A Silk Routes Partnership for Migration Is Established

ISTANBUL, 19 April 2013 – The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration was adopted by the participating countries of the Budapest Process at the 5th Budapest Process Ministerial Conference on Friday, 19 April in Istanbul, Turkey. In addition to launching the declaration, the conference marked the 20th anniversary of the Budapest Process. Over 250 representatives from 53 countries, as well as international organisations and other stakeholders, attended the conference, which was hosted by Turkey, the Chair of the Budapest Process. The Co-Chair of the Budapest Process is Hungary.

The declaration was widely praised as one of the most far-reaching and balanced declarations dealing with migration ever adopted by such a diverse group of countries. As ICMPD’s Director General, Mr. Peter Widermann, proclaimed in his press statement, the declaration “reflects how far the international community has come in understanding each other’s priorities and concerns, and shows that there is a real willingness to cooperate on these matters”. Ambassador Şakir Fakılı confirmed the importance of the declaration during his introductory speech at the conference, stating that it “mirrors a modern approach to migration management. Because today’s migration management is about partnership. And partnership is about mutual trust and sharing common objectives.”

This declaration brings some important elements to the forefront such as a clear commitment to respect human rights in migration management. Countries also declared to ensure the rights of the child and recognise gender specific-aspects of migration. In addition, the negative impact of discrimination, racism and xenophobia on societies and individuals, as well as the potential impact of environmental changes on migratory flows, are addressed.

The Silk Routes Partnership for Migration’s main goal is to promote dialogue and mutual cooperation in managing migration flows taking place along the Silk Routes. It will also promote coordinated efforts in carrying out concrete actions aimed at fulfilling the goals and priorities established in the declaration. Examples of such goals include improving conditions for legal migration and mobility, promoting international protection and the rights of refugees in line with international standards, supporting the integration of migrants and fighting discrimination, racism and xenophobia.

The Budapest Process is an intergovernmental dialogue with over 50 governments and 10 international organisations that promotes the development of comprehensive and sustainable systems for orderly migration. During its almost 20 years of operation, the Budapest Process has developed from an information sharing tool between European countries in a
pre-EU enlargement setting to a far reaching forum on migration management. Its informal and flexible nature has made it one of the leading platforms to engage an ever increasing number of states in intergovernmental dialogue on migration.

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The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), established in 1993 by Austria and Switzerland, is an international organisation that works in migration-related fields. Although ICMPD has a European basis, it carries out its activities throughout the world, including in Europe, Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and South America. Through its six Competence Centres, ICMPD provides its 15 Member States and numerous partners with in-depth knowledge and expertise in dealing with the phenomena of migration. It does so through using a holistic 3-pillar approach: research, capacity building and migration dialogues.

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