



## Project News

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06/06/2016

### **Expert Meeting on resettlement and other forms of admission of persons in need of international protection**

On 2-3 June, professionals working in the area of international protection from the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and the European Union Member States gathered in Stockholm to discuss resettlement and other forms of admission of persons in need of international protection. Sweden and Armenia hosted the meeting. Sweden has long traditions of resettlement of refugees dating back to the 1950s. For Armenia, which, as well as other EaP countries, has substantial experience in providing international protection to refugees, the preparation of the meeting became an opportunity to get a closer look at the resettlement.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

16/04/16

### **Panel meeting on irregular migration and trafficking in human beings**

The first meeting of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Migration and Asylum Panel in 2016 took place in Chisinau on 14-15 April and was devoted to the pressing topic of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings in the context of the current migration crisis in Europe. The event co-hosted by Moldova and Poland provided an opportunity for the representatives of the European Union Member States and institutions, EaP countries, international organizations and civil society to share the most recent information regarding the dimension and dynamics of irregular migration as well as the impact of the migration crisis on human trafficking.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



The Project is funded by the  
European Union



The Project is implemented by  
International Organization for Migration



The Swedish Migration Agency  
is a partner of the Project



## Highlights: Country News

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04/05/2016

### **New EU project to bring Azerbaijani and EU citizens closer**

Mobility partnership between the EU and Azerbaijan with a specific focus on strengthening the capacity of the country's government to develop and implement the national migration policy is the focus of a new EU-funded project presented in the Azerbaijani capital Baku on 3 May 2016. The 36-month project entitled "Support to the Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan (MOBILAZE)" will be implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development in cooperation with the partner institutions from several EU Member States and relevant Azerbaijani state institutions.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

23/04/2016

### **EU helps Azerbaijan deal with third-country migrants**

Officials from the State Migration Service of Azerbaijan visited Brussels to learn about Belgian and EU best practices on reception, detention and alternatives to detention of irregular third-country nationals. The study visit was organized by the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the European Commission (TAIEX) and is in line with the EU-Azerbaijan Action Plan, which sets combatting irregular migration among the strategic objectives of cooperation.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

24/06/2016

### **Consultations between the MFA of Belarus and Slovakia on consular issues**

On 23 June, Bratislava (Slovakia) hosted consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and Slovakia on consular issues. The Belarusian delegation was headed by the Head of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Igor Fisenko, Slovak delegation was led by the Director of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Igor Pokojny. During the consultations, the sides discussed the visa policy priorities of the two countries and the implementation of legislation regarding consular activities. The parties shared experiences concerning the response to the existing migration challenges, as well as exchanged information regarding the negotiations on the liberalization of visa regime between Belarus and the European Union.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

26/05/2016

### **Call for improving migration-related legislation in Belarus**

Belarusian legislation in the field of migration needs improving, Belarusian Deputy Interior Minister Nikolai Melchenko said at a roundtable, titled "Migration in the Republic of Belarus: Trends, Challenges, Prospects", on 26 May. "Belarus is facing new challenges and threats arising from the international



political, economic and environmental situation. We should improve the legal framework in the field of migration, introduce new forms and methods of work, and use modern information technologies and resources,” Nikolai Melchenko pointed out.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

21/05/2016

## **Integrated border guard system deployed at Belarusian-Latvian border**

An integrated system to guard the Belarusian-Latvian border is being deployed. New engineering systems are being deployed in the border sections near the border checkpoints Urbany in Braslav District and Grigorovshchina in Verkhnedvinsk District. “It will be an integrated border guard system. The junction with the Russian Federation and Latvia will be covered, too, by the border guard stations Plyusy, Bigosovo, and Druya,” explained Chief of the Polotsk border guard unit of the Belarusian Border Service Vladislav Bruyev. The integrated border guard system’s components vary from a fence fitted with contact sensors to video cameras. Such components have already been deployed in the Smorgon border guard unit, the Gomel border guard unit, and the Brest border guard unit, as well as along the Belarusian-Ukrainian border.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

13/05/2016

## **Belarus to offer digital visas soon**

A system to issue visas online will be created in Belarus in 2016-2017 in accordance with the government programme on developing the digital economy and the information society, BelTA learned from Belarusian Information Technologies and Communications Minister Sergei Popkov on 12 May. According to the source, the Digital Visa project has been initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project will be implemented using public-private partnership mechanisms.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

06/05/2016

## **Belarus border committee: demarcation of border with Ukraine proceeds as planned**

Belarus will continue demarcation works on the border with Ukraine in accordance with the plan, spokesman for the Belarusian State Border Committee Alexander Tishchenko informed. Commenting on reports in some media that residents of Volyn Region have made attempts to prevent the Belarusian specialists to carry out the demarcation works and that the works were suspended, Alexander Tishchenko said: “Yes, there were the attempts. But the demarcation will proceed in accordance with the plan.” Alexander Tishchenko expressed confidence that the Ukrainian side will deal with the problem and explain the situation to local residents.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



