

## **15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials**

**15-16 May 2008, Trabzon**

### **Meeting Conclusions**

1. The 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials was held in Trabzon on 15 – 16 May 2008, hosted by the Turkish Chair and gathered representatives from Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Kingdom, as well as the CIS Executive Committee, European Commission, Europol, IOM and ICMPD as the Secretariat of the Budapest Process.
2. In his opening statement, Ambassador Kemal Gür emphasized the transnational nature of migration phenomena going beyond the capacity of a single country and the need for common policy responses and coordinated action in the spirit of partnership and burden-sharing. The appropriateness of opening legal channels for migration in order to more effectively tackle the problem of irregular migration had already been acknowledged by the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials in 2006. Now it is time to address migration issues in a comprehensive framework and to develop cooperative approaches in migration management at the bilateral, regional and international levels. The Turkish Chairmanship has put strong emphasis on broadening the substantive and geographical scope of the Budapest Process. In addition to the traditional topical areas - such as irregular migration, return and readmission, border management and asylum – increased focus has been put on matters related to admission and immigration policies, labour migration, integration and re-integration. Though the focus of activities remained with the CIS region, the Turkish Chairmanship undertook the initiative to expand the scope of interest of the Budapest Process to include the Black Sea Region and the Eastern Mediterranean Regions.. Furthermore, Amabassador Gür opened the discussion on the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in the framework of the Budapest Process to be organized by the Czech Republic during EU Presidency in spring 2009.
3. The activities of the Budapest Process of 2007 and the proposed activities for 2008 were presented by the leading States and the Secretariat. Further to this, the budget was adopted by the participating States.
4. Mr. Tomas Urubek, representative of the Czech Republic, presented the concept of the Ministerial Conference, which will focus on the Eastern and South-Eastern dimension of migration in Europe, and will emphasize the following topical areas: fight against illegal migration, return and readmission of illegal migrants, promotion of well-managed labour migration, fostering the links between migration and development, and promotion of functioning integration policies.

5. Participants received positively the additional substantive and geographical focus provided by the Turkish chair and the plan to hold a 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference following the afore-mentioned approach.
6. In order to discuss participants' expectations regarding the outcome of a Ministerial Conference focusing on the Eastern and South-Eastern dimension of migration in Europe and the added value of such a conference, two working sessions were held. The first working session dealt with the role of the Budapest Process in the discussion of irregular migration, return and readmission. The second working session dealt with the role of the Budapest Process in the discussion of legal migration, integration and migration partnerships.
7. Participants of WG I expect a solid preparation of practical recommendations, the willingness of states to participate at ministers' level and the willingness of states to implement the recommendations following the Conference.
8. WG I expressed their expectation towards the Ministerial Conference to base its recommendations on the principles of partnership and mutual acknowledgement of priorities, positions and problems.
9. WG I suggested that the Ministerial Conference should focus on concrete measures in tackling irregular migration, return and readmission and devise recommendations, which are suited to move forward these concrete measures.
10. Participants of WG I agreed that the promotion of enhanced international and inter-agency cooperation in the fight against irregular migration and the criminal networks standing behind human smuggling operations still constitute the main priorities in this area.
11. WG I emphasized the need to further promote comprehensive return and readmission policies taking into account the interests and problems of countries of origin, countries of destination and transit countries in a balanced and partnership approach.
12. WG I suggested that the Ministerial Conference should focus more strongly on prevention measures targeted at countries of destination, tackling the demand side of irregular migration and the "pull factors" causing it.
13. In the discussions of WG II on the role of the Budapest Process in the area of legal migration, integration, migration partnerships it was widely acknowledged that one of the added values of the Process lies in its wide geographic coverage that brings together some 50 countries and all relevant international organisations.
14. WG II recognised that states are grouped in various regional and sub-regional constellations and consequently are bound by and engaged in various regulatory frameworks. Specifically, the 27 EU Member States and the EU institutions are engaged in an ever closer integration process in the area of migration, encompassing legal and illegal migration. Concepts such as circular migration and mobility partnerships are being developed in this context

15. WG II concluded that in order to bring about its added value, the Budapest Process should particularly focus on the aspects of how to concretely implement and operationalise policies and measures of legal migration. Through fostering of information exchange and good practices the Process could contribute to fostering such concepts also beyond the EU. Vice versa, the exchange of good practices and experiences gained in other regions can support the participating EU states in practically implementing their legal migration policies.
16. More generally, WG II acknowledged that international cooperation in migration management requires effective partnership between the concerned countries of origin, transit and destination. It was concluded that the Process shall continue to foster such partnership based on equality among the countries actively engaged in its dialogue. The further creation of practical partnership among the participating countries shall therefore feature prominently in the upcoming Ministerial Conference.
17. WG II discussed that integration should be included into the agenda of the Process in the future given its increasing relevance.
18. The Budapest Process, it was furthermore concluded by WG II, should continue to support the participating governments in their endeavours to effectively manage migration, particularly also the labour migration aspects
19. On the section dedicated to discussing the new developments in the Black Sea region, Mr Francesco Luciani, representative of the European Commission, underlined the importance placed by the European Union to better managing migration flows coming from, transiting through and taking place inside of this region, he recalled the decision taken on June 2007 at the EU Council to establish a cooperation platform in the field of migration including all the States and relevant actors of the region, and informed about the development of this concept and the plans for its forthcoming implementation. Mr. Mircea Bacalu, representative of Romania, made an overview of the cooperation initiatives existing in the region in different formats, and emphasised the valued added that a Cooperation Platform in the field of migration and development could bring in the dialogue between European Union and the Black Sea region. Mr. Bacalu made a summary presentation of this new initiative, promoted inside the European Union by Romania and Bulgaria and aimed at building on existing political dialogue by bringing the EU, partner countries and any other relevant organisations together to co-ordinate migration and development policies and to develop projects. The Black Sea Cooperation Platform will be practically-focused and will seek to identify a range of interventions to address shared concerns, resulting from the dialogue among the countries in the region. The fundamental principles underlying the concept of the Cooperation Platform are regional ownership and a flexible and open format of cooperation among interested stakeholders. Mr. Petar Iliev, representative of Bulgaria, underlined the important role of the Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre and its major role for the security in the region and in the process of countering illegal migration. Bulgaria

presented their intention to chair and to host the newly established Working Group for the Black Sea Region in November 2008 in Sofia. A detailed topic for this meeting will be elaborated between the chair and the Secretariat in the course of the next months.

20. The participants thanked Turkey for hosting an excellent meeting and the Secretariat for the substance preparation.