



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**9<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and  
5<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on SEA**

**High-level segment**

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

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address the High-level segment of the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on SEA, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the UNECE Secretariat staff for the organization of this event and for its dedication in promoting the principles of these relevant treaties.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest regional security organization with 57 participating States, recognizes a close connection between environment and security. Our efforts to strengthening transboundary environmental co-operation is a key component of the commitment to promoting good environmental governance among participating States, and it is also a central element of the Organization's broader approach to prevent conflicts, build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations.

Over the years, the fruitful collaboration with UNECE in implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, has been

growing and delivered undoubted value among countries in our region. It is worth recalling some of our recent joint initiatives aimed at raising awareness on environmental impact assessment - such as the publication of a set of selected elements in pictures of the Convention and the Protocol, or the translation of the brochure on “Strategic Environmental Assessment: Facts and Benefits” into five Central Asian languages - or aimed at strengthening institutional capacities in establishing national SEA systems and fostering regional co-operation - such as the project “Strengthening national and regional capacities and co-operation on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Central Asia” funded by the German Environment Agency UBA. In this framework, we are pleased to continue our support to Central Asian countries through the Phase II of the project which will start in January 2024 thanks to UBA financial contribution.

The OSCE is also actively engaged in facilitating the effective application of transboundary EIA and SEA procedures, as discussed at the “*Consultative meeting on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment in South-Eastern Europe*” organized on 5 December in Vienna. This event, which saw the participation of National Focal Points from the countries interested by the Bucharest Agreement, evidenced the importance of effective networking as a tool to facilitate transboundary discussions.

Concerning the contribution of the Convention and the Protocol to energy transition, over the last years the OSCE has developed a wide range of support projects and tools aimed at raising awareness, building capacity, and disseminating best practices. These endeavours assist participating States in reducing the environmental footprint of the energy sector, promoting a just and inclusive energy transition, and fostering climate resilience, ultimately contributing to a more secure and sustainable energy future.

Furthermore, our work is also focused on advancing sustainable connectivity with an eye towards applying adequate and effective environmental impact assessment procedures, particularly in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region, where numerous infrastructure projects are underway to improve trade and transport.

As a recognition of our commitment, we are grateful that the OSCE has been included as a lead organization in the workplan for 2024–2026, and I can assure you that we will continue to strive to support the implementation of the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA, as well as to maintain our fruitful cooperation with the UNECE.