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REPORT*

“Migration in the BSEC Member States – Social and Cultural Aspects”

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Human mobility is a major feature of the modern world. Our century is characterized as the century of people on the move. Migrants constitute 3% of the world population, which represents approximately 200 million people or the fifth biggest “country” in the world.

2. Current academic and political debates across the world identify international migration as a key aspect of contemporary social, economic and cultural life. Growing attention is being devoted to a variety of social and development problems linked to migration, but also to the benefits for the countries, communities and migrants involved. It is increasingly accepted that migration creates opportunities for sending and receiving countries, since it can allow migrants to learn new skills and can facilitate cross-border trade and investment linkages.

3. The Black Sea region is particularly concerned with the multiple effects of migration since it is an area both of sending and receiving migrants – as a final destination or transit area. Issues like brain drain, social rights of migrants and illegal migration are constantly in the centre of discussion within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. In its Recommendation 21/1997 on “Rights and social protection of refugees and displaced persons” the Assembly stresses the importance of the exercise by all of human rights, fundamental freedoms, as well as of economic, social and cultural rights, in promoting political and social stability. Recommendation 35/1999 concerned the issue of “The legal framework for combating trafficking in people” and finally legal aspects of protection and integration of labour migrants were addressed by Recommendation 51/2001 on “The legal framework of the protection of migrant workers in the Black Sea countries and the relations between immigrant communities and the host country”.

4. During the discussions at the two previous Meetings of the Committee, which elaborated Reports and Recommendations on “Social cohesion among the BSEC Member States – contribution to political stability” (103/2208) and “The impact of globalization on the social policies of the BSEC Member States” (106/2008), the national delegations emphasized the impact of migration in the social development of the Black Sea region. In this context, and taking into account the swift changes in migration patterns as well as in the international standard setting in the field of migration policies, the Committee decided to take up the subject of “Migration in the BSEC Member States – social and cultural aspects” as the main agenda item of its 32nd Meeting.

5. Contributions to the Report were received from the national delegations of Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Romania, Russia and Turkey. Reference material was also obtained from the official websites of UN agencies, EU institutions and relevant international organizations such as IOM, OECD, the Council of Europe etc.

II. MIGRATION IN THE BSEC REGION – MAJOR ASPECTS

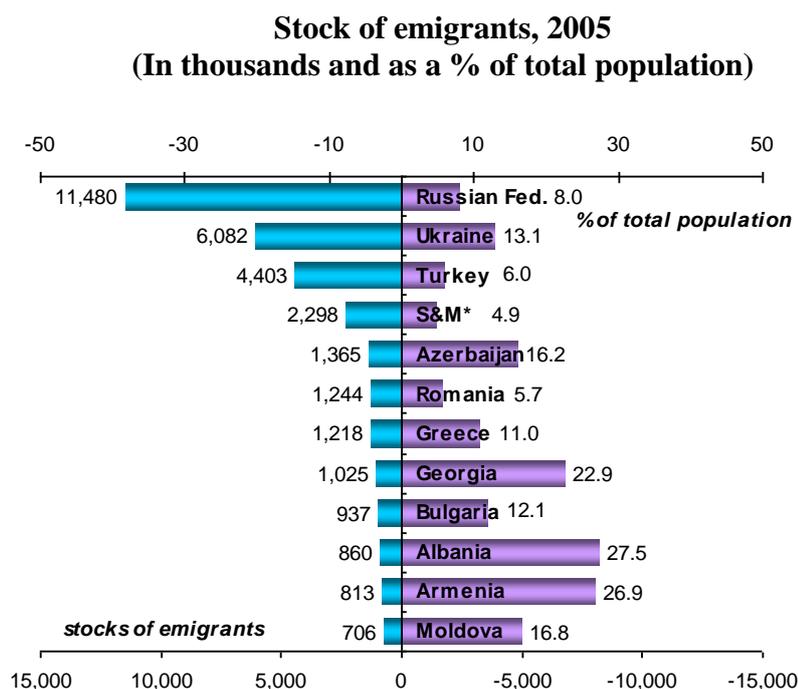
General patterns and figures

6. After the break-up of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of central planning in most of the BSEC Member States, new patterns of migration and mobility emerged in the region. Migration was primarily a result of political and military conflicts (in the Balkans and the Caucasus), but also of cultural factors (ethnic and linguistic). The transition to

market economies widened income gaps among the countries of the region and also between the region and Western Europe, which soon resulted in large migration flows in search for temporary employment. The economic disparities and the open-up of the previously tight borders constituted the main incentives to migrate in the late 1990's.

7. The basic push-and-pull model of labour migration is applicable to the BSEC region: economic conditions, demographic pressures and unemployment are the “push factors” in the sending countries while higher wages, demand for labour and family reunification work as “pull factors” in the receiving countries. The movement from lower-income to higher-income countries was further intensified by market opportunities and integration into the global economy.

