



**Statement by Ambassador Dr Boris Frlec,
Head of the OSCE Task Force,
at the Second Preparatory Seminar for the Thirteenth Economic Forum
"Migration from an Economic, Environmental and Security Perspective"
Almaty, Kazakhstan, 24-25 January 2005**

Closing Session

Thank you Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The two days of constructive discussions, the high number of participants and the interest expressed in the topic "Migration from an Economic, Environmental and Security Perspective" confirmed the relevance and importance of the topic of the Second Preparatory Seminar for the Thirteenth OSCE Economic Forum.

The phenomenon of migration is very complex. Among other causes, migration primarily stems from poverty, political conflicts and ecological catastrophes. However, migration can also be an instrument of career-building and social advancement. Given the fact that migration is an unavoidable necessity, efforts should be made to recognise it as a valuable resource. If properly managed, migration can enhance security and sustainable development.

To achieve this goal, people and governments alike should be educated on the issue of migration. For that reason, national networks for the expertise on migration need to be developed and sharing successful practices on migration management among the OSCE participating States should be facilitated. Prospective migrants should be provided with realistic information on opportunities for work or employment in countries of destination. In this context, information dissemination, if possibly in information centres located in countries of origin, has to be designed in a manner that would protect migrants from potential abuses. To develop a responsive attitude, not only migrants but also citizens and politicians, both in countries of origin and destination, must have access to comprehensive information on the complexity and the wide-array of consequences of migration.

Furthermore, we have to improve the existing legal frameworks and instruments and overcome the gap between existing legal standards and current migration practices in the OSCE participating States. Needless to say, adherence to international conventions on migration is a prerequisite.

In order to provide for fair decision-making on migration management, we shall encourage the harmonisation and exchange of migration policy experience, good practices, research results and statistical data. In this respect, co-operation among the OSCE participating States is crucial.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fact remains that at present, in countries of destination, the attitude towards receptiveness of migrants is rather one of marginalization than of integration. If freedom of movement is an important human right, we have to strive for the integration of migrants. In this context, more activities related to their integration, such as training in labour legislation, exploration of market access opportunities and promoting the rights of migrants, are required. At the same time, efforts should be invested into the gradual creation of an environment that would facilitate adaptation to the increasing cultural diversity and the integration of migrants.

One of the questions that we need to address effectively is whether countries of destination are ready and able to reduce their informal economies. As we have learned, informal economies grow faster and are more dynamic than formal economies. Due to the difficulties in the process of reduction of informal economies, the numbers of illegal migrants are not decreasing. Ironically, the persistence and growth of informal economies, which often are on the brink of the existing legislation, if not on the brink of criminality, enable even higher levels of remittances to flow back home. While the legality of remittances in this case is questionable, they still can be useful for achieving sustainable development in countries of origin.

In the context of terrorism, illegal migration, but also migration in general, has often been automatically put into the framework of criminality. We shall avoid such generalisation. However, we need to be aware that the worst terrorist attack in Europe was perpetrated by legal immigrants, which has contributed to a negative attitude of the public. This is a sensitive issue that demands a very careful elaboration.

There is a link between the environment, the economy and security. Natural and man-made disasters, combined with other unfavourable conditions can deplete people of their basic prospects and force them to seek new life opportunities elsewhere. In this respect, activities to assist the affected population on a long term basis and to resolve environmental problems should be supported. There is also an urgent need to stimulate and assist sustainable development in countries of origin.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to use this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to the government of Kazakhstan for hosting this important event. My gratitude goes to the Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Mr Swiecicki and his dedicated team for all assistance provided in the course of preparation and realisation of the seminar. The contribution of the OSCE Center in Almaty was also instrumental for the successful

organisation of the event. It has to be stressed that the contribution of International Organization for Migration and International Center for Migration Policy Development was essential in designing the agenda of the seminar.

Furthermore, let me extend my gratitude to the speakers, moderators and rapporteurs as well as to the participants who contributed considerably to the success of the event. My sincere thanks to you all.

The cycle of this year's preparatory seminars will continue in Kyiv, Ukraine on 10 - 11 March 2005 where the Third Preparatory Seminar on Integrating Persons belonging to National Minorities will take place. Let me take this opportunity and invite you to attend this final event before the Thirteenth OSCE Economic Forum on "Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons Belonging to National Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE Area". The high level Forum will be held in Prague from 23 to 27 May 2005.

Thank you.