



**ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**

**Δ' Γενική Διεύθυνση Διεθνών Οργανισμών
και Διεθνούς Ασφαλείας & Συνεργασίας**

**TASK FORCE
Ελληνικής Προεδρίας ΟΑΣΕ**



Seminar on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies

Brdo, 16-17 February 2009

Opening Speech by

Ambassador Abatis,

OSCE Greek Chairmanship

Honorable Minister, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me thank you, Minister Svetlik, as a representative of the Slovenian Government for the invaluable support extended by Slovenia towards making this Seminar a success. We are very pleased to convene here at Brdo, a place that successfully blends natural beauty and history in a modern environment that should inspire us to find solutions to pressing issues related to gender and labour migration.

On behalf of the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this important Seminar that will discuss examples of on-going practices in relation to labour migration policies for migrant women. The Greek Chairmanship finds the theme very important as well as relevant to the migration management discussion considering that around half of the world's 200 million migrants are women. And an increasing number are female migrant workers.

The Greek Government is very pleased to support the OSCE project on Awareness raising of the need for gender-sensitive labour migration policies under which this Seminar is being organized. The cross-

dimensionality of this project – labour migration management, gender equality, prevention of trafficking in human beings – falls squarely in the priorities of the OSCE Greek Chairmanship.

To reach a better management in migration policies across the OSCE area – including by enhancing co-operation between destination, transit, and origin countries, both bilaterally and at the regional level - is one of our main priorities during our Chairmanship. Our goal is to contribute to the mitigation of the negative aspects, while drawing on the benefits of migration.

The OSCE's comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to security is well suited to promote the principles of comprehensive, integrated migration policy and of enhanced regional co-operation on migration management issues. Therefore, we selected the theme of "Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region" for the OSCE 17th Economic and Environmental Forum.

The Seminar topic Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies fits well with the selected Forum theme as it raises the awareness of policy-makers to the fact that the number of female migrant workers is steadily increasing in many of our countries and that effective labour migration policies in both countries of destination and origin need to include a gender dimension to benefit all involved – governments, social partners, private sector and, most of all, the migrants themselves. More gender-sensitive labour migration policies can apart from reducing discrimination and exploitation of female migrant workers, also help to reduce irregular migration in some of the feminised employment sectors and reduce the grounds for operation by traffickers in human beings.

Furthermore, the gender aspects of migration are receiving increasing attention in many fora, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which the Greek Government is chairing this year. We are therefore looking forward to the OSCE Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies that is currently being developed as we might also present it to the Global Forum in November as a contribution to these discussions.

Promoting gender equality is among our priorities during our Chairmanship. We will in particular focus on women, peace and security issues and the prevention of violence against women. This Gender and Labour Migration project fits in as it aims at increasing the security and rights of female migrant

workers in the OSCE areas by identifying the main gender gaps in existing labour migration policies and suggests solutions to make policies more gender-sensitive. We also appreciate the project's effort to put gender mainstreaming of migration management on the agenda.

We also believe that creating legal labour migration channels for female migrant workers will contribute to the reduction of trafficking in human beings, which is another priority for the OSCE. We therefore welcome the participation of the Office of Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in this project. In 2009, under the agis Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons, the Special Representative will host a "Technical Seminar on Trafficking for Labour Exploitation Focusing on the Agricultural Sector" with the support of our Chairmanship. We hope that some of the work under the Gender and Labour Migration project can be of relevance to this event as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that we will have a genuine and action oriented dialogue during these two days.

We are honoured by the presence of so many representatives of governments, national agencies, academic community, international and non-governmental organizations and experts from across the OSCE area. This testifies to the importance of the subject. It is also a tribute to the unique role of the OSCE as a catalyst for networks of innovative international cooperation.

I look forward to our exchange of ideas and good practices.

Thank you.