

Report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: UK response, November 2022

Thank you, Ambassador Hasani, for your presentation on recent activities. It certainly makes clear the broad range of work, key to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, which you and your team cover.

For eight months now, we have witnessed the humanitarian catastrophe stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. From its effects on energy prices, to the increased risk of trafficking, the destabilising and degenerative effects of this war of choice are significant and numerous. Inflation in Ukraine is forecast to exceed 30% by the end of 2022, eroding real incomes and increasing poverty; and the Ukrainian Ministry of Finance has estimated a funding gap in its 2023 budget of 38 billion dollars. And as we have heard in this forum, the war has done 37 billion euros worth of damage to Ukraine's natural environment, with pollution, forest fires, damage to nature reserves, and destruction of water resources. All are direct results of Russia's aggression.

We therefore support your decision to continue to shift your office's focus to remedy these effects; as well as your suite of projects in response, including assessing the environmental damage. Russia must be held to account for all their actions in Ukraine. Credible and thorough assessments are an essential part of this.

I would like to focus my remarks on three interlinked areas of security that have become increasingly important since the start of Russia's war.

First, energy security.

We are pleased to see the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) address this important topic, through the protection of critical energy infrastructure from natural and man-made disasters; and supporting participating States to diversify their energy mix to include renewable energy, energy efficiency, and alternative fuels.

The dramatic rise in global energy prices, exacerbated by Russia's weaponisation of energy, has highlighted the importance of reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. The [UK's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) and our [Net Zero Strategy](#) set out our vision; and at COP27, [our Prime Minister announced a further 65 and a half million pounds for the Clean Energy Innovation Facility](#), providing grants to researchers and scientists in developing countries to accelerate the development of clean technology.

This shift can help us in addressing the second issue – climate security.

The UK sees an undeniable link between climate, nature, peace and security.

The impacts of climate change multiply the threats faced by vulnerable populations. We were pleased to see the continuation of your office's flagship climate project in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

We are clear that we must accelerate climate action. Under the UK's COP Presidency, almost all developed country climate finance providers made new, forward-looking climate finance commitments. The [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) means that '1.5 degrees' remains in sight, but this goal will only be achieved through immediate, sustained global effort. As we hand over the Presidency to another member of the OSCE family – Egypt – we must maintain the momentum that parties built at COP26.

Climate change increases competition for water and land, adding to the risk of the third threat – food insecurity.

As you said at the Economic and Environmental Committee meeting in June, armed conflicts and climate change have direct consequences on food security in the OSCE region. Your office's energy projects improve the sustainability and resilience of the food supply chain.

Today's global food security crisis was exacerbated by Russia's brutal war. Farmers are on the frontline – including in Ukraine where brave farmers continue to plant and harvest their crops. We must support them to export their grain and to rebuild their agriculture.

And finally, we share your assessment that the economic empowerment of women is a pre-requisite for their full and effective participation in society, and has a reinforcing effect on our common security. We welcome the integration of a gender perspective in your projects. Challenging destructive gender stereotypes is essential to combat the root cause of women's disempowerment.

I would like to thank you again, Ambassador Hasani, for all your and your team's work these past six months.

Thank you.