12:00 – 13:00 Concluding Session

- Wrap-up Discussion

Closing statements by delegations

Concluding remarks



2023 PRAGUE FORUM ON THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF THE OSCE

“Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through achieving sustainable development, and resilient and inclusive economic growth”

Prague, Czech Republic, 14-15 September 2023

Concept Note

Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide background information and suggest the parameters for discussion in the framework of the 2023 Prague Forum on the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE, which will take place in Prague, Czech Republic, on 14-15 September 2023. The deliberations of the Forum will focus on the following theme: *“Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through achieving sustainable development, and resilient and inclusive economic growth”*.

Under this overarching theme, the Forum will continue and complement the deliberations held in Struga, in the framework of the 2023 Struga Conference on the Economic & Environmental Dimension of the OSCE on the chosen topics such as a) co-operation to address challenges caused by climate change; b) good governance and anti-corruption; c) trade and transport facilitation for sustainable development and food security; d) disaster risk management. All of them constitute priorities of the Chairpersonship in the Organization’s second basket and are central to the mandate of the OSCE in the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

The Forum takes place amidst Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, which has triggered the worst security crisis on European soil since the end of the Cold War. Besides the unspeakable humanitarian catastrophe, the war is causing devastating damage to the critical infrastructures, economy and environment of Ukraine and threatening security and stability to the entire OSCE region.

In parallel, natural disasters such as devastating earthquakes, massive floods and forest fires serve as a distressing reminder of the broader range of challenges that countries across the region must encounter, further emphasizing the need for cohesive disaster risk management and cooperative strategies to mitigate their impact.

The event will bring together, upon invitation from the CiO, delegates from governmental and state institutions, the private sector, academia, civil society, and international organizations. The primary objective is to animate an interesting, interactive and focused discussion, exchange of national experiences and lessons learned as well as peer review of the

implementation of the OSCE commitments, which could result in concrete and feasible recommendations for the OSCE and its participating States.

OSCE participating States are strongly encouraged to use this event as an opportunity to continue the longstanding political dialogue on economic and environmental issues linked to security that has traditionally taken place within the framework of the Economic and Environmental Forum cycle.

Framing the discussion

Against this backdrop, it is imperative for the OSCE participating States to address the far-reaching consequences of the current situation by putting in place measures and economic plans that promote sustainable development as well as resilient and inclusive economic growth. The Forum will provide an opportunity to look into how the OSCE can support these efforts in the following key policy areas:

- ***Intensifying co-operation to combat climate change for sustainable and climate-resilient development***

Climate change is accelerating fast with its impacts increasingly being felt in all economic, environmental and social spheres. The 2021 Stockholm OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on climate change emphasizes that the effects of climate change can exacerbate economic challenges and environmental degradation, which may negatively affect prosperity, stability and security in the OSCE area and it encourages the OSCE participating States to intensify their dialogue and co-operation towards climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation. Given the OSCE's regional approach to addressing climate-related challenges, the discussion will provide examples of regional responses to climate change in the OSCE area and explore new entry points. It will also enable exchanges on the importance of climate-related data and analysis, early warning and strategic foresight to ensure preventive and risk-informed policy making. Furthermore, the session will provide an opportunity for the participants to share experiences on mainstreaming climate change into national policies and strategies and to discuss how to enhance regional co-operation in preparing for and responding to climate-related hazards.

- ***The role of new technologies in enhancing economic resilience, promoting good governance and preventing corruption in the OSCE area***

The session on "The Role of New Technologies in Enhancing Economic Resilience, Promoting Good Governance, and Preventing Corruption in the OSCE Area" will present a critical opportunity to explore the dynamic interplay between technology and governance. As the OSCE region faces the challenges of a rapidly evolving digital landscape and increasing public spending, the first topic on digitalization's impact on corruption prevention is paramount. New technologies, while posing inherent risks, also offer unprecedented opportunities to fortify public sector integrity. By streamlining processes, enhancing transparency, and automating oversight mechanisms, these tools can act as first line protection mechanisms against corruption, ensuring that public funds are channeled towards their intended purposes.

