

**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan at the IOM Conference on
“Reinforcing the Area of Freedom, Security, Prosperity and Justice of the EU and its
Neighbour Countries: Migration management and good practices”**

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Dear participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to express appreciations of the delegation of Azerbaijan to the organisers of this important event, which will certainly ensure the successful start and implementation of this new Pan-European Process on Migration Management and bring its valuable contribution to international dialogue and cooperation on migration and related issues.

As it was already said several times today, in the contemporary world, international migration became an important component in regional and global affairs. Today no country can avoid complex and often contradictory effects of migratory flows. We believe that the states and societies should not accept to undergo the migration and its unpredictable effects; on the contrary, they should try to manage the migration, by curbing its negative consequences and directing its positive returns to the well-being of their respective populations. From this point of view, the initiative on the Vienna Process is highly relevant, especially in the light of advancing European integration, and it is warmly welcomed and supported by the Government of Azerbaijan.

Among numerous aspects of the migration, security matters have significant influence and often decisive weight in developing migration policies and the linkage between migration and security has become an important point in the socio-political lives and foreign policies of a growing number of countries. While continuing efforts to combat terrorism have put security concerns at the forefront of the discussion on international migration, terrorism is not the only link between migration and security. Irregular migration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling raise also security concerns of states.

Being aware of the time constraint, I will address mainly the phenomenon of human trafficking, which is one of the most negative effect of the illegal migration and which has actually grown into global problem.

It is quite difficult determine the exact number of victims of trafficking in human beings, but national and international figures indicate that this number is rather increasing than decreasing. Being highly profitable source of easy money, human trafficking remains one of the grave crimes affecting societies and this makes it a priority issue for countries and institutions concerned.

Due to favorable geographical location Azerbaijan attracts various transnational organized criminal groups engaged in trafficking in human beings. In Azerbaijan the main causes of the problem of the trafficking in human beings are connected with socio-economic reasons. Besides that, the occupation of 20 % of the Azerbaijani lands has resulted in forcible displacement of hundred thousands of people, existence of a lawless zone on its territory and 132 km of uncontrolled state border with Iran, and this situation generates fertile conditions for various kinds of illegal activities, including trafficking in persons.

Awareness raising, education, training of the staff of government agencies concerned, medical, psychological and economic assistance to the victims of trafficking, improvement of domestic legislation could be cited as immediate measures to address the issue at the current stage.

Demonstrating its strong adherence to fight against human trafficking, Azerbaijan has adopted a National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in human being, which was drafted with close cooperation of IOM and OSCE offices in Baku. The key elements of the Plan of Action are the institution of a special department to combat trafficking in human beings and appointment of a National Coordinator to provide interaction of all interested parties, allocate secure accommodation, hot-line for the victims of trafficking and improvement of legislation. As a part of this Action Plan, a separate law on fight against trafficking has been adopted in 2005.

Along with it, the relevant bodies of the Republic of Azerbaijan dealing with combating trafficking in human beings cooperate closely with IOM, OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international on this issue.

I wish also to touch upon briefly the issue of border management, which is considered as a very important component in the global management of migration, especially from the prevention perspective of illegal migration and migration-related organised crimes. This morning I've listened with great interest to the statement made by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner. As a country covered by the EU Neighbourhood Policy, Azerbaijan appreciates the attention that the European Union pays to border management and capacity building in this matter. Azerbaijan has already engaged necessary reforms in view of transforming its Border Guard Service from military to law enforcement body. In this reform process we cooperate closely with IOM and we are grateful to IOM for its valuable support. But as the resources of IOM are limited, we have also applied to EU for assistance in this field and we count a lot on this assistance. During her statement Commissioner Ferrero Waldner has announced the launching of an important project on border management in Moldova and Ukraine. We welcome this news and we will closely follow this project with a view to using the experience of these two countries in Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again the necessity of international cooperation, in the light of increasing complexity of international migration and its multidisciplinary nature. I'm very happy to witness during this conference growing awareness of this necessity.