



## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretary General

Vienna, 2/ April 2021

Dear Ms. Utoikamanu,

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the report of the UN Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

Out of 32 Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) globally, ten are OSCE participating States and one is a Partner for Co-operation. Assisting these countries to tackle their transit and transport related challenges as well as strengthening responses to security risks from climate change are key priorities for our Organization.

In 2020, OSCE activities contributed to promoting the Vienna Programme of Action as a part of the Organization's wider commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I am pleased to share a summary of these activities with you in the attached report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Schmid', is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Helga Maria Schmid

Encl.: OSCE contributions to the draft report of the Secretary-General for the 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries

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## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

### OSCE contributions to the draft report of the Secretary-General for the 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries

Vienna, April 2021

#### I. Introduction

The nexus between peace, security and development that underlies the 2030 Agenda is also at the core of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. The potential of the OSCE's economic and environmental activities to fostering dialogue and diminishing tensions is recognized by several Ministerial Council Documents (MC), which will be discussed in more detail later. Based on these MC Decisions, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and the OSCE Field Operations<sup>1</sup> have engaged in activities aimed at enhancing connectivity and security, through trade and transport as well as at raising awareness and addressing potential security risks stemming from climate change. This included: supporting the adoption and implementation of legal instruments related to transport, trade and border crossing facilitation; providing political support for the development of international transport and logistics networks connecting Europe and Asia; promoting the dissemination of best practices and standards in the transport field; assisting participating States in combating corruption in customs and border services; developing capacities and sharing knowledge within and among the regions, as well as the supporting in the development and implementation of climate change adaptation measures in the most vulnerable geographic areas.

*Trade and transport* enables direct business contacts and can be a powerful resource for building good-neighbourly relations. Transport-related issues have been high on the OSCE's agenda since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. The importance of transport for our common security and cooperation was highlighted in several ministerial documents, including the 2003 Maastricht *Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension*. The 2016 Hamburg Ministerial Council (MC) Decision on *Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity* and 2017 Vienna MC Decision on *Promoting Economic Participation in the OSCE* underlined the relevance of the topic for all 57 OSCE Participating States. Furthermore, in view of the growing global interdependence in today's digital era, strong interlinkages between digitalization, good governance and enhanced connectivity were recognised by the 2018 Milan Ministerial Council Declaration on *Digital Economy as a Driver for Promoting Co-operation, Security and Growth* and the 2020 Tirana MC on *Preventing and combating corruption through digitalization and increased transparency*. These MC Decisions identified, inter alia, improving the business climate, promoting trade facilitation,

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<sup>1</sup> The OSCE has a network of field operations in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

strengthening public-private partnerships, and strengthening economic co-operation as key contributors to good-neighbourly relations, confidence-building and trust in the OSCE area.

*Security implications of climate change* have been on OSCE's agenda since 2007. The 2007 *Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security* defines a “complementary role” for the Organization to deal with climate change issues by fostering trans-border dialogue and cooperation at the policy level.

## **II. OSCE Contributions to the Draft Outline of the Report**

*Status of the implementation of the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action based on the activities included in the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024*

### **OSCE contributions through capacity-building and expert support**

In 2020, the OSCE launched the *Second Phase of the OSCE Green Ports and Connectivity Project*, thus expanding the scope of project activities, from the three countries originally involved throughout the first phase (namely Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan), to dry ports in Central Asia and Black Sea Ports in Georgia and Romania. Moreover, a work-package fully dedicated to increase women's economic participation in trade and logistics was added to the project. Bimonthly online working groups bringing together more than 80 stakeholders from all beneficiary countries have been established, allowing ports as well as regional and European logistics companies to explore technical solutions and work towards frictionless, digitalised and green trade along Caspian and Black sea trade routes. Furthermore, the OSCE is providing expert support to the Port of Aktau in Kazakhstan to implement the world-renowned Ecoports environmental management system. Other beneficiary ports will also receive support towards achieving certification in 2021. The OSCE has also started to develop a mentoring programme for women in logistics, which will be rolled out in 2021.

In 2020, the OSCE *Field Operations in Central Asia* organized a wide range of capacity building activities, targeted trainings and expert support related to the various aspects of trade facilitation, transit transport development, customs and border regulations. These events aimed at enhancing the participants' awareness of international instruments and mechanisms, and best practices to facilitate trade and transport systems, and overview the implementation of national policies and mechanisms in this area.

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) held two different seminars (on Digitalization of Transport and Customs Procedure and on Best Practices on the WTO membership) targeting more than 100 participants. Recommendations for effective next steps towards further digitalization of transport and custom procedures and successful undergoing the WTO membership negotiating process were developed. Furthermore, the Centre supported the revision of the Law on Foreign Investments of Turkmenistan, in line with national priorities and international standards and best practices.

The OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) conducted tailor-made training courses for the State Customs Service and its officers of the southern region of Kyrgyzstan, on practical usage of the Stationary Inspection Complex ST- 6035 enhancing the professional level and capacity of staff in efficiently operating on the inspection complexes. Also, the Office

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supported the Secretariat of the National Trade Facilitation Committee NTFC and its working groups in strengthening its technical capacities to facilitate smooth and efficient implementation and monitoring of activities required under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. .

The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) supported the further development of the Trade Information portal through the inclusion of the “Market Analysis Tools”, assisting the country in complying with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The portal aims at raising awareness on trade-related information such as laws and rules, export, import procedures, fees and charges imposed. The Programme Office also provided expert support in developing bylaws in compliance with the new Automobile Transport Code. As a result, 16 regulatory acts were developed on transportation rules of passengers, cargo, perishable, dangerous and other goods, and etc. Six were already adopted, while the remaining 11 under consideration. Regulatory acts create a law enforcement practice for the implementation of the provisions of the Code and laws in the field of transport by making them transparent and predictable.

### **OSCE contributions through offering a platform for dialogue**

In 2020, the OSCE continued to play the role of a facilitator, offering a platform for dialogue and co-operation. Together with UNECE, the OCEEA organised an *expert roundtable on “Intelligent Transport Systems and Cyber Security”* (remotely in September in Geneva). Based on the discussion, recommendations on enhancing cyber resilience of intelligent transport systems and potential roles for UNECE, OSCE and other relevant partners were put forward

In addition, together with UNECE, the OCEEA organized, *virtual consultations aimed at enhancing economic connectivity perspectives and the operationalization of Euro-Asian inland transport links (EATL)*. The event brought together over 140 participants from more than 30 countries across the Eurasian region engaged in transport corridor management. During these consultations, several OSCE participating States expressed their interest in continuing discussions that would potentially lead to the development of a corridor management mechanism proposal for Rail Route 3 of EATL. Two further joint OSCE/UNECE consultations rounds will take place in the first half of 2021. The OSCE has been providing political and practical support to the UNECE’s Euro-Asian Transport Links project since 2006.

In the wake of the COVID-19 health crisis, the need for digitalization of transport and transit documents has increased significantly leading to high interest in UNECE legal instruments such as eTIR. In this context in December 2020, the OCEEA, in cooperation with the UNECE, started *supporting the development of a new user friendly and comprehensive eTIR information platform*, that aims at facilitating virtual capacity building activities among eTIR countries and the countries interested to become eTIR signatories. The platform will be finalized by spring 2021. The information provided will be relevant for and facilitate the work of all eTIR international System Stakeholders (customs, international organizations, national associations, TIR carnet holders).

In view of travel restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to assist the National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC) of the Central Asian participating States in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the *OCEEA assessed the*

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*needs of NTFCs in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, through a tailor made questionnaire (based on the WTO TFA approved functions and responsibilities of NTFCs). One of the main outcomes was the need to develop and institutionalize a regional platform for coordination among NTFCs in Central Asia on the implantation of the WTO TFA. In November 2020, the results of the NTFC needs assessment were discussed among the participants of a regional trade facilitation workshop that was jointly organized with the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), the ITC Secretariat and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. Representatives from ITC, OSCE, WTO, WCO, EAEU Member States and beyond discussed opportunities for a coordinated and harmonized implementation of the TFA in the region. Since December 2020, the OCEEA has been conducting consultations with other international partners, such as GIZ, in order to address this need in the Central Asian region.*

*In 2020, the OSCE launched the extra-budgetary project “Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia”. The project aims to reduce climate change-related security threats by raising awareness, developing capacities and sharing knowledge within and among the regions, as well as through the implementation of climate change adaptation measures in the most vulnerable geographic areas (climate change and security hotspots). In 2020 the OSCE together with its partner adelphi- a Berlin-based think tank launched a regional consultation process on climate change and security in South-Eastern Europe, which included a series of workshops and surveys. Eighty stakeholders representing governmental agencies, NGOs, and academia as well as OSCE Field Operations from the region took part in this consultation process. The consultation process identified and mapped climate-related security risks (geographical hotspots and regional challenges) and generated ideas for possible transboundary co-operation opportunities. In 2021, a similar consultation process on climate change and security will be launched in the South Caucasus region through two bilateral workshops between Armenia and Georgia, and Azerbaijan and Georgia.*

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