

**“Refocusing Migration and Security: Bridging National
and Regional Responses”**

Rome, 4 March 2016

Report

Against the backdrop of growing public and political concerns about migration and displacement, an OSCE Security Days conference was convened in Rome on 4 March 2016 to stimulate a constructive and forward-looking discussion about fast-evolving trends in and around the OSCE area. The security implications of mass movements of people and the OSCE added value were key areas of analysis and debate.

Hosted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, this event brought together over 300 participants from governments, international and regional organizations, academia and civil society. Media coverage was extensive, and the conference reached some 111,600 people through Facebook and more than 6 million through Twitter. Italy, France, Serbia and Ireland generously supported the event.

Defining the Challenge: Addressing Security when Dealing with Migration

In his keynote speech, President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Gjorge Ivanov warned of the rapidly deteriorating situation in his country due to the continuing influx of refugees and migrants trying to enter Europe through the so-called Western Balkans route. He regretted that international co-operation seemed to be failing and that states were resorting to unilateral measures. As a result, more walls were being erected in Europe than during the Cold War era. President Ivanov emphasized that the security and stability of both his own country and of Greece were directly linked to the security and stability of the European Union. He called for a European solution and urged European partners to help the most affected transit states to cope with the emergency.

Security in the context of migration, including both the physical security and human rights of migrants and the protection of national borders, was at the heart of the discussions. Many speakers underlined that human security and state security are not inherently in tension, but that in fact there can be no security without respect for human rights. Three key aspects of the security implications of mass movements of people were identified: protecting refugees and safeguarding the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers as required by international law; preventing human trafficking and migrant smuggling; and developing and implementing more effective integration policies to build more cohesive societies in receiving countries.

A number of participants noted that reception challenges in Europe had distracted from the emergency refugee situation in the regions of first protection. They emphasized that only cross-regional co-operation could mitigate the challenges and ensure stability in frontline countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon.

While much of the current discourse focused on the effects of migration, addressing the root causes of forced migration was also necessary. Conflicts, including in the Middle East, were the main drivers of current flows; several participants stressed that ending them was critical to reducing the massive flow of migrants and refugees. Increased conflict prevention efforts were also needed. Investing in international development was seen as necessary to address other push factors that drive people to leave their homes, including environmental disasters, generalized violence, severe economic and social inequality, marginalization of young people and high youth unemployment. Donor countries were urged to recommit to reaching the longstanding UN target of devoting 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to development aid. A long-term perspective should also take into account new models of sustainability and strengthen co-ordination of international development assistance policies among bilateral and multilateral donors.

Although migration is not a new phenomenon, the massive scale of current flows into Europe was unprecedented since the end of World War II, and forced and irregular migration were seen as one of the defining trends of the twenty-first century. Therefore, migration should no longer be seen as a ‘niche issue’, but as a transnational matter with vast political, economic, social, and security implications. Any successful approach will require political leadership, strategy, foresight, and co-operation at the global, regional, and sub-regional levels.

The current emergency also required a shift in perceptions to recognize the shared responsibilities of all countries and to re-appreciate the significant opportunities that come with the movement of people across borders. Societies that succeed in integrating newcomers effectively will gain in relative terms both economically and culturally.

Several participants underlined that regional and sub-regional groupings like the EU urgently need to agree on common migration policies and work out a joint approach with counterparts in other regions. It was suggested that international organizations involved in the response could coalesce around the establishment of a migration crisis management task force to deal with key co-ordination aspects of the emergency.

Security Approaches and Tools of Migration Management

The international community was seen as facing both short- and long-term migration management challenges that require different sets of responses but need to be dealt with simultaneously. Yet there was no global system or universally accepted legal framework in place to address either need. Some participants argued for a global voluntary migration regime supporting open borders and a “right to migrate”, but also reaffirming national prerogatives to manage, limit or time-phase migration.

As short-term solutions, many speakers called for more resettlement opportunities and the creation of humanitarian corridors for refugees to avoid dangerous journeys in conflict zones and across the Mediterranean Sea. Some argued that the creation of legal channels for migration could also reduce migrant smuggling and other illegal activities, including human trafficking. There was broad agreement that combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling should become a priority; more efficient border management needed to go hand in hand with intelligence gathering and joint investigations to disrupt this hugely profitable business model. However, the point was made that many states lacked capacity and resources in these areas, which undermined their national response and hampered international co-

operation. In the long term, only the creation of a full-fledged legal migration management system could absorb existing and projected migratory pressures.

Engaging Societies and Communities: Levers of a Long-Term Response

Acknowledging the upsurge in intolerance, racism and xenophobia, which affected new migrants as well as established minorities, plus increasing cases of violence against migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, participants emphasized the need to understand the drivers of racism and to counter misperceptions and prejudices about migration. An appropriate communication strategy was needed to help both political leaders and the broader populace to accept the reality of multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious societies, to acknowledge that societies and values are not static, and to recognize migration's economic and social benefits for their countries. At the same time, investing more in education to help migrants develop a better understanding and respect for the culture and history of the host countries could facilitate their integration.

