



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**The Secretariat**

**Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

**Launch Seminar of the Mediterranean edition of the Handbook on  
Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies**

Wednesday, 12 December 2007

Balafrey Conference Center, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Rabat, Morocco

**Opening speech by**

**Mr. Bernard Snoy,**

**Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am very pleased and proud to be here today, and on the behalf of the OSCE, be part of the team presenting to you the new **Mediterranean edition of the Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies**. I want to thank the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting this Seminar and for its unwavering support to its organization. I also want to say that the production of the Handbook and the organization of this Seminar have been a real team effort. Without the expertise, dedication and cooperation of our partners in this endeavor, namely the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization, we would not have been able to present to you this Handbook and we would not be gathered here today. I also want to thank the Government of Spain for its support to this project.

We are launching a new Labour Migration Handbook that we hope will inspire you to an active exchange of good practices and sharing of experiences on new labour migration policies and models that have proven to be useful and effective. This Seminar has gathered participants from all over the Mediterranean – we have government and social partner representatives here from 20 countries and many regional and international organizations – providing a unique opportunity to have an open and informal dialogue on how to develop effective labour migration policies in both countries of origin and destination. You will also have direct access to the authors of the Handbook who will be introducing us to the different sections of the book as well as access to the complementary expertise of our three organizations.

The idea to produce a Mediterranean edition of the Handbook and to have it translated into Arabic stems from requests made at the OSCE Mediterranean Seminar in Sharm El-Sheik in 2006 to also make this Handbook more relevant for all countries of the Mediterranean and to make it more accessible to Arabic speakers in the Southern Mediterranean region as effective labour migration management is a common concern of countries North, South and East of the Mediterranean. As this idea was also interesting to the IOM and the ILO for their migration related work in this region, we decided to continue our good cooperation. We have revised the original Handbook that was mainly produced for the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The book takes into account the Mediterranean context and contains new examples and models from the Mediterranean countries. In this work we also received inputs from some of our Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The OSCE views **migration as a comprehensive security issue** with links not only to security concerns, but also to economic development, gender, human rights and environmental degradation. It is for this reason that we believe that the OSCE, with its comprehensive security concept, is well placed to facilitate dialogue and exchange of best practices on this topic.

Although migration related issues have been part of the OSCE dialogue since its inception at the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975, migration was placed on our agenda as a cross-dimensional issue by the OSCE Slovenian Chairmanship in 2005 and has been reinforced with the Ljubljana Ministerial Decision on Migration in 2005 and the Brussels Ministerial Statement on Migration in 2006.

Improved migration management and in particular more effective ways of addressing **irregular migration, the root causes of migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings** are issues of particular concern to many OSCE participating States as they also are to the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. Many of our participating States see that the OSCE can contribute to their existing national, regional and international efforts by providing a broad platform for experience and information exchange between different countries and stakeholder groups.

This year's Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE added a new aspect in the migration-security dialogue namely **environmentally induced migration**. Minister Moratinos outlined this issue at his opening speech at the 2007 Economic and Environmental Forum, when he said that "Migration resulting from environmental factors - whether within a State or between extensive geographical areas - represents an important issue for the future of the OSCE area." The potential links between migration, environmental degradation and security have also been raised in the recent Madrid Ministerial Council Declaration on Environment and Security. Environmental degradation is increasingly recognised to be an additional push factor to migration and should be included in migration management strategies. However, the causal linkages, as we shall hear later on are not always that apparent and the issue still requires more research.

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

What is clear is that the security of the OSCE and that of the Mediterranean region are inextricably linked. This message was already included in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 and was reiterated on many occasions since then. The **Mediterranean Partners** play a significant role today within the OSCE and regularly contribute their ideas and experience in all three dimensions of security. The representation of so many countries here today is the best example of the success of our partnership and a particular tribute to Morocco's relentless engagement.

In recent years, the Mediterranean Partners have been particularly active in the context of the annual Economic and Environmental Forum, by providing quality experts and bringing a much needed Mediterranean perspective on the problem at hand. This included the organization of specific side events during recent forums, one of which, in 2005, was devoted to migration.

