

Final remarks by DG at the Conference

SOFT SECURITY AND MIGRATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

House of the Estates, Helsinki, Finland

May 30 – 31, 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues,

The largest influx of migrants, the new migration reality, migratory pressure... these and similar terms have been almost buzzwords in the last few years. Migration issues have been high on the political agenda and received a lot of attention in the media but in most cases the focus is on risks linked to unregulated migration flows and perceived threats of migration. The CBSS is trying to take a broader perspective on migration issues and address both risks caused by migration, like labour exploitation of migrants, and positive impacts that migration can have on development of our countries.

For two days now we have been focussing on discussing the impact and lessons learned from managing the mixed migration flows in 2015 – 2016. Questions of integration, including labour integration, migration management, protection of the rights of migrants are all important to enhance policy coherence in migration management, which is of benefit to both migrants and host societies. We need to acknowledge challenges and bottlenecks in order to focus on solutions and I would like to conclude this conference with a forward-looking message.

We have had three very productive working groups this morning gathering the representatives of law enforcement, migration authorities, local actors, civil society and academia from the Baltic Sea Region. As the outcomes of these working groups were discussed in detail in the previous session, I only want to thank everyone for joining the discussion and sharing different experiences, views and presenting promising practices and solutions. We need all of you around the table to work together on migration issues. The CBSS will zoom in on your suggestions, recommendations and promising examples you have presented, and will develop a

report with a focus on building resilience and security, introducing new approaches to integration policies and reducing vulnerability of migrants in line with the soft security approach.

This year the CBSS has reached an important milestone - on 20 June in Reykjavik the Foreign Ministers of the CBSS Member States and a representative of the EU will meet to mark the 25th anniversary of the CBSS. All these 25 years, the CBSS has continued to strive for a safe, secure and prosperous Baltic Sea Region where everyone, irrespective of nationality, legal status or religion feels included, appreciated and where we communicate in the language of trust and respect. This conference was a significant building block in our undertaking to establish co-operation where challenges are addressed through preventive and proactive measures, rather than enforcement driven activities. Yesterday we heard about the “good relations model” implemented in Finland as a good example of soft security measures.

Migrants can make positive contributions to economic, cultural and social development of our beautiful region. They can help to respond to labour shortages, demographic situation and other challenges in our societies. Integration is not something given, efforts of course need to be made on both sides as pointed out during the discussions. Receiving countries should develop inclusive integration approaches that recognise the added value and contributions from migrants and we should ensure better protection of their fundamental rights.

To echo the key note speaker, Mr. Ambrosi, and other panellists, labour mobility issues are strongly linked with migration. In relation to this I want to highlight the work of the CBSS in coordinating the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF). The agenda of the BSLF includes the working areas: labour mobility and migration, demographic challenges and youth employment. BSLF concentrates on issues which are crucial for ensuring a well-functioning labour market where rules and regulations and working conditions in each country are the same for nationals and foreign workers.

Labour mobility and migration and other outcomes of the work of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum will underpin the agenda and discussions during the CBSS Labour Ministers meeting on 15 June in Berlin.

Ladies and gentlemen, to conclude - inclusiveness and building trust is what we need to recognise and encourage in order to understand the interplay between migration and development and a well-functioning labour market, as each of us is influenced by migration in our daily lives.

Let me thank again the colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland for being wonderful hosts of this event, the Icelandic presidency of the CBSS and my staff at the CBSS Secretariat for organising this conference. Our work does not end with this conference, it is rather a starting point. The incoming Swedish CBSS Presidency is committed to continue working on the soft security approach - building relationships and mutual trust.

Thank you all for these interesting and fruitful two days!