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Statement on behalf of the European Union

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(check against delivery)

implementation of comprehensive migration policies by countries of origin, transit and destination. Such policies can enhance the positive effects and minimize the negative consequences of migration.

The EU is strongly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is certain that poverty reduction, improvement of education and health, and promotion of democracy, human rights and good governance - to name but a few - also help to address the root causes of migration. Every government should see it as their responsibility to create and sustain a society where their citizens, in particular the youth, can secure a livelihood and build a future. It must be a viable option to stay in one's own country. More consideration should be given to how migration issues can be integrated into the poverty reduction strategies and national development plans of the partner countries, and how donors can support partners' priorities in this respect.

The EU believes that there is an urgent need for increased policy coherence between various policy areas at global, regional and national levels. International migration cannot be addressed in isolation, as migration issues are strongly linked to a range of other policy issues such as trade and economy, employment, environment, health and security. It should be noted that the decisions on international policies on migration should not be based on economic aspects only, but also take into consideration the different social, political and cultural dimensions.

Madame President,

It is important to keep in mind that it is the migrants themselves, men and women, who make positive contributions both to their countries of origin as well as of destination. This role of diasporas needs to be facilitated in order to contribute to the sustainable development of their countries of origin through, for example, supporting diaspora networks, capacity building of diaspora organisations and enabling the temporary return of members of the diaspora. The EU believes it can learn from diasporas in its development cooperation and recognizes the effects of co-development projects.

The respect for human and labour rights of migrants is essential. The EU

The EU is committed to the full protection of the human rights of migrants, particularly of women and children. They should be paid special attention, in view of the fact that they may be exposed to particular challenges and risks because of their sex or age. The EU is also committed to taking firm action to protect migrants from violence, discrimination, trafficking, exploitation and abuse. The EU underlines the importance of the implementation and non-discriminatory application of the six core human rights instruments.

The fight against illegal migration and particularly against trafficking and smuggling of human beings is central to eradicating forced and bonded labor. States should enhance efforts to criminalize trafficking and smuggling in their national legislation and to punish the perpetrators of these crimes as well as to offer protection and rehabilitation to the victims of trafficking. The EU recognizes the importance of international legal instruments such as the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime in this regard.

The EU is willing to support programmes that provide more information on the risks of illegal migration and opportunities for legal migration. Potential migrants should be provided with up-to-date information about the risks of irregular migration and trafficking, and about changes in circumstances in countries of destination as well as origin. Moreover, the EU underlines the importance of international and regional agreements which provide for cooperation on migration including migration management, capacity building and return. In this regard, the EU underscores that effective return policies are required. All such returns should be undertaken in a manner that is safe, dignified and humane, with full respect of human rights.

Madame President,

It is necessary to build sufficient capacity in countries of origin and transit to formulate and implement migration policies that contribute to development, as part of their national development strategies. It is essential to listen to the needs of countries of origin and transit of migratory flows.

So called circular migration, as an aspect of an effectively managed migration policy, can play a useful role in fostering transfer of skills and knowledge to developing countries. It can increase resources for exchange of know-how, technology and institutional knowledge. Ways and means to facilitate circular migration should be promoted.

The EU emphasises that policy responses to brain drain need to be incorporated in development and migration strategies and tailored to specific needs and challenges of each affected country. These responses could consist of more ethical and disciplined recruitment policies which help to address push and pull factors of migration. One of the key issues in this respect is the health worker mobility, which needs to be addressed through comprehensive national policies as well as international agreements and action.

The EU agrees on the importance of remittances and is willing to facilitate efforts to enhance the development impact of remittances. First steps could involve lowering the transfer costs of remittances and increasing the reliability and efficiency of the transfers. Remittances should, however, not be seen as a substitute for Official Development Assistance (ODA). There are a number of best practices and lessons learned worldwide that could contribute to a further development of policies on remittances. We should also pay special attention to the nature and potential of social remittances.

Madame President,

The movement of refugees is a special case. Refugees enjoy a special legal status in accordance with international law.

