



United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Transport Division

Statement by Mr. Miodrag Pesut

Delivered at the OSCE Review Conference  
Economic and Environmental Dimension

19 October 2010

Vienna, Austria

## **UNECE-OSCE co-operation**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to this important review session. On behalf of the UNECE, I would like to contribute to today's discussion and say a few words about of the UNECE-OSCE co-operation

In 2004, the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change noted economic, social threats and environmental degradation among the six main clusters of threats. The report urged the United Nations to co-operate more closely with regional and sub-regional organizations.

The UN Secretary General's Report was very well-received, but even before 2004, the UNECE and OSCE had already worked together recognizing the importance of economic development and the environment in the context of conflict prevention and enhanced security. In fact, in the area of economic and environmental dimension of security, the UNECE and OSCE have developed a model working relationship.

While this effective partnership has been fostered through many activities and projects undertaken jointly in the last 20 years, let me first describe why the UNECE-OSCE partnership has been so successful.

First, the UNECE and OSCE share virtually the same membership of over 50 states. Both organizations operate on a consensus principle and they both provide a neutral framework for governments to discuss issues of common interest.

Second, the partnership has been successful because it links issues of security, which is what the OSCE is about, to the economic, environmental and social factors which impact so directly on stability and security.

The UNECE is about those economic, environmental and social factors. It is a technical and economic organization that, as part of the United Nations, offers a multilateral platform to negotiate international legal instruments and standards in major pan-European transboundary sectors such as transport, environment, trade and energy. Such norm-setting work is supported by an expert secretariat, which is connected to a large network of governmental experts and decision-makers.

UNECE's products – norms, standards and international conventions – are technical. This may sound complex. But everyone stands to gain when countries adopt common legal standards. International trade and transport are facilitated. Shared assets which ignore borders, such as environment and water resources can be better protected. In short, by sharing technical instruments countries in the UNECE region, and often beyond, facilitate their economic relations, create links, overcome differences and contribute to the overall security and stability.

For its part, the OSCE provides a political platform and a network of field offices, and can give the political push to countries when needed. The UNECE values the political setting available at the OSCE. Our fruitful and continued co-operation so far underlines the appreciation and significance of the UNECE-OSCE partnership.

As a result of these complementarities and shared goals, the two organizations have developed a close relationship. This “closeness” is encouraged and supported by member States at the meetings of the UNECE sessions in Geneva and, I would like to believe, by the OSCE participating States in Vienna.

In the areas of economics and the environment, the UNECE appears to occupy a privileged position among all the organizations with which the OSCE co-operates. It is in the economic and environmental dimension where the traditional partnership between the OSCE and UNECE began and where it continues to be exemplary. This is reflected and recognized in the OSCE “Maastricht” Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, adopted in 2003, which identifies the UNECE as the key partner in its implementation. The Memorandum of Understanding, which both organizations signed at the Sofia Ministerial meeting in December 2004, tries to operationalise this partnership.

The UNECE-OSCE MOU is not a meaningless MOU but one that works. Accordingly, virtually every year, the UNECE undertakes reviews of the implementation of OSCE’s commitments. This is always a very substantial undertaking and, I hope, the OSCE gives due recognition to this effort. As you all know, the commitments stem from declarations since the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, including the Declaration of the Bonn Conference of 1990 and the Istanbul Charter of 1999.

These review sessions have become a regular feature of the OSCE annual Economic Forums since 1996. They typically lead to follow-up work that further demonstrates that fruitful and mutually beneficial work can be undertaken jointly by the OSCE and UNECE.

In the area of the environment, the UNECE with its five environmental conventions and 12 related protocols as well as abundant expertise and experience in regional approaches is well-placed to assist the OSCE. Four of the five UNECE conventions focus on regional, cross-border or transboundary co-operation. Not only do they provide frameworks to address cross-border environmental issues, but they are also practical instruments to prevent conflict.

Joint UNECE and OSCE activities in the field of the environment are typically components of the OSCE-UNDP-UNEP-NATO Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). The UNECE joined the ENVSEC in 2006.

Co-operation in the ENVSEC is very good. In 2009, the UNECE chaired the ENVSEC Management Board. The UNECE appreciates this excellent partnership, not only at the level of the Management Board but also in the implementation of joint OSCE - UNECE projects under the ENVSEC.

In “return”, the OSCE is actively supporting the “Environment for Europe process”, especially with regards to the component dealing with water, environment and security in Central Asia.

