



Statement on Migration

**delivered by Ana Novak, Head of the Global Issues Department at the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia
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Migration is one of the oldest human phenomena. Today, more people than ever before are on the move. Among other causes, migration primarily stems from differences in wealth, political conflicts and ecological catastrophes. Migration is now high on the international political agenda and forms part of the national agenda in many countries, increasingly becoming an issue in national election campaigns.

The demands of an increasingly globalised and integrated world economy indicate that migration is to remain a key element of future sustainable development. As such it requires adequate management at national and international levels. Political will is needed to see migration as an opportunity, not as a problem. Both countries of destination and countries of origin can benefit from a well-managed migration through the reduction of unemployment, remittances and skills transfer.

As migration is clearly a cross-cutting issue with strong impacts on security, the economy and the human dimension, the OSCE is a natural choice for a discussion on the subject and related affirmative action in all three dimensions. It calls for continued dialogue in the OSCE context between countries of origin, transit and destination. Such cooperation is especially important in reducing the negative side effects of the migration process, such as illegal migration and trafficking in human beings.

As a result, Slovenia continues to pay close attention to the issue of migration management not only in the OSCE, but also within other international forums, especially the Council of Europe. "Migration-integration" was one of the main priorities during the Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship in 2005 and was put high on the agenda of our six-month Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2009.

Slovenia believes that the EU Global Approach to Migration adopted by the European Council in December 2005 sets a good example of a comprehensive and balanced approach in dealing with migration issues. It illustrates the ambition of the European Union to establish an inter-sectoral framework to manage migration in a coherent way through political dialogue and close practical cooperation with countries of origin and transit, among them many OSCE participating States. Its key concepts are partnership, solidarity and shared responsibility.

All this is particularly important in the context of the current global economic and financial crisis. The effects of economic downturns on migration are complex and hard to predict. In

finding their way out of the global recession, countries will have to carefully formulate and put into practice policies aimed particularly at protecting the most vulnerable groups, including migrant workers. The OSCE has developed a number of commitments on migration, freedom of movement, and treatment of migrant workers. These aspects should now be further and more carefully examined in connection with the effects of the economic crisis.

Allow me to draw your attention to the Labour Migration Handbook, which was published in partnership with ILO and IOM as a result of the 13th Economic Forum. It presents a very useful analysis of policies and practices as well as solutions and practical measures for a better management of labour migration in countries of origin and destination. The Mediterranean edition of the Handbook was published subsequently.

Slovenia faced a drastic change in the migration structure in the last decade. Since 2005, it has recorded an increased number of labour migrants, which in 2008 accounted for almost 80% of total migration. In response, a national “Strategy of Economic Migration” is currently under preparation. It will provide a basis for further development in managing economic migration by taking into account its social component and promoting the integration of migrants into the society and the labour market.

A new migration phenomenon that requires increased attention in multilateral forums is “environmental migration”. Estimates show that today some 25 million people globally have been forced to abandon their homes due to environmental degradation. According to different forecasts, another 10 to 200 million people will be forced to migrate by 2050 because of dramatically changed weather conditions. Therefore, we can expect environmental factors to become increasingly important in determining the nature of human mobility in the future as well as its humanitarian and human security dimensions. Sudden massive inflows of people can lead to increased competition over essential resources, such as water or land between migrants and the local population, potentially leading to tensions and even conflicts.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that we are confronted with a number of challenges due to the issue of migration. These challenges can be dealt with efficiently only in close cooperation of countries of origin, transit and destination. Some of them have been explored in the proposed Food-for-Thought Paper initiated by Greece, which Slovenia has joined as a co-sponsor. In this regard we believe that there is enough room and opportunity for more targeted OSCE action.