



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**The 17<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

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**“Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region”**

**Welcoming Remarks by**

**Secretary General**

**Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**

Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to the second part of the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

I have no doubt that this splendid setting will inspire us to have an open exchange of views on how to draw fully on the economic and social contribution that migration makes to both countries of origin and destination.

The current global economic and financial context makes this all the more important. In troubled times, it is vital that we communicate clearly on the positive contribution that migrants make to our societies and also that we counter firmly any rise of xenophobia or scapegoating of migrant worker. Violations of human rights and threats to social cohesion cannot be accepted or ignored. These are our starting points.

The question of effective migration management matters also because the scope and complexity of international migration has increased in the last years across the OSCE area.

States hold primary responsibility for effectively addressing the opportunities and challenges of migration. However, inter-State co-operation is a key part of elaborating and implementing sustainable policy solutions. In this context, developing dialogue and stronger co-operation between governments at the bilateral, regional and international levels is vital.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE role starts here.

The first CSCE commitments on migration were elaborated in the Helsinki Final Act. Since 1975, participating States have developed their commitments further – to include commitments related to regulating migration, optimising the benefits of migration, ensuring migrants’ working and living conditions, preventing discrimination and xenophobia, and facilitating return and reintegration.

Throughout this process, the OSCE has come to offer an important regional platform for both political *consultation* and *action* on migration and security related issues. Upon their request, the OSCE indeed works to assist individual participating States in developing and enhancing migration management policies.

The decision of participating States last July, selecting “migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region” as the theme for the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, builds on these foundations.

Since July, discussions in the OSCE have been rich. The participating States have explored options for strengthening internal and external co-operation. They have discussed how to improve the legal channels for migration and the protection of migrants and also how to reduce irregular migration and to combat corruption

and organized criminal activities. Throughout all of these discussions, the participating States have agreed on the importance of greater coherence between migration policies and economic, social and environmental policies.

In the course of the Economic and Environmental Forum process, the participating States and OSCE partner organizations have identified a number of priority issues and potential areas of activity for the Organization. These recommendations have been reflected in the Summary documents prepared.

These recommendations underline the idea that the OSCE can provide a wide platform for dialogue and co-operation on migration and security issues, incorporating all OSCE participating States – countries of origin, transit and destination – as well as the Partners for Co-operation, and other partner organizations. In particular, the OSCE can facilitate the sharing of experience on measures that have proven successful in fostering legal labour migration and reducing irregular migration. The OSCE can help also to promote a better understanding of the links between migration and security. The OSCE contribution can also be in helping to address threats to social cohesion arising from xenophobic hostility and violence expressed against migrants. Finally, the Organization may play an important role in an early warning capacity -- in order to ensure better preparedness to respond to the impact of environmental factors on migration.

We have a full agenda ahead of us in the next three days. How can we better manage migration in a changing global context? What is the state of play regarding OSCE commitments in the area of migration and their implementation? How to strengthen gender mainstreaming in labour migration policies? How can we strengthen inter-State and regional co-operation? These are some of the questions that we will address.

The International Labour Office has performed a great service to the OSCE and the participating States, for which I am grateful. The *Review of the Implementation of*

*OSCE Commitments related to migration*, to be discussed later today, is important, because it confirms the role the OSCE can play in the area of comprehensive migration management. The Review is helpful also because it reminds all of the participating States of where they stand with regard to implementing migration related commitments and where improvements may be made. The Review will help to bolster the work of the OSCE and provide new directions for future work.

I wish also to draw your attention to the *Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies* that will be officially launched this afternoon. This Guide reflects the comprehensive approach the OSCE takes to migration management. Drawing across all three Dimensions, the Guide is the result of co-operation between the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the OSCE Secretariat Gender Section. I look forward to active discussion on the Guide.

Excellencies,

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I wish, first, to extend my personal gratitude to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Throughout the Forum process, the IOM has provided generous support and professional expertise to the organization of meetings and to developing concrete follow-up activities. The OSCE is grateful for the excellent co-operation and strong engagement received from both the ILO and the IOM.

A number of concrete follow-up projects, jointly developed by the OSCE and the IOM, have been submitted for the consideration of participating States. The focus of these proposed projects falls on issues such as migration data collection and harmonization, facilitating migrant savings and investment, gender and labour migration, as well as environmental issues and migration. I urge your thoughtful consideration to these ideas.

I wish also to thank the Greek Chairmanship. As captain of the OSCE ship, the Chairwoman-in-Office has stewarded excellently this important and sensitive topic through the Forum process.

On behalf of the OSCE Secretariat, my thanks finally go to all representatives from the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, and to experts from international organizations, NGOs and the business and academic community.

I am pleased to welcome Mr. Ján Kubiš, well-known to OSCE circles and now Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration. I look forward to your keynote addresses.

With this, I pass on the floor to Mr. Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of our Economic and Environmental Activities, whose Office, with the Greek Chairmanship, has prepared this event.

I look forward to our discussions. Thank you.