

Press release

OSCE seminar in Moscow focuses on harmonization of customs and border procedures

MOSCOW, 18 October 2006 - Border, customs, transport and trade officials from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia identified measures that would harmonize customs and border procedures during a two-day OSCE seminar that ended in Moscow today.

The event focused on the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.

"This year's OSCE Economic Forum has paved the way for new ideas on how the Organization can play a role in encouraging the implementation of UNECE transport conventions and standards," said Belgian Ambassador Vincent Mertens, who represented the Belgian OSCE Chairmanship at the meeting.

"The Harmonization Convention was chosen as a pilot project to show how the OSCE could add value by helping to overcome obstacles of a political nature".

Participants outlined ways to simplify customs and administrative procedures, reduce border delays, transportation costs and develop an integrated border management stem. Particular attention was paid to good governance practices and fighting corruption at border crossings.

Alexey Stukalo, Deputy Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, added: "This seminar is a good example of co-operation between the OSCE, UNECE and the Eurasian Economic Community. It contributes to international stability and security by focusing on cross-border trade and transport facilitation."

The seminar was preceded by a high-level UNECE Eurasian Economic Community conference on trade facilitation.

The OSCE and UNECE are planning to organize a similar seminar in Belgrade on 28 and 29 November for experts from South-Eastern Europe.



Alexey Stukalo, Deputy Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (centre), addresses a seminar on harmonization of customs and border controls, Moscow, 18 October 2006. (OSCE/Roel Janssens)