8. According to the World Bank, Europe and Central Asia region was in 2000 the world's largest region of emigration with 25.9 per cent of the world's migrants by origin. As a destination region for migrants, it was, with 18.6 per cent of the world's total, the second after the United States (19.7 per cent). In 2005, top 10 emigration countries of the same region included Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, Azerbaijan. The stock of immigrants was estimated at 31.1 million or 6.5% of population and the top 10 immigration countries included Russia (host to 12.1 million or the second largest number of international migrants in 2006), Ukraine (hosts the fourth largest number with 6.8 million migrants in 2006), Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro.

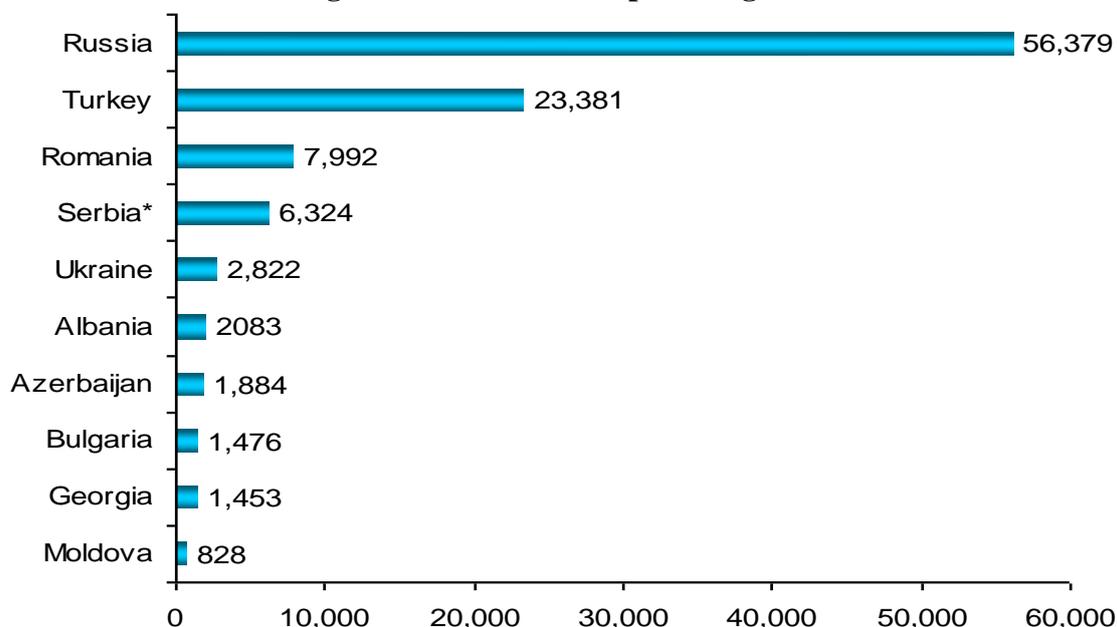


Note: *Serbia and Montenegro
Source: UNPD, 2005.

9. The main destination for the CIS countries has been Russia (top destination for migrants from Ukraine and the Caucasus countries), since it has a far higher level of economic development, remuneration of labour, and opportunities for effective employment than almost all the CIS countries. Furthermore, the cultural and historical similarities between Russia and the CIS countries in place to this day, explain the large scale labour migration to Russia. Main migration flows from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia but also a part of migrants from Moldova and Ukraine were directed to countries of the European

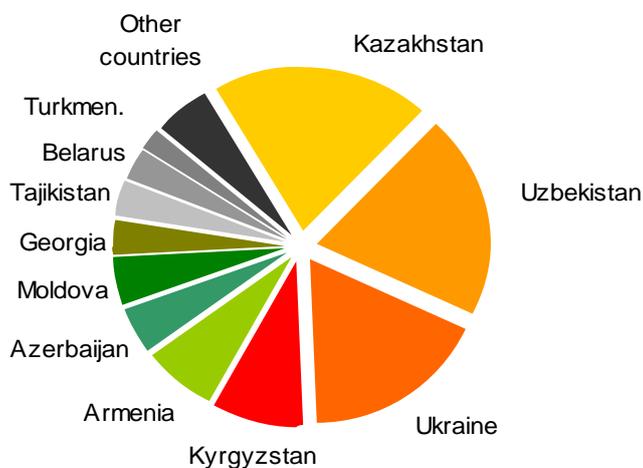
Union, among which Greece to a great extent. The population of Greece increased from 10.3 million in 1991 to 11 million in 2001 and analysts now estimate that migrants make up as much as 10% of the population. Turkey is also a popular destination for a number of CIS migrants who either spend short or long periods in the country in the hope of moving to Western Europe or, in more recent years, immigrate to Turkey as final destination.

Flows of migrant workers: work permits granted in 2006



Note: *Serbia and Montenegro
Source: UNPD, 2005.

