



European Union

IOM Diaspora Ministerial Conference

(18-19 June 2013)

International Dialogue on Migration 2013:

Diaspora Ministerial Conference

Statement by

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Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Geneva, 18 June 2013

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EU statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia^{*}, Turkey[§], the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Iceland[‡], Serbia^{*}, Albania^{*}, Bosnia and Herzegovina^{*}, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

We welcome the organisation of this ministerial conference on diasporas, which comes at an appropriate moment, in the lead-up to the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, and as discussions are underway on the post-2015 development agenda.

The conference will allow us to take stock of national and regional policy developments in an area of essential importance for fostering the links between migration and development.

Maximising the development impact of migration is a key policy priority for the EU and its Member States. The area of migration and development is recognised as one of the four pillars of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, which provides the overarching framework for the EU external migration policy. A strong migration perspective has also been included in the new EU development policy, the Agenda for Change.

The development contributions of diaspora groups are increasingly recognised by both countries of origin and destination. Migrants come with specific skills and expertise, and act as social facilitators

^{*} Accessing Country Croatia and the Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[§] Candidate Country

[‡] Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

who can catalyse and foster productive networks between countries of destination and their countries of origin. This wealth of knowledge and expertise can also be harnessed to support the development of the countries of origin. For example, diaspora and migrant organisations could be enabled to contribute actively to productive investments, circular migration and the temporary return of qualified migrants.

The EU and its Member States firmly believe that creating effective governance frameworks in both countries of origin and destination plays a key role in creating the conditions for the effective realisation of the development potential of diasporas. Building international partnerships on migration is an essential element of the EU's external migration policy. The EU and its Member States engage intensively in numerous inter-regional dialogues and bilateral partnerships, in which diaspora relations form an important element.

We expect this ministerial meeting to provide useful insights and orientation on key challenges such as how governments should engage diasporas and support diaspora groups, and how to provide frameworks conducive to the investment of the human, economic, social and cultural capital of diasporas in development. It should also examine how consideration of migration and development issues such as the role of the diaspora can be reflected in the post-2015 development framework.

Mr Chairperson,

We are particularly attracted by IOMs evolving conceptual framework which promotes the three E's, aiming at "enabling, engaging and empowering transnational communities".

Since 2005, the EU and its Member States have taken numerous steps to promote the development contribution of diaspora groups residing in Europe. In line with our commitment to Policy Coherence for Development, the EU has for example enacted legislation aimed at facilitating the circulation of skills, by allowing migrants with a long-term or highly qualified residence status to return home for a limited period of time, without losing their residence rights. Support has also been provided to diaspora groups, for example through the setting up of the "European-wide African Diaspora Platform", implemented by the African Policy Diaspora Centre, with exactly the aim of promoting the contribution of the African diaspora to the development of the continent.

The EU also has much positive experience in supporting the capacity of partner countries to map their diaspora, strengthen links between diaspora initiatives and national development strategies, and reach out to encourage diaspora engagement in development. For example, EU-funded projects to encourage the return of diaspora living in the EU with skills in demand at home are being implemented under the EU's Mobility Partnerships with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia.

The EU and its Member States are committed to continue promoting diaspora contributions to development, notably by supporting the capacities of ministries for diaspora in partner countries. We also wish to step up support for development contributions of South-South diaspora, including by supporting research to shed light on the role of South-South diaspora as development actors in their countries of origin.

The EU and its Member States consider this Ministerial Conference and the upcoming High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be important milestones towards the development of more effective diaspora policies. Important work is also carried out in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) which moves the agenda forward on diaspora communities as agents for development.

We encourage IOM to take full account of the results of this meeting in order to elaborate a conceptual approach which may assist states and other relevant stakeholders in harnessing the development potential of diasporas, in particular through better networking and more structured exchanges of information, views and best practices. Last but not least, we expect that the findings of this ministerial meeting will be appropriately reflected in the upcoming High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson