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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 11-22 September 2017

Working session 17: Fundamental Freedoms II, including freedom of movement, migrant workers and the integration of legal migrants

Mr. Moderator,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The EU remains resolute in its position that everyone should be free to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. Restrictions on this right have the character of very rare exceptions and should not be abused or applied in an arbitrary manner. Free movement and contacts among citizens are important in the context of the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The EU continues to actively promote the integration of migrant workers in societies where they are lawfully residing, and to undertake activities to raise public awareness of the enriching contribution of migrants and migrant workers to the latter. Successful integration policies are a factor in promoting stability and cohesion within our societies.

Based on the above, the EU would like to make the following recommendations:

- The OSCE Participating states should ensure the right to freedom of movement and residence within their borders as well as the right to leave the country, including its own, and return to his or her country. Security-related restrictions should be proportional and in response to a specific public need.
- The OSCE participating States should ensure freedom of movement of human rights defenders, enabling them to pursue their human rights activities.



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- The OSCE Participating states should focus on building dialogue and cooperation as an essential prerequisite to ensuring safe and sustainable human mobility in full respect of human rights.
- The OSCE Participating states should contribute in a coherent way towards the integration of the regular migrant population, fully respecting their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Moderator,

Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right and one of central values of the EU. It represents one of the four fundamental freedoms enshrined and protected in the EU Treaties. EU citizens consider freedom of movement as the most notable achievement of European integration.

The OSCE commitments on freedom of movement date all the way back to the Helsinki Final Act. A lot of progress has been made to facilitate freedom of movement since then. However, in a number of participating States, human rights defenders, including humanitarian organisations, continue to face undue restrictions with regard to free movement. It is crucial that Participating States recognize the importance of human rights work, and fully comply with the commitments and relevant international standards concerning freedom of movement. Preventing the access of human rights defenders to any part of state's territory, especially the conflict areas, or to any relevant site, for the purpose of monitoring, reporting and other human rights activities, is not acceptable.

Mr. Moderator,

The EU has paid increased attention to a well-managed legal migration, recognising the integration of migrant workers and legal migrants as a growth opportunity both for the countries of origin and for the countries of destination of migratory flows.

A forward-looking and comprehensive European immigration policy is an important objective for the EU, intended to establish a balanced approach to dealing with regular and



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irregular immigration. The Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration is offering the platform to implement this policy in close cooperation with our partners, finding shared solutions and establishing sound and fair dialogues.

The EU encourages the creation of conditions to foster greater harmony in relations between migrant workers and the rest of the society of the state in which they lawfully reside.

The EU reaffirms the principles stated in the “European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals”, emphasizing the importance of implementing the principle of equal treatment and of preventing institutional as well as every-day discrimination against migrants. With EU Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals launched in June 2016, our common policy priorities and tools for concrete actions to be undertaken at EU level were set out in support of the action on integration taken at Member States' level, with a view to further develop and strengthen integration policies across the EU.

Integration is an evolving process, which requires close monitoring, constant efforts, innovative approaches and bold ideas. The solutions are not easy to define but if migrants integrate successfully they will represent a significant contribution to social and economic achievement of the destination country. The EU believes that successful integration policy includes integration through participation, more involvement at local level as well as involvement of countries of origin. That is why active participation of migrants in the labour market to the socio-cultural life and the decision making process, through a genuine “bottom-up” approach and by reinforcing inter-institutional cooperation among different levels of governance, is essential.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.