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8th COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR MIGRATION AFFAIRS

Kyiv, 4-5 September 2008

**Economic migration, social cohesion
and development: towards an integrated approach**



FINAL DECLARATION

INTRODUCTION

- i. The 8th Council of Europe conference of ministers responsible for migration affairs was held in Kiev on 4 and 5 September 2008 at the invitation of the Ukrainian government.
- ii. The Conference elected Mr Hryhory Nemyria, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, as chair of the conference.
- iii. The Conference was attended by ministers of the Council of Europe member states¹ or their representatives as well as their counterparts from Holy see, Belarus, Cap Verde, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria.
- iv. Representatives of the following Council of Europe bodies also attended the conference: Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Development Bank, and the Conference of INGOs.
- v. The Council of the European Union, International Labour Office (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC), Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), and Association of European Administrative Judges also attended the conference as observers.
- vi. The general theme of the conference was "*Economic migration, social cohesion and development: towards an integrated approach*".
- vii. Following their discussions, the ministers of the Council of Europe member states responsible for migration affairs adopted the final declaration set out below.
- viii. The final declaration includes a plan of action which the ministers agreed to recommend to the Committee of Ministers for implementation within the framework of its intergovernmental programme of activities.
- ix. In closing the conference, the Ministers and other participants expressed their appreciation to the Ukrainian authorities for their hospitality and excellent organisation of the event.

¹ Austria, Azerbaidjan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

FINAL DECLARATION

8th COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR MIGRATION AFFAIRS

KYIV, 4-5 September 2008

We, the Ministers of the Council of Europe member states responsible for migration affairs,

RECALLING

The final declaration of the 7th conference of European Ministers responsible for migration (Helsinki, 16-17 September 2002) and the undertakings therein and, in particular, those relating to managing diversity in a democratic society and managing migration;

The various Council of Europe conventions relevant to the field of migration, integration and the rights of migrants and the importance of promoting their signature and ratification;

The various initiatives at global and regional level to promote co-operation between receiving and origin countries on migration and development, including the Report of the United Nations Global Commission on International Migration, the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the European Union Global Approach to Migration.

RECOGNISING THAT

The important interconnections between migration, social cohesion and development make migration and the welfare of migrants a vital concern for member states of the Council of Europe, whether they be receiving, transit or origin countries;

Through properly managed migration, migrants and persons of immigrant background can contribute significantly to economic progress, well-being and development in receiving and origin countries (both in and outside Europe);

Protecting the human rights of migrant workers and their families, and enforcing the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination in the labour market are essential elements in ensuring social cohesion and development;

The close links between migration, social cohesion and development require a coherent, comprehensive, integrated and co-ordinated approach by member states that is fully respectful of human rights, relevant to Europe as a whole, and derived from consultation and co-ordination between local, regional and national bodies, actors responsible for distinct policy areas, and all other relevant stakeholders, including social partners and civil society;

The Council of Europe and, in particular, the European Committee on Migration is uniquely placed in bringing together the full spectrum of migration experiences of receiving, transit and origin countries with participation spanning a range of national and local government departments and non-governmental organisations that address migration issues;

The Council of Europe has, thereby, the potential to develop holistic and coherent policies in the field of migration based on human rights.

AGREE AND UNDERTAKE

To work together in the management of migration in accordance with the principles and objectives set out below.

General principles

1. Promote and protect the human rights of migrants and those of persons of immigrant background and guarantee their rights to equal treatment and opportunities, with special attention to gender equality and the rights of women.
2. Strengthen dialogue and co-operation between receiving, transit and origin countries, particularly within Europe, with a view to increasing and sharing the benefits of migration, facilitating integration and re-integration, and enhancing the impact of migration on development.
3. Promote coherence between migration, development and integration policies at all levels (international, national, regional and local) including improved co-operation between government departments and the mainstreaming of migration into government policies and, for this purpose, continue to develop or improve national migration policies.

