



EEF.DEL/59/17
8 September 2017

ENGLISH only

Concluding Meeting of the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
“Greening the Economy and Building Partnerships
for Security in the OSCE Region”
Prague, 6-8 September 2016
Opening Session

Statement by Switzerland

Minister Schelling,
Excellences,
Dear colleagues and OSCE friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Switzerland wishes to thank the Czech Republic for hosting the concluding meeting of the Economic and Environment Forum once again here in the beautiful city of Prague and the Austrian chairmanship, as well as Ambassador Vuk Žugić and his entire team from the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, for organizing this important meeting. We also would like to thank Ambassador Algayerová, Ambassador Chatardová, as well as Professor Sachs for their excellent and informative.

Switzerland pays close attention to the developments in the OSCE's Economic and Environmental dimension, the potential of which remains untapped. We are convinced that a stronger second dimension will strengthen our commitment to the OSCE in general.

The two first preparatory meetings in Vienna in January and in Astana in June have yielded positive results in our view. The latter especially was innovative and raised specific challenges related to environmental and security policies. The Kazakh Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee has been instrumental in keeping during that meeting and all along the year so far an intense work program that reinvigorates the second dimension. We also positively assess the discussions during the academic conference organized by the Austrian chairmanship as well as the ambassadorial retreat in Linz, the first of that kind for the second dimension.

In this context, our concluding meeting should be the place where we engage in dialogue, compare notes, and, most importantly, reach concrete conclusions with regard to where we can find common ground and how we want to strengthen the OSCE in the second dimension. As a security organization with its convening power

as a strong asset as well as a extensive field presence, the OSCE has particular added value with regard to addressing the security implications of economic and environmental issues, as well as enhancing interstate cooperation in this regard.

We therefore look forward to the sessions on promoting connectivity, in the follow up of the Ministerial Decision 4/16 adopted in Hamburg. The OSCE should be used more intensively as a forum to conduct dialogue on regional economic cooperation and the development of transport. Reinforcing such a dialogue and focusing on the harmonization of policies can contribute to confidence and security. In conflict contexts, nurturing or re-establishing economic and environmental cooperation can be essential to re-build confidence. Connectivity's aim is to bring closer what may be diverging views or even interests and to identify and focus on achievable common objectives and goals.

Mr. Chair,

Switzerland appreciates that the Chairmanship has put a focus on Sustainable Development Goals during the opening session and that those will continue to be discussed during subsequent sessions. Switzerland has been very committed to contribute to the elaboration of this global agenda. We estimate that the OSCE already contributes to many of these goals. Therefore, we support a stronger OSCE role in supporting the implementation.

We also appreciate the emphasis that has been put on disaster risk reduction. Natural disasters are security threats that can be effectively addressed by greater cooperation among participating States. The OSCE already has commitments in this field, and it features strong tools, such as its Aarhus centers. Its role should be further strengthened.

At a time when we are witnessing a rise in violent extremism and terrorism the link between economic participation and radicalization also merits further attention and discussion. We are convinced that only politically and socially inclusive societies can be peaceful. We are looking forward to the discussions in this regard.

To conclude Mr. Chair, Switzerland will play an active part and will stay engaged for consensus in the deliberations during the coming days, including during the breakout session later this afternoon, with the participation of Ambassador Livia Leu, Delegate of the Swiss Government for Trade agreements. We will stay engaged during the remaining months leading to the Ministerial Council. We will be sharing our views during the session later today entitled "On the Way to Vienna".

Thank you Mr. Chair.