



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
AT THE OSCE ECONOMIC FORUM, PRAGUE 23 – 27 MAY 2005**

As delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mette Kongshem
Session 1 – Population Development
25 May 2005

Mr. Chairman,

From the discussion these days and from the presentations this morning there seems to be a general understanding that demographic trends and migration patterns as they now develop, are among the most important challenges facing OSCE participating States. If not properly addressed, they may have serious impact on the economy, on society; like marginalization of certain groups, lack of opportunities, boiling over into social discontent and thereby threatening security and stability.

There is also a general understanding that we are faced with the question of conflict prevention and that the OSCE has a role in putting into use its resources and mechanisms and address these developments. In our view OSCE could and should provide participating States with recommendations on sustainable policy responses to deal with these challenges. The question is how.

My Delegation would like to make some concrete suggestions for the way ahead towards the Ministerial meeting in Ljubljana:

We think that OSCE needs a specific forum where to focus attention on demographic trends and population developments including migration. Related issues are already being dealt with in the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking. Making use of this existing mechanism, we can transform this group into a working group with a broader mandate, a working group on the human capital in the OSCE region: focusing on population developments and migration where gender equality and trafficking remain vital issues.

Such a working group could for example set about its work by developing a strategy on human capital dealing with demographic challenges. Such a strategy could contain elements like the following:

- contribute to an increased awareness raising concerning these challenges and the responses required.
- promote standard setting.
- provide best practices for combining maternity and professional careers of women and men on an equal footing, and focusing on gender equality as a prerequisite for a forward-looking and sustainable family policy.
- devise policies that manage migration in a positive way, by creating favourable conditions for rapid integration of immigrants through inclusion, opportunities and participation. And in this respect paying specific attention to the fact that international migration has been feminised in Europe and also that women and gender relations in migrant families is a factor that has been neglected so far.
- focus on the empowerment of the human capital in countries of origin in order to tackle outgoing migration flows.

In order to assist the working group with analytical studies and background material and data, we would support the idea that a special unit is created within the Office of the Economic Coordinator. Such a unit could focus on the harmonization of data collection and comparative analyses.

In this way the OSCE will create a good platform for dialogue and action in the area of demography and migration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman