



*Check against Delivery*

Talking points for Mr. Petros Efthymiou, MP (Greece),  
Chairman of the Second General Committee of the OSCE PA

17TH MEETING OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
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For the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly – of which I chair the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment – the topic of migration is a long standing issue. Let me give you some examples of our initiatives from the past two years:

- At the Kiev Annual Session in 2007, the main debate of the 2<sup>nd</sup> committee was on migration, its interconnection with trafficking in human beings, and border control. In the respective chapter of the Kiev Declaration adopted that year, the PA condemned criminal networks that facilitate illegal immigration and called for an increase in co-operation among participating States, notably in establishing and sharing reliable statistical data. In this context, let me stress that the Parliamentary Assembly's tireless and urgent calls for putting Human Trafficking on the OSCE agenda, already made even ten years ago, eventually led to the Ministerial Council Decisions in Maastricht and elsewhere.

- In May of last year, in an effort to promote dialogue on issues related to global migration, Ms. Hilda L. Solis, the then OSCE PA's Special Representative on Migration – now U.S. Secretary of Labor – testified at the U.S. Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) about the topic: “Los Angeles: The Regional Impacts and Opportunities of Migration”, recommending that the countries of the OSCE could use the cases like the Los Angeles case as a model to exchange their experiences and best practices.
- Also in 2008, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly gathered in Astana for its Annual Session, adopting a Resolution on “Recognizing the Economic, Cultural, Political and Social Contributions of Migrants”. It especially encourages participating States to empower migrants and to protect the most vulnerable by improving their economic, educational, civic and social integration. Furthermore, the Resolution calls on participating States to provide migrants with citizenship classes and highlights the importance of improved co-operation with regulatory agencies and international financial institutions to optimize remittance mechanisms and small business micro-loan programs.

- A few months later, in September 2008 at our Toronto Fall Meetings, a conference on “The OSCE in an Open World: Trade, Migration, and Security” studied issues related to migration from a Human perspective.
- More recently, on 16 April in Dushanbe, the Parliamentary Assembly organized a regional parliamentary seminar on labor migration in Tajikistan.
- As for upcoming activities, later this month, the PA’s Economic Conference will be held in Dublin from 27 to 29 May on “The World Financial Crisis”. An entire session of the Conference will be dedicated to “The Social Consequences of the Crisis: the Case of Migration”.
- But we are not just making requests to the OSCE and its participating States. Parliaments and MPs are the direct link to the societies that we represent, mediating between the citizens and the decision-makers. The issue of migration is not one that merely calls for administrative approach. It cannot be properly addressed without the support of our citizens. Many of the suggestions we have heard these last days will remain unworkable if we do not win the hearts and minds of our peoples. Only by properly understanding and addressing our citizens’ concerns, by carefully correcting misconceptions, and by thus promoting diversity and social cohesion can we be successful. This is our main task as parliamentarians.

Dear Friends, I wish us all success in our future endeavors.