

Commission on Population and Development
Thirty-ninth session

International Migration and Development

Statement on behalf of the European Union

Mr. Thomas NADER
Director
Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New York, 3 April 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the EFTA Country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

As this is the first time for Austria to take the floor during this session of the Commission, please allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I would like to assure you that the European Union looks forward to participating actively and constructively in the 39th Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

In 2006 the international discussion will be focused on international migration and development. The EU is aware that migration is a sensitive subject and that views and opinions on migration may diverge between countries and regions. An effective and fruitful dialogue starts by exploring and understanding each others' position. The goal must be to raise awareness of the multidimensional aspects of the causes and effects of migration and of the positive and negative impacts of migration in development terms. It is important to maximise the positive impact of migration while limiting its negative consequences for countries of origin, transit, and destination, as well as for the individual migrants themselves, women as well as men. The EU is intent on having an open and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders in which different issues and challenges can be raised.

The question of how migration policy can contribute to the overall objective of policy coherence for poverty reduction and development will occupy a large part of our discussions. The culmination of this will be the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development scheduled for 14-15 September 2006. The UN General Assembly has called upon the Commissions on Population and Development, on the Status of Women, and on Social Development to prepare this important meeting by providing contributions in their respective areas of expertise via ECOSOC. This increases the significance of our work in the framework of this year's session of the CPD.

In order to make the greatest contribution possible in the limited time available, the EU believes it is important for the Commission to concentrate on aspects corresponding to its mandate and expertise. International migration trends and flows, the interrelationships between migration and economic development and social change, the interactions between international migration and population growth, fertility, mortality, health, labour markets, gender issues, and so forth, are all part of a broad agenda on population and development. Consequently, the EU would propose focusing on population, international migration and development. It will then be up to the UN Secretary General, as part of the comprehensive overview of studies and analyses on

¹ Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

the multi-dimensional aspects of migration and development that he has been requested to prepare for the aforementioned High Level Dialogue, to bring together such sectoral reports in a holistic and coherent manner.

Mr. Chairperson,

For more than ten years the European Union has been developing a common migration policy framework, and is increasingly moving towards a comprehensive approach to migration and development. The General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union adopted "Conclusions on Migration and External Relations" in November 2005, where it is recognised that migration can be an essential part of the development agenda and development policy. It is noted that the links between migration and development are complex, but that migration, when managed effectively, can have a substantial positive impact both for the host country and for the country of origin. We are developing ideas on, among other things, temporary and circular migration, and return, and believe that there is a need for an approach addressing regional and Pan-African dimensions of migration so as to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between countries of origin and transit and the EU. In this context, the European Council has adopted Conclusions on a "Global approach to migration: Priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean." In this regard it is important to also focus on preventing and combating illegal migration. Information campaigns targeted at countries of origin could also be considered with the aim to give a realistic understanding about the rules for admission into the various Member States of the European Union. At the same time, priority should be given to the integration of legal migrants for the benefits of migrants and their hosting societies alike.

An important aspect of migration and development is the necessity in many cases of finding regional solutions and approaches. This is, for example, the basis for the dialogue with our Mediterranean partner countries and the African Union.

Mr. Chairperson,

According to the Report of the Global Commission on International Migration it is estimated that around 60 per cent of all recorded migrants are now to be found in the world's more prosperous countries, and the other 40 per cent in developing countries. Despite this trend, large numbers of people continue to engage in 'south-south' migration, moving from one developing country to another. The CPD and the High Level Dialogue should also examine this phenomenon. Nearly half of all international migrants are women and women migrants outnumber male migrants in developing countries. Immigration currently constitutes a major part of population growth in more developed countries and particularly in Europe. Between 1990 and 2000 immigration accounted for 89 percent of the population growth in Europe. Considering the declining and ageing population of the EU, managed migration may contribute to help counter this tendency.

The human rights of migrants must be protected and observed. Development cannot be achieved at the expense of human rights. Furthermore, the specific needs of women and children must be considered since over half of global migrants are women and many are children. The strategy of "gender mainstreaming" must be taken into account in all spheres of human life, including matters relating to migration and development. Women

can gain autonomy through migration, but they can also experience discrimination and exploitation. Special consideration must be given to the violence deriving from all forms of trafficking in and smuggling of human beings, which disproportionately affects women, adolescents and children. Here we need to create/increase awareness together with support measures for those affected including the creation of economic alternatives. Moreover, it is important to give particular attention to the access by all migrants to adequate health care and services, including reproductive health care and services and the health needs of women.

