



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE
Economic and Environmental Activities**

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17TH OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region”

SECOND PREPARATORY CONFERENCE

TIRANA, 16-17 March 2009

Concept Note

Within the general theme “**Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region**” – the **17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum** (namely the first preparatory Conference on 16-17 October 2008 in Prague and the first part of the Forum on 19-20 January 2009 in Vienna) focused so far mainly on the ways and means to improve migration management and enhance co-operation between countries. In that regard, it was emphasized that a combination of comprehensive policy instruments and control mechanisms should be employed, in order to facilitate legal migration and counter illegal migration and the criminal activities associated with this phenomenon.

With this background, the second preparatory Conference (**16-17 March 2009, Tirana**) will mark the next step in this year’s Forum process. The Conference will address the need to strengthen the linkages and interaction between economic, social and environmental policies and migration for the overall benefit of stability and security in the OSCE area.

The need for such a discussion stems from the observation that up to now policies on migration in most countries have been made in separation from other public policies (*i.e.* on development, economy, trade, environment etc.), despite the rather strong links between all these areas, on the one hand, and migration issues, on the other hand. The general concept of the Tirana Conference starts from the assumption that enhancing the policy coherence would potentiate the beneficial aspects of migration for both countries of origin and destination, and would reduce the number of potential security risks.

The main objective of the Conference is to formulate specific recommendations for the OSCE on how the above mentioned issues should be addressed.

In this regard, **Introductory Session I - Linkages between migration management and economic, social and environmental policies** - should set the stage for the discussions at the Conference, highlight the interconnections between migration and other policy areas and indicate the measures needed to reach a more effective “policy mix”. An emphasis should be put on the need for long-term planning in addressing these linkages, on the mechanisms to promote inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination, as well as on short-term actions required. Examples of “effective practices” from OSCE participating States should be presented.

In particular, given the current global economic context, special attention should be paid to the impact of the crisis on migration management. The current crisis should stimulate innovative thinking especially with regard to the possible role of migration in underpinning sound economic development. At the same time, careful attention should be paid to the public discourse and actions taken on migration issues in order to avoid increased social tensions involving migrants or making the migrants carry the heaviest burden of the economic downturn as this in turn can generate security risks. Such issues should also be addressed during Session I.

Apart from a more general introductory part, the Conference agenda includes three main “building blocks”. Each one of them has a specific focus on economic, social and environmental aspects and their linkages with migration. Each one of them should contain both conceptual elements as well as concrete examples from across the OSCE region.

Session II - Migration and economic development - should highlight migrants’ contribution to the economies of countries of origin and destination and should focus on the policies that can enhance the positive effects of migration and make them sustainable. In this connection, the need for sound economic policies that encourage good governance and an attractive investment and business climate, leading to employment creation in countries of origin could be emphasized. Other relevant issues that also could be discussed are: re-integrating returning migrants into the domestic labour force, making the best use of migrants’ remittances and investments as a stabilizing factor, designing and implementing remittances policies and programmes as well as stimulating Diaspora involvement in the economic development of origin countries including through involving the banking sector to improve products for diaspora investment into the home country. Furthermore, the co-operation between destination and origin countries through co-development programmes will be another focus of this session.

Session III - Social policy issues linked with migration management - should discuss ways and means to protect and promote the rights of migrants and to empower them to achieve a better economic and social status. To this end, action is required in both origin and destination countries. Thus, the session would, *inter alia*, address the social cost of migration on the ‘left-behind’ and the ways to alleviate it, the policies and actions required for a successful reintegration of returned migrants etc. Special attention should be paid to training and skills development programmes in the countries of origin. Other topics for discussion in this session could include the social integration of labor migrants in destination countries, their protection in employment, social welfare and social security. An important element in this connection is the dialogue and co-operation between Governments and social partners, employers’ associations and trade unions, as well as civil society and migrants’ organizations. Such dialogues and co-operation is needed within each country as well as between origin and destination countries, bilaterally and at regional level.

Session IV – Environment and migration – will focus on an interconnection that is less researched and often less understood. There has always been an interdependency between migration and the environment. Environmental degradation, the loss of natural resources, water scarcity or destruction of habitats, notably in rural areas dependent on agriculture or livestock, can lead to severe loss in productivity and ultimately unemployment, pushing people to migrate either internally or internationally. Both gradual environmental change and extreme environmental events influence population migration patterns. Climate change adds new complexity to this nexus, while making the need to address it all the more urgent. Session IV will discuss these interrelations between environment and migration as well as the links with other factors such as demographic changes. The debate is expected to raise awareness on the potential consequences of environmentally induced migration for security and stability. While awareness raising and possibly more research are indeed needed, the session should also indicate what other actions could be required such as policy responses to environmentally induced migration in the areas of education, prevention, adaptation, mitigation etc.