

Statement by

Mr. Valeriu OSTALEP, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the
Republic of Moldova at the 17-th OSCE Economic and Environment Forum
Athens, 19 May 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The migration phenomenon has always existed, influenced by the historic context, the economic, political, social and demographic disparities between the Central and East European countries and the EU Member States. There are also interdependencies between the origin and receiving countries, as well as the European integration process evolutions. An integrated and inclusive common approach to economic migration management and the harmonization of the migration policies is necessary. It represents a challenge and an ambitious objective for both the European Union and countries of origin and will become urgent in the future, especially due to the demographic dynamics and economic development needs.

The impact of the current economic crisis on migration highlights the need for a coordinated approach. Governments should focus on protection of the most vulnerable, ensure prevention of discrimination of migrants in host countries, prepare for reintegration of the returning ones, develop labor strategies and implement institutional reforms that foster economic development and create employment opportunities.

In this regard, both host and origin countries need the assistance of relevant international governmental and non-governmental institutions which could provide an analysis on lay-offs, reduction of employment of migrants and their return to the country of origin, on deterioration of work conditions, as well on different forms of discrimination against foreign workers.

Mr. Chairman,

In my country, the process of gradual advance towards European Union has established a set of short and medium-term priorities, following recommendations of the European partners in the field of migration, which is linked with the Justice and Home Affairs commitments and the visa dialog.

The priorities in this regard imply consolidation of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the regional level in managing migration, especially fighting illegal migration, for stability and security reasons.

In this regard, the Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Community on the facilitation of the issuance of visas and on readmission were concluded, which are being implemented since 1st January 2008. Also, as of February 2008, the Republic of Moldova issues machine readable passports that comply with ICAO and EU standards and contain biometric data, including photo and fingerprints.

To achieve the objectives of prevention and fighting trafficking in human beings, a range of relevant normative acts have been adopted. The most important ones that should be mentioned are – the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and the

National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. The process of establishing the National Referral System continues.

The Government is establishing the Informational Integrated Automatic System "Migration and Asylum" in order to create proper conditions to implement the mechanisms of coordination and control of migration processes. The System will be an important management and monitoring instrument, that will contain data regarding the entry and exit from Moldova, will oversee the stay of foreign nationals and stateless persons and will help prevent illegal migration. The System is one of priorities envisaged by the National Action Plan on consolidating migration management and asylum system in Moldova, adopted in June 2008. This Plan also provides a series of measures for the implementation of the Mobility Partnership between the Moldova and EU, fighting illegal migration and consolidating the national system on asylum.

The Joint Declaration on Mobility Partnership was signed by the Republic of Moldova and EU on June 5, 2008, which is now successfully implemented. We consider that the Joint Declaration on Mobility Partnership is a new generation document favorable for strengthening the cooperation on bilateral and multilateral level in the field of migration.

The Mobility Partnership aims at consolidating cooperation on migration and development, preventing and fighting illegal migration, trafficking of human beings, as well as promoting an effective readmission and return policy, while respecting human rights and relevant international instruments for the protection of refugees and taking into account the individual situation of migrants and the socio-economic development of participating parties.

Several cooperation projects have already been and will be launched with the Swedish National Labor Market Administration in the area of labor market and migration. The aim is to create and develop competences of labor employment agencies from Moldova through experience and know-how transfer from Swedish experts in areas of employing disadvantaged persons and facilitating access to job information. Another focus, in connection with the Mobility Partnership with EU, is on return and reintegration of migrant workers, as well ensuring a legal character of the migration.

Last but not least, I would like to mention one of the main priorities for the Government of the Republic of Moldova, namely the goal to develop a comprehensive dialogue with European Union for the introduction of a visa free travel regime for the Moldovan citizens. In this sense, the Republic of Moldova proposed to the EU a pragmatic solution on the initiation of the dialogue on visa liberalization perspective. We are convinced that we should create conditions for citizens working abroad to freely travel and return home. By applying prohibitive mechanisms we will only aggravate the problem.

Moldovan authorities consider that the extension of the EU Border Assistant Mission to Moldova and Ukraine will substantially contribute to harmonizing the border management standards and procedures according to the EU ones by enhancing professional capacities at operational level, developing of risk analysis capacities, improving the interoperability between the border guards and customs service, as well as with other relevant national agencies.

Concluding, I wish to express one more time the need of strengthened cooperation in the field of migration, especially in the context of establishing an efficient mechanism of data sharing on Migration. The Government of the Republic of Moldova sees the cooperation on bilateral and multilateral level in this regard as an added value to the implementation of all necessary technical conditions and reforms in justice and home affairs, especially in the context of ensuring stability and security in the region.

Thank you for your attention!