



22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
“Responding to Environmental Challenges
with a View to Promoting Cooperation and Security in the OSCE Area”
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Session VII: Panel Debate – The Role of the OSCE in Responding to Environmental Challenges

Abstract of Panelist Prof. Dr. Johann Georg Goldammer, Director, Global Fire Monitoring Center

Themes to be addressed: "The role that OSCE could play as platform for knowledge-sharing and as an implementation platform" and "How to increase cross-border environmental emergency preparedness in the OSCE area"

- Natural ecosystems and cultural landscape complexes often stretch over large areas and may cross national boundaries. Risks and consequences of natural and technogenic disasters in these landscapes are therefore often shared by neighbouring countries.
- Long-term stability of natural and cultural landscapes are essential for sustainable delivery of valuable services to the environment and humans. The protection of ecosystem functions ensures the conservation of floristic and faunistic biodiversity and supports livelihood and local economies by supplying shelter, wood and non-wood forest products, agricultural products, drinking water, other raw materials and energy for society.
- In addition, well-managed or protected and stable vegetation cover is essential for the protection and stability of the soil cover. In watersheds stable vegetation cover reduces the vulnerability of the soil to become affected by weather extremes and potentially resulting in excessive water runoff and floods. In well-managed forests and other fire-prone lands, which are stretching along national borders, the likelihood of wildfires and fire smoke to cross borders can be reduced.
- Landscape management aimed at reducing the occurrence and transboundary consequences of natural disasters and industrial accidents requires dialogue and cooperation, including building of technical and human resources capacities between neighbouring nations.
- The OSCE supports the dialogue and cooperation between nations aimed at enhancing environmental and human security. Sharing of knowledge and expertise in the management of those natural resources that either could be causative agent of a disaster, or could become affected by a disaster, becomes increasingly important in the portfolio of OSCE activities, notably between participating states.
- The OSCE through the ENVSEC Initiative has demonstrated that in case of wildfire disaster risk reduction the development of national policies and management capacities benefited from regional cooperation.
- Within its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE supports the dialogue and cooperation between its participating States on issues related to environment and natural resources management in order to enhance security and stability at all levels. Sharing of knowledge and initiating or strengthening the cross-boundary exchange provides an added value to the portfolio of international organizations and actors in the field of disaster risk reduction.