



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY TURKEY
(HDIM WS 11-Humanitarian Issues and other commitments I)
(3 October 2011, Warsaw)**

Mr/Ms. Moderator,

Migration and the situation of migrants continue to be subjects of a lively debate within the OSCE area. This debate is first and foremost about human beings who have inalienable rights. It is about economies which need workforce to sustain development and production. More recently, it is also about security, identity and values. In our view, a sound immigration and integration policy should take into account all of these important aspects.

However, the formulation of immigration and integration policies today has become increasingly hostile and they usually result in negligence of the basic human rights of migrants and their families. Migrants, rather, are used to be perceived as economic asset or commodity. Now, they are also perceived as a burden and treated as the scapegoats for the economic and social challenges in which the host countries are confronted with.

Turkey follows the current debate on migration and migrants with concern. The headlines of this debate reflect more restrictive policies and more discrimination. While there is little discussion on the main characteristics of a real integration, migrants are constantly blamed for not integrating.

Integration, for most of the migrants, means participation to economic, social, cultural and political life. It is mutually reinforcing process whereby both the host state as well as the migrants themselves have responsibilities and

expectations to be fulfilled. Migrants should not be forced to integrate at the expense of their ties to their motherlands, mother tongues and cultures. It equally means abiding by the rules of the society they chose to live in. It would be of highly questionable if integration policies are devised without thorough consultation and cooperation with migrant communities.

The newly enacted stricter regulations that pose numerous barriers undermine the efforts made for integration. Unreasonable conditions for family reunification, such as language and citizenship exams, only contribute to the separation of families and thus negatively affect the migrant's ability to integrate into society. Turkey will continue to encourage Turkish migrants abroad to learn the languages of the countries that they reside. On the other hand, imposing this as a precondition for family reunification is incompatible with human rights.

Mr./Ms. Moderator,

Turkey is deeply concerned with rising xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance against migrants and their families. Anti-immigrant agenda is no longer confined with far-right and extremist political parties. It does not only ignore the contributions of the migrants, but also present them as a target and responsible for all societal and economic problems.

The violent attacks against migrants, their families, properties and places of worship are increasing particularly in Western Europe. What is more worrying is that these attacks are generally ignored and as such treated as `isolated incidents` and are sometimes even encouraged. Not only the OSCE commitments, but also the basic principles of a healthy society require to discourage statesmen and politicians to seek political gains through populist rhetoric particularly during elections period.

Turkey believes that the roots and the consequences of xenophobia and its impact on vulnerable groups such as migrants, should be discussed and addressed with more clarity. Therefore we invite ODIHR to further elaborate on effective means to combat this phenomenon. The political support and guidance of the incoming Irish Chairmanship will play an important role to this end.

Thank you for your attention.