Ongoing ENVSEC projects include: Uranium Waste and Tailings Sites in the Ferghana Valley (lead organisation NATO); Study of Radioactive Waste Disposal Sites in Turkmenistan (NATO); Dam safety in Central Asia: capacity building and sub-regional cooperation (UNECE); Enhancing regional exchange of water resource information (CAREWIB phase II) (UNECE-UNEP).

The OSCE and UNECE have also co-operated in assisting in accession to and more effective implementation of the UNECE Aarhus Convention through the establishment of so-called Aarhus Centres.

There are currently nine countries engaged (or due to become engaged) in the Aarhus Centres project (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan). The Centres play an important role in promoting the environmental rights, but there is a need for strengthening co-operation between the Centres and ministries responsible for environment and justice matters on the one hand, and with the civil society, on the other hand.

The OSCE also helps capacity building of delegates from countries with economies in transition supporting their participation in events organized under the Aarhus Convention.

There is also a large number of other environmental joint UNECE–OSCE projects underway: the **Kura project** - a project to establish a bilateral water agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia and to support Georgia in the ratification of the Water Convention; the **Dniester III** project – the third phase (2009-2011) to support the development of co-operation between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova on the Dniester river.; the **Chu-Talas II** project - to support the development of bilateral water co-operation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the rivers Chu and Talas; the **Environmental Impact Assessment project in Central Asia** - a pilot application of the UNECE Espoo Convention between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. This pilot has been successfully implemented and was concluded in 2009; and finally, a similar implementation of the EIA (Espoo) Convention **in Belarus and South Caucasus**.

Other areas in which the UNECE is very active with the OSCE is international transport, border crossing facilitation and inland transport security

In accordance with Ministerial Council Decision No. 11/06 on Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE (adopted in December 2006), both the OSCE and UNECE are making efforts to facilitate international transport and border crossing.

Since 2006, both organizations have organized many joint capacity building events. To name a few: “Harmonization of frontier controls of goods” held in Moscow and Belgrade; Good governance in customs organized in Tbilisi and Kiev; the Almaty

Program of Action to assist landlocked countries in Almaty; safe navigation and environmental security in Odessa; railway border crossings in Balkanabat; and cross-border transport operations event held in Astana.

Looking into the immediate future, in two weeks, the UNECE Transport Division as part of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) initiative will hold an EATL meeting in Tashkent. The session is organized in partnership with the Office of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Tashkent and the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The meeting will include a study tour where participants will travel to visit the International Intermodal Logistics Centre and Free Industrial Economic Zone in Navoi in Uzbekistan. In November, in this very conference room, a session of UNECE's Working Party on Rail Transport will be hosted by the Government of Austria in co-operation with the OSCE. In December 2010, there will be a joint OSCE/UNECE Inter-regional Workshop on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan.

The OSCE-UNECE Handbook of Best Practices at Borders is ready in draft and it is being finalized. It will be ready by the end of this year.

On 31 January 2011, the UNECE is hosting its annual "Inland Transport Security Discussion Forum" in Geneva. The OSCE Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities has been invited to deliver a statement. The UNECE believes that more should - and could - be done to enhance inland transport security. Effective exchange of views and best practices is the first, basic step in this direction. I hope that the 2012 Discussion Forum – as was proposed by the UNECE at the 2010 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum – will take place in Vienna and will be jointly organized by the UNECE and OSCE.

In Dushanbe, the UNECE is supporting the OSCE Border Management Staff College. The UNECE is in the process of becoming a College's affiliate. The College will provide training programs to high level customs, border and transport officials. The first training session is scheduled to take place in November 2010 and its curriculum includes courses on trade and transport facilitation. Two UNECE trainers will deliver these courses.

Finally, key-questions on **energy security** dialogue evolve around energy security implications of gas infrastructure in the ECE region, impact of the financial crisis on energy infrastructure investment and reactions of governments and energy industries to energy security risks. The UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy has responded by launching the Energy Security Dialogue between governments, energy industries, financial institutions and international organizations. The OSCE is encouraged to actively participate in this process.

In closing, many perceive the OSCE as a unique and model regional security organization. The UNECE, in turn, believes that the UNECE-OSCE partnership represents a model for co-operation between economic and security organizations. I would like to stress that the UNECE looks forward to continuing and deepening its co-operation with the OSCE. We need to work together for the sake of the stability and well-being of our region. I would also like to convey the assurance of the UNECE leadership that UNECE will do its part.

Thank you.