



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council No 1109 Vienna, 20 July 2016

EU statement on Migration and Refugee Flows

The European Union and its Member States wish to express our sincere gratitude to Ambassador Wild for ably chairing the Informal Working Group and commend him for taking an engaged and serious approach to this task. With a focus on substance, he has comprehensively taken us through discussions on a wide range of topics related to migration and refugees. We appreciate the open and constructive atmosphere in the working group and the valuable input by panellists and all those who contributed to the process.

With its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE is well-placed to contribute to the global response to the current, complex situation, complementing the efforts undertaken by other international organisations. The OSCE is also a useful regional platform for dialogue and cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, including with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. This merits a place for the OSCE in the international efforts led by the UN, including at the upcoming UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants in September.

We commend the OSCE Secretariat, the autonomous institutions and field missions for the activities they have already initiated to address the current challenge. These provide a good foundation to build on as we define the OSCE's future engagement, which should be carried out within existing mandates, as we see no need to amend the mandates of any executive structure or institutions. We underline the importance of continuing to work on practical responses now in areas where the OSCE has a clear role to play, while we continue the wider discussions.

We would like to thank Ambassador Wild for the substantial report he has put forward to inform today's debate. This is a useful starting point in outlining recommendations for OSCE's engagement. By way of general comments, we would like to state that

any such engagement should bring added value to current efforts and avoid duplications, that possible budgetary implications of additional activities should be carefully considered and, finally, that refugees and migrants are indeed distinct categories that merit distinct policies.

Let me share our preliminary observations on the recommendations of the report, which will require further detailed consideration. First, we agree with the need to improve coherence and coordination of OSCE activities, both among OSCE entities, while respecting existing mandates, and in relation to other organisations.

Second, regarding protection, the European Union and its Member States are committed to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all. This includes unaccompanied children and women, who are particularly subject to discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence, and are more vulnerable targets of trafficking and other crimes. ODIHR could continue its cooperation with IOM and UNHCR on gender aspects of migration policies.

Third, on combatting crime – an area of particular interest – we believe a priority should be countering smuggling and trafficking in human beings – an area in which the OSCE has built unique expertise and adds value to efforts by other organisations – for example through increased police and judiciary cooperation against traffickers of human beings and training developed for not only prosecutors and judges, but also for law enforcement actors. We would also like to encourage all OSCE participating States and Partners to become parties to and to fully implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, especially the Protocol against smuggling of migrants.

Fourth, we see added value in the OSCE contributing to strengthening border management cooperation. The specialised expertise of the Border Management Staff College should be fully utilised, for instance to develop training or assistance for border authorities that complement the work of other organisations.

Fifth, the successful integration of migrants and refugees into the society of the host country is key to ensuring that they can contribute to their host community. ODIHR's guidelines on promoting tolerance and non-discrimination can offer useful guidance for policy makers, law enforcement personnel, civil society and educators. The OSCE

also provides a useful platform for dialogue and for sharing experiences and best practices in the field of labour migration.

Finally, the management of unprecedented irregular migration and refugee flows is a global responsibility, which calls for collective solutions based on solidarity and partnerships. We are ready to actively engage towards an equitable and balanced responsibility-sharing within the international community. We should continue working intensively with countries of origin and transit, which is essential in managing the mixed migratory flows. We therefore join the call for a closer engagement within the OSCE with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in this area.

We look forward to discussing these recommendations further. As far as a possible outcome of the Ministerial Council in Hamburg is concerned, we remain ready to engage actively on a text reflecting our common position on the OSCE's response to the current migration and refugee flows, among other important issues.

We once again thank Ambassador Wild for his thorough and dedicated efforts.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.