15/04/2016

## **Belarus hosts immigrants from 110 countries in 2015**

In 2015, Belarus became home to immigrants from 110 countries, Deputy Chairperson of the National Statistics Committee of Belarus Zhanna Vasilevskaya said at a press conference. Over the past five years, immigration has exceeded emigration by 2.5 times. In 2015, as many as 28,400 foreign nationals moved permanently to Belarus, while 9,900 people left the country.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

01/04/2016

## **BYR 11.6 billion paid in Belarus in post-arrival assistance to 1,600 foreigners**

Last year Belarus paid BYR 11.6 billion to cover resettlement costs and provide post-arrival assistance to 1,600 foreigners, Alexei Begun, the head of the Citizenship and Migration Department at the Interior Ministry of Belarus, informed. The law on amendments to some laws of the Republic of Belarus on legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the Republic of Belarus came into force on 12 July 2014. It identifies the categories of foreigners who are entitled to compensation for resettlement costs and to post-arrival assistance. A resolution of the Council of Ministers established the size and order of payments.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

01/04/2016

## **Ukrainian ID cards 'not valid' for crossing Belarusian border**

Belarus does not consider Ukrainian ID cards as valid documents for crossing the border, Dmitry Mironchik, Head of the Information Office of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated on 31 March. According to him, when Belarus and Ukraine signed the relevant agreement in 2009, the introduction of plastic cards with or without contactless digital chips instead of paperback passports was not envisaged. "This is why Belarus does not consider the new domestic passports introduced by Ukraine on 1 January 2016 as valid documents for crossing the border," explained the official.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

01/06/2016

## **Georgia elaborated special guidelines for migration profile development**

When discussed at the international forums, Georgian model of Migration Profile evoked a big interest amongst international organizations working in the field of migration. Hence, it was decided that the Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) would develop guidelines for elaborating 'medium' and short (thematic) profiles so that the interested actors get familiar with methods and approaches used while working on the document. The SCMI Secretariat finished the work on the development guidelines in May 2016.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



13/05/2016

## **EU project helps improve surveillance on green border between Georgia and Turkey**

Surveillance and communications equipment will be installed in the four sections of the green border between Georgia and Turkey, thanks to the EUR 3.2 million invested under the EU-funded project “Reinforcing the Capacities of the Government of Georgia in Border and Migration Management”, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Georgia. The project aims to assist the Georgian authorities in implementing the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) and in dealing with the challenges posed by the management of border and migration flows.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

06/05/2016

## **Georgia issues information brochure on visa free travel to the EU to educate its citizens**

The Ministry of Justice of Georgia has launched an informational campaign on visa free travel to the EU. Citizens of Georgia collecting newly issued passports will be provided with necessary information. A special leaflet explaining rules and regulations of visa free travel was developed for this purpose. Georgian citizens collecting their passports at Public Service Halls, Community Centres and territorial offices of the Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia will be given the leaflet by the front desk operators who undergone the special training in order to explain the necessary details to interested citizens.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

26/05/2016

## **Moldovan parliament ratifies Moldova-Georgia agreement on readmission of irregularly staying persons**

The parliament of Moldova on 26 May ratified the agreement between Moldova and Georgia on readmission of irregularly staying persons. The document is aimed at fighting the irregular migration and readmitting the persons staying irregularly on the territory of the two countries, as well as at strengthening the partnership between the states in the migration management sector.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

28/04/2016

## **Over half a million Moldovan citizens travelled to Schengen area during two years of visa-free regime**

Two years ago, on 28 April 2014, following a long and complex process, the European Union abolished the short-term visa requirements for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, holders of biometric passports, travelling to the Schengen area. During these two years, 577,058 Moldovan citizens, holders of biometric



passports, travelled to the Schengen area for 1,400,122 times. At the same time, according to the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex) only about 0.3 per cent of refusals of entry and 0.5 per cent of irregular stay were registered. Thus, Moldovan citizens have had a responsible attitude to this freedom.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

01/04/2016

## **New information platform on Moldovan state border crossing launched**

A new information platform, [www.frontiera.gov.md](http://www.frontiera.gov.md), which contains full information on the crossing of Moldova's state border, was launched by the Border Police, Migration and Asylum Bureau, Customs Service and representatives of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) on 1 April.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

03/06/2016

## **Ukraine MFA facilitates visa processing for foreigners from 1 June**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has started the implementation of information and telecommunication visa system, which will facilitate visa procedures. Ten foreign diplomatic establishments of Ukraine and the Operations Section of the Directorate General for Consular Service of Foreign Ministry at the Boryspil international airport are processing Ukrainian visas by means of this system, the Directorate General for Consular Service of Foreign Ministry of Ukraine informed on the official Facebook page on 2 June 2016.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

