



**Launch Seminar of the Mediterranean edition of the
Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies
Rabat, 12-13 December 2007
Wednesday, 12 December**

09.00 – 10.30 OPENING SESSION

Welcoming remarks

Ambassador Matjaž Kovačič, Head of the Division for International Organisations
and Human Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia, OSCE
Chairmanship in 2005

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by saying that today at this gathering we are indeed addressing one of the most urgent problems of today's world. Hardly a day goes by without another newspaper headline or a News programme raising the issues of the movement of people or the impact of migration on societies.

The gap between standards of living continues to persist both on global scale and among the OSCE participating States. They are the main driving force of modern migration. The pattern remains the same even when some countries secure faster economic development. In such cases, we can observe that countries of origin become countries of transit and, finally, countries of destination. We are faced with these changing migration trends every day. It seems to be a never ending story.

On the one hand, migration is regarded as a complex phenomenon of interaction and interdependence of people, civilizations and economies, as a more or less normal process. On the other hand, it is often a result of not only economic reasons but also social or political ones that have an impact on economic stability as well as on human development and human security in general. In this case, people do not choose to migrate; they are forced to do so.

The freedom of movement is a human right with strong economic, political and social implications. It is therefore essential that we identify relevant policies, rules and regulations to help create effective institutions, stimulate economic development and foster prosperity.

The recently adopted EU Global Approach to Migration links migration with development assistance as well as internal regulation of legal migration, integration of migrants, protection of refugees, border control, readmission and the fight against illegal migration and human trafficking. This approach is based on a genuine partnership with third countries, which is an integral part of the Union's external policies.

The EU is thus moving away from the almost entirely restrictive approach applied in the past, which was based on securing external borders and limiting asylum applications; the EU is beginning to accept that migration in many forms will continue and should be properly regulated to maximize its positive effects on the migrants themselves, on the countries of origin and on EU Member States.

Given its economic weight, it is essential to reinforce considerably the effectiveness of the EU's cooperation and its development policies with countries that are generating migratory flows.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my particular pleasure to be here today, addressing you as a Slovenian representative. The Ljubljana Ministerial Council adopted in 2005 the decision on migration (MC.DEC/2/05), recognizing the increasing importance of migration in OSCE participating States and requiring closer inter-state co-operation.

In the same year, the 13th Economic Forum in Prague recommended drawing up a handbook on migration management policies based on good practices in the OSCE area.

At that time, it was a common understanding that this topic was one of the central issues of concern to the OSCE participating States. Thus, the Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration in Countries of Origin and Destination came to life. The facts that it had been produced as a joint effort of the OSCE, IOM and ILO gives this work still more added value. We are pleased that it received such positive reviews and that we now have a new Mediterranean version of the *Handbook*, which is being launched in both English and Arabic. The new Handbook presents a very useful analysis of policies and practices as well as solutions and practical measures for a better management of labour migration from the OSCE participating States and southern Mediterranean countries.

The development of the *Labour Migration Handbook* is a very good example of inter-state cooperation within the OSCE's region. It proves that the OSCE can provide a political platform to improve the debate on migration management solutions. We believe that the lessons learned in

the OSCE can also be a valuable contribution to other countries and regions of the world by taking into account a global perspective on policy challenges facing countries of origin, transit and destination in the age of an increasing labour mobility.

In short, the Handbook offers an innovative approach by dealing with the supply and demand side of contemporary migration flows. It is also a useful tool for people who deal with migration issues on a daily practical basis as well as in research and policy making process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within weeks, Slovenia is about to assume a coordinating role in the European Union. Migration will rank high on the agenda of the Slovenian EU Presidency in the first half of 2008. We will continue to push for progress regarding the issue of migration and asylum policy, which is presently an extremely sensitive area gaining in importance due to demographic trends. Slovenia will try to carry on the Portuguese efforts in this domain, particularly the implementation of conclusions adopted at the recent EUROMED Ministerial meeting.

In this context, we will also focus on our immediate neighbourhood - South-Eastern Europe. Migration to and from the region is becoming increasingly complex and multidirectional, with intensified interaction between different dimensions – humanitarian, economic, social and labour. Examples of good practice in the domain of migration policies are designed by different regional initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addressing the contemporary problems of migration, we need to find ways of including both internal and external security goals in a coherent policy. It should address the long-term problems of the Union and its relations with the rest of the world, starting with the Mediterranean region.

In order to cope with migration effectively, we should carry out foreign, commercial and development policies that will in the long run promote economic growth of countries of origin, even at the possible immediate expense of the short term benefits for the European economy.

We have to continue our efforts towards further integration of immigration policies into the EU's relations with third countries. A comprehensive and balanced approach to tackle root causes must remain the European Union's constant long-term objective, designing effective policies in the relations with countries of origin, and most importantly, creating a comprehensive approach to manage migratory flows while at the same time respecting its own fundamental values that are of universal importance.

Let me conclude by saying that the only long-term and sustainable response to migration pressure is not to put more barriers in place, send people back or carry out selective migration policies but rather to invest massively in development. The OSCE's engagements over the last few years in this regard, including the launching of the Mediterranean edition of the Handbook, are steps in this direction and should therefore continue.

Thank you!