



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018

**Working Session 12 – Statement by the Delegation of Canada, delivered by Counsellor Daniel Barbarie,
Tuesday, September 18, 2018**

Moderator,

We would propose the following recommendations for this session:

- 1) That OSCE participating States continue to examine ways in which the OSCE can act in complementarity to the UN and other regional organizations in promoting the rights of migrants.
- 2) That the OSCE and ODIHR study migration systems to collect best practices that can be shared with participating States, particularly in assisting states in building partnerships to broaden collective engagement on addressing migrations issues and effectively fostering long-term integration of migrants within societies.

Moderator,

We thank the Italian OSCE Chairmanship for including this specifically selected topic on the agenda this year. The issue of protecting migrant and refugee rights is an important issue to the OSCE region given the increasing numbers of people fleeing conflicts in the OSCE neighbourhood and we should be discussing this at HDIM.

We have been concerned about the response to migration and migrants in many OSCE participating States, in particular the approach some states have taken towards migrants and the manner in which they have characterized migrants and refugees. We must recognize that migrants are often subject to inhumane conditions and human rights abuses, such as human trafficking, and migrant women and girls are particularly vulnerable during their journeys and need protection. Canada is committed to protect and uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants, and we reiterate that refugees and migrants are entitled to the same universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We recognize that whilst unregulated migration flows pose a challenge, they can also present an important opportunity for all OSCE states. We believe that safe, orderly, and regular migration can help to drive innovation, economic growth, and social stability, particularly when supported by policies to facilitate inclusion and diversity. Canada's economic strength has been built by immigration, with currently one in five Canadians having been born abroad. Migrants and refugees contribute to the identity and long-term prosperity of our country, they enhance the cultural richness and diversity of our communities, they bring new skills to our labour force, and they contribute to innovation and the economy.

As states, we must fulfill our international obligations and commitments to protect the rights of refugees and migrants. We must find ways to increase international and regional cooperation with a view to assisting hosting states who play a pivotal role in providing protection to refugees, migrants, and displaced persons. In this regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the negotiation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration as well as the consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees. These Compacts focus on practical measures to protect and promote the human dignity of migrants and refugees and to contribute to global prosperity. We also strongly believe that gender-responsive migration and refugee policies and practices that empower women and girls will be more effective for migrants, refugees and communities more broadly.