27/05/2016

## **EU assists with cross-border investigation techniques in Ukraine**

Criminal intelligence analysis, cooperation and information exchange with third parties, EU security policy cycle and operational support were among the topics discussed between senior experts from Europol and 25 detectives, prosecutors and investigators from Ukraine during a seminar organized by the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) in the country's capital Kyiv on 26 May. The capacity-building activity on new level of cross-border investigation was held for the country's National Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

07/05/2016

## **Ukraine and Romania abandoned long-term visa fees**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Mr. Lazăr Comănescu, signed an agreement on cancellation of fees for issuance of long-term





national visas, which gives Ukrainian and Romanian nationals an opportunity to receive permits for entry and stay for more than 90 days free of charge.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

29/04/2016

## **Meeting of border control agencies of the Baltic-Black Sea region countries took place in Odesa**

Representatives of Ukraine, Turkey, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Moldova, Poland and Latvia participated in the conference for the border control agencies of the countries of the Baltic-Black Sea region which was held in Odesa on 28 April. Representatives of Frontex, EUAM, EUBAM and IOM Ukraine also attended the conference. During the event, the participants discussed priority cooperation vectors aimed at prevention of uncontrolled expansion of the migration crisis along the EU eastern borders. They also assessed possible risks of emerging of new channels of irregular migration especially through the Black Sea and also looked at the possibility of extending joint operations under the Frontex's auspices to the Black Sea basin.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

21/04/2016

## **European Commission proposes visa-free travel for citizens of Ukraine**

The European Commission proposed to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for the citizens of Ukraine by transferring Ukraine to the list of countries whose citizens can travel without a visa to the Schengen area. This proposal comes after the Commission gave a positive assessment last December, confirming that Ukraine successfully met all benchmarks under the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP).

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

## **Highlights: EU Spotlight**

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30/06/2016

## **Frontex organized workshop for monitors of joint return operations**

Frontex and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) held a workshop in Warsaw to discuss ways to improve the monitoring mechanisms for return flights from the European Union to third countries and to effectively ensure respect for fundamental rights during forced returns. The EU Return Directive requires Member States to provide for an effective forced-return monitoring system. However, it does not oblige them to have a monitor on each return flight.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



30/06/2016

## **Europol published the latest trends in migrant smuggling**

Between January and June 2016, Europol received intelligence on more than 7,000 newly-identified migrant smuggling suspects. Recent data shows that migrant smuggling remains an increasingly profitable business for criminals, with the prices for migrant smuggling having tripled. Europol and its European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) currently have 42 experts and analysts providing operational and analytical support to the EU Member States fighting migrant smuggling. Together they have so far supported 55 high-level investigations. Europol experts are currently deployed at the hotspots in Greece and Italy, and 200 guest officers have been nominated.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

18/06/2016

## **New online Knowledge Centre to better manage information and data on migration and demography**

Coinciding with World Refugee Day on 20 June, the European Commission set up a new online in-house Knowledge Centre for Migration and Demography. This will bring together existing knowledge and conduct research and forward-looking analysis on future migration flows and population trends, studying amongst other aspects, their impact on health, welfare, education systems and the economy in Europe.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

13/06/2016

## **Commission presents Action Plan on Integration and reforms 'Blue Card' scheme for highly skilled workers from outside the EU**

On 13 June, the European Commission presented an Action Plan to support Member States in the integration of third-country nationals and their economic and social contribution to the EU, as well as a legal proposal to reform the rules on highly skilled migrants coming to the EU to work, which will support European businesses in attracting qualified and talented people from around the world. These initiatives follow up on the commitment in President Juncker's Political Guidelines, which set legal migration as a priority for this Commission.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

08/06/2016

## **New Migration Partnership Framework: reinforced cooperation with third countries to better manage migration**

The European Commission has set out plans for a new results-oriented Partnership Framework to mobilise and focus EU action and resources in its external work on managing migration. The EU will seek tailor made partnerships with key third countries of origin and transit, using all policies and instruments at the EU's disposal to achieve concrete results. Building on the European Agenda on Migration, the





priorities are saving lives at sea, increasing returns, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and, in the long term, helping third countries' development in order to address root causes of irregular migration. Member State contributions in these partnerships – diplomatic, technical and financial – will be of fundamental importance in delivering results.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

21/05/2016

## **EU visa waiver suspension mechanism: Council ready to start negotiations with Parliament**

On 20 May, the Council agreed its negotiating position on the proposed regulation to revise the suspension mechanism which can be applied to all existing visa liberalization agreements. On the basis of this mandate, the Netherlands presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament as soon as the latter has adopted its position. "Visa liberalization has great advantages for the EU and third countries. Yet we need an emergency brake for all visa free countries to make sure that visa liberalization cannot be abused. I'm pleased that we agreed on a mechanism that makes it easier to act against abuse. I'm looking forward to working with the European Parliament to realise this soon", said Klaas Dijkhoff, Minister for Migration of the Netherlands and President of the Council.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

