



EUROPEAN UNION

Economic and Environmental Implementation Meeting Vienna, 28 & 29 October 2025

Taking stock of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of disaster risk reduction

EU Opening Statement

FINAL (1040 words)

1. The European Union places great value on the Economic and Environmental Dimension as an integral part of the comprehensive approach to security of the OSCE. The EU is therefore pleased to take part in the 2025 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting and thanks the Finnish Chairpersonship and the team of the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities for the organisation of the meeting. We welcome the keynote speakers and thank them for their valuable and insightful contributions.
2. The topic chosen for this year's EEDIM is of crucial importance in light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which has had a profound environmental and economic impact in Ukraine and beyond, including the Black Sea region. We are deeply concerned about the sustained damage to farmlands, water supply and sewage systems, along with the long-lasting damage to valuable ecosystems, biodiversity and marine sites. These include areas impacted by the destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP) dam in the Kherson region, as well as the alleged deliberate contamination of the Desna River. The weaponisation of the environment violates international law. We are also deeply concerned about the serious environmental impact and security risks caused by the Russian shadow fleet. We encourage the OSCE to keep addressing the security risks

stemming from the economic and environmental consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

3. We believe that the OSCE should continue contributing to addressing and also alleviating the devastating impact of Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine's environment and economy, including by strengthening disaster risk management. We underline the need to assess the damage and are committed to addressing it in the context of Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. In this regard, we welcome the continuation of the implementation of the extra-budgetary project "Assessment of Environment of the War against Ukraine ExB Project", to which a number of Member States contribute.
4. The EU acknowledges that the frequency of disasters, related human, economic and environmental losses and the underlying vulnerabilities that drive risk and fragility, such as conflict, poverty and inequality, is increasing just as ecosystems and habitats are at risk of collapse. The impacts of global shocks such as environmental degradation and climate change, armed conflicts, notably the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and health threats, such as global pandemics, demonstrate the interconnected and systemic character of today's risk as well as its potential to evolve into disasters with cascading effects across geographies and sectors, and hamper human development. Effective disaster risk reduction (DRR), anticipatory action and risk-informed policy making on prevention and reduction of disasters are essential to reduce the impact of adverse events, save lives and decrease humanitarian needs.
5. Disasters, whether natural or man-made know no borders and can simultaneously hit one or several countries without warning. Today, Europe's risk landscape is evolving dramatically. We are confronted with multiple, simultaneous challenges and threats of varying nature and growing complexity. The rise in the number of conflicts, man-made and natural disasters – including extreme weather events – and the changing nature of security risks increasingly challenge the disaster risk management structure of the EU. It is therefore crucial to have arrangements in

place for effective prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from disasters.

6. The EU's overall approach to disaster risk reduction and management is based on an all-hazards, multi-stakeholder approach which brings together all relevant actors, across all levels of government – local, regional, national and EU – as well as civil society, businesses and scientific community. Moreover, DRR has been incorporated into the EU's external policies in order to promote cross-border risk management, disaster preparedness and collective response in other parts of the world, and to strengthen the EU's role as a reliable and responsible global actor.
7. Since 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) aims to strengthen cooperation on civil protection between EU Member States and ten further states participating in the mechanism – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine – to improve prevention, preparedness, and response to disasters. Pooling civil protection capacities and capabilities allows for a stronger and more coherent collective response. Since its launch, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has responded to over 820 requests for assistance both inside and outside the EU. When an emergency hits, any country can request assistance via the UCPM. The UCPM has also played a major role in contributing to the EU response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU is implementing its largest emergency operation since the creation of the Mechanism, providing a considerable amount of assistance for the emergency response to Ukraine and the region but also in support to prevention and preparedness in the country. Since 2021, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism Knowledge Network consolidates, analyses, and disseminates scientific and operational knowledge, and supports coherence of planning and decision-making processes.
8. In recent years, the EU has also invested more in prevention and preparedness, including by boosting its "rescEU strategic reserve" to ensure greater preparedness at EU-level. In a further effort to enhance disaster resilience, in 2023 the European Commission adopted five Disaster Resilience Goals (DRGs), which

represent a common European agenda to anticipate and withstand the effects of major disasters and emergencies. Several tools are available to Member States and Participating States to develop their capacity in this regard, for instance financial assistance for projects, expert deployment (including peer reviews), participation in training, technical guidance, scientific support. Furthermore, as part of its new Preparedness Union Strategy adopted earlier this year, the EU is currently updating the UCPM to enhance EU support and solidarity through the UCPM. As part of this update, it is planned to allocate around 11 billion EUR in common funding for civil protection and to introduce an enhanced civil protection framework designed to improve coordination across various sectors, including strengthened civil-military cooperation.

9. Finally, we strongly believe that promoting disaster risk reduction and management should stay high on the OSCE agenda and a priority for its work. The EU reaffirms its commitment to advancing cooperation on these issues and strengthening the work of the OSCE second dimension to achieve comprehensive security and looks forward to the discussions in the substantive sessions today and tomorrow.

(Alignments)