



FINAL DECLARATION

**For the 3rd Sub-Regional Conference
of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

“Promoting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises”

Bern, 14 to 16 May 2003

1. Noting that security and stability as well as a sustainable economic development are mutually reinforcing preconditions for each other;
2. Emphasizing the key role of the SMEs both in the market and transition economies as well as the fact that the private sector and of SMEs is of major importance for all OSCE participating States;
3. Noting that SME development is a precondition for sustainable economic development in the whole OSCE area and that all OSCE countries stand to benefit from improved international economic integration;
4. Recognizing the importance of SME as a backbone and driving force for a sustainable economy;
5. Emphasizing that for countries in transition, the development of the private sector and of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises is a major challenge;
6. Recognizing the importance of increasing and improving female participation in decision-making and economic activities as a means to realizing each country's economic potential;
7. Recognizing the variety of conditions and specificity of economies and productive potentials of each OSCE participating State and consequently their influence on SME development;
8. Recognizing also the recent growth in the number of women-owned SMEs in many regions of the world and the opportunity this trend provides to enhance the economic independence of women and their contributions to national, regional and global economies;
9. Acknowledging the importance of parliaments in enhancing the development of SME;
10. Acknowledging that the Economic and Environmental Dimension is a vital part of the Comprehensive Security Concept and that the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE shall be strengthened and revitalized;
11. Emphasizing the importance of preparation in accordance with the Porto Ministerial Council Decision of a new strategy document on the economic and ecological dimension based upon the principles of equal economic co-operation in the OSCE area;

The Sub-regional Conference on Promoting SME organized by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,

12. Acknowledges that addressing tensions resulting from economic and environmental problems is an important element in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation;
13. Urges the OSCE to raise awareness by making delegations and capitals more sensitive to the interplay between environmental and/or economic factors and the security of the OSCE region;
14. Calls upon OSCE participating States to promote developing stable and efficient economic and institutional structures to enable them to obtain an equitable share of global prosperity;
15. Calls upon national parliaments and regional legislative assemblies in the OSCE participating States to ensure the adoption of adequate legislation to foster the development of SME;
16. Supports the ongoing elaboration of a new OSCE strategy document in the economic and ecological dimension and recommends to include in it provisions regarding the role of SMEs in sustainable economic development;
17. Calls upon the OSCE participating States to promote practices of good governance and a transparent rule of law to ensure a predictable framework within which SME may flourish;
18. Calls upon the OSCE to catalyze specific action from key partners, such as *inter alia* Intergovernmental Organizations, International Financial Institutions and NGOs, and to focus their attention on security concerns;
19. Calls upon OSCE participating States to create a legal and regulatory environment favourable to the development of SME including equitable taxation systems and assistance in gaining access to technical, trade and financial infrastructures;
20. Calls upon governments of the OSCE to provide technical assistance services on legal, tax and licensing requirements as well as access to information on market data and trade and investment opportunities;
21. Urges OSCE participating States to support the availability of financial resources targeted to meet the needs of SME via commercial banks, international organizations, venture capital firms and other institutions;

22. Appeals to OSCE to identify areas and sectors under development and in need of reconstruction in order to bring them to the attention of international and government organizations as well as NGOs with the resources to assist SME;
23. Urges that the OSCE, making use of its Platform for Co-operative Security, should establish working partnerships at headquarter level with Intergovernmental Organizations, NGOs, International Financial Institutions and UN agencies to target program resources to SME development in specific regions and countries, thereby also reinforcing OSCE field efforts;
24. Calls upon the OSCE to catalyze working relationships between technical assistance providers and business associations/NGOs to promote SME creation, and build the capacity of existing enterprises;
25. Reminds all OSCE participating States about the utmost importance of basic and professional education and the development of research as well as the necessity to find ways to establish contacts between high level schools and SMEs;
26. Urges the OSCE to facilitate systematic access to market data and other business information, particularly lines of credits and other financial resources targeted for SMEs by working with government ministries, Intergovernmental Organizations, International Financial Institutions and other relevant organizations to ensure transparent and equal information access and distribution;
27. Appeals to OSCE participating States to develop new frameworks to enable women to be part of the labour market;
28. Suggests that participating States cooperate with Women's organizations and offer training and counselling to women in order to enhance their professional perspectives;
29. Calls upon national, regional and local administrations in the OSCE participating States to ensure clear and simple administrative procedures for the creation of SMEs.
30. Calls upon participating States to allow SMEs fair access and competition to public commands and supply;
31. Calls upon OSCE participating States to promote entrepreneurship to create and entrepreneurial culture as well as develop and implement instruments of support to SMEs including training, consulting, management, marketing and start-up capital;

32. Calls upon the OSCE to encourage the SMEs of developed economies to enter into joint venture arrangements with the SMEs of transition economies in order to strengthen their economic activities in terms of quality improvements and to facilitate marketing;
33. Appeals to the OSCE to address the trans-national aspects of SMEs and to promote regional cooperation;
34. Suggests that OSCE participating States should foster cooperation and networking between the economic sector and universities i.e. universities of applied science;
35. Calls upon OSCE participating States to elaborate national policies on youth and to elaborate programmes to facilitate the fight against unemployment and to support young entrepreneurship;
36. Appeals to the OSCE to prepare guidelines on best practices in developing SMEs sector in order to ensure stronger contribution of SMEs potential to economic growth and well-being.

Berne, 15 May 2003