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The Secretariat**

**Co-ordinator of OSCE  
Economic and Environmental Activities**

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**General Committee on Economic Affairs, Sciences,  
Technology and the Environment  
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**Statement**

by

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Chairperson,  
Distinguished Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to participate today in the 15<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and address the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.

Before presenting to you the activities that my Office has planned for 2016, I would like to dedicate a few minutes to the 24<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

As you might already know, this year the Forum process focuses on “Strengthening stability and security through co-operation on good governance”. My Office, in close co-operation with the German Chairmanship, organised on 25-26 January the First Preparatory Meeting. During two days participants discussed the benefits of good environmental governance and how it can support sustainable development, foster a favourable business and investment climate, and contribute to prosperity, stability and security. Participants also looked into the benefits of resource efficiency and green technologies. The meeting was attended by senior representatives of partner organizations, national international experts, members of the civil society and academia, as well as the private sector. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parliamentary Assembly for the interest in the EEF process and in particular Ms. Nilza de Sena, Vice-Chair of this Committee for her valuable contribution to the discussions we had.

Now our efforts are concentrated on the preparations of the Second Preparatory Meeting that will take place in Berlin on 19-20 May and that will be devoted to such important topics as “Good governance as a basis for business interaction and good investment climate” and “Good migration governance to support stable economic development”.

As per established practice, the Concluding Meeting of the EEF will be held in Prague, from 14 to 16 September 2016.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me now briefly outline the thematic priorities for my Office for the year 2016, by starting with some planned **economic activities**.

Corruption remains among key factors that impinge on and distort good governance, management of public funds and competitive markets. If un-suppressed, it undermines economies, social protection, the trust of citizens in democratic institutions and processes. Combating this evil requires, first of all, detection and elimination of the causes and conditions of corruption through the development and implementation of a system of corruption prevention measures.

With this in mind, my Office will continue to provide assistance to participating States in implementing their anti-corruption commitments, in particular those related to the **UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**. A 2-year project on *Fostering a participatory approach towards preventing corruption in Central Asia* is currently under finalisation and we look forward to raise the necessary funds and start with its implementation.

The Office also plans to continue its co-operation with the **OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN)**. In this regard, we are planning to organize, in the margins of the 2016 “OECD Integrity Week” in April, a side event to present and raise visibility of the OSCE’s anti-corruption work. Moreover, in May, my Office and the **OSCE Centre in Bishkek** are planning to co-organise in the framework of the OECD ACN a regional expert seminar on corruption prevention.

In the next couple of weeks, we also plan to finish the editorial work of the **OSCE Handbook on Combating Corruption** and use this publication at training and capacity building events implemented in co-operation with external partners and the OSCE Field Operations.

Corrupt officials often engage in money laundering and attempt to present stolen or earned illegally funds as earned legitimately. They may launder money by moving illegal funds through the international financial system in order to conceal their criminal origin and enjoy the proceeds of their crimes. As a result, states should enhance their regulatory and supervisory systems to oversee private sector compliance with anti-money laundering rules. Therefore, in the area of anti-money laundering, my Office, in co-operation with the Field Operations and partner organizations, will continue providing support to strengthening the capacities of participating States’ officials to more successfully initiate, investigate and prosecute cases of money laundering, as well as to promote inter-agency co-operation.

My Office, in partnership with **ODIHR** and field operations in Southeast Europe, will organize a regional workshop in Vienna on identifying trends and sharing best practices in combatting political corruption in the areas of political party financing, public officials’ assets and income disclosure, abuse of state resources, public procurement, and money laundering.

Moreover, following a request by the **Ukrainian National Police Academy**, my Office in partnership with **UNODC**, will organize a specialized workshop on investigating money

laundering and corruption for anti-corruption officials and investigators in Odessa. The workshop will serve as a pilot course for a joint OSCE and UNODC beginner, intermediate and advanced training curricula on investigating money laundering and corruption for Ukrainian authorities that is planned for development.

