



Statement by
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Madam Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this honourable assembly in the name of Slovakia and to share with you the ideas that we discussed during the Second ASEM (Europe-Asia Meeting) labour and employment minister's conference of EU and ASEM labour ministers in Bali in Indonesia in October last year.

In the Report of the Secretary-General on “Promoting social integration”, we can read about the importance of labour migration. Migrant workers and their families continue to face major obstacles to integration in their host countries. The integration of migrants into the host country society should not result in the loss of social and cultural ties with the country of origin. For migrants, specific aspects of successful integration include equal access to public institutions; respect for cultures and religions; knowledge of the language, culture and institutions of the host country, as well as full participation in the democratic process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my report as chair of the working group on labour migration (October 14, 2008) within the second ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers' Conference, we can find also similar points of view. The report acknowledged the importance of dialogue and cooperation in relation to migration issues between Europe and Asia. It further, highlights several activities and projects, which can reinforce future partnership and cooperation between Asia and Europe such as strengthening dialogue and cooperation, setting up ways and means to facilitate technical cooperation, intensifying exchange of experiences, expertise and good practices as well as capacity-building in the issue of labour migration.

Slovakia and other EU new member states gradually transformed from countries of emigration into countries who are accepting immigrants. There is “new geography” of migration, diversification of migration flows in Europe and the need for flexible, adaptable frameworks to manage different flows of migration. Migration policies have to be coordinated

with other policies. Managed economic migration is one of the possible alternative solutions for lack of local labour resources through entry of foreigners into the labour markets.

Bilateral and regional agreements to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers bring the benefits both to sending (emigrant) countries and to receiving (immigrant) countries. Cooperation with the ILO is essential. We need to implement an explicit and enforceable ethical framework to supervise the recruitment and hiring policies to ensure that government, recruitment agencies and employers comply with national and international codes. Human resources development, including in emigrant countries, equals employment opportunities, effective integration of families (not assimilation), and good monitoring systems are important in this respect. The establishment of a regionally appropriate "social floor" minimum standard of income and an overall portability of basic entitlements across borders is a positive idea.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Considering the changing of mobility patterns of labour migration, there is a need to create migration policies that should be flexible and adaptable, and have long-term implications.

Delegates of the meeting discussed and shared information, perspectives and best practices based on their own respective experiences. They shared the common view that issues of labour migration are crucial and need to be on program of ASEM process (interregional cooperation). In line with this view, they also stressed the importance to have a dialogue and cooperation to manage labour migration issues.

Delegates raised that labour migration could reduce unemployment that leads to poverty alleviation. Moreover, labour migration generates remuneration that boosts national economy. The delegates acknowledged the need for labour supply and demand among ASEM partners.

The delegates shared views that labour migration could generate a problem and cause economic impact if not well anticipated and managed by both the sending and the receiving countries. The delegates underlined the necessity to have a harmonized cooperation between sending and receiving countries. Governments have to play a key role in establishing mechanisms and regulations to solve this matter.

We stressed the following points:

- decent work, integration and non-discrimination policies for economic migrants,
- access to labour markets and social security systems of receiving countries for migrant workers,
- labour market research in the context of labour migration,
- common approach to labour migration,
- bilateral and multilateral co-operation,
- need for a national regulatory policy,
- importance of corporate social responsibility,
- tripartite dialog on issues and challenges stemming from migration.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson for your attention.