Russian Federation: Immigration flows by country of origin in 2006



(Source: IOM, 2008)

10. Within some of the BSEC countries there is simultaneous immigration and emigration; for example, Russia is estimated to have two to three million workers abroad. Turkey is also a characteristic example of country of origin, transit and destination. Mobility patterns in the region were also affected by the recent enlargements of the European Union. Ukrainian workers travel to Poland where some sectors have labour shortages because Polish workers have migrated temporarily or permanently to other parts of the European Union, while workers from the poorer CIS countries work in Ukraine. A similar pattern to that of Poland is anticipated in Bulgaria and Romania.

11. Characteristic changes in the distribution of migration attitudes among Bulgarian citizens highlighted in a 2007 survey:

- *By gender:* In 2007, fewer women intended to emigrate.
- *By education:* There are changes in the structure of professional groups. The most active emigrants are those with secondary level of education. The levels for those with technical education are still high but tangibly declining. Bulgarians with lower and higher levels of education have similarly low interest in emigrating.
 - The share of the unemployed among those willing to emigrate has declined (the experience of returning emigrants serves as a deterring factor) but the share of the employed and students has increased.
 - *By social status:* Unmarried people are becoming more active, while those in wedlock show sharply declining attitudes towards emigration. The income motive is declining relative to more substantial values – a professional career as a long term resource for personal prosperity, self-respect as being important not only for the person itself but also as a value to be passed on to the next generation.
 - *By region:* Attitudes favouring emigration in the large centres of the periphery are declining, while in Sofia and in smaller towns are increasing.
 - *By ethnicity:* Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin and the Roma are decreasingly inclined to emigrate.
 - *By destination:* The order of countries of preference for Bulgarians seeking employment abroad is: the USA, Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy.

12. Today, there is a great variation in the nature of migration flows across the BSEC region, which constitutes an increasingly important crossroads of migratory movement corridors. Temporary or permanent labour migrants, legal or illegal, single newcomers or settled families, asylum seekers and transit migrants are all part of the extremely complex human mobility in the region.

Family, Social networks and diasporas

13. In many BSEC Member States the importance of the family increased as other safety nets disappeared after the collapse of socialist regimes. Family and kinship relations have been important in the decision-making process to emigrate, as is the case particularly in Albania. Family is playing an important role in initiating and later on establishing social networks upon arrival in countries of destination, but also as support systems in the communities of origin for older people and children left behind. Migrant networks of Moldovans and Ukrainians established during the last 15 years in Southern European countries facilitate today migration and provide support to the newly arrived compatriots. Representatives of diasporas are often employers in countries of destination as for example Armenian construction companies and Azerbaijani wholesale and retail trade companies in Russia which commonly hire migrants from their respective countries. In the case of Turkey, ties to migrant communities abroad can be one explanation for the high

numbers of Turkish labour migrants migrating to Germany (522,943) compared to other destinations.

14. Similar paths of migration have been developed close connected with larger and larger Romanian communities within the destination countries. Also, there are Romanian communities/regions which become important senders of migrants abroad. This context stimulates the information process and facilitates employment within the destination country. As the years go by and the paths of migration develop, more and more Romanians take advantage of the opportunities offered by their friends/relatives/neighbors and their experiences in working abroad, being helped by them to migrate and find a job. Nevertheless, this phenomenon stimulates mostly the irregular migration for employment.

15. The relationship between Russian authorities and Russians living abroad has evolved through structures of financial support and social organizations providing support. Among agencies dealing with the Russian diaspora, the Russian Center of the International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia focuses on the following activities:

- providing information support for the external and internal policy of Russia and assisting in the formation of positive perception of the image of modern Russia in the global community
- assisting in the development of comprehensive connections of compatriots with the historical motherland and interaction with the Russian-speaking diasporas abroad
- strengthening of positions of the Russian language in the world
- preserving the high reputation abroad of the national system of higher education
- conducting cultural and educational activities abroad and assisting in the development of business and cultural relations of Russia with other countries
- assisting in the development of scientific, technical and business cooperation of Russia with foreign countries.

(Source: IOM, 2008)

Brain drain and demographic impacts

16. Migration is a phenomenon that has dramatically affected the social tissue of the BSEC Member States during the recent years. Especially Armenia, Georgia and Moldova have experienced an increasing outflow of their labour force. It is estimated that since the beginning of the 1990s, around one million persons, or about 25% of Armenia's population, have left the country. This resulted in an aging population, a gender imbalance and a loss of skilled labour. Georgia's population has also decreased by almost 1 million from 5.4m to 4.5m since independence. As for Moldova, though estimates for the number of people working abroad (mostly in Russia, South East Europe and the EU) vary widely, some sources put the outflow at 30% of the entire work force.

17. The permanent migrants often incorporate high levels of human capital so that this represents a substantial brain drain. 10.2% of Ukrainian households are estimated to have had experienced temporary external labour migration by 2004 and Russia is estimated to have two to three million workers abroad, which likely represents a brain drain of skilled workers. The UNDP estimates annual losses resulting from brain drain in Russia amounting to US\$ 25 billion (data from 2004). According to data from the World Bank, emigration rate of tertiary educated in 2000 was 20.0% in Albania, 17.4% in Serbia and Montenegro and 14.1% Romania (among the top 10 countries in the Europe and Central

Asia region). In the case of Serbia, emigration of highly educated people began in the 1980s and accelerated significantly due to political and economic factors in the 1990s; external migration rates increased from 3.5% of the total population in 1991 to 5.3% in 2002 (OECD, 2008).