We will also continue to provide support to the **Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine** in implementing an ExB project on anti-money laundering that will assist Ukrainian authorities in conducting a money laundering and terrorism financing national risk assessment

As a follow-up to the 2015 Central Asian Regional Workshop on “*Supporting successful prosecutions and other disruptions by building, enhancing and networking financial investigation capacity in national Law Enforcement Agencies*” held in Tashkent, my Office, in partnership with UNODC and EAG, plans to organize an advanced follow-up meeting for Central Asian Financial Intelligence Units, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies on prosecuting, networking and disrupting illicit financial flows. This will serve as a pilot course for the development of a joint OSCE and UNODC regional Central Asian training programme on investigating corruption and money laundering for Financial Intelligence Units, anti-corruption officials, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies.

In partnership with the World Bank, we will also support the development of a Money Laundering **National Risk Assessment** (NRA) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The national authorities will be supported in gathering data and statistics and evaluating risks in their anti-money laundering systems.

Contemporary economic realities call for enhanced harmonization of transport and customs operations that impact trade and commerce. Efficient border management policies create simplified border crossing procedures that create favourable conditions for diversified trade activities. In the area of **transport, trade and customs**, my Office, in support also of the German 2016 OSCE Chairmanship’s focus on promotion of ‘economic connectivity’ will remain quite active.

In June, in Dushanbe, we will support the **OSCE Office in Tajikistan** with the organization of a regional trade facilitation workshop for Ministry of Trade, Transport and Customs representatives from countries in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The event will *inter alia*, provide guidance for countries interested in establishing National Trade Facilitation Committees and look into issues related to acceding and implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

In September, in Astana, we plan to conduct jointly with the **OSCE Programme Office in Astana** and the World Customs Organization (WCO) a Regional Workshop on Enhancing Trade Facilitation through the improvement of Regional Transit. The event will gather relevant officials from Landlocked Developing Countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

My Office will also continue to support the dialogue on **good migration governance**. As a follow-up to the planned Security Day in Rome in March, we will organize **an Expert meeting in Vienna** to explore areas for an enhanced role for the OSCE to play in this policy field. The meeting will aim at promoting a peer-review process, collecting inputs from think tanks, practitioners and experts as well as international organizations mandated to work on migration-related issues.

At field level, my Office will **support the government of Kazakhstan** in improving legislation and practices **in the field of re-admission** of irregular migrants in their countries of origin, in line with good practices and international standards. **Training of trainers' seminars** to improve the effectiveness of labour migration policies and practices will be carried out in **Kazakhstan and Tajikistan** in line with the specific needs and expected outcomes of the respective governments.

Moreover, practitioners and experts from Ministries of labour of countries in Eastern Europe will be invited to Chisinau, Moldova in the framework of our **ExB project** on “**Gender-sensitive labour migration policies: awareness raising in the Mediterranean region and Eastern Europe**”. In co-operation with ODIHR, ILO and IOM, participants from Belarus, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, and Ukraine would be engaged in a three-day exchange of views and experiences on how to make migration a successful experience for male and female migrant workers as well as for countries of origin and destination.

What is on the **environment and security-agenda** in 2016?

First, let me say that all environmental activities of my Office this year are envisaged to contribute to efforts of OSCE participating States to implement the outcomes of the **post-2015 global processes**, particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. **Parliamentarians** played an important role in the development of these global outcome documents, and they have an important role to play in their implementation. Therefore we look forward to benefitting from **your support** to our environmental activities.

In 2016, the OSCE **chairs the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative**. In the course of 13 years, this Initiative has enabled us to work closely with UNDP, UNECE, UNEP and the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) on environment and security challenges, in a co-ordinated and complementary way. **Priorities** of our ENVSEC Chairmanship this year are to further strengthen the Initiative from a security perspective, and to ensure synergies between ENVSEC activities and the implementation of the outcomes of the 2015 global processes related to sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

In the focus area of **water governance** - the topic of last year's **Economic and Environmental Forum** - we plan to continue and advance our work:

- to raise awareness for a **comprehensive security approach** to water management,
- to further deepen our **collaboration** with other international actors engaged in water governance and water diplomacy, including within ENVSEC,
- to facilitate, together with UNECE, the entry into force of the **Dniester River Basin Treaty**, signed by Moldova and Ukraine in 2012, (including the establishment of a joint body for interstate co-operation in the area of protection, sustainable use and development of this river basin),
- to facilitate the finalization and endorsement of the bilateral water agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia on the **Kura River Basin**, and
- to work closely with our **field operations** in support of water governance at national and trans-boundary level in Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

