

Opening remarks for the Second Preparatory Meeting for the 6th Budapest Ministerial Conference

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16-17 April 2018, Istanbul, Turkey

Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to open this Senior Officials Meeting on behalf of the Secretariat of the Budapest Process together with our friends and partners from Turkey, Hungary and the European Commission; and to welcome all the Silk Routes Partners and other Budapest Process countries who have engaged in the preparations for the upcoming Ministerial Conference of the Budapest Process. I would like to thank all of them for their great support and excellent work in preparation of this meeting.

Over the next two days we will discuss the draft Ministerial Declaration, the concrete actions it wants to develop, and the means for monitoring its implementation. In line with the work that has been done so far, the Ministerial Declaration will consist of two parts, the “Istanbul Commitments” and a “Call for Action”. The latter should bridge the gap between political agreement and delivery on the ground, which so often limits the success of political dialogues on migration.

There are very good reasons to follow such an approach. We all know that there is no meaningful action without strong political commitment. But we also know that even the strongest political commitment will be meaningless if it is not translated into concrete action.

When we discuss about migration in conference rooms and outside the public arena, we often manage to agree and to find common ground. But the difficult part of the process comes after that, when our conclusions and commitments have to stand the test of reality and have to find the approval of our voters and populations. This is never an easy task. It becomes even more complicated in the face of large-scale migration and displacement, security and economic challenges, which is a reality for many of our Silk Routes Partners. Still, over the last five years the Silk Routes Partners have maintained and even deepened cooperation within the framework of the Budapest Process and beyond.

We should all be inspired by their commitment to partnership and to undertake a number of concrete and targeted actions in line with the six priority goals of the Silk Routes Partnership. We should also make sure that implementation is balanced across these six pillars. The

envisaged action plan is ambitious, but it is also pragmatic. It is well-balanced, but it puts focus on very concrete priorities. Finally, it is the result of an intense political process that reflects a common understanding between all partners, but also takes into account their different situations, interests and challenges.

The next two days will provide a great opportunity to deepen and broaden the cooperation of the Silk Routes Partnership on Migration, to have frank and honest discussions and to take an important step forward. I truly hope that this step will bring us closer to our important common goal of promoting safe, regular and orderly migration.

I look very much forward to our discussions and wish all of you a successful and fruitful Senior Officials Meeting.

Thank you very much.