



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

OSCE Mediterranean Seminar: November 2004

Addressing Threats to Security in the 21st Century:
Interaction Between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

Session 3: Migration – Opportunities and Challenges

IOM Presentation:

Maximising the Potential of Migration in a Security-Sensitive Environment

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On behalf of IOM, I would like to thank the hosts and organizers – the Government of Egypt and the OSCE – for arranging this important meeting and for the invitation for IOM to participate. This forum provides a useful opportunity for IOM to discuss issues related to migration and security with the community of States that forms the Mediterranean Partners¹ and Partners for Cooperation with OSCE², and with the broader OSCE constituency.

Many of you know IOM well, in fact all six of OSCE's Mediterranean Partners and all four of the Partners for Cooperation are IOM Member States. None the less, please allow me to provide a brief refresher. IOM is an inter-governmental organisation with, currently 105 Member and 27 Observer States. We are not North American, nor Latin American or European, nor African or Asian; we are neither exclusively a developed States' Organisation nor a developing States' Organization. We are, indeed, truly global and reflective of the diverse points of view, as well as the growing common ground, on migration issues in the world community. Our headquarters is in Geneva, though by far the largest presence we have is in the field, around the world in our more

¹ OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation include: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

² OSCE Partners for Cooperation include: Afghanistan, Japan, Republic of Korea and Thailand.



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than 200 offices. At present we have over 4000 operational staff working in over 1200 active projects with a current budgetary value of over US dollars 600 million. While our work on projects is significant, we are both a policy and a project Organization, helping the world community to reflect upon, shape, enact and re-shape cooperative approaches to migration management.

With that preface, I would like now to touch upon the following points in support of our agenda here today: 1) the opportunities migration presents for the Mediterranean region; 2) the challenges it presents and, in that context, the relationship between migration and security; and 3) some suggestions on programming for this sector that can help maximise the opportunities that migration offers, even within a security-conscious environment.

First, the opportunities migration presents for the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean region is not uniform in its migration characteristics; within the OSCE Partnership group, as well as within the broader Mediterranean, there are meaningful differences among countries. Much, but not all, of the Mediterranean on the African side is characterised by countries with significant migrant outflows, and significant transit migration toward Egypt and the Maghreb. Population pressure and economies that can not fully accommodate the national workforce generally fuel these movements, though there are some important exceptions to that rule within the region. While these characteristics create problems or challenges in migration management, they also create opportunities.

The southern-most area of the Mediterranean has a large and willing workforce, and one traditionally willing to travel to work in other locations. Because neighbouring areas, including the GCC countries and Western Europe, require workers to fulfil open labour niches and to offset, in Europe's case, imbalances in the working-age population demographics, there exists a good opportunity to put these pieces together for the common good. So the first major opportunity, then, is the large and mobile workforce



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of the southern Mediterranean and the need of the surrounding regions for these workers.

The second important opportunity is the strong impact these workers can have on their home countries' economies. Remittances form a significant portion of the foreign exchange receipts of these labour export countries, and these remittances can have a strong impact on local development. Expanding the number of labour migrants abroad and finding ways to intensify the impact of remittances on local development, may also be seen as important opportunities in the migration sector. To the extent that lack of economic opportunity may be a contributing factor encouraging some into a world of crime and perhaps terrorism, the opportunity exists to better use migration, particularly organised labour migration, as an active tool for national development and perhaps as a tool to improve security. The relationship between development and terrorism is just beginning to be explored. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, made a useful contribution in this exploration last year, producing an interesting report on the potential use of development cooperation as an instrument in the prevention of terrorism.³ That report is well worth a close read.

The third great opportunity, I would argue, is the special potential of migration to serve as a vehicle for cross-cultural understanding and the development of pluralistic societies. Clearly this is not an automatic result of migration, but there can be little doubt that migration has, for the most part, made the major immigration countries more diverse and more tolerant. Difficulties arise when migration is substantially unmanaged or kept at the margins of public policy. In that situation, public perception of the benefits of migration, and the nature of migrants, can suffer.

