



PORTUGAL 2007

**94th Session
of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**

(Geneva, 27 - 30 November 2007)

**Statement by Portugal
on behalf of the European Union**

Geneva, 29 November 2007

Check against delivery

**94th Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
EU Statement**

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the EU. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The EU thanks the Director General for his report and wishes to congratulate the members of the bureau for their election and expresses the firm commitment of the EU to work closely with you. The EU also welcomes the Republic of Burundi and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, as new members of the Organization, *the Recrutement Afrique*, the Refugees Education Trust (RET) and Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), as observers.

The EU believes that a comprehensive and global approach to migration requires genuine collaboration between countries of origin, transit and destination. This is essential in order to fight illegal migration, ensure that migration takes place through legal channels, migrants are not exposed to risks and that there are developmental benefits to both countries of origin and destination and to migrants themselves. Within this framework, the EU is grateful for the vital role played by IOM, in particular its invaluable role in operational delivery, its flexibility and willingness to work in challenging environments.

The past year has seen important developments in migration policy at the European level. The EU has deepened the external dimension of its “Global Approach on Migration” through extending it to the Eastern and South-Eastern borders of the EU. Furthermore, a policy debate has now been launched within the EU on legal migration, not least through the High-level Conference on Legal Immigration organized by the Portuguese Presidency of the EU in September of this year. The EU will be considering a series of measures in the course of the coming year.

The EU continues to attach great importance to the cooperation with developing countries, and with Africa in particular, in the area of migration. A first Euromed Ministerial Meeting on Migration took place on 18 and 19 November 2007 in the Algarve. The EU-Africa Summit that will take place next month in Lisbon will be a major opportunity to address issues related to migration and development in a constructive and effective manner, and we look forward to an outcome that can help to bring together European Union and African views and activities in this respect.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

In this context, the EU has also been pleased to note the development of a constructive international debate on how to maximize the development gains from migration, namely through the organization of the first Session of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (Brussels, July 2007). We welcome the preparation by the Philippines in advance of the event in 2008. This and other events at the regional level have brought important political commitments from Governments in both receiving and sending countries of migrants to deal with Migration and Development issues.

The EU recognises that Policy Coherence is essential to maximize the positive impact of Migration on Development, as well as to minimize its potential negative effects. *Inter alia*, the impact of brain drain can be counteracted through the adoption of adequate policies that take into account the different policy interactions of Development and Migration Policies. Several countries have been making progress in their approach to integrate their Development and Migration policies.

The European Union is ready to explore with partner countries the linkages between migration and development in order to maximize the development impact of remittances, facilitate the involvement of diasporas/migrant communities in development processes and explore practices such as circular migration. It will also be important to address the downsides of migration, which include illegal migration and the trafficking of human beings.

The EU welcomes the IOM Strategy that was adopted by the Extraordinary Council last June, and sees the identification of 12 areas of activity on which IOM will focus as an important step towards setting a direction and priorities for the organization. The organization and Member States have a shared responsibility in this respect. IOM activities should contribute to enhancing global understanding of migration issues and providing expert and practical support to Member States. The EU would like to underline the importance, for IOM, of working in co-operation with other agencies in the field, to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. The Global Migration Group should play an important role in this respect.

The Strategy also put into place a new institutional framework. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance was set up to strengthen the involvement of IOM's Member States in IOM policies, programmes and activities and had its first meeting last October. This meeting showed more discussion on policy and programme related matters and a greater efficiency in defining and preparing programmatic matters. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. The EU would like to see a timely provision of relevant background papers and more initiative from the IOM administration in placing relevant policy and programme issues on the agenda. Also, the Council remains the principal governing body for policy, strategy and governance and more involvement in the debate by Member States should be pursued.

The EU and IOM work together in many areas in order to facilitate the humane and orderly management of international migration. Recognizing IOMs work to enhance global understanding of migration issues and providing expert and practical support to member states all along the migration spectrum, the EU and its Member States - which together with the European Commission are the largest donor of the organization - will continue to be an active partner for IOM.