

Speaking points for Vice-President **Franco Frattini** on the occasion of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, *Brussels, 11 July 2007 (3pm-5pm)*

Re: *Europe has now shifted from a negative to a positive attitude towards migration*

- Thank you for the invitation to speak before such a distinguished audience. I would like to pay a special tribute to Madame de Clercq for her relentless efforts in making this inaugural Global Forum such an uplifting event and to Mr Peter Sutherland, UN Special Representative for Migration.
- **Scepticism surrounding migration.** When I became Vice-President of the Commission just two years ago and half ago, European governments approached migration with a heavy dose of scepticism. They tended to underestimate the scale of migration, the European dimension of the challenges it poses, the fact that its origins are not purely economic, and, last but not least, its effects, which are not just transitory.
- **Gradual realisation that migration is important.** This perception is gradually changing as European governments have started to understand more clearly the complexity of both the challenges and the opportunities that migration poses.
- **First failure: national recipes for a transnational issue.** Most European governments initially sought

national, piece-meal solutions to a problem which, being transnational by nature, calls for European solidarity. Poor knowledge of the migration phenomenon contributed to this misguided approach. The first "national" results were indeed less than satisfactory. This has led most European governments to pool their resources in a bid to find more satisfactory and lasting solutions to the challenges they face, both at national and at European level.

- **The Global Approach.** One of the biggest changes in our approach to migration is that EU Member States now understand that we cannot approach migration in piecemeal fashion. We need to understand this phenomenon in its full complexity. This calls for a global approach and EU solidarity. Cooperation with third countries is one of the key measures of the EU's Global Approach to migration. This approach has also led to the Tripoli Conference, which was a historic event. We must therefore make equal partners of the countries from which migrants hail. Only then will people move in a safe and legal manner. Only then will we be able to tap the full development potential of migration. Migration is not just an economic issue, nor a problem of security. Migration concerns human beings, their dignity, their lives. It also concerns how we translate our basic values into practice.
- **Europe's recent initiatives.** Among the recent initiatives undertaken by the Commission, I would like to highlight mobility partnerships and circular migration. These partnerships will provide a new political framework that can be used to negotiate between the EU and third

countries ready to work actively to manage migration flows more effectively. Citizens from the third countries involved in these mobility partnerships would benefit from greater mobility between their countries and the EU, in the form of opportunities for legal migration and, possibly, also short-term movements (short-stay visa issues).

- **Advantages of circular migration.** Countries of origin will benefit from the inflow of remittances while migrants are abroad and from their investments and skills when they return. We must all remain aware of the risks and consequences of the **brain drain** and more efforts are needed to minimise this phenomenon. Migrants themselves also have much to gain, as expansion of circular migration programmes will increase the opportunities for safe, legal migration to the EU. Destination countries will receive a steady supply of needed workers, both skilled and unskilled.
- **But all our efforts are not enough.** A major political question still has to be resolved. In developing Europe's strategy on migration, the European Commission and its Member States have realised that European solidarity is not sufficient to rise to the challenges posed by migration. Europe will be strengthened in its development of a comprehensive migration policy if cooperation with third countries is deepened. Cooperating with third countries is crucial if Europe wants to find a lasting solution to migration. By way of example, Europe has to combat the causes that drive thousands of people to risk their lives by attempting a crossing to Europe in

small, rickety boats. These desperate people, who are in many cases unforgivably exploited, are aware of the tremendous risks they are taking when they undertake their so-called "*voyages of hope*".

- **Targeted information campaigns.** Information campaigns need to be promoted in the countries of origin to make people aware of the risks involved in "voyages of hope". These campaigns also need to provide information on the availability of jobs in Europe and give practical advice on how to contact employers and on the labour market rules in force in each Member State and in Europe in general.
- **Making the Global Forum a success story.** Since the time at my disposal is limited, I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that I really appreciate and support the Global Forum on migration and development, as I believe that it will become the international forum in which all stakeholders meet to exchange their views and, where possible, deepen cooperation. I understand that political support is very high and that all the countries involved are committed to making the Global Forum a success story. I am here to make my contribution.