

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
WORKING SESSION 12
(specifically selected topic) Rights of Migrants

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Ms. Moderator,

We would like to thank the distinguished introducers for their presentations on the current challenges and trends in the sphere of migration, activities of other international organizations and exploring of possible contribution of the OSCE to global efforts to address migration issues.

This session is an appropriate platform to discuss human rights aspects of migration between the main stakeholders: governments, international organizations and civil society.

Armenia has actively and constructively contributed to negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration are important partners for Armenia in elaboration and implementation of state policy on migration.

Since beginning of the conflict in Syria my country is facing new wave of cross-border displacement from Syria. Armenia is hosting more than 22 000 refugees from that country. Close to 20 thousand of these people were granted citizenship, which enabled them with all the political, civilian, economic, social and other rights and facilitated integration into our society. In addition to this, Armenia is one of the rare countries, engaged in providing humanitarian aid to the population of Syria.

OSCE as a regional security organization based on comprehensive security concept plays an important role in complementing the efforts of the UN and its specialized agencies. Distinguished speakers and number of participants highlighted number of areas, such as trafficking and smuggling of migrants, their integration, promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination with focus on migrants.

Comparative advantage of the OSCE is a network of field operations, many of them located along the main migration routes. We commend the rapid response of the OSCE field operations in West Balkans to the migration flows in 2015-2016 through the Balkan route.

We took note with concern of the information provided by the civil society in this meeting on security threats that migrants and refugees of particular religious and ethnic origin are facing in the OSCE area while being targeted by terrorist groups. Transit countries should ensure security of migrants by providing full protection from the violence, regardless their ethnic or religious origin.

We would like to stress that migrants and refugees cannot become bargaining tool in relations of transit countries with countries of destination. All sides are bound by international law and no bilateral agreements can be made in violation of human rights of migrants.

The current migratory crisis emanates from the instability and upheaval in the OSCE neighboring region. We believe that in its activities to address the issues of migrants OSCE should distinguish between migrants who cross international borders and displacement which is a result of conflicts in the OSCE area. The UN activities on elaboration of two separate compacts on migrants and refugees is a case to the point. Attempts to introduce conflict cycle issues to the topic of migration will complicate adoption of new OSCE commitments in the field of migration.

Ms. Moderator,

We would like to submit following recommendations.

- For participating states to implement OSCE commitments in the field of migration and border control, in particular the Ljubljana Commitments on open and secure borders.
- OSCE platform should be utilized to develop regional cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.
- OSCE Secretariat and Institutions should build their activities in migration area, by clearly distinguishing topic of migrants from the conflict cycle issues, which are covered by agreed negotiation formats.

Thank You.