The annual Mediterranean Seminars in particular provide an occasion for in-depth reflection on a number of issues, including migration. Migration was in fact the main theme of the 2005 Mediterranean Seminar, which was also held here in Rabat in September 2005. On that occasion, the focus was on the economic as well as the human and cultural aspects of migration and an attempt was made at elaborating guiding principles for an OSCE role in migration and integration. Next week, in Tel Aviv, once again the participating States and the Mediterranean Partners will convene to discuss the theme of tolerance and non-discrimination, including in their migration related aspects.

**OSCE works on migration related issues in all its dimensions.**

My Office, which represents the economic and environmental dimension of the organization, has worked on facilitating dialogue and exchange of best practices on the mutual benefits of effective labour migration management among our participating States as well as between them and our Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. This work was mainly carried out through the production and promotion of this Handbook and by organizing capacity building workshops and seminars.

Our field presences in Central Asia are also actively supporting legal, more orderly and safe migration by assisting local authorities in the establishment of a network of migrant information-resource centres. These centres help raise awareness among potential migrants and

their family members about legal means of migration, destination country requirements as well as the dangers of illegal migration, including human trafficking for labour exploitation. More generally, issues related to trafficking for labour exploitation have been brought to the attention of the OSCE participating States and their Partners by the OSCE's Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

As I said before, environment and migration linkages are not always apparent and still require more research for us to adequately understand the apparent causalities. For this reason, my Office is supporting the United Nations University and a consortium of several European Universities to undertake research related to environmental migration. We are lending our support notably to the Central Asian research program as well as to the Mediterranean program. We are very glad that a representative of the United Nations University, Mr. Tamer Afifi can be with us today to tell you more about this research initiative and its preliminary findings with regard to the Mediterranean.

I would also like to mention that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE supports initiatives concerning the treatment of migrants and migrant workers and the protection of their rights. Unfortunately, no ODIHR representative was able to join us here in Rabat as ODIHR is currently organizing a workshop on New Immigration Legislation in Russia in Moscow together with the IOM. The theme of that workshop is actually an outcome of a similar seminar to this one, held in Moscow, last year.

But coming back to the Handbook, I would like to emphasize that it takes a comprehensive approach to labour migration management, covering best-practices and policies of direct relevance and interest to both countries of origin and destination.

Let me give you a few **illustrations**. To address the increasing irregular migration flows within and from the Mediterranean region and the associated risks, the Handbook gives several examples of how countries can develop foreign employment and information services for their nationals to help them find legal employment. Concrete examples are given of services developed by the Ministry of Manpower and Migration in Egypt and the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation. It also discusses different admission and post-admission policies, citing Spain and Italy among others. Regarding the protection of migrant domestic workers, a concern in many countries of the region, it showcases the Special Working Contract in Jordan for non-Jordanian Domestic Workers – a new and interesting initiative.

Generally, the Handbook covers thematically basic facts on labour migration, looks at applicable laws and provides policy guidelines and models.

In addition to presenting the new Handbook to you, the aim of the Seminar is to encourage dialogue and cooperative networking on common concerns and challenges, in finding solutions and approaches that can better capture the many positive contributions of labour migration as well as minimise violations of human rights and occurrence of exploitation and discrimination.

Before concluding, let me point out some of the thematic areas that we will be discussing at the Seminar. We will start by looking at the economic and environmental reasons for migration, then we will turn to the policy responses to labour migration in countries of origin and destination. As an increasing number of labour migrants now also are women, we will also be addressing the need for gender sensitive labour migration policies. We will also discuss different international and regional cooperation mechanisms and their contribution to the task of promoting legal labour migration and of reducing the irregular migration in the Mediterranean region. Before concluding, our last session will review what should be a very important message of the seminar, namely the crucial nexus between labour migration, employment and development.

I hope you will find the Seminar both stimulating and useful for the specific situations each of you is facing at home. I also hope that the discussions started here will continue, building on the various existing regional and organizational structures, including the OSCE. Let me assure you that, for the years to come, migration will continue to be a key component of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security as it is clearly of relevance to the institution's early warning and conflict prevention mandate.

I thank you for your attention.