

ASEM Ministerial Conference on Cooperation for the Management of Migratory Flows between Europe and Asia

Lanzarote, April 5 2002

Declaration

1. The ASEM Ministerial Conference on Cooperation for the Management of Migratory flows between Europe and Asia was held in Lanzarote, Spain on 4 and 5 April 2002. It was attended by Ministers of the ten Asian and fifteen European nations and by the Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs of the European Commission. The Conference was chaired by Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs of Spain, Member State currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

2. This Conference was co-initiated by Spain, China and Germany and endorsed at the ASEM 3 held in Seoul on 20 and 21 October 2000. It responded to the latter's commitment to address global issues of common concern such as managing migratory flows in a globalised world. Recent developments in Asia and Europe have shown the need for effective cooperation between European and Asian partners.

3. Acknowledging that migration issues are an important element of the relation among ASEM partners, Ministers resolved to cooperate in the management of migratory flows between Europe and Asia in accordance with the principles of mutual benefit, equality and mutual respect. Such cooperation implies responsibility on the part of countries of origin, transit and destination. Ministers exchanged views on recent trends in migratory movements between Asia and Europe. They commended the contribution of legal migration in enhancing social development and economic growth and in promoting Asia-Europe cultural exchanges and mutual understanding. Ministers discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in the management of legal migratory flows. Ministers agreed that migration should be addressed in a comprehensive and balanced manner, considering its causes, manifestations and effects, in the countries of origin, transit and destination.

4. Ministers also recognized that illegal migration had increasingly become a common challenge to ASEM partners, which involved many complex elements, among others, socio-economic development gaps among countries and the spread of organized transnational crime. They confirmed that international cooperation on migration should be based on a genuine partnership fully respecting the sovereignty of the different countries involved. Ministers shared the view that combating poverty and addressing development issues are key factors in tackling some of the root causes of illegal migration.

5. Legal and illegal migration should not be considered in isolation from each other. In order to achieve the benefits of legal migration and reduce the adverse effects of illegal migration, Ministers agreed to share strategic information on migratory flows, including routes used and trafficking and smuggling networks. Furthermore, Ministers agreed to explore other forms of cooperation between ASEM partners such as enhancing the capacity of countries to manage movement of people through information sharing on migratory flows, training and technical assistance. To that end, they further agreed to establish a network of contact points, when appropriate, for coordination and preparation of meetings at expert level between partners and future ASEM meetings at Director-General level of Immigration services on illegal migration flows as well as on the detection of false, counterfeit and falsified documents.

6. Ministers agreed that greater efforts should be made to raise awareness at all levels, including through public information campaigns, dissemination, and publicising the adverse effects of illegal migration, smuggling, human trafficking and related abuse, and available assistance to victims of trafficking. These efforts should be undertaken to ensure orderly migratory movements and counter criminal actions by traffickers and smugglers. To that end Ministers agreed that ASEM partners would co-operate in the fight against criminal organisations in the field of trafficking and smuggling of human beings. Ministers called for the consideration of the signature, ratification as well as implementation of relevant international conventions including the December 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Ministers also underlined the need for joint efforts of the international community in the cooperation on the management of migratory flows.

7. Ministers highlighted the importance of cooperation on return and readmission of illegal migrants, in full respect of the sovereignty of ASEM partners and their respective international commitments. Return and readmission should be carried out in a humane and dignified manner.

8. Ministers noted with concern the increased recourse by illegal immigration networks to sophisticated means of document forgery and agreed to step up cooperation and to exchange information on such matters at experts' level in the detection of documentary fraud. The ASEM partners agreed to study the possibility of establishing a network of Immigration and Consular Liaison Officers (ICLOs) in order to increase cooperation.

9. Ministers stressed the importance of enhancing the social integration of legal migrants, protecting their rights and ensuring them fair treatment while fully respecting the sovereignty of individual countries. Ministers agreed furthermore to encourage steps to fight against xenophobia, discrimination, labour and sexual exploitation of aliens in ASEM States.

10. Ministers noted significant regional efforts on managing migration and other important international agreements/meetings related to migration issues such as the International Symposium on Migration-ISM held in Bangkok, Thailand, 21-23 April 1999 which resulted in the issuance of the Bangkok Declaration, the International Conference on Migration held in Brussels on 16-17 October 2001 and the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime held recently in Bali on February 26-28, 2002.

11. Finally, Ministers agreed that the results of this Conference would be presented at the Fourth Asia-Europe Summit (ASEM 4) in Copenhagen in September 2002.