



SLOVAKIA

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S T A T E M E N T

by

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to the High Level Dialog on Migration and Development

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Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations

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Madame President,

Coming from a small country, which especially at the beginning of 20th century produced thousands and thousands migrants bound particularly for the USA, I have to say that this fact still affects social consciousness in my country.

Slovakia welcomes the organization of this High Level Dialogue, as migration is becoming more and more an integral part of global processes bringing both concerns and challenges not only to the migrants, but also to the countries of origin, transit as well as destination. This fact is supported also by the latest Transatlantic Trends survey of American and European public opinion. According to these findings 79 percent of Americans and 76 percent of Europeans agree that large numbers of immigrants coming into their country are an important threat.

Slovakia lying on the east-west migratory route in Europe, so far does not have to deal with an excessive influx of migrants. Despite this, Slovakia as a smaller EU country, is involved in formation of the EU migration policies and therefore fully supports the EU joint position presented at this High Level Dialogue, as well as the EU global approach on migration adopted in December 2005 and number of instruments and policy guidelines contained in the so-called Hague program where, among other things is defined also the EU objective to create common European asylum system. From our own experience, we can prove evidence that misuse of asylum procedures is still a frequent and spread phenomenon.

The adoption of the *EU Directive on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status* on 1 December 2005 successfully completed the first phase of the development of the joint asylum policy. The setting up of the so-called *Dublin centres* across the EU has contributed to the better management of asylum procedures. To facilitate the integration of migrants, we are working in Slovakia on preparation of the *Guidelines of Integration Policy for Migrants*, which will cover all groups of migrants as well as all aspects of their work and life in our country.

We support also the EU effort aimed at strengthening its operational cooperation, in particular by developing joint operations in the Mediterranean and Atlantic areas, which should improve coastal patrolling, identification of illegal migratory routes and surveillance of maritime borders. In this context, it is advisable to mention as a positive example also recent Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, which took place in Rabat at the beginning of July. Here, participating African and European countries manifested strong political interest in strengthening cooperation in managing migration, which resulted in adoption of joint political declaration and challenging action plan.

Negotiations of readmission agreements on the EU level, we consider as a big step forward in the management of migration flows and in the effort to eliminate illegal migration.

The Slovak Government adopted last year the *Guidelines of Migration Policy*, which created precondition for the implementation of active and effective policies and

measures in the areas that are being discussed at this forum. These policy guidelines define our priorities with regard to the reception and stay of migrants on the territory of Slovakia. They are aiming at the improvement of coordination among various Slovak institutions involved in the management of migration process. One of the goals set out in these guidelines is establishing the Immigration and Naturalisation Office before 2010.

Madame President,

Slovakia supports the reinforcement of the international dialogue and cooperation in migration issues, but at the same time we share the opinion that there is still room for better use of the existing institutions and activities. Any new initiative is welcome of course as long as it has potential for success and brings new added value to work already done in various international forums.

Slovakia reiterates the need to fully implement the UN conventions fighting against all sources of intolerance, encouraging the cultural variety and focusing on fostering the idea of human rights, mutual respect and understanding among civilisations. In this context I am pleased to inform that Slovak Government approved Action plan on preventing all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other manifestations of intolerance.

We are convinced that the management of migration is a common responsibility of all countries included. Therefore we engage in the dialogue on migration with various countries and regions in the world, but at the same time we predominantly cooperate with our neighbours with the aim to create conditions for the better management of migration flows and smooth extension of Schengen area by the end of next year.

Slovak Republic shares the opinion that migration and development are two inseparable agendas. The activities of UN, EU and other regional or global organizations should be carried out along coordinated lines in order to achieve the best possible results. Illegal migration is a major source of misuse of asylum systems and this phenomenon deserves international attention. Better management of the migration processes would bring decrease of unfounded asylum claims and real refugees would then enjoy better protection and acceleration of the asylum procedures. We think that there is a serious need to draw more attention to the eventual possibility of misusing asylum procedures by suspects involved in terrorist activities. In our opinion we should jointly strive for effective management of migration flows in the regions of origin and at the same time to work on elimination of all causes of massive moves of population by developing legal ways of immigration.

Madame President,

Slovakia believes that this dialogue is instrumental in the identification of incoherencies in existing migration and development policies and at the same time it will contribute significantly to the building partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination.

Thank you for your kind attention.