18. Almost half of labor migrants from Georgia are young people (47.4%) of most active working age. Due to labor migration the Georgian labor market lacks highly qualified working force. In this way the labor and demographic potential is declining in the country and generates not only demographic loss but also undesired structural change in the population. Labor migrants manage to find work mainly as low qualified workers at physically hard jobs in other countries. They are mainly hired for construction, agriculture and service sectors not requiring qualification and skills. This huge human resource is not adequately absorbed by the international labor market. In 2008 the Institute for Demography and Social Studies of Georgia conducted a study according to which only 5.1% of migrant population abroad is employed at their profession, 67% of migrants are working physically, while this figure domestically was 26.7%.

19. The above trends are affected by developed countries' policies towards permanent and temporary immigration which seek to attract skilled labour from the region and thus apply selectivity schemes enhancing brain drain. In the case of temporary migration, there may be skill acquisition, which benefits the returning migrant's home country. In order to mitigate brain drain and be able to absorb produced innovations in its economy, Russia is focusing on the development of advanced technologies sectors with the example of IT sector demonstrating the highest annual growth rate of 15%.

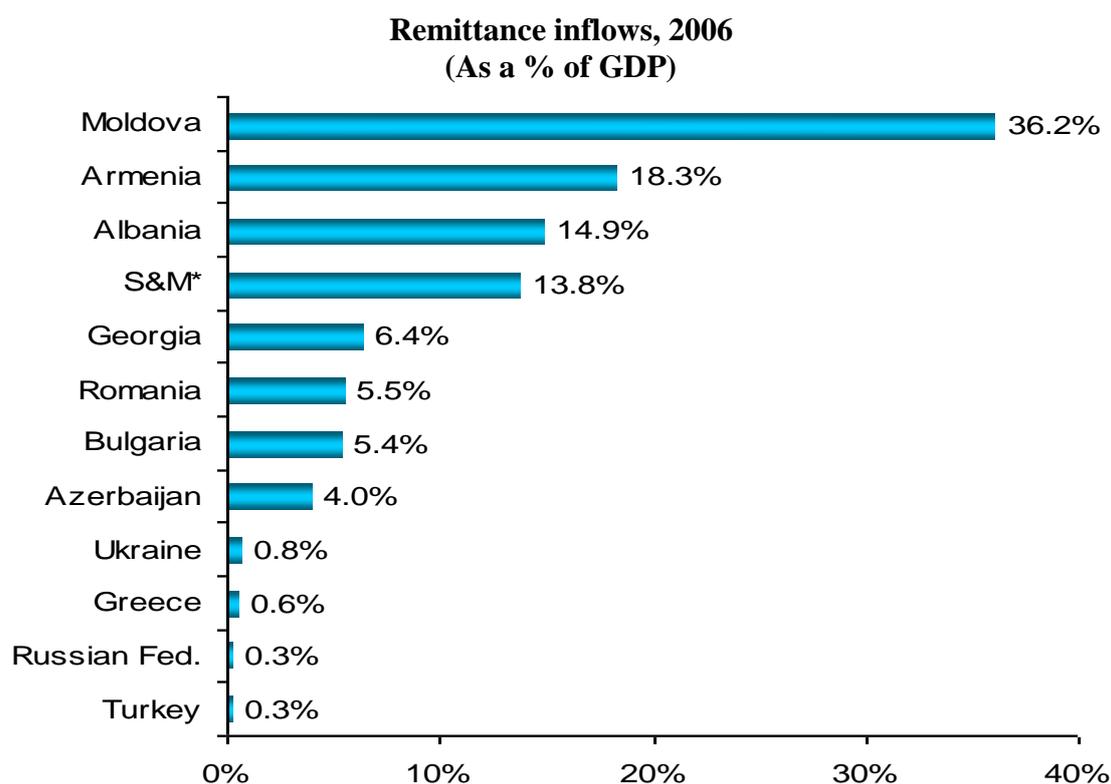
20. In Serbia, the National Action Plan for Employment (2006-2008) and the National Strategy for Employment (2005-2010) both take into account migration and return and reintegration of labourers. In particular, the National Action Plan for Employment discusses the measures for creating conditions for reintegration and work engagement of returnees and their families, especially young and educated persons. Measures to prevent brain drain are also envisaged. In the field of employment, special emphasis is placed on the system of measures that would boost the geographical mobility of the labour force, increase the employment rate, especially of young people, and encourage the education of the youth, especially young refugees.