06/05/2016

## **Back to Schengen: European Commission takes next steps towards lifting of temporary internal border controls**

The European Commission has proposed a Recommendation, to be decided upon by the Council, to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders, namely in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway for a maximum period of six months. National measures have already been introduced by these countries to address the threat to public policy and internal security resulting from the secondary movements of irregular migrants. The draft Recommendation proposes to extend these measures, in line with the [Schengen Borders Code](#), as, and despite significant progress made by Greece, not all of the serious deficiencies identified could be adequately and comprehensively addressed within the three months' limit.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

06/05/2016

## **Almost 90,000 unaccompanied minors among asylum seekers registered in the EU in 2015**

According to statistics released by Eurostat, 88,300 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the Member States of the European Union in 2015 were considered to be unaccompanied minors. 51 per cent of them are Afghans. In the years 2008-2013, the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking



minors was between 11,000 and 13,000 per year. It almost doubled in 2014 to reach slightly more than 23,000 persons, and then nearly quadrupled in 2015.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

29/04/2016

## **Managing the refugee crisis: Commission reports on implementation of EU-Turkey Statement**

The Commission has reported on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement and finds that good progress has been made to operationalize the Statement. Continued efforts and commitments are needed to consolidate this position and carry out sustained return and resettlement operations, given that this aspect of implementation still largely lies ahead. On 18 March, EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey agreed to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and replace it instead with legal channels of resettlement of refugees to the European Union. This new approach has started to deliver results, with a sharp decrease seen in the number of people irregularly crossing the Aegean from Turkey into Greece.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

08/04/2016

## **Frontex publishes Risk Analysis for 2016**

Frontex published its Annual Risk Analysis for 2016. The report gives a detailed description of the current situation and also describes a series of alternative futures developed in collaboration with experts from relevant stakeholder organizations. These scenarios may be used as a foresight instrument at a strategic level. The Annual Risk Analysis also points out three major challenges to be faced at the external borders: an unprecedented rise in migratory pressure, an increasing terrorist threat and a steady rise in the number of regular travelers.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

07/04/2016

## **Stronger and smarter information systems for borders and security**

The European Commission has adopted on 6 April a Communication on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security, setting out options on how existing and future information systems could enhance both external border management and internal security in the EU. The Communication initiates a process of structurally improving the EU's data management architecture in full compliance with fundamental rights, in particular the protection of personal data. The Communication sets out actions to improve the functioning and interoperability of existing information systems and potential new systems to address information gaps.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



07/04/2016

## **Reforming the Common European Asylum System and developing safe and legal pathways to Europe**

On 6 April, the European Commission adopted a Communication launching the process for a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), presenting: options for a fair and sustainable system for allocating asylum applicants among Member States; a further harmonization of asylum procedures and standards to create a level playing field across Europe and thereby reduce pull factors inducing measures to reduce irregular secondary movements; and a strengthening of the mandate of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

01/04/2016

## **European Commission awards EUR 1.14 million in emergency assistance for voluntary return of irregular migrants from Italy**

The European Commission has awarded EUR1.14 million in emergency assistance to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to set up an Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration scheme for Italy. This scheme targets irregular migrants wishing to return from Italy to their country of origin. It will provide information on voluntary return options and assist migrants with the return process. The IOM will support the migrants' reintegration in their countries of origin through assistance with housing, education, vocational training and employment, which will dissuade them from making further irregular journeys. This award of EUR1.14 million is provided under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and serves as bridge funding until Italy sets up a permanent voluntary return scheme as part of its national programme under AMIF. The total emergency assistance awarded to Italy since 2014 has now reached EUR 22 million. This is on top of the EUR 593 million Italy has been allocated for the period 2014-2020 for its national programmes under AMIF (EUR 348 million) and the Internal Security Fund (EUR 245 million).

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

## **Highlights: International Arena**

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20/06/2016

## **'Unprecedented' 65 million people displaced by war and persecution in 2015 – UN reports on World Refugee Day**

The number of people displaced from their homes due to conflict and persecution last year exceeded 60 million for the first time in United Nations history, a tally greater than the population of the United Kingdom, or of Canada, Australia and New Zealand combined, says a new report released on World



Refugee Day. The Global Trends 2015 compiled by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) notes that 65.3 million people were displaced at the end of 2015, an increase of more than 5 million from 59.5 million a year earlier.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

This information sheet is produced by the Support Project to the EaP Panel on Migration and Asylum, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Ukraine and the Swedish Migration Board.

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