

**Statement by the Director of the
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD),
Mr. Jonas Widgren, at the 10th UN Congress
On the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
ODCCP,
Vienna 10 – 17 April 2000**

Mr. President,

First of all, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Vienna, wishes to express its gratitude for having the opportunity to address the 10th UN Congress. ICMPD also wants to thank for the possibility to follow as observer the work of ODCCP, especially the ongoing work of the CIGP Ad Hoc Committee on the elaboration of a comprehensive Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the three additional instruments. The draft Convention and two of its Protocols are of primary importance to us.

During the last years, ICMPD has on numerous occasions highlighted the need for reinforcing multilateral and inter-agency cooperation aiming at combating trafficking in and smuggling of people as one important feature of trans-national crime.

As all our studies are indicating, organized criminality has continued to make a wider industry out of trafficking in and smuggling of people.

Mr. President,

As known, the European region is one of the most trafficking-intensive in the world, and since the changes in Central and Eastern Europe, the problems of trafficking and illegal migration have taken on new serious dimensions. ICMPD estimates that between 400.000 and 500.000 persons entered Western Europe illegally in 1999. The majority of these people have been trafficked through the borders by professional groups. Criminal elements in source countries are well connected with their counterparts in Europe and elsewhere through various gray business links. So what further action, as seen from an ICMPD perspective, can be taken to prevent and reduce this emerging form of organized crime?

Positive action at the political level has begun to take effect. Some significant developments have occurred through efforts by an inter-governmental forum known as the Budapest Process. ICMPD is the Secretariat of the Budapest Process, and officials of Ministries of Interior or Justice of over 40 States actively participate in this forum. It is pan-European in composition but has also overseas ties to Canada, the United States and to Australia.

ICMPD is an intergovernmental organization, created in 1993 and tasked with, among others, to assist States in Europe to find ways to harmonize enforcement efforts to combat migrant trafficking as a form of irregular migration. It emerges from our name that our overriding goal is to work for more sustainable migration policies in Europe and for comprehensive refugee policies. By now, ICMPD receives the direct support of more than 20 Governments in Europe. We also have a close co-operation with major organizations such as Interpol, WCO, IOM, Europol, IGC and many others. As Secretariat to the Budapest Process, ICMPD prepared the 1997 Ministerial Conference on Illegal Migration in Prague. It was there that Ministers from 34 States adopted a set of 55 recommendations relating to the overall goal of combating trafficking in aliens and illegal migration in general.

In the context of the Budapest Process, ICMPD has organized more than 60 different intergovernmental meetings since 1994. Already at the Prague Ministerial Conference, the Ministers recognized that in order to combat trafficking there is a need to adopt internationally harmonized law enforcement regimes that focus on the migrant trafficking problem.

The conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding between ICMPD and interested organizations is a method of attaining a mutual goal, and we have so far signed such Memoranda of Understanding with Interpol, WCO and IOM. These words could be seen as an invitation to ODCCP/CICP to sign such a Memorandum with us.

We completely share the views expressed here at the Congress that knowledge is the most powerful tool in the arsenal of tools used against crime. Furthermore, since organized crime is not compartmentalized, why should various international agencies and organizations be so

compartmentalized? It is in this context that an alliance between relevant intergovernmental organizations is exceedingly necessary.

Finally, Mr. President, let me end my statement with the assurances that ICMPD will continue to promote the paramount ongoing effort in finalizing the Convention text as well as the protocols. Therefore, we will use all means at our disposal to convince all governments, which are co-operating with us, to sign the Convention and its additional instruments, once open for signature.

Thank you.