



“Migration management: opportunities and challenges to the economy in the OSCE region”

Vienna, 25 February 2016

Ms. Nilza Sena (MP, Portugal)
*Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA’s General Committee on
Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment*

- It is a pleasure for me as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment to welcome you to this Special Debate on “Migration management: opportunities and challenges to the economy in the OSCE region”.
- I would like to thank Mr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, for being here today.
- The OSCE region is home to almost half of the total number of migrants worldwide – from Vancouver to Vladivostok the OSCE countries are nations of origin, transit, and destination for millions of migrants and refugees.
- The current migration crisis is impacting OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation in many different ways, presenting new challenges to governments and economies that in some cases are still recovering from the 2008 financial crisis.
- But while migration is seen by many governments as a burden that must be shared more equitably, it is important to remember that there are also numerous advantages to be gained from immigrants, who often bring needed skills and help spur economic growth.
- People who have fled warzones in search of safety are teachers, health care workers, scientists, engineers, and construction workers. They can revitalize stagnant economies by fueling population growth, sustaining crucial lower skilled industries such as agriculture and manufacturing, and can otherwise play a valuable role in our communities and our economies.

- We should remember that in many OSCE participating States, birth rates are well below replacement level, populations are rapidly ageing, and work forces are 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 market could catalyze the reform of global refugee policy and improve the lives of millions.
- Statistical evidence shows that migrants' work increases economic output and growth and their investment in new business and new business initiatives contributes to an increase in employment in countries of destination. The displaced could contribute to the cost of their own care while improving the lot of their host countries and integrating themselves into local economies.
- Across the advanced countries, the number of highly educated immigrants has increased rapidly over the past decade, which has important implications for productivity and innovation. Migrants could also play a role in facilitating trade and investment flows.
- The benefits stemming from an effective migration management for the socio-economic development, social cohesion, security and stability in all countries including those of origin, transit and destination are countless.
- Despite those benefits, the debate over migration has grown increasingly polarized and heated.
- Members of the public and policymakers in destination countries widely believe that immigration is primarily an economic burden, as immigration is considered a key factor leading to 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 labor and skills needed in critical occupations and sectors.
- Colleagues, we all recognize that large scale immigration can pose serious challenges to all nations and their ability to cope with its challenges, but by understanding refugees as not only a humanitarian challenge but also a development opportunity, States could do much to sustainably improve the lives of the dispossessed.
- We should take measures to minimize negative impacts of the global financial and economic crisis on migrants by intensifying economic co-operation, creating attractive conditions for investment and business development and facilitating the flow of remittances.

- Effective migration management that encourages legal migration, promotes integration of migrants, and provides them access to labor markets is a key.
- This sort of effective management is crucial to the economic and social development of countries of origin and destination countries, and a key factor in finding effective solutions to migration challenges 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 exchange of best practices, and facilitating legal migration, while paying particular attention to bilateral and multilateral co-operation in this field.
- Thank you!