

Statement by Ambassador Marc Thill
Permanent Representative of Luxembourg,
at the first working session of the
17th Economic and Environmental Forum of the OSCE
(Athens, 18-20th of April 2009)

Thank you, Madam Moderator,

As the Director of ODIHR has remarked in his intervention, this working session should not only be dedicated to discuss the role of the OSCE in the field of "migration management in a changing global environment", but also to exchange "good practices" in the various participating States of the OSCE.

In that regard, I would like to express some considerations on the recent initiatives taken by Luxembourg on a national level, without pretending that they are transferable as such to other participating States.

First, for those who are not aware, let me clarify that, for over half a century, Luxembourg is an important host country for migrants. Today, migrants account for more than 40% of the resident population. Are to be added those migrants coming from neighboring countries and who cross the border on a daily basis to work in Luxembourg, so that migrants currently represent more than 50% of the working population in Luxembourg.

As for the recent measures taken by Luxembourg, I indicate first, as the ILO noted in its report on the implementation of the commitments of OSCE participating States in the field of migration, that Luxembourg has acted in a way that migration applies, at least for our country, almost exclusively to relations with other countries and it therefore presents important aspects of foreign policy. Since 2004, indeed, it is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is in charge of immigration and is therefore named Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration.

This decision, which may seem symbolic, was taken in 2004 and it adds to the conviction, put into practice by Luxembourg for much longer time, that any effective

policy to regulate immigration benefits from being supported by a proactive policy in the field of development assistance. Indeed, despite the present financial and economic crisis Luxembourg, which already spends more than 0.9% of its GNI to development aid, remains determined to soon exceed the threshold of 1%.

Finally, in recent years, Luxembourg has also been very active on the legislative level and has adapted and modernized its national legislation.

In May 2006, it adopted a new law on asylum and other forms of protection related to the free movement of persons and immigration. As recently as August 2008, it adopted a new law on free movement of persons and on immigration, involving a reform of the system of work permits and recognizing at the same time that there is a need to promote legal immigration and combat illegal immigration. More recently, it adopted a new law on nationality, the most innovative aspect of which is the introduction of dual citizenship, allowing migrants who are staying in Luxembourg to adopt the nationality of Luxembourg in relatively liberal conditions, while retaining their nationality of origin and thus facilitating the access to and the enjoyment of all rights of national citizens, including and especially the political rights.

By being active, through its policy of international development cooperation in the country of origin, and by adapting its national legislation on immigration and nationality that applies to the host country and the rights of migrants, Luxembourg has made efforts in contributing that migration can and should be beneficial for the three parties directly concerned, the country of origin, the host country and especially migrants themselves.