

**Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
The Secretariat**

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

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The 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
**“Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security
of land transportation and facilitating international transport
by road and rail in the OSCE region”**

Within the Economic and Environmental Division of the OSCE, the Economic and Environmental Forum constitutes one of the major high lightening events. It focuses every year on a different theme proposed by the Chairmanship and agreed upon by the 56 participating States. Gathering around 400 participants with various backgrounds, such as official representatives of participating States and high-level experts from international organizations, as well as from civil society, the academic and business community, the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum aims at identifying needs and priorities, stimulating political will, and elaborating concrete solutions in dealing with economic, environmental and security related challenges.

On 30 July 2009 the Permanent Council (PC), the OSCE’s main decision-making body, agreed upon and adopted the decision to hold the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum on **“Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region”**.

Given the breadth and depth of the Forum’s annual topics, and in order to reconcile not only expert knowledge but also political standpoints of participating States, the Forum process foresees several steps. The Forum is organized in two parts, whereby each part is preceded by a series of expert level preparatory conferences.

The 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum will be conducted under the 2010 Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE, over a total period of five days. After a First Preparatory Conference in Astana from 12-13 October 2009, the first part of the Forum will take place in Vienna, from 1-2 February 2010. Following a Second Preparatory Conference in March 2010 the final part of the Forum will be held from 24-26 May 2010 in Prague.

The agendas of the two segments of the Forum will focus on the following topics:

- Best practices and good governance at border crossings and in customs procedures, as part of border management, including the aspects of rule of law, transparency, integrity, co-ordination and harmonization;

- Facilitation of international land-transport and cross-border operations, paying due attention to the specific needs of landlocked developing countries, in order to strengthen economic co-operation during the current economic downturn;
- Safeguarding of the security of the international transport circuit, including the fight against transnational crime, terrorism and trafficking in weapons, drugs and human beings;
- Impact of transportation on environment and security;

The OSCE's involvement in transport matters goes back to the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Bonn Document (1990) and the Maastricht Strategy Document of the Economic and Environmental Dimension (2003). Furthermore, the decision on this year's Forum relies on the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, the Ministerial Council Decision No. 11/06 on future transport dialogue in the OSCE and the Ministerial Council Decision No. 9/08 on Follow-up to the 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

Based on this set of documents and decisions, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) has implemented over the past few years various activities aimed at facilitating transit transportation and legitimate cross-border trade across the OSCE region. In its involvement in transport matters, the OSCE/OCEEA recognizes the interconnection of the topic of transport with other significant and equally relevant issues. Hence, in its approach to transport matters, it applies a multi-layered approach. To that effect, respective activities cover aspects related to Transport and Security, Transport and the Environment, Transport Challenges of Landlocked Countries and Transport and Border-crossing Facilitation.

Being aware that effective transport and border management as well as the harmonization of frontier controls requires strong ties and co-operation with stakeholders as well as with experts at the international level, the OSCE/OCEEA believes that the topic of the Forum is not only relevant to be discussed solely in the sphere of the OSCE, but demands and holds the chance for extensive international co-operation. The current Chairmanship-in-Office and the incoming 2010 Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE expect the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum to be instrumental in promoting in-depth co-operation among governments, experts and international organizations with regard to the issues at stake.

Accordingly, the OSCE/OCEEA allows itself to extend a warm invitation to the international participants of the 22nd Session of the UNECE Working Party on Trends and Economics. We very much welcome you to the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum and will keep you informed about the current proceedings on our regularly updated website: www.osce.org/eea.

Contacts:

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) will be glad to provide further information about the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

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