



OSCE TASK FORCE

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Seminar "Migration and Integration", 11.-13. May, 2005, Warsaw, ODIHR

Opening statement

Ambassador dr. Boris Frlec, Head of the OSCE Task Force, MFA, Ljubljana

Your Excellencies,

Mr Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Slovenian Chairmanship would like to express its gratitude to Poland as the host state and its appreciation to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for the immense work invested in the organisation of this seminar.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, which laid the foundations for CSCE and connected security with economic issues and human rights. The CSCE participating States addressed different aspects of migration, including human contacts and family reunification, moreover, this document provided a basis for the development of co-operation also in the migration management among participating States.

The OSCE today is the largest regional security organisation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, with 55 participating States from Europe, North America, Caucasus and Central Asia. 2005 is also the year of reform, revitalization and rebalance for the OSCE. Apart from EU and NATO enlargements, integration, globalization and new security threats have altered the agenda of the OSCE. In his recent report entitled "In Larger Freedom", UN Secretary General Kofi Annan mentions the link between development, security and human rights. Due to new security challenges, a comprehensive approach to security implies the need for reciprocity of economic development and security - in this sense not only security from organised crime and terrorist attacks but above all social and economic security. The OSCE already focuses part of its activities on assistance to countries' capacity building to improve governance, rule of law and to strengthen the fight against corruption. Human rights and security issues are so complex and diverse that a holistic approach is needed, also in relation to migration and integration. We are happy to state that a comprehensive manner has always been the perspective and a strong point of the OSCE. Its activities relate to all three dimensions of security - the human (comprising human rights, democratization and rule of law), the politico-military and the economic-environmental.

I would like to recall that on 23-27 May the 13th OSCE Economic Forum will take place in Prague. Until now there have been three preparatory seminars for the Forum; the last two dealt with migration from an economic, environmental and security perspective and with integrating persons belonging to national minorities from economic and other perspectives. In both cases the conclusions were that the integration of immigrants and national minorities is an issue of human rights and the best way of combating tensions, while the key to integration is participation in economic and social life of the host society.

In the framework of the Political-Military Dimension migration issues will be addressed in the "Seminar on Cross-Border Crime: Fighting Illegal Migration", which is due to be held in Slovenia on 13-15 June 2005, as one of the seminars of the Ohrid Follow-up Process in South-East Europe. This activity aims to expand the current and envisaged national training of the Border Police in fighting cross-border crime and, by focusing on this, to develop joint training measures and methods at the cross-border level in order to develop regional operational measures to combat cross-border crime.

We would all agree that migration is a normal social and economic phenomenon not only in the OSCE region but worldwide. States have developed and applied or are developing different approaches and concepts for dealing with migration, which is true both for countries of origin (emigrant societies) and for countries of destination (immigrant societies). For example, some host societies have chosen the "melting pot model", while others decided for multicultural approach or integration policies.

Yet, the legal aspects of migration and integration of legal migrants is the basis of any discussion and future consideration of these issues. The rights of legal migrants and their integration can be enhanced by secure legal status and clear rights and duties. Rules should be transparent and should not change in the face of daily politics. This seminar will deal with co-operative frameworks supporting integration and protection of legal migrants and with the legal aspects of migration and integration of lawful migrants in order to improve the existing legal instruments and exchange experience. The ODIHR's tolerance and non-discrimination programme, established in 2004, already functions in this sense.

Xenophobia is not a recent phenomenon – it has been present since the beginning of mankind. Today, it is often the result of changing conditions in host societies and unsuccessful integration

of immigrants into social and economic life in the target countries. Marginalization of immigrants has led to dangerous problems and social tensions in the past years even in affluent societies, sometimes also in cases of second or third generation legal immigrants. Even more, isolation and resentment felt by migrants can result in crime and terrorism. A significant part of this seminar will be devoted to the participation of legal migrants in public life and society and with the socio-cultural aspects of integration, since we must seriously deal with this problem without hesitation.

I would like to reiterate Education is an important part of the process of integration, whether from the legal or from the socio-cultural aspects. As follow-up to various last year's OSCE events regarding the issues of tolerance and non-discrimination, the CiO appointed three Personal Representatives earlier this year, as part of the OSCE fight in combating discrimination and promoting tolerance. Furthermore, by the Sofia Ministerial Council Decision on tolerance and non-discrimination, the participating States obliged themselves to take measures "against discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia, against migrants and migrant workers" and to raise public awareness of the enriching contribution of migrants and migrant workers into society."

In relation to migration today, we mostly concentrate on its economic and social aspects, more seldom do we hear about it from the gender point of view. Migration of women is an issue that we should not neglect. According to UN statistics, as of 2000, 49% of all international migrants were females, who have increasingly become part of worker flows moving to become the principal wage earners for their families. (Third Coordination Meeting on International Migration, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Secretariat, October 2004).

Migration has become an overwhelming phenomenon with an overall effect. We have learnt that we must deal with the management of migration together. This seminar can give new ideas and

proposals for better co-operation between participating States and between governments and civil societies of both target societies and societies of origin. Last but not least, international organisations should share experience and know-how among each other. Migration today should not lead to loss for any society.

Managing of migrations requires concerted activities in countries of origin and countries of destination. Activities in countries of origin should not be directed just in providing relevant information to potential migrants, but should also focus on the improvement of social and economic conditions and possibilities in these environments and on their sustainable development. More effort should be made in providing better chances for people's future in their environments. It is evident that countries of origin themselves cannot resolve these problems and need the assistance of the international community and more developed countries.

However, regardless how successful development in every region will be there will always be some migration – conditioned by individual aspirations of future migrants and their perception of their future life. Also countries need migration for diverse reasons, among which the needs of their economies are most evident. Traditionally, developed countries needed additional workforce and developing countries were eager to receive revenues from their emigrants. Demographic trends that we can observe worldwide put these issues also in some “new” perspectives – although not unknown in the past, when different regions were struggling with depopulation or overpopulation.

For these reasons it is necessary to deal with migrations and their management. An important component of these activities and policies should be awareness raising that would contribute to the better information and knowledge on and understanding of migrations and diversity, which are key conditions also for a successful equal integration of immigrants. This will require that

both the protection and adequate integration of persons belonging to national minorities and the protection and integration of migrants are further developed in a way that will take into account their specific situations, needs and interests.

We are confident that the results of this seminar will allow that the OSCE would address the issues of migration and integration more effectively and that participating States will take concrete steps to manage migration and integration of migrants into the societies.

Thank you.