

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

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Venue: Belafraj Conference Center,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

OPENING REMARKS

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express our gratitude to the authorities of the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting this meeting and more specially Director General of Bilateral Relations, Ambassador Yousef Amrani

I would like to give my special thanks to Mr. Bernard Snoy, OSCE Co-ordinator of the Office of Economic and Environmental Activities, and his staff here with him today; Ms. Michele Klein Solomon, Director of the Migration Policy Research and Communications of the International Organization for Migration; and Mr Mourad Wahba Resident Coordinator of United Nations who represents the International Labour Organisation.

Last but not least let me thank Ambassador Kovacic representing Slovenia as it was under the Slovene Chairmanship that OSCE has focused an enhanced attention in Migration and thus has triggered the current process.

The OSCE Spanish Chairmanship attaches the utmost importance to this Seminar for three sorts of reasons:

- It clearly reflects one of the Spanish Chairmanship priorities namely, enhancing the relationship with OSCE Partners for Cooperation and more precisely, with Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. In this respect let me recall the important decision adopted on the occasion of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid, last November concerning the setting up of a Partnership Fund which will permit the launching and the funding of OSCE related initiatives and programmes in cooperation with Partners for Cooperation.
- It allows the OSCE to actively contribute in this field of activities reinforcing thus its role as a relevant international organization in the current international scenario. OSCE's added value when addressing migration issues is based on its well established comprehensive approach to security. In this way our debates the two coming days can be enriched. OSCE's specific approach allows to take

on board different aspects of the migration policies and its repercussions as the OSCE does. In this respect let me recall the important decision adopted in Madrid concerning Security and Environment where migrations are considered in this light. This year's focus on tolerance and non discrimination reflected at the High level meetings held in Bucarest and Cordoba constitute as well an additional element for this multifaceted approach on migrations.

- Finally this Seminar will contribute to reinforce OSCE's cooperation with other international organizations. The Spanish Chairmanship has paid special attention to this well established tradition. It is indeed an opportunity to further enhanced OSCE cooperation with ILO and IMO.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, labour migration has become one of the major and most complex issues of today's world, and it is increasingly at the top of the agendas of many governments, shaping both foreign and domestic policies. Countries that workers leave in search of a better life, countries they pass through, and countries they are destined for are part of a labour market made increasingly interdependent by the forces of globalization, which have direct link to security, human rights, economic and environmental factors. But the issue of labour migration is not only a concern for our governments but also for our societies. We Spaniards, have a long history tied up with all sides of the labour migration spectrum. We were once a labour sending country, today a destination country. For this reason, Spain has taken special interest in advancing the aims of the original Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies and in its adaptation to the Mediterranean region as well as in its translation to Arabic, through funding the OSCE contribution to this project.

The main objective of the Handbook is to assist States in the OSCE Region - both participating States and partners for co-operation - to develop new and innovative policies for a more effective management of labour migration. In this sense, Spain is convinced that inter-State co-operation is essential to enhance the positive impact of labour migration on both countries from origin and destination, an aspect that sometimes is overshadowed by negative images and stereotypes depicted by the media or certain sectors of society. Fortunately migration is increasingly recognized as an asset and stimulus to development.

The launching of the Mediterranean version of the Handbook must be seen as a step towards enhancing dialogue and cooperation among OSCE participating States and partners in the Northern and Southern Mediterranean on recognising the mutual benefits of legal migration, developing effective migration policies by governments, reducing irregular migration and promoting fair treatment and integration of migrants through the exchange of good practices and new approaches. I hope this handbook can be of help to our States in their efforts to address these issues. The targeted stakeholders of the Handbook are decision-makers and labour migration practitioners in the OSCE area -especially in the Northern and Southern Mediterranean - and countries served by ILO and IOM.

Let me conclude by inviting you all to maintain a fruitful discussion and an exchange of experiences about best practices on establishing effective labour migration policies in the Mediterranean region.

Thank you all for joining us here this morning.

