



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE O.S.C.E.

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
Chairperson of the Economic and
Environmental Committee

**15th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
25-26 February 2016**

**Presentation of
Ambassador Andreas Papadakis,
Permanent Representative of Greece,
Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee of the OSCE**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Members of Parliaments,
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honor to address the Members of the General Committee on the occasion of the 15th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Allow me to thank the German Chairmanship for entrusting me with the responsibility to chair the Economic and Environmental Committee for this year. Furthermore, I wish to thank the previous Serbian Chairmanship for our excellent co-operation in 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After extensive consultations with the German Chairmanship, the Delegations of the Participating States and the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, I would like to present to you the general outline of the work of the Economic and Environmental Committee for this year.

Our main guidelines for the work of the Committee in 2016 are in principle the German Chairmanship's priorities in the Second Dimension, namely good governance, business conditions as well as economic connectivity. The program of work is structured in a way that it reflects these priorities and makes the connection to other important meetings and events organized by the Chairmanship in an integrated manner. The Chairmanship's aspiration to include in our deliberations the private sector and adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to the debate is, in my view, very important and we are committed to serve this goal.

Without going into details, let me inform you that in 2016 we will continue the fruitful practice of inviting representatives of the OSCE field operations to learn about their work in the Second Dimension, including the Head of Missions who will visit Vienna on the occasion of their report to the Permanent Council. Another important goal of our work this year will be to involve in our discussions different stakeholders, including the business sector, for enabling a more substantial dialogue between governments and the private sector on economic and environmental issues.

Based on the priorities of the OSCE German Chairmanship we plan to organize, with the support of the Office of the Coordinator for Economics and Environmental Activities, seven thematic meetings. Allow me to briefly present them:

On Transport and Customs Administration

In line with the OSCE German Chairmanship's priority to strengthen economic connectivity, we organized yesterday a thematic meeting on Transport and Customs Administration in order to give a comprehensive overview of the potential of Euro-Asian inland transport links and the role of the OSCE in overcoming existing obstacles in these important areas. In my view, the results of the discussions we had yesterday are extremely positive and will definitely contribute to our future work.

On Migration

In March, the Committee will hold a thematic meeting that will focus on promoting efficient labour migration policies. We will also further explore the potential for enhanced engagement with relevant academic institutions and international partners such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) etc.

On Trade Facilitation and Economic Co-operation

In April, the Committee meeting will be dedicated to Trade Facilitation and Economic Co-operation with the aim to explore the ways to strengthen dialogue and the exchange of best practices in the field of trade facilitation and explore regional initiatives aiming at fostering economic co-operation through trade facilitation.

On Business Climate

In accordance with the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, our Committee meeting in June will explore the framework conditions for improvement of business climate through intensification of trade and investment and development of a business-friendly environment as a pre-requisite for ensuring sustainable development in the OSCE area and beyond.

On Energy

After the summer recess we will address the important topic of energy, in particular sustainable energy. While issues related to energy can be a source of tension, they also offer many opportunities for fruitful co-operation. This meeting will review the most recent activities and explore further steps to be taken towards enhancing energy co-operation and energy security in the OSCE area.

On Water governance and Disaster Risk Reduction

In November the Committee will provide an opportunity to overview the OSCE's current and future activities in the area of water governance and disaster risk reduction. This meeting will also emphasize the continuity of our work with the priorities of the Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships.

On Climate Change

Finally, our last thematic meeting in December will focus on climate change. This meeting will aim at taking stock of the impacts of climate change in the OSCE area particularly from the security perspective. It will also give an opportunity to outline the OSCE activities related to this topic and explore opportunities for future work and partnerships including in light of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Dear participants,

The topics just outlined set out the areas where we have an opportunity to co-operate further to increase the relevance of the Economic and Environmental Dimension in order to achieve the overriding objective of "Renewing dialogue, Rebuilding trust, Restoring security".

A number of topics on our agenda are of cross-cutting nature and we need to discuss them through a cross-dimensional and all-inclusive approach. In this regard, as we did during 2015, the Economic and Environmental Committee is open to the practice of holding joint meetings with the other Committees on issues of common interest, in consultation of course with the Chairmanship. One such meeting is already scheduled in cooperation with the Security Committee on countering the financing of terrorism.

On another issue, the main topic of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum, to be held in September in Prague, will be "Strengthening Stability and Security through Cooperation on Good Governance". On our way to Prague's Forum, two Preparatory Meetings will set the tone for successful deliberations of this years' Forum. The First Preparatory Meeting was already held here in Vienna on 25-26 January and the Second will take place in Berlin in mid May. Back-to-back with the Second Preparatory meeting, the German Chairmanship will organize in Berlin a Business Conference on Connectivity that will bring together business representatives from across the OSCE area. I am pleased to note that the Economic and Environmental Forum process will allow us to address three important areas of good governance, namely, good governance as a basis for business interaction, effective fight against corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, as well as good migration and environmental governance to support stable economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We recognize that women's participation in the economic sphere contributes significantly towards economic recovery and that implementation of existing commitments on eliminating discrimination against women and promoting equal opportunities for them in the economic and environmental sphere is essential to the security and stability of the OSCE region. Having that in mind, the Economic and Environmental Committee intends to incorporate and integrate the gender perspective in the ongoing activities and programs.

I am confident that in 2016 we can accomplish in the framework of the Economic and Environmental Dimension, with the help of all p-S and all OSCE structures, further progress on many related issues. I trust that the topics just outlined set out the areas where we could and should cooperate to make best use of all potentials and to strengthen the work of the Second Dimension. Further utilization of the Economic and Environmental Dimension could substantially contribute to the overall security in the OSCE area.

Thank you for your attention and I am looking forward to your comments.