



**Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE
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17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Concept Note on Conclusions and the Way Forward

According to the PC.DEC/857 of 24 July 2008, “*Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region*” was selected as the theme for the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF).

Every year, one of the main objectives of the Forum process is to identify policy recommendations and follow-up activities. To that end, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) put a strong emphasis on identifying and defining the possible future role of the OSCE in the area of migration management.

The current process, which will be concluded on 18-20 May in Athens with the second part of the Forum, included two preparatory Conferences (Prague, 16-17 October 2008 and Tirana, 16-17 March 2009) and the first part of the Forum (Vienna, 19-20 January 2009). The debates as well as the outcome of each meeting are reflected in the Consolidated Summaries:

- SEC.GAL/216/08 for the Prague Conference;
- EEF.GAL/4/09 for the Vienna Forum/Part I; and
- SEC.GAL/46/09 for the Tirana Conference.

To facilitate deliberations at the Athens Forum, a concept note with a summary of the key conclusions as well as a number of follow-up actions are presented below. They could be used by Delegations and participants in preparation for the Forum, together with the other more comprehensive documents referred to in this Concept Note.

Main Conclusions of the 17th EEF process

1) Effective migration management:

In the course of the Forum process means and ways to improve economic stability through migration management were discussed. Participants concluded that fostered partnerships and co-operation between destination, transit and origin countries are prerequisites for more efficient migration management. In this context, it is of key importance for participating States to encourage the ratification and implementation of migration related legal instruments and agreements on the

international, regional and bilateral level. The amelioration of regulatory instruments would also allow temporary migration and a higher degree of mobility of migrants ('circular migration'). In order to ensure evidence-based decisions and policy making as well as the development of common standards for labour assessment studies, the collection of high-quality data and statistics on migration should be improved and harmonized. Potential discrepancies between labour market requirements and migration admission policies can be better addressed by also including the private sector in the design of labour market policies. As emphasized in the two preparatory Conferences and the first part of the Forum, attention also needs to be paid to incorporating gender aspects in migration policy making as about half of all migrants are women and an increasing number are becoming principal migrants. As for improving measures aimed at reducing irregular migration and dismantling criminal networks such as smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings and connected money-laundering activities, the Forum participants recommended to strengthen common policies on effective border management and inter-state cooperation through the establishment of i.e. joint cross-border investigation teams.

2) Enhancing the positive contribution of migration to economic development:

As discussed throughout the Forum process, enhancing the positive contribution of migration to economic development requires awareness raising of the positive socio-economic development contributions of migration to destination and origin countries. Adjusting and improving regulations of recruitment agencies was considered essential to prevent malpractices such as misinformation about the nature and conditions of employment, charging of high placement fees or facilitation of illegal migration. Besides, it was emphasized that labour and employment agencies shall endeavor to strengthen co-operation at all levels (public, private, national, international). Given the positive implications of remittances on the economy of origin countries, participants agreed to working on better conditions and services to facilitate the flow of remittances. While bearing in mind a gender-sensitive approach and a focus on the need of vulnerable groups, participating States consented on improving financial literacy of remittance holders and recipients. The designing of regulatory reforms aimed at encouraging remittance holders and recipients to invest in new businesses, including self-employment opportunities, was suggested. Further the issue of migrant savings abroad (much larger than remittances) was raised. The potential of diasporas deciding to invest their savings back home could create intensive economic boost in countries of origin if properly facilitated by both national banks (legislatively) and commercial banks (with migrant oriented products), generally stimulated by targeted government policies.

3) Addressing the social aspects of migration:

Social aspects of migration requires awareness raising of the social responsibility of national institutions and agencies, in particular those bodies dealing with labour, employment, education, social welfare and security, trade and financial issues. The Forum participants emphasized the need to share experiences and best practices on social policy making sensitive to migrants' needs. On the national level, the enhancement of intergovernmental and inter-agency co-operation was considered to be of major significance. In the course of the Forum process, participants discussed social aspects of migration, equality of treatment and respect for human rights, the importance of decent working conditions and the prevention of exploitation and abuse. *Inter alia*, in order to ensure decent economic and social status of migrants and to guard the enforcement of national standards, labour inspections are essential. The promotion of the rights of the most vulnerable, such as children, women or undocumented migrants was also recommended. Particular attention was paid to the issue of integration, reintegration and social security of migrants throughout the entire migration process. Forum participants acknowledged the value of adequate and accessible information to migrants in both

origin and destination countries for legal, orderly and safe migration. The establishment of 'Migrant Information Centres' was taken as one of the good example on helpful support services.

