Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first of all express my appreciation for this important and timely Senior Officials´ Meeting. It builds on the three eventful and successful years of the „Building Migration Partnerships initiative”, and opens the door for the concrete implementation of the agreed priorities listed in the Prague Process Action Plan adopted in Poznan last year. It paves the way for stronger cooperation among all partners in achieving our common goals.

I am proud to say that since October 2008, when first talks about the establishment of such a mechanism arose, ICMPD has provided its services and support to the five leading states of the Prague Process - the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia – as well as to all 50 Prague Process participating states.

So what has happened since then?

The three years of the “Building Migration Partnerships” initiative had been busy and a number of concrete results have been achieved. To highlight only a few of them:

Through the active participation of the partners from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asian States a broad number of state-owned and state-endorsed Migration Profiles have been elaborated. These profiles analyse the migration situation in the respective country and, even more importantly, highlight concrete priorities for co-operation on international level.

The “Building Migration Partnerships Joint Declaration”, adopted in Prague in April 2009, as well as the Prague Process Action Plan for the years 2012 to 2016, endorsed during the Second Prague Process Ministerial Conference in Poznan in November last year, have brought international recognition to this dynamic process.

It has become a complementary tool to existing co-operation schemes, such as the Global Approach to Migration, the Mobility Partnerships, the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum, the Budapest Process or the EU-Russia dialogue.
Establishing Migration Partnerships is a key to better migration management - migration policies do not work when they focus on the national level alone!

But it is also our conviction that migration policies can only be fully effective when they are implemented in the spirit of true partnership and when they are based on the full support of all States involved – countries of origin, transit and destination.

As a member state led service organisation, ICMPD aims to promote and shape innovative, comprehensive and sustainable migration policies.

We do this firstly by working on mastering the facts, i.e. by doing research into all aspects and facets of international migration and mobility;

Secondly, we support and facilitate migration dialogues among all relevant stakeholders, and we work on reaching consensus in relation to agenda and priority setting. But we always emphasise the leading role of States in the migration debate and acknowledge that States must have the final responsibility to decide on their migration policies, within the set international framework.

Thirdly, we provide technical assistance and support to stakeholders in building up the capacities that are required to effectively deal with these priorities (govern migration).

As an organisation specialised on migration issues we are fully aware not only of the complexities and inter-linkages between the various migration challenges but also of the need for closest possible cooperation between States in responding to them.

These facts have not changed since the Prague Ministerial Conference. But what has changed, is the quality of dialogue between the partners, the degree of mutual understanding, and the readiness for joint and concrete actions reaffirmed at the Poznan Ministerial Conference.

To conclude, I believe that the Prague Process Targeted Initiative and its Pilot Projects starting today will contribute to a more practical cooperation between the partners of the Prague Process on common priorities and common challenges and opportunities in the area of migration. But all our joint efforts must never lose sight of our common responsibilities regarding migrants, refugees and vulnerable groups such as victims of trafficking, minors and children.

And we always have to keep in our minds that Migration is about people – It is about those who are on the move, about those who remain and about those who receive migrants in their communities – and we want to work with you to find solutions for all of them!

Thank you.