Remittances

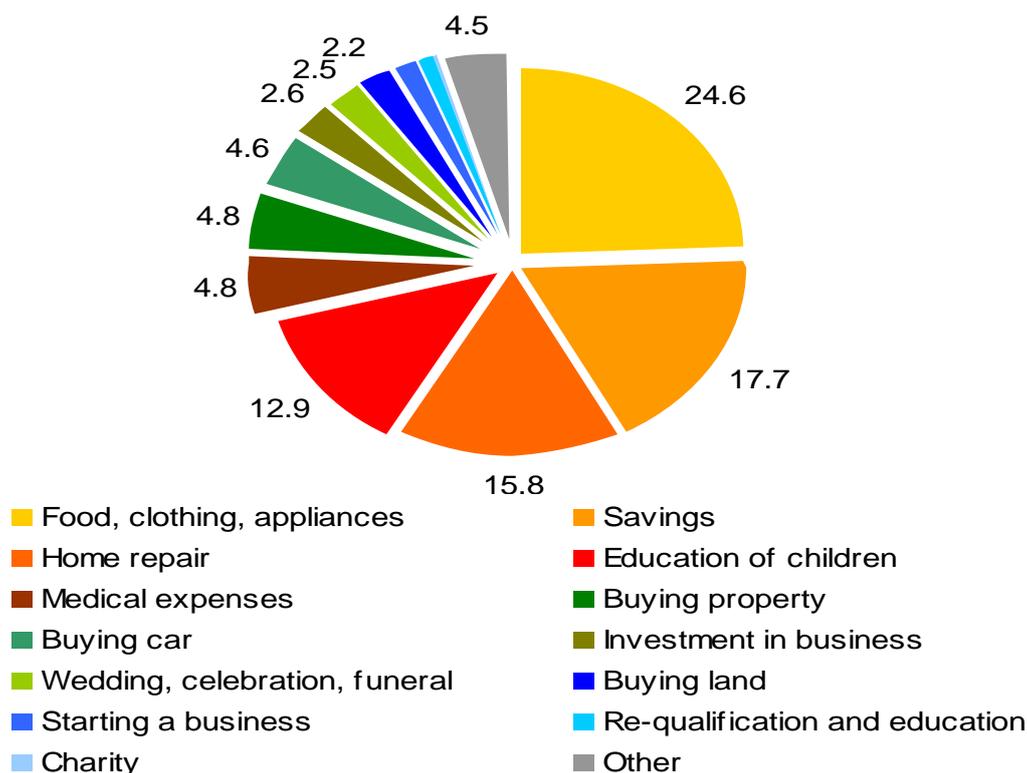
21. On the positive side of emigration, remittances play an important role in the household revenues and therefore in poverty reduction and the improvement of quality of life in the country of origin. The income levels of families with migrants are estimated to be generally higher than in families without migrant members. In Armenia for example, in 2004 the consumption of households with a migrant worker was, on average, 11% higher than in those without a migrant. Even in better off economies such as Serbia, remittances constitute 2% of total household incomes. Furthermore, remittances provide many poor families with an additional social safety net while relieving fiscal pressure on governments for social spending on the unemployed and poor. For many net emigration countries in the BSEC region, household income and national output are tied to the incomes of migrants living and working abroad, while remittances play more important role in stabilizing economic development than foreign direct investments (FDI) or official development aid (ODA).

22. According to the WB (2008), in 2007 the countries of the Black Sea received USD 26.7 billion in remittances, 1.5 times more than in 2000. This amount reflects only officially recorded transfers; the actual amount including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels is believed to be significantly larger. This figure shows that this region received 25.7 per cent of the total remittances sent to Europe and Central Asia and 8.4 per cent of the worldwide flows of remittances in 2007. At the national level, the country with the highest remittance flows in the region is Romania (25.4% of total flows), which is estimated to have received USD 6.8 billion in 2007, making it the tenth largest recipient of remittances of the world after India, China, Mexico, Philippines, France, Spain, Belgium, Germany and the U.K.

23. While remittances have played a crucial role in improving the well-being of families, increasing access to better education and health and thus creating a healthier and more productive workforce and population, they have not become a major source of investment in the economies of poorer BSEC Member States. Development impact of migrants' remittances could be further enhanced and incentives for remitting money home by official channels could be encouraged. At the moment, considerable part of migrants' money is delivered to their countries of origin non-officially – through friends, relatives, or carried personally as cash.



Use of Remittances: Romania 2005



(Source: IOM, 2008)

A vulnerable group of population

24. Immigrants are exposed to higher risks of poverty, poorer educational attainment for their children, difficulties in accessing housing, health care and other social services compared to nationals of the host countries. The wide use of migrants in the informal economy is an important feature of labour migration in the region. Using migrant workers allows employers to increase flexibility and decrease costs in the form of social security contributions, taxes and wages. This situation is exacerbated by migrants' own willingness to enter into flexible situations in spite of the fact that lack of rights increases their vulnerability to exploitation and thus a vicious circle ensues.

