

**39-th Session of the Commission on Population and Development
New York, 5 April 2006**

**Item 4 “General Debate on National Experience in Population Matters:
International Migration and Development”**

Statement

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Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you with your election as a chair person of the 39-th Session of the Commission on Population and Development and state my delegation readiness to contribute to the work of this Commission.

The Bulgarian policy in the field of migration and development supports the positive migration, which contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Migration as a positive force for development should bring benefit for both host and home countries and for migrants themselves.

The migration policy of the Republic of Bulgaria is an important element of the integration of our country into the European Union. It aims at promoting the respect for the fundamental human rights while maintaining an optimum balance between the freedom of movement of persons and prevention of illegal migration. For that purpose we adopted the respective legislation and secondary normative acts in the field of migration. Our country has acceded to international treaties in the field of human rights, protection of national minorities, combat against terrorism, abolishment of all forms of racial discrimination, etc. The policy of the government is consistent with the respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms, anti discrimination, tolerance and social integration of all the vulnerable groups, including the migrants in the country.

The last annual report on the migration situation in Bulgaria characterizes the country as a transit one. While the general tendencies in the migration situation in the Republic of Bulgaria have remained the same for the last few years, we should underline the positive development in the national policy in this field.

An interdepartmental working group with the participation of representatives from all ministries and institutions was established with the aim to work on the management of the migration processes, employment and social integration of the foreign citizens in Bulgaria. The interdepartmental working group analyses the legislation and the administrative practice in the field of the social and cultural integration of migrant workers and their families in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria is actively involved in international cooperation as regards the improvement of the management of labor migration. Our country introduces international standards in legislation following the positive experience of other countries. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy on

its part has been building up its migration policy in correspondence with the commitments undertaken in the process of accession of our country to the EU. This policy includes the mutual recognition of qualifications and coordination of social security schemes.

Since 2005 a network of counsellors on labor and social matters at the embassies of the Republic of Bulgaria began to develop. In 2005 a Labor and Social Advisory Office was established within Bulgarian Embassy in Greece. The process will continue with setting up of offices in Spain, Germany and other countries. These offices provide Bulgarian citizens with information and support in the respective country as well as informing the citizens of this country about the opportunities for employment in Bulgaria. The counsellors on labor and social matters facilitate dialogue and cooperation between the ministry and similar institutions abroad, based on exchange of data and experience.

As regards legal instruments, Bulgaria is looking for opportunities for parallel conclusion of employment and social security agreements. So far in the field of employment agreements with Germany, Spain, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, France, Luxemburg, Portugal, the Flemish community of Belgium and the Lombardy region of Italy have been signed. With most of these countries Bulgaria has also signed social security agreements – with a view to achieving maximum protection of the Bulgarian citizens employed in these countries.

In order to prevent cross-border illegal migration, brochures about the legislation of other countries regarding residence and employment and about the sanctions for its non-observance respectively have been issued annually. There is a close cooperation with the Bulgarian media in this process – there have been three visits of experts and journalists to countries with a large number of Bulgarian workers – Spain, Portugal and Greece. As a result the Bulgarian public was acquainted in detail with the legislation of these countries and with the sanctions concerning its non-observance, as well as with the way of living of the Bulgarian citizens there and their problems. The ambition is that a necessary level of legal culture be created in the Bulgarian society, useful in the process of the cross-border employment.

A large information campaign on the risks of offers for illegal employment proposals, the counteraction to the illegal residence, work abroad, etc. has been launched with the active involvement of nongovernmental organizations, the employers' and trade union organizations as well as with intergovernmental organizations, as the International Organization for Migration, with which a Memorandum for joint activity was signed.

In conclusion I would like to stress that our country actively participates in the process of establishment of a multilateral framework for cross-border migration, which shall guarantee full protection of the rights of migrant workers and a fair character of this process for both sending and receiving countries – with a view to contributing as much as possible to the development goals. The international migration is a process of global importance and must be a central part in the global agenda.

Thank you!