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DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL MIGRATION SERVICE OF  
RUSSIA, AT PART 1 OF THE 17th OSCE ECONOMIC AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 19 and 20 January 2009

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

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,

The unprecedented scale and intensity of the transborder movements of persons over the last decade and the ever-increasing influence of migration on virtually every aspect of modern-day life, including politics, the economy, demography, the social sphere and security, makes the task of finding the most effective ways of managing migration processes a priority concern.

The importance of this problem for countries in the OSCE region was also highlighted during the work of the First Preparatory Conference for the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

We believe that through the constructive and engaged dialogue that took place in Prague in October of last year we have been able by and large to identify the basic approaches and strategies required for solving the migration problems facing us. These approaches and strategies were set out in the consolidated report on the results of the Conference.

We are convinced that the principal responsibility for managing migration processes rests with the countries themselves, which have the sovereign right to determine their own migration policy, guided by existing international standards and recommendations.

As was rightly noted at the Conference in Prague, migration policy must be based on a determination of labour market needs and on forecasts for the country's socio-economic development. One might also add to these criteria additional factors such as the particular characteristics of the demographic situation in the country and its ability to receive migrants as well as the specific features of the regional and transborder migration flows involved.

It is important to establish and improve mechanisms for gathering and analysing the relevant information and statistical data, for monitoring the migration situation and also for devising common unified standards in the interests of a possible inter-State exchange. I should like to point out that it is planned that work in this area will begin very shortly within the framework of the recently established council bringing together the directors of the departments for migration of the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

When identifying the principles to govern migration policy, we also take the position that effective migration management is possible only on the basis of a comprehensive, balanced and fair approach, taking into account the interests not only of the host community but also of the countries of origin and of the migrants themselves and their families. Policy formulation must also be concerned with ensuring fundamental human rights and the dignity of the migrants in accordance with the standards and principles of international law.

As was pointed out in Prague, an indispensable element in the formulation and implementation of a co-ordinated migration policy is constructive inter-State collaboration and dialogue at the international, regional and bilateral levels. This is a logical consequence of the actual transborder character of migration processes.

We are also convinced that effective migration management is impossible without the active and responsible involvement of international and non-governmental organizations, representatives of civil society institutions and business, national communities living abroad and migrants' associations.

We believe that the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum could serve as a respected platform for the exchange of innovative experience in this area and could in this way make a tangible contribution to the efforts to devise and implement an effective migration policy in the countries of the region.

In that connection, however, it must be borne in mind that despite the similarity of the problems facing us, the circumstances as regards migration in the various countries within the OSCE region may differ considerably from one another in terms of the nature and scale of the migration flows, the countries' needs and ability to receive migrants, and their national priorities in the migration sphere.

For this reason, approaches and recommendations based on the positive experience of individual countries may in other countries not produce similar results and may indeed in some cases have the opposite effect. This being the case, we think it essential to carefully weigh up and analyse to what degree the particular recommendations or experience of our partners may or may not be applicable to each individual country.

Distinguished colleagues,

The Russian Federation fully shares the opinion expressed in Prague to the effect that one of the effective mechanisms for solving the problems involved in managing migration flows is the creation of more favourable conditions for legal labour migration. This is in fact the aim of the amendments introduced in the Russian migration laws that entered into force in January 2007. We are speaking here of simpler and more transparent procedures for obtaining work permits and for the registration of migrants, significantly increased accountability on

the part of employers for the recruitment of illegal migrants and stricter monitoring of compliance with labour laws.

An analysis of the results of the two years during which the new laws have been in force shows that the measures taken have made it possible to increase the number of foreign citizens legally working in Russia and, accordingly, to substantially reduce the number of illegal migrants. At the same time, this has helped to increase the legal and social protection of migrants.

We are currently working together with our partners in the CIS to improve the system for the organized recruitment of migrant workers, primarily on the basis of temporary or circular migration. This system should include a whole range of measures, including professional and language training, medical examinations and legal, country-specific and cultural orientation programmes for migrants.

We believe that a system of this kind would be able to respond flexibly to economic and social development needs as well as to labour market requirements in our countries and would provide a more attractive alternative for those migrants who are still working in the shadow economy and service sector.

At the same time, temporary or circular migration will make it possible to make more effective use of the professional skills acquired by migrant workers as well as their ability to invest money in their countries of origin, thus contributing to their economic and social development.

Legal migration should in our view be encouraged in parallel with decisive measures to counter illegal migration, particularly where it is associated with such phenomena as trafficking in human beings, international terrorism, organized crime and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs.

To this end, we believe that, alongside improvements to the systems for border management and immigration control and the use of more secure travel documents, existing mechanisms for the return of migrants, such as readmission, should be more actively employed and work should continue to find new arrangements. Of particular interest might be mechanisms to guarantee that temporary migrant workers meet their obligations to return voluntarily to their countries of origin following the expiry of their employment contracts or work permits.

In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to address the participants in this Forum and to wish them successful and fruitful work.

Thank you for your attention.