³ Kivimäki, Timo. *Development cooperation as an instrument in the prevention of terrorism: Research Report*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), Copenhagen. July 2003. (For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark)



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In sum, migration presents meaningful opportunities to build both origin and destination country economies, to assist in building social stability and to serve as a mechanism toward more tolerant and diverse societies.

If those are some of the opportunities, what then are the challenges? Many could be mentioned here that relate to the obstacles of moving from an unmanaged or partially-managed system toward a predictable and orderly approach to migration. But let me concentrate here on one over-riding challenge: that of managing the current migration flow, and perhaps increased flows, within a new framework that requires increased attention to security in the migration sector.

Prior to the major paradigm shifts that followed September 11th, some governments, when confronted with the many obstacles and challenges related to improving migration management, tended toward largely laissez-faire approaches: less rigorous border inspection, less inspection or accountability regarding off-the-record employment, and easing of requirements for travel documents and pre-travel clearance. The complexities were addressed by, at times, looking the other way and throwing open the doors, albeit often informally. This option is increasingly untenable. Movements need to be better managed at all stages of the process, and this requires better systems, training and technology, as well as improved policy and legal or regulatory frameworks, and much improved intra- and inter-governmental cooperation.

One of the first and most important challenges to be met is that of better defining the relationship of migration and security. In that regard, the events of September 11th opened up a new set of challenges for all of us who work in the area of migration – whether we work with governments, international organisations, academic institutions, NGOs or from other bases. We were immediately and dramatically challenged to consider the relationship between migration and terrorism, and between migration and security more generally. The soul-searching and conclusion-reaching was not easy, and



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in fact continues to this day, though the dust, literally, has long-ago settled on the instigating events.

In this process we, as a community involved in migration management, have learned quite a lot. There has been a great deal of activity in the areas of policy, law, regulation and operations, and perhaps foremost in the area of internal and international government cooperation in those areas where migration management and security management complement one another.

IOM, for our part, has taken lessons from the 11th September events and from the follow-up to those events. We understand our role to be one of assisting all concerned to articulate the common edges between migration and security, and to assist government efforts to put in place more effective practices to ensure that the migration sector is contributing effectively in the overall efforts toward increased security, while providing as well appropriate balance in the areas of the facilitation of normal movement of persons and protection of the vulnerable.

If there is a common understanding that has emerged thus far in the process of examining the migration and security nexus, it is that migration management should not be considered the leading edge in efforts to eliminate terrorism and security threats. It is unwise and unmerited to link migration and security, and migration and terrorism specifically, too closely or in a causal manner. To do so would mis-represent the nature of migration and migrants. However, the area of migration is none the less an essential area for action in the overall efforts to improve security. This suggests that providing assistance to build migration management systems, inclusive of policy, legal and operational elements should be a major priority and should be seen as part of a process of nation-building, and of supporting improved governance.

What, then, would be some of the strategies to address this main challenge: improving security in the migration sector without severely limiting the opportunities that



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migration provides, and without opening doors toward human rights abuses or encouraging xenophobia? Let me offer these initial suggestions.

First, governments should view highly-articulated migration management systems, such as border checkpoint data systems, and passport and visa issuance systems, as tools both for improved facilitation of movement, including expanded tourism and trade, as well as tools for improved security. The same systems can be supportive of both goals; they are the normal tools of management in the migration sector in most developed democracies. It is not necessarily the case that, in order to facilitate migratory movement, controls and security must be weakened. The world has turned a significant corner in relation to migration management post September 11th and the trend is unmistakably toward more sophisticated systems to manage movements – including movements toward, within and out of special ‘free movement/open border’ areas.