To follow-up to the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing **Disaster Risk Reduction**, we will advance our support to participating States in this field, with a special focus on **floods and wildfires**. More specifically, with the introduction of the Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) we will further advance our activities on wildfire management in the South Caucasus. We will also explore possibilities to **replicate the experience** and good practices from wildfire management in the **South Caucasus, Central Asia and Mongolia in Eastern Europe**. With regard to flooding, we will conclude our project that explored the potential of ecosystem-based approaches in reducing flood risks **in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine**. And we will continue to strengthen the capacities of Aarhus Centres and local authorities in raising disaster risk awareness of local stakeholders and to improve their collaboration on trans-boundary environmental challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In October last year, the discussions at the Security Day on **Climate Change** reiterated the urgency to address the security implications of climate change. My Office will continue assessing the security risks of climate change and promoting trans-boundary climate change adaptation measures. In co-operation with UNECE, we will finalize an implementation plan for a **trans-boundary climate change adaptation strategy for the Dniester river basin**, facilitated by both organizations and endorsed by Moldova and Ukraine last year. In 2016, my Office will also explore opportunities to address projected impacts of climate change and other environmental challenges on increased migration and their implications for security.

The prevention of illegal cross-border transport of **hazardous waste** and the reduction of risks from hazardous waste deposited at abandoned industrial sites will remain high on our agenda. The Secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal is our close partner in this field. In the framework of the **ENVSEC Initiative**, we will continue to foster stakeholder engagement in **uranium tailings remediation** in several countries of Central Asia through active engagement of the Aarhus Centres.

**Environmental good governance** - raising environmental awareness, strengthening the capacities of civil society, enhancing transparency, increasing access to environmental information, facilitating public participation in decision-making and ensuring access to justice on environmental matters remain priorities for us. We will therefore continue to support the implementation of the **Aarhus Convention**, specifically through capacity building of national stakeholders and through the **60 Aarhus Centres in 14 countries** of the OSCE region. We will further strengthen the networking among Aarhus Centres to ensure an exchange of best practices and lessons learned. In 2016, our **Annual Aarhus Centres Meeting** will focus on the role of Aarhus Centres in **greening the economy and enhancing resource efficiency**.

My Office is also planning to continue its **CASE NGO Small Grants Programme** which so far supported **67 NGO projects** in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

The OCEEA will carry on with **gender mainstreaming its environmental activities** particularly through projects on water management and Aarhus Centres that were developed together with the Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat.

Our engagement with the **Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation** constitutes a strategic component of our work. This year we plan to have a regional consultation within the framework of the **Valencia follow-up process** to consolidate results of the two expert-level workshops we organized in 2012 and 2014. This event will further promote a **dialogue on environment and security issues in the Southern Mediterranean** region and identify an implementation plan and concrete follow-up projects.

My last point: **Energy Security**, a crucial area of our work. We will build upon activities undertaken in past years, also taking into account the two decisions on environment and energy adopted at the 2013 Ministerial Council in Kyiv.

Given our mandate, the acknowledged close linkages between energy, security and environment, and the outcomes of the Paris Climate Change Conference, **sustainable energy** will continue to feature prominently in my Office's work. We are planning a range of activities in co-operation with the OSCE field operations and with international partners to **promote best practices** in this area, **build capacity** and provide a **platform for dialogue** for a broad variety of stakeholders. For the **Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation**, we will conduct a **field study** on sustainable energy: It will showcase leading technology in renewable energy production, storage solutions, energy efficiency and network integration in Austria and Germany and will bring together representatives from the public and private sector to assess the potential for future partnerships.

Increasing the resilience of **Non-Nuclear Critical Energy Infrastructure** from natural disasters through the dissemination of viable concepts for risk assessment and mitigation can be a viable tool to strengthen energy security in the OSCE area. In the context of the respective 2013 MC Decision, my Office is currently finalizing a **Handbook on Protecting Electricity Networks from Natural Disasters** which we hope to be able to release later this year.

Finally, I would like to underline the **importance of expanded co-operation with specialized international energy organizations** to take advantage of their unique knowledge base. Among the much appreciated partners of the OSCE are the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division, the Energy Charter Secretariat, the EBRD, the IEA, and the organizations that form the Vienna Energy Club -*Energy Community, IAEA, IIASA, IPI, OPEC, OFID, UNIDO, REEEP, SE4ALL*.

Thank you for your attention.