

The First Preparatory Conference to the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, Prague, 16 - 17 October 2008

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

Concluding Remarks by Ambassador Mara Marinaki
Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to make some concluding remarks concerning the First Preparatory Conference to the Seventeenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which was held here in Prague, at the beautiful premises of the Czernin Palace and marked the first phase of the 17th Economic and Environmental Forum.

I would like to state, first of all, that the discussions conducted here have strengthened our conviction that the selected theme contributes to consistency, continuity and coherence the main priorities of the Finnish CiO in the OSCE's work, also in the second dimension. This Conference in Prague has built upon decisions already made under the Slovenian Chairmanship in 2005, as well as on follow-up activities and recommendations of various Economic and Environmental Fora in the past years.

The proceedings of this First Preparatory Conference have, in our view, reconfirmed that the OSCE is well-placed to mobilize political will, promote multilateral dialogue, work closely with other relevant partner organizations and stakeholders, encourage participating States to undertake the necessary steps that will contribute to the implementation of the existing norms, standards, and commitments in this increasingly challenging field of migration.

Effective migration management encourages legal migration that brings benefits to the economic and social development of both sending and receiving countries while improving the living conditions of millions of migrants and it also safeguards against potential security challenges. Yesterday and today we have attested a series of positive examples on how best to manage legal channels for migration, including circular migration. Such good practices could and should be further promoted.

Illegal activities involving human trafficking of all kinds, drug smuggling, etc., perpetrated by criminal networks, should be firmly countered. Increased co-operation is needed in this field and I believe that the joint effective management of borders and the inter-agency co-operation plays a key role in this regard. The OSCE should continue its engagement in this area.

The issue of environmentally-induced migration was also mentioned during our debates. This increasingly pertinent topic will continue to attract our attention in the following meetings of the 17th EEF process.

The rights of migrants and their protection, including the gender aspects, were other important elements we touched upon here in Prague.

Effective migration management can only be sustained through partnerships between destination, transit and origin countries, both bilaterally and at the regional level. We should together envisage innovative policies and joint mechanisms, *inter alia* in the area of border management, common data systems, as well as enhanced co-operation between labour and employment agencies, networks of migrant information and resource centres.

Sound circular migration and return policies would also facilitate and encourage legal migration, while maximizing the positive contributions migrants make to the economic, political, and social spheres both in their countries of origin and of final destination.

One of the main conclusions we can draw from the Conference is that good migration management can be achieved through a combination of comprehensive policy instruments and control mechanisms. We have to adopt a comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach. That is, in fact, the spirit and substance of the OSCE principles and falls within the perspective both of the current and the incoming OSCE Chairmanships.

All these subjects were touched upon over the last two days, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the key recommendations:

1. strengthening awareness-raising of environmentally induced migration and its possible stability and security impacts in the OSCE region
2. promoting and facilitating capacity-building activities for government officials, social partners, recruitment agencies and civil society to develop and implement more effective migration management policies and counter irregular migration practices
3. enhancing co-operation to develop comprehensive, effective and secure migration management approaches at all levels, among OSCE Participating States, international and regional organizations, including through the involvement of civil society and business community
4. providing a platform for continued dialogue on how to strengthen co-operation in order to develop effective policies and practices for return, repatriation and reintegration; exchange best practices on border management that facilitates labour mobility; and promoting international standards on building effective systems to fight criminal networks active in the areas of human-trafficking and money-laundering.

Let us carry forward the momentum established here, in Prague, to the next step of the Forum process which will take place in Vienna on 19-20 January 2009. The Vienna Forum, I am confident, will consolidate the results we have achieved here in Prague and I warmly invite all of you to take an active part.

Moreover, the 17th EEF will also expand on this topic by looking at the interconnections between migration policies and economic, social, environmental and security policies, how they impact each other, and how policy cohesion can enhance the developmental impacts

from migration. These sub-themes will be examined more in-depth during the second phase of the preparatory process.

Within this framework, the incoming Greek Chairmanship looks forward to an ongoing and substantial exchange of views with all Participating States, which has already been launched this year, under the hospices of the current Finnish Chairmanship, and will be continued and further elaborated next year with a view to addressing the challenges to security in a comprehensive manner, reflecting the spirit and the substance of the OSCE principles. The Prague Conference provided an opportunity to renew the dialogue on migration management not only among the Participating States, but, also, with other relevant partner organizations and stakeholders. Moreover, the key issues identified during this Conference could be further elaborated and developed during the next phases of the 17th Economic and Environmental Forum Process, and especially, at the Vienna Economic and Environmental Forum.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like, first of all, to thank all the keynote speakers whose presentations have given the necessary stepping board for a very fecund debate, all the moderators for their efforts to stimulate a result-orientated discussion, as well as the rapporteurs and interpreters for their valuable work. All of you, through your joint efforts, gave a strong impetus to the 17th Economic and Environmental Forum process.

Furthermore, I would like to express my warmest thanks to our traditional host, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and I would like to express once again our gratitude to the Czech hosts for providing this beautiful venue for the First Preparatory Conference to the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

Last but not least, I am especially thankful to the coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Bernard Snoy, and his team for their invaluable assistance and support provided to the incoming Greek Chairmanship throughout the preparations of the 17th Economic and Environmental Forum. Since it is the last Conference, within the context of the Forum process, attended by Mr. Snoy in his current capacity, I would like to congratulate him personally for his successful contribution to the fostering and enhancement of the scope of the Economic and Environmental Dimension and wish him every success in his future endeavors. Moreover, I would like to thank the OSCE Conference Services and the team of the OSCE Prague Office for the excellent organization of this event.

In our effort to intensify the dialogue on this important theme within the OSCE, as well as with other relevant partner organizations and stakeholders, we have received a strong support along the preparatory process for this conference from a number of other international organizations. We are looking forward to continuing this co-operation and we want to assure our partners that the OSCE is committed to achieving concrete and ambitious results. Joining forces is definitively the key to success.

Last but not least, let me express my gratitude to all of you, representatives of the OSCE Participating States, Partners for Co-operation, the OSCE Secretariat and Field Presences,

International Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations as well as members of the academic community and representatives of the business community.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Vienna and Athens.

Thank you