

## **Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies**

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Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the past few years, the problems and challenges arising from international migration have been among the central themes discussed under the auspices of the United Nations, at the level of the European Union and African Union, and within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Poverty, scarce opportunities for employment and maintaining a family, ageing of the population, bleak demographic outlook for economically developed countries and the current situation in the labour market are only some of the factors precipitating migration from one environment to another. This has also affected the social, economic and political life in countries of origin and destination.

Numerous other factors, such as climate change, signal that a massive increase in migration flows (i.e. environmental refugees) awaits us in the future due to the loss of land. According to some forecasts, by 2050 10 million people will be forced to migrate from the least developed parts of the world (for example, the Maldives, where some 400,000 people live, will disappear if sea level rises by only one metre) due to changed weather conditions such as droughts, floods and hurricanes.

The global society will become ethnically and culturally diverse due to massive migration flows. We must therefore strengthen dialogue and cooperation between different groups if we are to successfully address the issues and exploit the advantages of migration.

Today marks three years since the European Union started developing the Global Approach to Migration in order to produce, together with its partners, a comprehensive strategy for migration policy. Today it is crucial to be aware of the need for coordinated and balanced treatment of the migration phenomenon. In the future, we must make additional efforts to exploit the interconnection between development opportunities and the positive impact of international migration. This interconnection is not a fresh discovery; we have, however, only recently realised that, while taking ever-increasing global mobility into account, this interconnection must be based on mutual benefits and advantages of migration flows. The ageing Europe needs a new workforce to further develop its economy and to disburden its social and pension systems, while the densely populated underdeveloped parts of the world are in desperate need of a development impetus.

All this is particularly important in the context of the economic and financial crisis which has hit different parts of the world almost simultaneously due to the great interdependence of the global capital market. There has been a sharp decrease in the need for a new workforce; a number of countries have even started encouraging migrant workers to return to their countries of origin. In finding their way out of the global recession, countries will have to carefully formulate and put into practice policies aimed particularly at protecting the most vulnerable groups, including migrant workers, and ensuring their social and working rights.

During this time of recession and growing unemployment among native workers, when countries are adopting new measures on a daily basis to protect their labour markets, it is crucial that they not only direct their migration policies towards selectively choosing migrant workers coming from third countries and reducing their number, but also take measures to enhance their integration into society and labour markets.

We are also aware of this in Slovenia, as we have faced a total change in the structure of migration flows over the last decade. At the beginning of this decade, we were facing a large number of illegal migrants and asylum seekers, and therefore focused our migration policy and institutional order on the prevention of illegal migration, establishment of a restrictive asylum policy and on enhanced border control. Today, or at least since 2005, as Slovenia records a large number of work migrations, which in 2008 accounted for almost 80% of total migration, Slovenia has endeavoured to channel migration policy into the area of effective planning of economic migration and into connecting work migration with the processes of integrating immigrants into the society and the labour market.

In this scope, Slovenia seriously embarked on the project of drafting the “Strategy of Economic Migration” in 2008; when put into practice, it will represent an important strategic basis for further development in balancing economic migration. An action plan, including specific measures based on the principle of equal treatment and guaranteeing social and economic rights of workers from third countries in the area of work and employment, is an integral part of the Strategy. The Strategy sets out the following objectives:

- Guaranteeing immigration, which will alleviate the effects of the decreasing number of people of working age and the working population and minimise short-term discrepancies in the labour market;
- Promoting immigration, which will enhance innovation and business activities, preserve or encourage the competitiveness of the economy and augment human resources;
- Enabling domestic work force to acquire experience abroad, reducing brain-drain by promoting the circulation of experts.

We firmly believe that comprehensive migration flow management is possible only through intensive dialogue and partner cooperation between countries. In recent years, Slovenia implemented this principle in the “Brdo Process”, where the following prerequisites for such cooperation have been established with countries of South-Eastern Europe:

- Harmonising visa policy and the policy of issuing residence permits in these countries with the EU policy – for example, defining the common criteria for granting visas and harmonising requirements or obligations;
- Strengthening cooperation between institutions responsible for immigration and control of national borders with a view to obtaining exact and comparable information (such as on migration flows in certain countries and regions, on the structure of immigrants and emigrants, on the amount of transferred funds, on links with the diaspora, etc.);
- Enhancing the transfer of good practices and improving technical standards in the protection of national borders;
- Enhancing practical assistance in providing training for officials in migration and asylum legislation and procedures, registration of the population, security of travel documents and the introduction of biometrics;

- Accelerating the return and readmission of persons residing illegally in other countries;
- Promoting legal migration in the context of a simpler and more selective movement of workforce and elaborating migration profiles.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to conclude by pointing out an essential fact. At the international level, a number of documents have already been adopted and various measures proposed which certainly provide an excellent basis for establishing a more comprehensive and worthy regulation of migration flows. **However, these documents must be implemented and measures put into practice;** naturally, they must also be tailored to the needs of each country and harmonised with broader regional initiatives.

Thank you for your attention.