25. The vulnerability and precariousness of migrant workers is expected to be aggravated by the current global financial and economic crisis which has already started having serious implications for migrant workers worldwide. Past experience indicates that migrant workers, especially women workers and those in irregular status are among the hardest hit and most vulnerable during crisis situations. While the full impact of the crisis on migrant workers is yet to unfold, there are reports of direct layoffs, worsening working conditions including wage cuts, increasing returns, and reductions in immigrant intakes. Moreover, there is a high risk of migrant workers becoming the scapegoats for the current financial and economic crisis and of racism and xenophobia increasing.

26. Under these circumstances, the role of the social conditions which migrants face, the attitudes of the host population and the presentation by political leaders of the benefits of

diversity and of pluralistic societies is more than ever vital to the success of immigration policies.

27. In light of the above, it is important to direct integration policies towards the dual aim of providing immigrants with the means to function in the society where they live and develop their potential while preserving their cultural and ethnic identity, and familiarizing the native population with the rights of immigrants, their culture, traditions and needs. Special attention should be paid to the value of cultural, social and religious differences, in order to prevent violations of human rights on the grounds of cultural tradition or religion. Finally, particular responsibility lies upon the mass media, which should avoid dissemination of negative ethnic stereotypes, extremist views and xenophobia.

28. In Greece, the new migration policy is part of the general national strategy of social conversion and cohesion, within the spirit of the Lisbon Strategy, which provides the attraction of high skilled migrants, the integration of migrants in the labour market etc. in order to render European Union most competitive and to achieve the objective of full employment. The strategy acknowledges that, far from being a problem in itself, migration can be an advantage, which allows, among others, the countries to promote persons living within their national boundaries, without any kind of discrimination, and at the same time gain important advantages and enrich their cultures.

29. The main axes, of the Law 3386/2005 concerning the entry, stay and social integration of third country nationals in the Greek Territory are the following:

- The rational planning of migrants' entry in the Greek Territory, taking into consideration concrete attributes, the data and the needs our social and economic life.
- The guarantee of migrants' work terms, so that they work under conditions that suit in a modern state of right.
- The import of modern legislative framework for social integration of migrants.
- The guarantee of expedient conditions for the free exercise of all kinds of migrants' rights and mainly those that concern the free development of their personality, their free attendance in the economic and social life of the country with social justice and respect of their particularities.

30. Issues like social and welfare problems of foreigners on the territory of Azerbaijan, their integration in the labor market and protection of their constitutional rights and freedoms, development of interaction between the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan and foreign nationals, study of culture, history and state language of Azerbaijan, choice of residence, etc. are regulated on the basis of the norms and principles of international law and with due regard to the provisions of the existing domestic legislation. As for the social integration of internally displaced migrants the Migration Policy Concept includes the following items:

- enhancement of state assistance for improvement of social conditions of displaced migrants, provision of housing, their integration in labor market and implementation of other constitutional rights;
- strengthening measures for providing government assistance to displaced persons;
- elaboration of concrete programs for planning the measures for relocation of population from ecologically dangerous zones and their settlement in new residential places their adaptation and rehabilitation.

31. For more effective solution to the above mentioned problem the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan elaborated and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers

of the Republic of Azerbaijan the draft “Adaptation regulations of migrants to local conditions in the Republic of Azerbaijan”.

Asylum seekers

32. At the end of 2006, the number of refugees and asylum seekers concentrated in the countries of the Black Sea region totaled 231.7 and 22.5 thousand people, respectively. By far the leading receiving countries for refugees are Armenia (113.7 thousand) and Serbia (98.9 thousand) accounting for 92 per cent of the total number of refugees in the region. Regarding the number of asylum seekers, Greece leads the group with 13.5 thousand requests for asylum, followed by Turkey with 6.2 thousand requests (IOM, 2008).

33. In Turkey, the National Action Plan on Asylum and Migration has been elaborated and entered into force on 25.03.2005. Various public bodies and agencies as well as the civil society organizations render service to the refugees and displaced persons living in Turkey. Decisions on the asylum seekers and refugees are concluded by the Ministry of the Interior, which determines the expediency of their accommodation in a suitable guesthouse. To this end, the refugees reaching the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Institution from the Foreign Nationals’ Department of the General Directorate of Security of the Ministry of Interior are provided necessary services. Since December 2008, 146 asylum seeking children have been accommodated in the asylum houses and youth hostels under the auspices of General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Institution.

Youth and education

34. As regards sending countries, there is evidence that migration by one or both parents has negative impacts on family cohesion and children. Children growing up in single-parent households face a higher risk of being poor. In countries with particularly high emigration rates, older children may remain at home, alone or with responsibility for younger ones, when both parents migrate in search of work. There is a considerably higher risk for these children of dropping out of school or even leaving home and ending up on the street engaged in criminality or sex-trade work. Many of these children and youth also have a risk of becoming the victims of traffickers.

