



EUROPEAN UNION

Economic and Environmental Implementation Meeting Vienna, 18 - 19 October 2021

EU Opening Statement

1. The European Union is pleased to take part in the 2021 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting and thanks the Swedish Chairpersonship and the team of the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities for the organisation.
2. 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.
3. Indeed, the fight against corruption is one of the long-lasting priorities for the European Union.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the risk of corruption owing to the financial stimulus and economic recovery measures taken by governments in the wake of the pandemic. The recent increase in criminal activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder that we should step up our anti-corruption efforts in order to protect values, such as transparency, integrity and accountability. The OSCE with its comprehensive approach to security provides for an ideal platform for facilitating dialogue, sharing practices and supporting co-operation among our countries on this issue. We strongly believe that the fight against corruption should remain high on the agenda of our deliberations and a priority for the work of the whole OSCE.
5. Corruption represents not only a threat to security and democracy, but also entails a loss of public trust, may increase inequalities and contribute to the degradation of the environment. Lack of good environmental governance exacerbated by corruption is enabler of environmental crime, as well as trafficking of natural resources and wildlife. Corruption further hinders productivity, efficiency and, ultimately, economic growth, due to the misallocation of resources, distortion of incentives and other inefficiencies.

6. The adoption of objective and appropriate measures and indicators is also crucial in order to be able to better understand, prevent and fight corruption. The G20 Anti-corruption Working Group has extensively discussed the importance of this issue, leading to the adoption earlier this year of the Compendium of good practices on corruption measurement.
7. The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to continue efforts to prevent, combat and to promote effective measures against corruption in all forms. We believe 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.

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 ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, SAN MARINO 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.