

Peer learning sessions of the 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region

Presentation of policy practices as a basis for the peer learning discussion

[Session 4.2. Digital Transformation for SDG implementation](#)

<p>Title of intervention, country and name of presenter</p>	<p><i>Intervention under Topic 3 of Session 4.2:</i></p> <p><i>“The importance of new technologies to support trade and trade facilitation for more resilient and responsive economies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic through the global mandate of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT)”</i></p> <p><i>Exact title of intervention “Digitalization in trade facilitation towards a sustainable and resilient recovery”</i></p> <p>Ambassador Vuk Žugić , Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)</p>
<p>Brief description</p>	<p>As the COVID-19 crisis deepens globally and in the OSCE area, it poses severe threats to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as to security and stability. New and innovative technologies can help the OSCE participating States (https://www.osce.org/participating-states) to facilitate trade with each other and make their economies more resilient against external shocks such as the pandemic. New technologies can be an important contributing factor to a comprehensive security approach and can act as a confidence and trust building measure. At the same time, new technologies pose certain risks, which need to be taken into account. The promotion of trade and transport connectivity is a crucial component of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE, which is inherently bound to the ongoing digitalisation of our economies and supply chains.</p> <p>By increasing the speed of exchanges and reducing the costs of international transactions, digitalization can in fact play a key role in promoting economic connectivity between countries and contribute to sustainable development, security and stability.</p>

<p>Policy goal(s) or challenge(s) to be addressed</p>	<p>Policy goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance the resilience of economies against external shocks like the COVID 19 pandemic using new technologies - Pursue an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach engaging governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations - Contribute to a sustainable and green recovery through digital transformation <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More openness and use of new technologies/networks for trade also create vulnerabilities that need to be addressed
<p>Instruments and proposals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a clear common vision among participating States towards employing new technologies to the overall goal of facilitating trade - Also have a clear common vision of how to encounter potential threats ➔ Importance of norms and rules setting ➔ Partnerships with other regional and international organizations to build on each others experience, knowledge and strengths ➔ The OSCE, since its establishment has been providing to its participating States a key platform to discuss policy choices and foster inter-governmental dialogue and is best placed to facilitate meaningful and inclusive dialogue and coordination in this field.
<p>Constraints and difficulties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consensus building on employment of new technologies for trade facilitation - Integration of new technologies into existing trade infrastructure - Setting up norms and regulations for new technologies in favour of states and societies, not only companies - Defining common threats and adequate responses

Lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport connectivity, the quality of logistics services and border management all play growing roles as determinants of international trade flows. Trade facilitation in particular has been identified as a tool for increasing trust and co-operation between countries.• The current situation has shown that the use of innovative digital tools can be instrumental in advancing broader goals such as facilitating the flow of goods across borders, as well as developing diversified and regional supply chains, which provide greater resilience and possible sustainable paths to address the many challenges brought to global trade and connectivity by COVID-19.• Since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the OSCE, and through further OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions, commitments are shaped around the idea that connectivity through trade and transport, can be a driving force for reducing inequalities and fostering economic development, prosperity, stability and security in the OSCE region. Thus, the OSCE is well positioned as a platform for facilitating dialogue, supporting co-operation, and sharing lessons learned.
Links to additional materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Connectivity: https://www.osce.org/oceea/446224- Digitalization: https://www.osce.org/oceea/446218- Narrowing Socio-Economic Disparities: https://www.osce.org/oceea/446254