35. Immigrant children within the Black Sea region on in the European Union countries are also faced with educational disadvantages in comparison to their native peers: early school leaving is more common among them and enrolment in higher education lower. In some European countries second generation pupils from a migrant background show lower school performance than the first generation, a fact that indicates that the social divide may deepen over time. At the same time, there is a tendency of socially advantaged parents to withdraw their children from schools with high numbers of migrant pupils, as is often the case in Greece, which leads to segregation and disparities between schools. It is obvious that this situation may undermine the chances of young migrant pupils for successful integration in society and the labour market later in life.

36. It is important for BSEC Member States that have recently become or are now starting being migrant receiving countries to benefit from relevant experience in the EU and place emphasis on education of immigrant children as a key to ensuring that these pupils are equipped to become integrated, successful and productive citizens of the host country. Schools must play a leading role in creating an inclusive society, as they represent the main opportunity for young people of migrant and host communities to get to know and

respect each other. Migration can bring culturally and educationally valuable elements to the school and develop intercultural skills and the capacity to enter into a tolerant and respectful dialogue with people from a different cultural background. Conversely, if educational opportunities for children of migrants are not improved, there is a high risk of widening social divisions, cultural segregation, exclusion of communities and inter-ethnic conflict.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

European Union migration strategy and the Black Sea Region

37. Cooperation with third countries is an essential part of the EU migration strategy. In order to work much more closely with third countries, the EU is developing a number of new tools, including assisting countries that are interested in putting together detailed *Migration Profiles* so as to have the relevant information on which to base practical measures; building *Cooperation Platforms* bringing together third countries, EU Member States and international organizations to ensure effective migration management; and creating *Migration Support Teams* consisting of experts from EU Member States to provide assistance to third countries that ask for it.

38. Both Member States and the EU now put particular emphasis on the need for a “global approach”. What’s more, taking into account that approximately one third of all third country nationals living in the EU are nationals of Eastern and South-Eastern European neighbouring countries and the Russian Federation, the EU has developed a series of migration management initiatives to tackle migration at its new eastern and south-eastern borders efficiently.

39. In June 2007, the European Commission has issued the Communication no. 247 *Applying the Global Approach to Migration to the Eastern and South-Eastern Regions Neighbouring the European Union*. This Communication focuses mainly on the regions neighbouring the EU to the east and south-east:

- Turkey, the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, including Kosovo);
- The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries in Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus);
- The Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia); and
- The Russian Federation.

40. In the framework of the priorities set in the *Black Sea Synergy* initiative, the European Council adopted in June 2007 the Conclusions on the Global Approach to Migration endorsing a number of priority actions, including the establishment of a Cooperation Platform on Migration in the Black Sea region. In April 2008 the EU decided to establish this platform, bringing together EU Member States, EU agencies, countries bordering the Black Sea and regional organizations. The platform will aim to provide for a focused and strengthened migration dialogue and for improving practical cooperation between EU Member States and the countries in the region, as well as between the Black Sea countries themselves. There are advanced plans to fund the further development of the Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre based in Burgas, Bulgaria. Each Black Sea country is expected to establish national centers that will feed/exchange relevant information to/through the Coordination Centre. The Commission is co-funding two

projects against trafficking in human beings through labour market based measures and police measures respectively.

41. The European Parliament in its Report on a Black Sea Regional Policy Approach (2007/2101(INI)) “recalls the need to address the challenges posed by transnational crime, trafficking and illegal migration, whilst fully respecting the non-refoulement principle; underlines that measures in this field must be coupled with appropriate measures to enhance mobility in order to stimulate people-to-people contacts and thereby spread European values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights; urges the Council and the Commission, therefore, to conclude visa-facilitation and readmission agreements with those Black Sea countries that do not yet enjoy them, as well as to promote mobility by all other possible means, including the signing of mobility partnerships with European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries; stresses, in particular, the need for efficient visa facilitation for local cross-border traffic and for specific population groups such as students, businessmen and civil society actors.”

Cooperation in migration within the BSEC framework

42. Migration issues are addressed by BSEC in the framework of the Working Group on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in Particular in its Organized Forms. This is indicative of the emphasis placed so far on migration aspects related to illegal migration, combating trafficking in human beings, border control and security.

43. In March 2006 BSEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Organization for Migration which put the basis for a broader consideration of migration issues in the region. The two Organizations agreed to consider the following areas for mutual cooperation:

- Establishing or strengthening regional dialogue and technical cooperation mechanisms, where appropriate, among and between the BSEC Member States and other countries affecting migration patterns in the BSEC region;
- Expert and legal advice to the BSEC Member States in migration related areas, to facilitate harmonization and coordination of approaches;
- Coordinating activities in protecting victims of trafficking and irregular migration;
- Coordinating information campaigns, trainings or other programmes by IOM through BSEC network;
- Implementation of programmes by IOM, in close collaboration with BSEC, in combating smuggling and trafficking in persons, and other forms of irregular migration in the BSEC region;
- Facilitating communication and cooperation among BSEC Member States on issues related to border controls; and
- Providing IOM’s assistance to migrants for voluntary return to, from and via BSEC Member States.

