



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE
Economic and Environmental Activities

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17TH OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

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

FIRST PREPARATORY CONFERENCE

Prague, 16-17 October 2008

The theme for the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum is “**Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region**”. The theme stems from and relies on the mandate given to the OSCE, *inter alia*, through the following documents:

- The OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension of 2003
- Ljubljana Decision on Migration No.2/05
- Brussels Ministerial Statement on Migration No. 6/06.

The theme ensures continuity as it builds upon the relevant recommendations of previous economic and environmental Fora, in particular the 13th Economic Forum in 2005 under the Slovenian Chairmanship, the 12th Economic Forum in 2004 under the Bulgarian Chairmanship and the 15th Economic and Environmental Forum in 2007 under the Spanish Chairmanship, as well as on the follow-up work developed in connection with these recommendations.

The theme addresses a very topical issue, namely how to manage migration more effectively so that it maximises the benefits for and minimises the negative effects on destination and origin countries as well as migrants themselves. The theme was proposed by the incoming Greek Chairmanship as it believes that enhanced co-operation between destination, transit and origin countries, both bilaterally and at the regional level, can lead to the development of comprehensive, effective and secure migration management approaches that in turn will have a positive effect on overall stability and security in the OSCE region, emphasize mutual understanding, defuse potential tensions, and lead to joint actions.

The incoming Greek Chairmanship also believes that the OSCE with its cross-dimensional character can provide a good platform for political dialogue and experience exchange among its participating States and Partners for Co-operation on these issues.

The 17th Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) process will focus on two main areas: (i) the key challenges related to improved migration management, namely improving the channels for legal migration and reducing illegal migration and combating of corruption and organized criminal activities related to international migration; and (ii) interconnections between migration policies and economic, social, environmental and security policies and how they impact each other and how a closer policy cohesion can enhance the developmental impacts from migration.

The Prague Conference, as the first preparatory conference in the 17th EEF process, and the Vienna Economic and Environmental Forum (19-20 January 2009) will discuss issues related to the first area, namely improved migration management with a focus on how to reduce illegal migration through a combination of comprehensive policy instruments and control mechanisms.

The Prague Conference is expected to provide an opportunity to renew the dialogue on migration management, among the OSCE participating States as well as with other relevant partner organizations and stakeholders. Furthermore, the Conference should help to identify a few key issues of relevance to the OSCE context that can be further enlarged and complemented by the next meetings, in particular the Vienna Economic and Environmental Forum.

A Background Issues document has been prepared by the IOM (International Organization for Migration) that closely corresponds to the Agenda topics. The document aims at identifying the key issues expected to be covered under each topic and thereby should serve as helpful guidance to delegations, experts and other participants in their preparation for the discussions of the Conference (**see Background Issues document**).