

Meeting 461
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LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ MISIJA
PRIE JUNGTINIŲ TAUTŲ SKYRIAUS ŽENEVOJE

MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA LITUANIE
AUPRES DE L'OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES A GENEVE

Statement to the 88th session of the IOM Council
Geneva, December 2004

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you and the new Bureau on the election and wish you every success in your work. Lithuania is pleased to welcome our Baltic neighbour Estonia as well as Brazil, Turkey and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas as newly acceded members.

In my intervention I would like to touch upon some of the elements of migration management from Lithuania's perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

This outgoing year has been marked by our full membership in the European Union. Having become a part of the eastern boundary of the EU, Lithuania fully assumes its responsibilities to ensure that migration and asylum management systems are effective and humane. And we see cooperation as one of the key instruments in achieving these tasks.

Lithuania has benefited and still benefits from technical assistance programmes, carried out in cooperation with EU member states, especially Nordic countries, and IOM, in the field of capacity building of state institutions, border control, counter-trafficking and education just to name a few.

Regional IOM projects aimed at prevention of trafficking in the Baltic States have proved to be very successful and we look forward to further cooperation with IOM and states in the region on this important issue.

At the national level, the implementation of the 1 *Programme of Trafficking and Prostitution Control and Prevention for the years 2002-2004* has already produced tangible results: progress has been made by enacting strong anti-trafficking laws, successfully prosecuting trafficking cases, settling up a network of assistance for the victims of trafficking, carrying out preventative educational campaigns.

One of the major developments in the field of national legislation was the entry into force of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Legal Status of Aliens (Foreigners). Harmonised with EU *Acquis* in the spheres of visas, migration, asylum and free movement of persons, having included the Dublin II provisions and reflecting the best practise of the EU Member States, the new law replaced two separate laws: the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and the Law on Refugee Status.

Looking into perspective, the Government of Lithuania has recently adopted the National Strategy on the Demographic Policy, which takes into account current and expected migration trends, their added value and undesired effects and foresees the migration policy for the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Development cooperation is becoming an integral part of Lithuania's foreign policy. Lithuanian Development Cooperation Policy Paper for 2003-2005 foresees major instruments, areas and partnerships for development cooperation. In the initial stage development projects target neighbouring countries: Belarus, Kaliningrad region, Ukraine, Moldova, as well as Caucasus, Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In this respect we would like to mention two new projects that will be launched next year: "Free movement, secure borders", which will aim at analyzing the facilitated transit scheme between the Russian Federation and Lithuania, and the other one - "Fight against the illegal migration on the eastern border of the European Union". Both projects will be carried out in cooperation with IOM, Finland and Sweden.

Mr. Chairman,

Looking back at a decade of close and effective cooperation with IOM, we greatly appreciate the assistance that has been provided through the organisation's regional office in Helsinki and its office in Vilnius. We would also like to express our appreciation for the visit of Ms Ndiaye to Lithuania earlier this year and we are looking to maintain the good spirit and cooperation in the years to come.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.