

The 17<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
Part 1, Vienna 19 - 20 January 2009

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

Concluding Remarks by Ambassador Nikolaos Kalantzianos  
Head of the Greek OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to undertake the task of presenting some concluding remarks concerning the First Part of the Seventeenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which was held here in Vienna under the Greek Chairmanship, as a sequel of its Preparatory Conference that took place in Prague, on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

The unfolding of the Seventeenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum as well as the discussions that followed strengthen our conviction that this Organization, through its comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach to security, can indeed bring added value in the field of migration.

As stated by the OSCE Secretary General at the beginning of this Forum, the multi-dimensional approach of OSCE to security does indeed contribute to the promotion of the principles of an integrated migration management policy and of an enhanced regional co-operation on migration issues. The cornerstone of the OSCE's efforts and initiatives is to stimulate the necessary political will among Participating States and to provide a platform for dialogue and co-operation on how to improve migration management to the overall benefit of stability and security within its wide geographical region. The First Part of the 17<sup>th</sup> EEF focused on improving channels for legal migration by developing more effective migration policies and long-term strategies.

The discussions conducted throughout the Forum underscored that effective migration management encourages legal migration and, consequently, brings benefits to the economic and social development of both origin and destination countries. Effective migration management also safeguards against potential security challenges posed by illegal migration and criminal networks that perpetrate this phenomenon. Therefore, we should encourage and promote **synergy** between destination, transit and origin countries to develop more **flexible, coherent and comprehensive migration management policies**. One of our main goals should be to mitigate the negative aspects, while drawing on the benefits of migration.

However, the implementation of such policies requires, first and foremost, the sophistication of data collection and processing tools for policy makers as well as

data harmonization in all our countries in order to ensure compatibility and effectiveness of our joint efforts migration policy. Increase in terms of quality and quantity of the aforementioned data will certainly underpin our efforts in designing migration programmes, in determining labour market demand for migrant workers, in understanding the effects of remittances on development and in assessing the effectiveness of our border management measures. Thus, being able to trace labour market's supply and demand for various categories of migrants (highly skilled or low skilled) can facilitate the development of effective migration management policies.

The OSCE, in co-operation with other partner organizations, can promote and facilitate the exchange of best practices and sharing of experience on temporary labour migration programmes and, more precisely, on circular migration, return and reintegration programmes as well as capacity-building activities in order to institute more effective implementation of migration management policies. Interstate co-operation through the exchange of best practices in **regional and bilateral labour agreements** related to circular migration, return and reintegration is considered to be a necessary tool in order to combat illegal migration.

We support the ideas expressed regarding the importance of developing support services for migrants and potential migrants that provide a wide range of pre-departure information regarding legal migration channels, employment opportunities and skills requirements, risks of trafficking in human beings as well as assistance upon return and need for reintegration. We found the services put in place by Kyrgyzstan an interesting model. This mechanism can be put into effect only through promoting enhanced co-operation of labour and employment agencies (public, national and across borders) as well as among migrant information centres.

Furthermore, the importance of effective management of borders and inter-agency as well as inter-governmental co-operation in order to combat criminal network involved in smuggling of migrants and illegal migration has been stressed. The OSCE should continue its engagement in this area, for example by facilitating sharing of experience and promoting international standards on building effective systems to fight and dismantle criminal networks. The links with money-laundering activities should also be explored.

In following up and implementing suggestions and recommendations made at the Forum, the OSCE field presences and in particular the Economic and Environmental Officers play a critical role. At this point, we welcome the organization of the **Annual Co-ordination Meeting for Economic and Environmental Officers (EEOs)** which will begin today after the closure of the First Part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum and will continue also tomorrow. This Meeting for the Economic and Environmental Officers (EEOs) will be an opportunity for us to be informed at first hand about economic and environmental issues and activities in Central Asia, South Caucasus and South-eastern and Eastern Europe.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, migration is intrinsically connected with the biggest challenges that the Participating States will have to confront; one of these challenges is the global financial/economic crisis which can severely affect both countries of origin and destination as well as migrants themselves.

In fact, as we have heard, the financial crisis is already affecting many labour migrants in our countries who are losing their jobs in sectors sensitive to economic fluctuations. These losses are also felt in their home countries through significant decreases in remittances. To try to mitigate, as much as possible, a rise in poverty and economic uncertainty and the potential for conflict, closer cooperation between our countries to find solutions that are mutually beneficial is essential.

Today, more than ever, with our economies starting to feel the impact of the global financial crisis in loss of jobs, it is important that the OSCE helps in raising awareness among the general public about the valuable economic and social contributions of migrants to both the host as well as the origin countries. This in order to avoid incidents of discrimination and xenophobia in the destination countries as well as negative sentiments rising in the origin countries towards host countries.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We believe that the Vienna Forum has produced concrete results and recommendations giving in this way a strong impetus to the next phase of the 17<sup>th</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum process.

I am pleased to inform you that the Second Preparatory Conference will be held in **Tirana, Albania, on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009**, where I warmly invite all of you to participate actively. I am very confident that Albania will organize the Conference neatly and in a most effective way.

During this Second Preparatory Conference -and building upon Prague's and Vienna's conclusions and recommendations- we will emphasize on the need to strengthen the linkages between migration and the economic, social and environmental policies so as to ensure stability and security in the OSCE region. In this context, the need for sound economic and environmental policies that encourage good governance, attract investment and ameliorate the business environment, which constitute the absolute prerequisites for creating new jobs, will be thoroughly elaborated and discussed.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like, first of all, to congratulate all keynote speakers whose presentations have triggered useful thoughts and recommendations, all the moderators for their efforts to stimulate a meaningful discussion as well as the rapporteurs and interpreters for their valuable contribution.

I am especially thankful to the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Goran Svilanovic and his team for their dedication and support to the Greek Chairmanship throughout the preparations of the 17<sup>th</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum. I would like to seize the opportunity to congratulate him on the assumption of his duties and wish him every success in his very demanding task. Moreover, I would like to thank the OSCE Conference Services for the excellent organization of this event.

In addition, we acknowledge firmly the strong support that we received from a number of other international organizations as well as relevant partner organizations and stakeholders that helped us carry out this important task. We are looking forward to continuing this co-operation which has already proved to be successful, by producing concrete and useful results.

Last but not least, let me express my warmest thanks to all of you, representatives of the OSCE Participating States, Partners for Co-operation, the OSCE Secretariat and Field Presences, International Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations as well as academics and representatives of the business community.

Thank you for your attention.