



United States Mission to the OSCE

Closing Remarks

As delivered by Charles Hornbostel
Economic and Environmental Forum
Prague, Czech Republic
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Thank you, Mr. Coordinator.

We thank the Lithuanian CiO, you, Mr. Svilanovic, and your team in the Office of the Coordinator, and the Czech government for their excellent work in organizing this Forum.

We would like to highlight what the United States believes are the key points to take away from this year's discussions.

Many panelists noted that the OSCE can serve as a bridge between technical experts and political leadership. As just one example on cooperation between organizations, the UNECE made clear that it stands ready to provide technical substance, while the OSCE can provide the political framework for action. Maximizing the OSCE's potential will require building upon these relationships.

One thing is clear to us: without good governance and transparency, all efforts to realize energy security, improve energy efficiency, and increase the share of renewable energy will be ultimately unsustainable. We must ensure that the OSCE remains at the forefront of international principles of good behavior. We take note of the Kazakhstani statement that the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is a model of tripartite cooperation, to be replicated everywhere. When one considers that the OSCE brings together governments, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, media, and civil society, it is readily apparent that the OSCE itself is a kind of regional transparency initiative. Therefore, as we stated in our opening, endorsing the EITI is something the OSCE should do, as the EITI is in fact a direct reflection of what the OSCE is and how it works. Just as needed is a toolbox that helps OSCE participating States resolve energy-related crises and problems, and we welcome the CiO's proposal for a Draft Decision on creating an Energy Task force to address these issues.

On the issue of sustainable transport, several facts are clear. We learned in Druskininkai that 70% of the cost of commercial goods in Central Asia result from transport inefficiencies and corruption, compared with just 7% across Europe. Yesterday, we heard that 40% of the total transport time for goods across the OSCE region is spent at border crossings, with idling trucks wasting energy and adding to CO2 emissions. Clearly, this is not a sustainable situation. At the same time, we all face the challenge of impacts on health, the environment, and energy security as our mobility needs increase. Complex rules and regulations only serve to inflate costs and promote corruption, as individuals facing onerous documentation requirements and other obstacles seek alternative means for moving goods across borders. We recognize that successful solutions will be holistic, targeting vehicles, fuels, operators, and the political and legal frameworks in which they function. These solutions will depend on close collaboration among government, the private sector, and civil society. The best programs to address transportation emissions and energy consumption will be those that draw

on a mix of policy options, such as regulatory measures, voluntary programs and technological investment appropriate to national circumstances.

We should also keep in mind the excellent work our OSCE field presences are doing, connecting principles to practicalities in the real world. We note the efforts of the Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, working with the government and the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan to draft a strategy to promote renewable energy. Likewise, we note that as result of a project implemented by the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, the Ministry of Municipal Economy is expected to initiate changes to the existing legislative framework aimed at the stimulation of renewable energy use. Until its closure on March 31, the Office in Minsk was assisting the Government of Belarus with, among other things, improving Belarus' capacities in the field of energy diversification and the development of local potential for renewable energies.

As an example from the transport sector, in August the Centre in Bishkek, working with its partner the Anti-corruption Business Council, provided more than a dozen information boards to the State Customs Service, displaying information on customs procedures and regulations to increase citizens' awareness. This is just a sampling, and we certainly do not wish to slight others by citing a few. The United States applauds these efforts to improve the lives of citizens, and we will continue to seek similar opportunities to support for the future.

We thank all the panelists for their thoughtful contributions on the subjects of sustainable energy and transport, issues that literally cut across borders and security dimensions. We maintain our conviction that this organization can play a valuable role on these issues, and we look forward to recording concrete achievements in these and other areas at the Vilnius Ministerial.

Thank you, Moderator.