Economic and social progress in receiving, transit and origin countries

Principle

4. Manage economic migration with a view to promoting economic and social progress in receiving, transit and origin countries, in particular, by:
 - (i) Reviewing the options for legal migration to ensure that they better correspond to prevailing conditions in the labour market and setting clear and transparent criteria for admission;

- (ii) Combating more effectively irregular migration, including employers who have recourse to irregular migrant labour;
- (iii) Building institutional capacity of national bodies responsible for migration management;
- (iv) Developing and implementing migration policies based on coherent and well-balanced measures.

Specific measures

5. Develop comprehensive programmes for the reception, employment, integration and, where appropriate, return and re-integration of migrants.
6. Allow migrants to develop and maintain links with their countries of origin provided this does not adversely compromise social cohesion in receiving countries. This might include measures to facilitate the mobility of migrants to and from their receiving and origin countries.
7. Consult key stakeholders to ensure that migration policies better correspond to supply and demand in the labour market and thereby gain their support.
8. Promote employment opportunities for migrants and persons of immigrant background at all skill levels in accordance with labour market demand.
9. Take specific measures to help the most vulnerable migrants, including those suffering violence or trauma in crossing borders or at sea, whether they remain in the receiving country or return to the country of origin.
10. Strengthen the role of labour inspectors and, where necessary, increase penalties for people traffickers and employers who recruit and exploit irregular migrants.
11. Combat more effectively trafficking in human beings and the criminal networks that encourage irregular migration and profit from irregular migrant labour.

Integration and re-integration of migrants and their families

Principle

12. Enhance social cohesion by improving the integration of migrants and persons of immigrant background and the re-integration of migrants who return to their countries of origin, in particular, by:
 - (i) Promoting interaction and dialogue between migrants and receiving societies;
 - (ii) Empowering migrants to achieve their potential in receiving countries and enhancing their commitment to integration;

- (iii) Removing the barriers to effective integration, in particular, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, and the barriers to re-integration.

Specific measures

13. Encourage and support interaction and dialogue between migrants and the receiving society (particularly at local level) and empower all members of society, including already settled immigrants, to participate actively in the integration process.
14. Establish or improve the administrative procedures for recognising the equivalence of diplomas and assessing vocational skills and qualifications.
15. Eliminate the obstacles for economic migrants and their families to education, health care, social protection, employment and housing.
16. Establish or improve programmes that help migrants learn the language and acquire knowledge of the culture of the receiving society.
17. Reinforce efforts to combat more effectively, discrimination, racism and xenophobia and, in particular, violence against migrants and their families and the exploitation of isolated migrant women in the workplace.
18. Implement specific measures to ensure the integration of the most vulnerable migrants, in particular, children and young people at risk of exclusion, isolated women, victims of violence, elderly migrants, and migrants in poor health or with disabilities.
19. Assess and, if necessary, address the specific needs of certain groups of migrants that are not always directly covered by existing integration policies, for example, short-term migrants, seasonal workers and highly skilled migrants.
20. Develop and implement policies to assist the re-integration of migrants who return voluntarily to their countries of origin.
21. Take advantage of the skills of returnees and facilitate their integration into the labour market of the country of origin, through retraining if necessary.

Development in receiving and origin countries

Principle

22. Strengthen the contribution of migrants and persons of immigrant background to development in receiving and origin countries, and their involvement in co-development programmes, in particular by:
 - (i) Ensuring that making the decision to migrate is one of choice rather than of necessity;

- (ii) Avoiding migration policies that hinder development in origin countries;
- (iii) Facilitating and removing the obstacles to the flow of migrants' remittances and enhancing their impact on development.

