



EUROPEAN UNION

Economic and Environmental Implementation Meeting Vienna, 19 - 20 October 2020

EU Opening Statement

The European Union is pleased to take part in the 2020 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting and thanks the Albanian Chairmanship and the team of the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities for the organisation.

We warmly welcome the keynote speakers to our meeting and thank them for their remarks. We have many common goals on which we should join efforts and we appreciate the good cooperation that is already taking place.

We welcome the flexible arrangement of this meeting that allows for a wide range of speakers. Highlighting the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, we are pleased to see a number of panellists representing civil society and academia, as we are convinced that they advance our dialogue by increasing the diversity of our discussions in the OSCE, in particular when taking stock of the progress in implementation of our commitments.

We welcome that the theme of this year's EEDIM focuses on Disaster Risk Reduction, including a focus on sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources, good governance and transparency, as well as the integrated approach to disaster risk management.

Natural and man-made hazards pose grave risks, including at the transboundary level across the OSCE area, and affect our security collectively. Over the past decade, the frequency and intensity of disasters have increased significantly due to global trends including population growth, unsustainable urbanisation, poor land management and, in particular, climate change.

Disasters and climate risks have a major impact on the economy, as well as on the security and well-being of our citizens. The EU efforts on disaster risk reduction contribute to fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change. An important element is to ensure effective implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. We reaffirm our full commitment to these agreements and OSCE commitments in this area, from the Helsinki Final Act to the Basel Ministerial Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction. We believe that the OSCE has a role to play in advancing this agenda.

We trust that our discussions will bring a better understanding of where we stand in our efforts of implementing our common commitments in the economic and environmental dimension. We believe that our deliberations in the coming days will contribute to stepping up our efforts in cooperation on disaster risk reduction and in utilising the exchanged knowledge and best practices. We look forward to the fruitful discussions in the coming two days.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.