Raising integration from a niche to a priority area was seen as crucial. More effective integration strategies needed to be developed and implemented, and social inclusion and participation – particularly of immigrant youth – were essential ingredients. Since the majority of refugees and migrants currently coming to Europe were young people, including school-age children, providing education to newcomers was a particularly important long-term investment. The high percentage of refugee children not receiving any formal education could become a “lost generation”. Female refugees and migrants were another particularly vulnerable group. As potential agents of change, women need to be empowered and given a role in integration-related matters. Any discussion on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 should take into account refugee and migrant women.

The current emergency had also seen some very encouraging manifestations of solidarity. In many destination countries, civil society organizations played a prominent role as first responders by providing essential humanitarian support to asylum seekers and migrants. Educational NGOs were also supporting the work done by national agencies.

In the long term, participants stressed that states must firmly ground their migration policies in forward-looking strategic approaches. Development paradigms would need rethinking in order to find sustainable and effective solutions. UN sustainable development efforts should have a strong migration dimension, and it was suggested that regional organizations like the OSCE could contribute to this process.

The Way Forward: The Role of the OSCE and International Partners

There was broad support for an enhanced OSCE role in addressing migration. Many participants emphasized that the OSCE would not have to start from scratch as it already had commitments in this area. The mid- to long-term response would require a smart mix of co-ordinated policies in five key areas: 1) solidarity with countries of first asylum; 2) protection of people all along migration routes; 3) combating human trafficking and organized crime along the routes; 4) responsible border management; and 5) co-ordinated relocation and integration policies.

Representatives from regional and international organizations highlighted the significant level of dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE on migration-related matters and called for

strengthening ties. They underlined that the OSCE could play a supporting role as well as bring added value. The Organization's wide geographical scope, its broad and diverse membership, its norms-setting function and cross-dimensional engagement, its relationship with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, and extended field presence were all mentioned as key assets. Given the OSCE's unique expertise on the conflict cycle, some suggested that early warning mechanisms could be applied to the refugee crisis, for instance by leveraging OSCE field presences in South East Europe. Others underlined the OSCE's highly respected track record in the human dimension and its recognized role in human rights monitoring.

Looking at long-term needs, it was noted that the OSCE already played an important role in promoting integration, tolerance and non-discrimination, as well as education. It was proposed that the OSCE Institutions could step up their work in these areas.

In their concluding remarks, the OSCE Secretary General and the Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council emphasized that the conference had generated new momentum and a broad expectation that the OSCE should adopt a more coherent and strategic approach. The Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council announced that an informal working group on migration would be established to continue discussions, and that a special session of the Permanent Council dedicated to migration would be held later in the year.

Recommendations for the OSCE in the short term

- A Permanent Council or Ministerial Council decision on the OSCE response to the crisis would be an important move, opening the way for new forms of engagement.
- The OSCE participating States should intensify interaction with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation; migration management could be a unifying factor supporting a common response.
- The OSCE could strengthen its role in building capacities in border management that respects state security and is administered in a way that is protection and human rights sensitive.
- A special or thematic OSCE mission focused on migration could be established. Promoting co-ordination with other international and regional organizations could be one of its main goals.
- OSCE field operations, especially in South East Europe, could step up their engagement within existing mandates, including by systematically collecting information about migration flows and reporting on local reactions and developments.
- OSCE co-operation with Europol could potentially be expanded to include the newly launched European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC).

Recommendations for the OSCE in the long term

- The OSCE could launch new initiatives that help to address structural drivers of migration, including conflict, uneven development, climate change, scarce natural resources, and demographic pressures.

- Addressing migration-related challenges requires an all-encompassing and integrated response. Thanks to its comprehensive toolbox, the OSCE could address a number of these challenges, particularly in areas where the OSCE already has a long-term track record.
- The OSCE could leverage its convening power to stimulate a constructive and open debate on the migration-security nexus that is broadly defined.
- The OSCE could promote co-operation involving both EU and non-EU member states, and contribute to global migration management debates, including at the September 2016 UN Summit, which is set to develop global migration policy principles.
- The OSCE could also play a role as an international norm setter.
- The OSCE could develop guidelines for responsible migration management that builds on best practices and fosters co-ordination among the 57 participating States.
- The OSCE could do more to promote policies that build resilience against intolerance and radicalization, including by empowering young migrants and female migrants, and by working with leaders in local and religious communities.
- Evidence-based approaches are the best antidotes to weak governance and toxic public discourse. The OSCE should continue independent data collection and support new policy-oriented research on migration.
- Social inequalities, youth marginalization and high unemployment rates among young people are among the triggers for emigration. The OSCE should support youth-oriented policies as a key component of new sustainable development paradigms. UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security could provide a suitable platform for action.
- The mandates of OSCE field operations could be reviewed in consultation with their host countries towards an enhanced role. OSCE Institutions could be organically involved in new initiatives and take on projects at a regional level.