Second, building migration management systems and policy/legal frameworks should be seen as an essential part of nation-building and improved governance. It is increasingly difficult to keep migration as a back-burner issue or a minor element of public policy. Further, migration should not, as it is today, be an unusual feature in development planning frameworks. Development programming should encourage the inclusion of improved migration management systems in their priorities – from the perspective of improving security, increasing the economic impact of migration on development, and from the general perspective of migration management as a key element of democratic governance and nation-building. Improving migration management capacities should figure prominently in multi-year development plans, both in the national plans and in the complementing plans of foreign assistance agencies.

Third, the process of building migration systems and frameworks requires intense and well-articulated intra- and inter-governmental cooperation. Every useful opportunity should be taken to integrate migration into relevant on-going regional initiatives, and



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into internal government coordination and strategy-setting mechanisms. Additionally, regional and inter-regional dialogue and technical planning specifically on migration is essential. Here I would note the Maghreb 5+5 dialogue⁴ on migration that involves some of the OSCE Mediterranean partners alongside IOM, our recent work with the CEN-SAD group of States⁵ that extends into other partners represented here today, and further our initial work with the League of Arab States through our joint conference on Arab Migration in a Globalised World⁶, which took place in Cairo in September of 2003. We are planning to expand this cooperation in the near future.

Fourth, and finally, the process of building migration systems and frameworks should be planned and implemented in a managed and sustainable manner, with solid indicators or benchmarks of achievement along the way. IOM favours a projectised approach in which specific initiatives can be fairly costed, implemented in a timely manner and evaluated clearly. And, in that vein, let me now move toward closure with brief reference to the issue of programming and what capacity-building and technical cooperation in the migration and security area actually means in programme and project terms.

IOM works in this sector primarily through the following kinds of initiatives:

- 1) Strengthening border systems, including the entry/exit data systems and the ‘business process’ used to manage border checkpoints;
- 2) Providing technical guidance and support to the improvement of travel documents and their issuance systems, particularly passports and visas (let me also note here that IOM works closely with ICAO, the International Civil

⁴ The 5+5 Migration Dialogue members include: Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, and Tunisia

⁵ The Communauté des États Sahélo-Sahariens (CEN-SAD) members include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somali Democratic Republic, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia

⁶ Participants at the League of Arab States/IOM Conference on Arab Migration in a Globalised World included: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen,



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- Aviation Organisation, in the promotion of machine-readable travel documents, and participates in the relevant ICAO meetings and working group);
- 3) Building and augmenting national capacities to offer assisted voluntary return programmes to migrants who have reached a dead-end in their travels, either in a transit or a destination country;
 - 4) Building national capacities in the area of staff training and human resource development in relevant Ministries and Departments, and these training programmes focus not only on enforcement issues, but also on the human rights of migrants and protection of vulnerable migrants;
 - 5) Providing technical support and assistance to combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, including enhancing immigration service and law enforcement capacities to investigate these criminal phenomena, in the spirit of the Palermo Protocols;
 - 6) Establishing programmes to enhance economic and community development in areas of high migration pressure, thus addressing some of the root causes of economically-pressured migration;
 - 7) Enabling technical cooperation and policy planning between and among the involved States in sub-regions, and between the concerned regions; and,
 - 8) Providing technical support to the development of new policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to support this sector.

These examples, or areas of IOM activity, may provide useful ideas for carrying the agenda of this meeting forward into further practical and cooperative action to improve security in the migration sector.

Let me close here by recognizing that we are this year at the ten-year anniversary of the OSCE Budapest Summit Decision of 1994, which called for rapprochement between OSCE and the Mediterranean countries. It is particularly timely that this meeting is taking place on this decade marker, and it is instructive to see how the agenda for rapprochement has been shaped by recent events.



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IOM believes that migration as a theme is closely linked with many of the issues of concern to the OSCE's security agenda, with broader development and human rights agendas, and with the overall intentions of the rapprochement. We hope that these comments will prove helpful in advancing the agenda and the overall goal of this OSCE initiative, and will provide a basis for further inclusion of migration within the planning activities of the Contact Group to the Permanent Council. IOM would be happy to further contribute to the shaping of that agenda and to the related discussions.

Thank you.