Specific measures

- 23. Support the creation of improved social and economic conditions in countries of origin through international co-operation and bilateral initiatives.
- 24. Take steps to avoid hindering development in countries of origin.
- 25. Develop measures that seek to reduce the adverse effects in countries of origin of the loss of migrants' skills.
- 26. Encourage investment in education and training in countries of origin.
- 27. Create the necessary conditions (security, recognition and encouragement) for migrants to increase their involvement in development projects in their countries of origin.
- 28. Facilitate by appropriate measures, the transfer of capital, skills and technology by migrants to their countries of origin.
- 29. Strengthen co-development initiatives through the collaboration of all relevant actors in receiving and origin countries and a greater involvement of migrants in their conception, implementation and evaluation.
- 30. Strengthen the role of migrant diasporas as development actors in international relations.

Towards an integrated approach

Principle

- 31. Pursue an integrated approach to economic migration, development and social cohesion at national and international level, in particular, by:
 - (i) Co-ordinating, so far as possible, observation and research at local, national and international level;
 - (ii) Co-ordinating policy action at local, national and international level;
 - (iii) Developing multi-sectorial partnerships with and between states and involving civil society;
 - (iv) Promoting synergy and concomitance in the action undertaken;

- (v) Properly and fully assessing policy need and evaluating its impact on development and social cohesion.

Specific measures

32. Strengthen partnerships and consultation mechanisms between receiving, transit and origin countries with a view to improving the mutual understanding of their respective challenges in the field of economic migration and maximising its benefits for all actors.
33. Put in place agreed mechanisms for research and analysis in the field of economic migration, including the use of indicators, for the purpose of undertaking regular assessments of trends at local and national level in the light of the international context and feeding the information upwards with a view to informing policy-making.
34. Increase the impact on development of the specific policies of different government departments in receiving and origin countries by linking together more closely development policies with migration, co-development and integration policies.
35. Improve the understanding of the social and economic realities of migration and the impact of policy at national, regional and local level by:
- Setting-up structures for monitoring social cohesion and integration;
 - Establishing indicators for social cohesion and the integration of migrants and setting short, medium and long term improvement targets;
 - Introducing regular dialogue between state and civil society, including migrants' associations, and evaluating the outcomes.
36. Strengthen the co-operation between government departments in member states across the policy areas of economic migration, social cohesion and development, identify common priority lines of action and objectives, and develop concomitant and complementary policies.
37. Establish and strengthen partnerships between the member states of the Council of Europe in the fields of economic migration, social cohesion and development and increase co-operation in these fields between the Council of Europe, European Union, Commonwealth of Independent States, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the specialised agencies of the United Nations including the International Labour Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and International Organization for Migration.

RECOMMENDS

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to implement, within the framework of its intergovernmental programme of activities, the following plan of action.

PLAN OF ACTION

A Reinforce social cohesion and the integration of migrants by developing policies to improve the interaction between migrants and receiving societies and the participation of migrants and persons of immigrant background in civil society, including, where appropriate, local and national political life.

B Enhance the contribution of migrants to their receiving and origin societies through policies that recognise more fully their skills, develop their full potential and empower them as individuals and as agents in actively contributing to social cohesion and development.

C Continue to develop measures to promote and protect the human rights of especially vulnerable migrants and persons of immigrant background, taking account of their specific needs and the challenges with which they are confronted, in particular:

- (i) Combat xenophobia, racism and violence against migrants and their families;
- (ii) Secure appropriate humanitarian assistance to migrants who suffer injury or trauma whilst crossing borders or by sea;
- (iii) Ensure that appropriate care is quickly provided for unaccompanied migrant children by, for example, establishing a rapid reaction service;
- (iv) Develop preventative measures and support services for elderly migrants and isolated migrant women to avoid, in particular, situations of vulnerability and abuse;
- (v) Protect irregular migrants including the victims of trafficking from any abuse arising from their situation, and strengthen co-operation between receiving, transit and origin countries on combating irregular migration.

D Devise an integrated approach to economic migration, development and social cohesion and assist member states in its implementation, including mechanisms for the regular exchange of information and training on necessary reforms and inter-ministerial co-operation.