Migrants are especially vulnerable to human rights violations. The Cairo Programme of Action calls on governments to improve the access of migrants to health, education, and other social services and stresses the importance of reproductive rights for migrants. Services provided in terms of the ICPD Cairo Agenda must be sensitive to the individual needs of women, adolescents and children and responsive to their often powerless situation, with particular attention to those who are victims of sexual violence. Access to health, education, and equal treatment before the law and the protection of their rights and safety are a first step towards a successful integration of the migrant population.

Mr. Chairperson,

Whenever an international dialogue takes place in the context of development, the question is justifiably posed: What concrete measures is the international community prepared to take in order to translate its political intentions into deeds? Permit me here to mention several areas in which the EU has taken or is taking steps to improve the contribution of migration to development:

Dialogue: The EU is in favour of increased dialogue on migration between states and regions. International migration necessarily entails co-operation if it is to work for the benefit of sending, transit, and receiving countries. The ongoing dialogue this year, culminating in the HLD, will enable donor governments and developing country governments to explore how they can work better together to increase migration's benefits and minimise its risks. We would like to stress the need for continued dialogue at international level on this very important topic also after the High Level Dialogue.

Capacity building: Development efforts should include support to partner governments to develop national legislation on migration and strengthen institutional capacity to manage migration effectively. To ensure the positive impact of migration on development and vice versa, a coherent migration policy is essential and to that effect cooperation and coordination within and between states should be increased. Development cooperation may also be used to target job creation, decent working conditions, to enhance social inclusion and poverty reduction and generally to improve the social and economic environment in developing countries. International cooperation could enhance capacity building in the area of asylum and migration. This may contribute in a positive manner to economic and social development in developing countries. We also need to work together to ensure that migration is an integral part of poverty reduction strategies.

Remittances: In 2005 alone, about USD 167 billion in remittances flowed via formal channels into the developing countries; perhaps an additional 50 percent of this sum via informal channels. While they cannot replace ODA, the volume of remittances is thus

estimated to be 2-3 times higher than that of ODA. Remittances are private resources and, therefore, the high levels should not cause a decline in ODA. Remittances contribute to the advancement and saving of migrants and communities. The EU is working on proposals for providing more secure, faster, and cheaper transfer methods for remittances obtained from legal earnings and from legal purposes. We hope during this year's dialogue that states will reinforce their commitment to programmes to improve infrastructure in both sending and receiving countries, in order to enhance poverty reduction and increase the development benefits of remittances. The resolution we adopted in the General Assembly on facilitating and reducing the transfer costs of remittances (A/RES/60/206) last December is a step in the right direction, but further efforts are needed to enhance the development effects of remittances.

Brain circulation: Remittances and brain circulation constitute some of the positive impacts of migration on development. However, it cannot be denied that migratory flows, especially of skilled workers, can lead to shortages of personnel in key sectors. This is especially true in the health sector. The EU has recognised the seriousness of this situation and is working with developing country governments to design measures to combat multi-skill shortages in vulnerable sectors, e.g. in the health services of developing countries. This subject is on the agenda of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union in April. In this area, action plans and measures at the local, regional, and international levels will be worked out to reduce the negative impacts of brain drain and maximise the positive impacts in both sending and receiving countries.

Diaspora: Development cooperation, if it is to be successful, must reflect a comprehensive knowledge of local conditions. In relation to migration, the question arises, of how an intensive dialogue with Diaspora members could deepen our mutual understanding and, in so doing help us to achieve better development work together. The discussion following the Report of the Global Commission on International Migration has focused our attention in this direction. As a first step we are now considering, in accordance with the wish expressed by migrants themselves, assistance in the building of appropriate networks and the strengthening of their contribution to the social, economic, and political development of their countries of origin. It is important that the construction of Diaspora-networks be based exclusively on voluntary collaboration. Such Diaspora-organisations could be useful partners for development dialogue. Skilled labour in the Diaspora can play an important role, through at the very least the transfer of skills and the training of compatriots.

It is important that states continue to look for ways to strengthen the link between migration and development, so that the potential of well managed migration to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is realised. Partnership with third countries concerned will also be a key element for the success of such a policy, with a view to promoting co-development. In this context, we will work for a positive and constructive outcome of the High Level Dialogue. We look forward to the deliberations of the 39th Session of the Commission on Population and Development regarding this important topic, recognising the need to continue the international dialogue on migration and development.
