

**Mr. Under Secretary's Draft Speech**  
**At Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Cohesion**  
**26-27 February 2009, MOSCOW**

Mr. Chairrman,  
Distinguished Participants,

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to the European Council Directorate General for Social Cohesion and Russian Government for co-organization of this conference titled "Investing in Social Cohesion: Investing in Stability and Well-being of Society". I also would like to express my thanks to Mm. Golikova and her government for her kind invitation and hospitality.

I would like to congratulate the High Level Task Force on Social Cohesion for their comprehensive report that provides recommendations on future policies, considering the current situation related to the social cohesion.

Our Minister Mr. Faruk Çelik also was planning to attend to this conference. However, it hadn't been possible for him to come to Moscow because of the decease of one of his relatives. I am attending to this conference on behalf of him.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,

In the environment of current global and economic crisis, at both national and international level, we all are in need of more social cohesion and social solidarity than ever. This crisis, born at finance sector and having impacts on every single field of life, not only endangers the social cohesion and solidarity in

the society but also threatens the entire rights obtained as a result of long lasting struggle.

This first conference held in appropriate time will give us the opportunity to discuss which could be the best approach, to adopt in field of social cohesion. Furthermore, in this conference we will find the opportunity to elaborate our common responsibilities and define the policies we have to pursue in order to provide the sustainability of the social cohesion.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,

We all know that the changing conditions and newly arising challenges require us to reinvest in social rights and to reshape the policies related to social cohesion. However, I am confident that, reshaping new policies regarding the social cohesion, the big financial and economic crisis will not dissuade us from our aim of providing social rights for all, set out particularly in the European Convention on Human Rights and Revised European Social Charter and various Council instruments in this field.

As pointed out in the Report of High-Level Task Force on Social Cohesion, the European Council has comprehensive *acquis* on which the social cohesion can be perfectly built on. Considering this *acquis* ruled by rights-based approach, when combined together with the instruments of the United Nations and International Labour Organization; is significantly sufficient for the legislative infrastructure required for social cohesion.

However, we all know that, the manner in which these legally protected rights are enjoyed in practice by the vulnerable groups must be clarified. The fact that

those who need the protection of rights at most are the ones who have the opportunity to claim at least; and this is the paradox to be solved!

It should not be disregarded, that the lack of provisions of decent work and social justice for the vulnerable groups in one country, shall constitute obstacle the realization of the entire efforts required for other people of the country.

For the generalization of social protection, eliminating poverty, and provision of a sustainable economic and social growth in all countries as well as for comprehensive and fair globalization, the following issues are of core importance;

- Providing productive job opportunities in compliance with equality, security and the decent work principles of ILO to those vulnerable persons who are able to work,
- Intensifying action programs to enable the easy access to firstly financial sources, education, health, housing as well as equal rights and opportunities to the vulnerable groups,
- By minimizing inequalities, determining and implementation of coherent policies to provide the best distribution of welfare.

Supporting the finance of social policies and social protection regimes by the financial policies, inclusion of social cohesion dimension to the national development plans and strategies are the other main issues, which we have to take into account as member states.

We have to spread out the effective civil and social dialogue mechanisms that will enable the active participation of our citizens, local governments, social partners, and NGOs in decision making process in order to improve the common awareness of responsibility.

Hence, not only the non-governmental organizations will establish contacts with persons from various parts of society, but the sustainability of the strategic connection between these parts and the government will also be provided.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished participants,

The changes in the economies and the demographic trends increase the demand of more foreign labour in the industrialized states. Foreign labour demand appears as a necessity for a sustainable social security system, which is one of the most important aspects of social protection. Nevertheless, we have the opinion that that on one hand the adoption of new approaches on migration such as “selective migration” and “return migration”, on the other hand significant restrictions brought in the social rights of existing migrants, and rigid rules against free movement of labour, will not be useful in terms of social cohesion neither for the country of origin nor for the country of destination. We believe that the new migration policies should not be away from right based approach.

A multi cultural life requires respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms above all. For this reason, the multi cultural societies should not often emphasize cultural, traditional and religious diversities.

In the establishment of a comprehensive social cohesion, effective participation of the vulnerable groups as young people, women, elderly people, migrants, and disabled to the decision taking process are extremely important. In many countries, these groups feel themselves as excluded, alienated and hindered; and loose their trust in the future, political processes and governmental institutions.

For this reason, considering the capacity of those people to enjoy their rights and their concerns, suitable ways and instruments to enable them express themselves freely must be provided.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Participants,

We will be glad to welcome all of you to the II Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Cohesion to be held in Turkey in 2012.

Ending my words, I wish you a fruitful conference.  
Thank you.

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