



**24th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Second Preparatory Meeting
“Strengthening stability and security through co-operation on good governance”**

Berlin, 20 May 2016

**Session VI: The contribution of migrant workers to economic development, stability
and security through circular and return migration**

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Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA’s General Committee on
Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment**

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important forum today. It is a privilege to be here on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which has been particularly active on the issue of migration in recent months.

Following a decision taken by our Standing Committee at the Winter Meeting in Vienna this February, we recently launched an Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, chaired by Swiss parliamentarian Filippo Lombardi. Just last week members of this ad hoc committee conducted a visit to the migrant encampment in the vicinity of Calais, France.

The visit to what is commonly called “the jungle” served as a stark reminder of the human effects that the current approach to migration management is having on people fleeing conflicts, political repression and poverty.

This approach has been characterized by a lack of European solidarity and by governments viewing the issue through the prism of short-sighted national interests.

But while many governments see migration as a burden that must be shared more equitably, there are also numerous advantages to be gained from immigrants, who often bring needed skills and help spur economic growth.

People leaving their homes in search of safety, freedom and economic security are teachers, health care workers, scientists, engineers, and construction workers – the very people we need to revitalize stagnant economies by fueling population growth and sustaining critical industries such as agriculture and manufacturing.

In many OSCE participating States, birth rates are well below the replacement level, with populations rapidly ageing, and work forces shrinking.

Meanwhile, some 54 per cent of the world's refugees have lived in exile for more than five years, often without freedom of movement or the right to work. Allowing these refugees to integrate and participate in the labour market could catalyze the reform of global refugee policy and improve the lives of millions.

The benefits stemming from an effective migration management for the socio-economic development, social cohesion, security and stability in all countries are countless.

Yet, policymakers and members of the public in destination countries widely believe that immigration is primarily an economic liability associated with job loss, as well as a heavy burden on public services.

However, evidence suggests that in most countries migrants pay more in taxes and social contributions than they receive, and contribute substantially to destination countries' economies by providing the labour and skills needed in critical occupations and sectors.

We should therefore view the migration crisis as an opportunity that would benefit from intensifying economic co-operation, creating attractive conditions for investment, and facilitating the flow of remittances.

Effective migration management that encourages legal migration, promotes integration of migrants, and provides them access to labour markets is key.

Equally important is the formation of good co-operation and close partnerships between governments, governmental agencies and relevant international and regional organizations.

The OSCE must continue to assist the participating States in this regard, by promoting effective migration management, including through the exchange of best practices, and facilitating legal migration, while paying particular attention to bilateral and multilateral co-operation in this field.

The Parliamentary Assembly stands ready to work with the governmental side in developing this essential co-operation, and I look forward to continuing our fruitful discussions today.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here.