

**17th Economic and Environmental Forum
Vienna, 19th January 2009**

EU Opening Statement

The European Union is very pleased to participate in the first part of the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum "Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region".

The EU believes that the issues of demographic development, migration and integration of third-country nationals are complex ones and need to be addressed cross-dimensionally, bearing in mind the comprehensive concept of security of the OSCE. The European Union remains of the view that certain issues, such as climate change, have effect on migration patterns and should be considered part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. That is why we appreciate this very pertinent topic being selected by Greece as one of the main themes of the Chairmanship. We can build on the discussions and outcome of the 13th Economic Forum under the Slovenian Chairmanship in 2005.

International migration is a reality that will persist as long as there are differentials of wealth and development between the various regions of the world. Managed migration could be an opportunity, because it is a factor of human and economic exchange, and could enable people to achieve what they aspire to. It can also contribute decisively to the economic growth of both countries of destination, which need migrants because of changes in their labor markets or in their demography, and countries of origin, as it provides resources for the migrants and their home countries, and thus contributes to their development. On the other hand illegal migration also remains a challenge. In this regard it is very important to focus as well on combating criminal networks, smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

In December 2005, the European Council adopted the Global Approach to Migration. In this context we reaffirm our conviction that migration issues are an integral part of the EU's external relations and that any harmonious and effective management of migration must be comprehensive, and consequently address the organization of legal migration and the control of illegal migration as ways of encouraging the synergy between migration and development. We are convinced that the Global Approach to Migration can only make sense within a close partnership between the countries of origin, transit and destination, for the benefit of all the countries concerned and of the migrants themselves.

The EU is taking concrete steps in order to support the implementation and further development of the Global Approach to Migration. One of them is a ministerial conference [Stálá mise České Republiky při OBSE](#)

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE
Mission Permanente de la République Tchèque
auprès de l'OSCE

Penzingerstrasse 11-13

1140 Vienna, Austria

phone: (+43) 1 899 58 140 | Fax: (+43) 1 894 57 98

E-mail: OSCE.Mission.Vienna@embassy.mzv.cz

www.eu2009.cz

| 1 |

on migration to be held on 27 - 28 April 2009 in Prague. The recommendations which will be adopted at this conference should boost mutual implementation of the Global Approach to migration between EU and countries of origin and transit and launch a new form of close cooperation called Migration Partnership. The aim of this conference is further to strengthen the territorial focus on eastern and south-eastern dimension.

Poorly managed immigration may disrupt the social cohesion of the countries of destination. The organization of immigration must consequently take into account the reception capacity of the country of destination in terms of its labor market, housing, and health, education and social services, and protect migrants against possible exploitation by criminal networks. Furthermore, migration and asylum policies must comply with the norms of international law, particularly those that concern human rights, human dignity and refugees.

In this spirit, the European Council has adopted on 15 - 16 October 2008 an European Pact on Immigration and Asylum.

The Pact focuses on five basic commitments, which will continue to be transposed into concrete measures:

- to organize legal immigration to take account of the priorities, needs and reception capacities determined by each Member State, and to encourage integration;
- to control illegal immigration by ensuring that illegal immigrants return to their countries of origin or to a country of transit;
- to make border controls more effective;
- to construct a Europe of asylum;
- to create a comprehensive partnership with the countries of origin and of transit in order to encourage the synergy between migration and development.

Madam Chair, the EU believes that the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security is of increasing importance. The chosen theme of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum is an opportunity to discuss the main aspects of the migration phenomenon from various perspectives. The OSCE is a unique political forum for promoting dialogue and building bridges between policy-makers and experts of participating States as well as between various other stakeholders, private enterprises, academia, and NGOs.

The EU is looking forward to an intensive debate during the first part of the Economic and Environmental Forum. We encourage the representatives of the participating States and the OSCE Field Operations to contribute actively so as to make the Forum a success.

The candidate country CROATIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE and ARMENIA align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.