

**OSCE opening speech at the 5th EATL Expert Group Meeting in Tashkent
Monday, 1 November 2010
International Business Centre, Tashkent/Uzbekistan**

Dear Deputy Minister Tulyaganov,
Dear Director Adamantiadis,
Distinguished participants,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming you all to the fifth session of the EATL Expert Group meeting here in Tashkent. I am doing this on behalf of Ambassador Venczel who unfortunately cannot be with us today. I would also like to express my most sincere thanks to our host, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. My special thanks go to the Department of Transport, which was instrumental in putting this event together. The OSCE is very happy to once again join forces with the UNECE and to co-operate in organising this meeting.

We will – hopefully – have some fruitful days together here in beautiful Tashkent and later in Navoi and Bukhara, the heart of the ancient silk road. Our time in Tashkent will be split between the EATL meeting and some presentations of my colleagues from the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna tomorrow afternoon. They will use this opportunity to inform you about some transport related initiatives of the OSCE. They will also discuss with you possibilities of further co-operation in the framework of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process and other OSCE related projects in the sphere of transport.

With 56 participating States from Europe, Central Asia and North America, the OSCE forms the largest regional security organization in the world. The organization is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. It has 18 missions or field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The OSCE deals with three dimensions of security - the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimension. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns.

In 2010, under Kazakh Chairmanship, transport and security, once again after 2006, has become the central theme within the OSCE. During 2010 the focus was on promoting good governance at border crossings, on improving security of land transportation and its facilitation. Further to the Astana preparatory conference held last year in October, we held the Vienna Forum in February and the Minsk preparatory conference in March this year and finished the forum cycle in May with the final part held in Prague.

The Forum process emphasizes the importance of integrated transport networks in the OSCE area for underpinning economic development. Promotion of regional and sub-regional co-operation in transport is a key element in this regard. Strong political will is necessary to ensure that interstate co-operation and co-ordination are efficient enough and stimulate trade. Particular attention should be dedicated to developing adequate transport corridors that serve the special needs of landlocked countries.

It was stated that the OSCE can represent a useful platform in this regard. In order to avoid duplication, the OSCE is teaming up with other international organizations and provides support to ongoing efforts and discussion frameworks. This is what brought us here together today. And I would like to stress how much we value our excellent and continuous co-operation with the UNECE.

As part of good governance efforts, the adoption and implementation of international legal instruments to facilitate cross-border trade and transport operations play an important role. The Forum process put a lot of emphasis on good governance aspects of transport and border crossings, including transparency, integrity and the fight against corruption. Promoting integrity in customs and border services would on the one hand stimulate regional economic development and on the other hand prevent illegal trafficking and other threats to security.

Another priority issue that emerged out of the Forum deliberations is the need for adopting a public-private partnership approach in dealing with transport and border crossings. Partnership and co-operation with private business is crucial to ensure smoother border crossing operations.

As you can see from this quite long list there are many things to discuss and I am quite positive that we will touch numerous of these issues during our meeting. I am looking forward to a vivid discussion in the next days and wish us all a rewarding and valuable dialogue.

Thank you!