44. In the framework of the cooperation envisaged in the MoU, the first joint project titled “Black Sea Consultative Process on Migration Management” was launched in 2007 and resulted in the elaboration of the “Migration Policy Recommendations for the Black Sea Region” which were approved by the BSEC Council of Minister of Foreign Affairs (Tirana, October 2008). The Council invited the Member States to implement them in conformity with their national legislations and recommended the Working Group on Combating Crime, in Particular in its Organized Forms, to continue appropriate interaction with IOM.

45. The main considerations on which the Recommendations are based are the following:

- migration touches all countries and requires a multidisciplinary approach that comprises various areas such as border security and crime prevention, economic and labour market developments, regional economic integration and protection of human rights;
- this kind of multidisciplinary approach for migration management in the BSEC region requires an effective fight against irregular migration flows and simultaneous facilitation of legal ones;
- coherence of national migration policies requires coordination and active cooperation among involved authorities;

46. The specific recommendations include among others the following:

- Further dialogue and exchange of information should be developed – including the negotiation of bilateral labour migration agreements, rapid administrative procedures, quotas – among the BSEC Member States on their needs for labour force and possibilities for facilitated labour migration schemes.
- Countries in the BSEC region which are attracting substantial immigrant flows are invited to introduce efficient and rapid immigration procedures for legal entry and stay of foreign citizens.
- Support mechanisms for expatriates, including protection of their rights as foreigners and/or workers, and facilitation of their links with the home communities should be developed – including remittance transfer and the development of scientific, business and other types of networks.
- Productive investment of remittances in the countries of origin should be enhanced. For example, increasing opportunities for remittance recipients to start entrepreneurial activities, including entrepreneurial training and financial services to ensure access to micro-credit, soft loans and grants, insurance and cost effective transfer of remittances.
- Partnerships among governmental and local authorities, diaspora, and international organizations should be enhanced and linked to the development agenda of the country of origin with a view to create opportunities for social investment and collective remittance projects and programmes. Governments are invited to put in place policies that encourage migrants to send remittances through formal channels.
- BSEC Member States are invited to co-operate in combating irregular labour migration and undocumented employment of migrants, through monitoring mechanisms for migrant workers and the agencies carrying out recruitment and employment services, to prevent labour exploitation/trafficking and abusive practices of some of these operators including excessive charging of the workers for getting a job abroad.
- Root causes leading to irregular migration as well as ways to address them should be considered and identified respectively.
- Increased coordination in the compilation and regional exchange of data on migration is needed.

- Dialogue and cooperation between governments on migration issues should be enhanced at regional level, for instance through either the expansion of the Working Group on Combating Organized Crime or the creation of a new Working Group on Migration, within the BSEC framework. Participation of specialized international intergovernmental Organizations such as IOM should be encouraged.
- The BSEC Member States are invited to consider asylum and refugee issues in the region as a clear priority for their governments' action. There is a need to facilitate and assist refugees and displaced in the region and to ensure effective identification of asylum seekers and protection of their rights to access asylum procedures.

47. Apart from the above mentioned Recommendations, the joint BSEC-IOM project produced two other tangible results, namely the Country Migration Profiles (for the 12 BSEC Member States) and the Regional Overview on Migration Trends in the Black Sea. The Profiles are seen as a means to identify information gaps and to develop strategies to enhance data collection and data-sharing through the analysis of information and data available on immigration, emigration, irregular migration, labour market conditions, skills shortages, diasporas and remittances.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

48. The BSEC Member States are increasingly becoming aware of the fact that the successful management and regulation of the migration processes are key instruments for advancement in the globalizing world economy. Migration and migrant integration thus become a key issue at the national, regional and global level, while most countries now recognize the need for cooperation in order to manage migration effectively.

49. The global redistribution of the workforce we are witnessing is an irreversible process and should therefore be managed wisely to the benefit of the countries of origin and destination as well as to migrants. Conversely, ineffective migrant process management could lead to an increased gray economy, to building tensions in the recipient societies and to humiliation and exploitation of immigrants.

50. Migration provides new opportunities and challenges for the societies of the BSEC Member States, whereas phenomena such as brain drain, demographic decline, xenophobia and failure of social and cultural integration of migrants raise concerns. The complexity and sensitivity of migration-related issues is a challenge for policy makers, especially in a part of the world where there are multiple patterns of flows, and - most importantly - where developments towards political, social and economic integration have had and will continue to have major impacts on migration management policies.

51. Therefore, it is necessary to address migration not as a series of isolated issues but in a comprehensive framework that takes into account its socio-economic, cultural, demographic, humanitarian, and other aspects.

52. In spite of the positive efforts made so far by the governments in the region and international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), much remains to be done in terms of migration management. Regional cooperation and building the capacity of the states in the region to deal effectively with migration issues remains a priority. As a platform for a political discussion on migration issues, PABSEC could effectively promote common understanding of migration-related benefits and risks, as well as the potential of inter-state cooperation in the Black Sea region. Proper migration management and cooperation within BSEC could make migration an important resource of sustainable economic and social development of both sending and receiving countries in the region.