In the pursuit of a corruption-resistant environment, the second topic will shed the light on the transformative potential of open data and the pivotal role played by non-governmental actors. Civil society organizations, journalists, and the private sector, armed with accessible and

comprehensive data, emerge as formidable line of defence against corruption. Best practices from diverse corners of the OSCE region serve as examples for inspiration, illustrating how collaborative efforts can yield tangible results in combating corruption. By harnessing open data's potential, more oversight opportunities are created, empowering both citizens and institutions to hold power to account and safeguard the principles of good governance.

The session will also cast a spotlight on exemplary cases of data-driven decision-making across the OSCE area. Transparent and efficient governance hinges on the accessibility of reliable information and the ability to translate it into well-informed policies. In this light, the third topic highlights successful cases where open data serves as a cornerstone of progressive governance, fostering an environment where informed choices lay grounds for effective public administration.

Finally, the discussion will turn into the realm of emerging technologies like blockchain and virtual assets, underscoring the importance of proper regulation of the latter. The participants will look at the new ideas, experiences, and best practices with the aim to share opinions on of how new technologies can become catalysts for a resilient, corruption-free, and accountable OSCE community.

- ***The role of supply chains as well as trade and transport facilitation for sustainable development and food security***

At the 2016 Hamburg Ministerial Council, the OSCE participating States acknowledged that connectivity through transport and trade facilitation could enhance economic cooperation that is mutually beneficial and contribute to good-neighbourly relations, confidence building, and trust. However, conflicts and global crises such as the Covid-19 Pandemic have had far-reaching impacts on supply chains, transport routes and cross-border trade.

As a case in point, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has caused massive impacts on supply chains, transport routes and cross-border trade. The blockade of Ukraine's food export by sea and destruction of port infrastructure directly threatens global food security, putting under severe risk countries dependent on agricultural imports as well as affecting world grain prices. Consequently, participating States and private companies sought to diversify supply chains and thus making them more resilient. A discussion point could be the economic and humanitarian consequences of such a blockade and how alternative transport routes via land or rivers can, at least temporarily, alleviate the situation to allow shipments to reach their destinations.

Furthermore, the rapidly increasing trade volumes along the Middle Corridor provide an economic opportunity to better connect the regions along this route and to integrate these regions within themselves in a sustainable and inclusive manner. The connectivity initiatives along these transport routes from Central Asia to Europe could potentially make them more efficient, transparent and economically viable. This session could discuss the road ahead what needs to be done to achieve these goals.

- ***The importance of addressing the disaster risk management cycle in preventing and mitigating potential damage from natural or human-made disasters, to promote co-operation and joint action***

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development continues to be treated with high priority by states; however, disasters threaten to minimize or even cancel any progress gained towards this overarching goal. According to

the 2023 Global Risks Report of the World Economic Forum^[1], natural disasters and extreme weather events are ranked as the second most severe global risks over the next two years period, while on the longer term, over the next ten years period they occupy the third place after climate action failure.

Based on the OSCE commitments in the area of disaster risk reduction, particularly those reflected in the 2014 Basel MC decision, the session will offer an opportunity to exchange views on damage assessment, the development of remediation measures, reflecting short- and long-term environment and security considerations. Furthermore, it will facilitate discussion around the topic of establishing of early warning mechanisms and fostering joint responses to disaster, as part of the OSCE's efforts to diminish tensions, contribute to conflict prevention, build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations, among others. The meeting will also serve as an opportunity to discuss potential avenues for "facilitation of cross-border co-operation in case of natural disasters or serious accidents in border zones" (2005 Ljubljana MC Decision) as well as to understand and discuss the immediate and long-term environmental, humanitarian and economic consequences of the destruction of the Kakhovka HPS dam. As the latter vividly demonstrates, man-made disasters resulting from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine constitute another significant threat to the common security and stability in the OSCE area.

^[1] [WEF Global Risks Report 2023.pdf \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-2023)