



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

**Remarks by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier**

**OSCE-CEI High-Level Panel Discussion**  
**“Beyond the Emergency: Improving the International Response to**  
**Large Movements of People”**  
**9 June 2017**

Thank you, Ambassador Azzoni,  
Dear Minister Kravchenko, dear Ambassador Linhart, dear co-panelists,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased that the growing co-operation between the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the OSCE has led to this joint event. Special thanks for this go to the Belarusian Presidency of the CEI and the Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE. This event underscores the good potential for growing cooperation between our organizations and the need to undertake steps to further develop and structure our relationship more formally. It is a timely opportunity to exchange views on an issue that is clearly highly relevant to the agenda of both organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Migration Summit in New York last year, I emphasized the important role that regional organizations can play to facilitate the implementation of the future Global Compact by promoting coherent regional approaches to this complex and divisive issue, thus paving the way towards shared concepts, common policies and coordinated action. In fact, refugee and migrant flows have put some countries under formidable stress, testing governance and law enforcement on multiple levels, while challenging and sometimes overstressing the capacity of public services. Resulting friction has given leverage to forces that have an interest in exacerbating divisions within and between our societies. The alarming rise in xenophobic tendencies across the OSCE region is, among other reasons, a manifestation of people’s growing fears about migration. Whereas the benefits of free circulation continue to be recognized for the economic opportunities they create for companies and for individuals, physical and legal barriers are being tightened to fend off irregular migrants, some of whom are in fact refugees seeking international protection from violence and conflicts. These actions have created tensions at the inter-state, sub-regional and regional levels.

Against the larger backdrop of revived political divisions reminiscent of the Cold War, the divisive discourse on migration bears considerable risks for security and stability in our region. At the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Hamburg last year, we saw first-hand how difficult the discussion has become. Although a decision on migration was finally approved by the OSCE participating States, it has admittedly given us only limited political guidance

on an issue that is set to shape political and even strategic developments in Europe and beyond for the long term. The lack of agreement on terms such as solidarity and shared responsibility is also rather worrying given the close cooperation that is required to address the many related challenges. However, despite its shortcomings the Hamburg Ministerial Decision has set us on course to strengthening OSCE engagement on migration issues, in cooperation with our international partners.

Given the complexity of the phenomenon, simplistic and disconnected responses will not work. Instead we need to strike a careful balance between humanitarian and security considerations. We must also avoid the trap of stigmatizing people, as in the distinction that is often made between “good” refugees and “bad” economic migrants. If we use these categories too rigidly we fail to recognize the complexity of the push and pull factors – many of which are very personal – that cause people to move. Notions such as environmental refugees and the need to clarify the status of people fleeing from failing or failed states are part of an evolving debate that does not lend itself to simple answers.

What we have inaptly come to call the “migration crisis” is in effect the failure to deal with the underlying political, economic, and social drivers that push people to seek a better life outside their own countries. They include civil strife and armed conflict, dysfunctional governance and chronic corruption, deep economic disparities magnified by demographic imbalances, as well as threats posed by natural and man-made disasters. Faced with challenges of such a magnitude and complexity, the path towards stability and progress will be hard won and will need to be the work of a broad coalition of actors at all levels.

This is the reason why I see great opportunity in the negotiations that will lead to the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018. This process is the first attempt ever to put in place some form of governance of migration at the global level. Although the process is firmly in the hands of various United Nations’ bodies I see an important role for regional organizations such as the OSCE, the ICMPD and the CEI to contribute region-specific input to the negotiations in New York next year.

Indeed, when reading the main elements for the future Global Compact, I see many synergies with existing OSCE migration-related commitments and activities. They include the facilitation of safe, orderly and regular migration through well-managed policies, the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, the adoption of cooperative approaches to border management in keeping with human rights standards, the fight against the trafficking in human beings and the promotion of integration as condition for stability and development. These are just some of the areas where the OSCE can support efforts towards global migration governance.

After all, the New York Declaration affirms the strong intention to build on existing bilateral, regional and global cooperation and partnership mechanisms. We stand ready to play our part in supporting the implementation process, once the Compact is agreed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Migration is a structural phenomenon of our increasingly interconnected world and will stay with us for the long term. As such it needs to be governed rather than just contained. Today’s event is another clear signal that we are committed to engaging on these issues with our partners. In fact, in addressing this global phenomenon, we see the OSCE as part of a broad

coalition of actors, including national governments, regional and international organizations, as well as the private sector and civil society that can help improve migration governance at all levels and turn migration into a resource for all.

Thank you.