Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to welcome you today at the 4th meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on the Black Sea Region. My name is Gabriela Abado, and since January this year I am the Acting Director General of ICMPD, after ten years as Deputy Director General leading our financial and human resource management. While I represented ICMPD at various events over the years, this is the first time I have the honour to do so at a Budapest Process meeting. Being the Secretariat of the Budapest Process is one of the first tasks ICMPD was asked to do, now more than two decades ago. As such, the Budapest Process both developed and still represents the core of what ICMPDs activities – facilitating cooperation on migration between states and other partners.

I would like to thank our Bulgarian hosts in particular Deputy Minister Krasimir Tsipov, Ms. Marinova and Hans Seidel Foundation for inviting us to their beautiful capital and for their great hospitality. The Working Group on the Black Sea region is an important and very much appreciated structure existing since 2008 and this year’s topic – Effects of Crisis on Migration Management - is of particular importance. It is a topic which has been discussed already on different occasions in the Budapest Process, but never as comprehensive as today and tomorrow.

Following the 5th Budapest Process Ministerial Conference in Istanbul on the 19 April 2013 with the adoption of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration, migration flows along the Silk Routes are the Budapest Process priority. Therefore, I am very happy to see the strong representation of countries and organisations around this table – and it is my great pleasure to extend a special warm welcome to the representatives of the Silk Routes Regions. Also the Budapest Process Working Group on the Black Sea Region supports the implementation of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration.
The purpose of the 4th meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on the Black Sea region is to provide a forum for sharing experiences, lessons learned and good practices between countries and other stakeholders on how to prepare for and mitigate the impact of crisis situations on migration and protection capacities of countries. The meeting will explore the topic from pre-crisis to post-crisis management, including prevention, protection, combating migration related crime, durable solutions and integration.

Several countries in the Black Sea and Silk Routes regions have been affected by events putting a severe strain on the work of migration management authorities. In order to encourage experience-sharing and contrasting of situations, each panel will consist of at least one Silk Routes and one Black sea country (either as chair or as speaker).

As mentioned, many different topics relating to crisis and migration have been raised in various frameworks during the past years; there have been meetings in regional migration dialogues, special initiatives have been formed to handle certain aspects of this topic and operational projects are initiated in this field. For this reason it is important to define clearly what we will talk about in this meeting.

For the purpose of this meeting, the word ‘crisis’ refers to all events that cause significant movements of people – whether environmental, economic or security related. Obviously a wide range of stakeholders are needed in order to fully address crises and to protect and the persons affected and properly manage new flows. During this meeting the topic will be addressed from the perspective of migration management authorities – how they perceive crisis, how they take measures to deal with the effects of crisis, what the main challenges are that they encounter and their good practices for dealing with such situations. And above all, we should not forget our ultimate goal: to help and protect those who are on the move.

The result of the meeting should be the strengthening of regional cooperation as well as the identification of good practices and concrete initiatives with regard to migration management and crisis, in all four fields of the panels: the first focusing on how migration management should be used to prepare for crisis situations, the second on how to respond to a crisis situation, the third on combatting migration related crime – for example by criminals exploiting vulnerable persons and the fourth; how to manage the post-crisis situation – to find durable solutions for the persons displaced.

In closing, I would like to point out that one of the most important imperatives is to act - and to act together – to deal with the effects of crisis on migration management. An unattended crisis
can have serious effects on people and destabilising effects on host societies. International cooperation is here a main ingredient to move forward. The combination of countries and organisations around the table therefore underlines the need for a multilateral approach, engaging countries of origin, transit and destination in discussion in an atmosphere of trust. In this regard, I would also like to underline the importance of burden sharing and shared responsibility in the widest sense. All countries along relevant migration routes should work together to solve common problems.

I look forward to the productive and active discussions during today and tomorrow, and thank you very much for your attention!