4) **Tackling the interrelation between environment and migration:**

In respect of the phenomenon of environmentally induced migration and potential impacts on the security and stability in the OSCE area, the Forum process was instrumental in stimulating discussion on the need for awareness raising. Moreover, participants agreed on the need for comprehensive research on the correlation between the status of the environment and migratory flows, so as to bridge the information gaps between researchers, policy-makers and operational bodies. The issue of elaborating coherent policy responses and sharing of experience and best practices among participating States and their partners was also discussed.

The Way Forward

1) **Continuation of on-going awareness and capacity building activities**

As follow-up to the 13th EEF in 2005, the OCEEA in co-operation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), developed the *OSCE-IOM-ILO 'Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination'*. The first edition was published in 2006 in English and Russian. It was followed by the Mediterranean Edition in English and Arabic, which is currently being translated into French.

Building on existing achievements, the OCEEA together with IOM, with support of the ILO, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, set up a joint project entitled '**Development of Practical Training Materials on Labour Migration Management**' (Project Number 1100766). The project is a response to a need for developing stronger institutional capacity among governments, social partners and other relevant practitioners to formulate labour migration policies that ensure safer, more humane and orderly labour movements as well as decent work conditions for migrant workers.

Under the project, eleven training modules will be developed that can be thought together or separately depending on the training requirements. The training methodology is highly interactive and modules are being designed for field use. The modules are on issues such as international legal frameworks for the protection of migrant workers; migration and development; foreign employment; admission policies; social cohesion; gender aspects; return and reintegration; irregular labour migration; and international cooperation. Two regional training of trainers workshops are planned in 2009 to be held in Albania and Kyrgyzstan. The training manual is being produced in Arabic, English and Russian.

The 17th EEF process emphasized the importance of capacity building activities thus giving a strong impetus to the above mentioned project.

2) **Gender and Migration**

In response to the launch seminar recommendations of the Labour Migration Handbook's Mediterranean Edition and the increasing need of taking the gender aspects into consideration when developing comprehensive and effective migration policies, the OSCE developed a cross-dimensional project aimed at raising political awareness of the gender dimension of labour migration. The project

was developed complementary to the Forum and is currently being implemented by the OCEEA together with the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSRTHB) and the OSCE Gender Section. As part of this project a '**Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies**' was produced and will be launched at the Athens Forum.

3) **Fostering the implementation of OSCE commitments related to migration**

Following the PC.DEC/857, the ILO was asked to prepare a '*Report on the Review of the Implementation of OSCE Commitments related to migration by OSCE participating States*'.

The *Review Report* was circulated on 6 May 2009 under reference number EEF.IO/5/09. It provides a comprehensive background on recent migration dynamics in the OSCE area as well as a solid analysis of the OSCE commitments. It looks at the legal framework and the protection of migrants; policies to optimize benefits and mitigate adverse impact of migration; international co-operation and dialogue; and structures and institutions for migration management. It includes a set of conclusions and recommendations. It reiterates that there is a substantial role and responsibility for the participating States and the OSCE in moving forward the topic of effective migration management.

In Athens, participating States are expected to provide feed-back and comments on the findings and recommendations of the Report in Session II of the Forum: "Review of the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension focusing on migration". **Based on the Review Report and the discussions held during the Forum process, a number of follow-up activities could be envisaged.**

4) **Joint OSCE/IOM follow-up activities**

During the the 17th EEF process, the OCEEA further deepened its close co-operation with the IOM. Based on the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the Forum process, five concrete **follow-up projects** between the OSCE and the IOM were developed. They are presented in more details in a separate document. The five projects focus on the following:

1. Migration Data in Eastern Europe & Central Asia
2. Migrant Savings & Investment in the OSCE Region
3. Female Labour Migration in the OSCE Region
4. Migration & Environmental issues in Central Asia
5. Migration & Environmental issues in the South Caucasus

The successful implementation of these proposed and possible follow-up activities will require political support as well as voluntary financial and in-kind contributions from the participating States. The OCEEA hopes that the 17th Economic and Environmental Forum / Part II (18-20 May 2009, Athens) will be instrumental in this regard and a special session titled "The OSCE contribution and follow-up ideas" has been set aside for this on Wednesday 20 May 2009.