



News Digest Issue 17 (October-December 2016)

Project News

12/12/16

Panel meeting on migration strategies

Migration strategies were in focus of the Panel meeting held in Minsk on 7-8 December 2016. Participants from the EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries discussed why it is important for a country, as well as for the whole region, to have a migration strategy, how to effectively organize its drafting and minimize obstacles for its adoption and implementation.

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

31/10/16

Experts focus on information and communication technologies use for migration management

The meeting on information and communication technologies use in migration management held in Riga on 27-28 October 2016 gathered the record number of nearly sixty participants including about twenty speakers. The wide range of sectors and diverse thematic fields represented by the participants – EU and EaP national migration, border guard, consular and security services, European Commission, the EU Joint Research Centre, international organizations, academic institutions, civil society organizations and private sector – once again demonstrated the prominent role that information and communication technologies play in contemporary migration management.

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



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by
International Organization for Migration



Highlights: Country News

07/11/16

Armenia continues negotiating with the EU on visa liberalization

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia confirmed that the country is ready to put efforts in order to start moving towards visa liberalization with the EU. “We expect that similar to Georgia and Moldova, Armenia’s process towards visa liberalization will start in the near future, commencing with the assessment visit by the European Commission and followed by the Action Plan,” the Deputy Minister said. “Such step would be a part of the reform process in the country,” he added.

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

20/10/16

Foreign nationals imprisoned in Armenia can now apply for asylum

New amendments to the Criminal Procedures Code and the Law of Armenia “On Detained and Arrested Persons” will allow foreign nationals and stateless persons convicted, detained and arrested in Armenia to apply for asylum. According to the amendments to the Law of Armenia “On Refugees and Persons Seeking Refuge”, asylum applications on behalf of minors can be submitted not exclusively by their parents but also by trustees and guardians.

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

07/10/16

UN and ICMPD help Armenia to develop strategy on migration and border management

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a project cooperation agreement for the Project “Support to Migration and Border Management in Armenia” (MIBMA) in Yerevan. The Project is fully funded by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD in partnership with UNDP. The overall objective of the action is to enhance approximation of the migration and border management in Armenia to the European standards of governance, in order to increase security, facilitate trade and support the possible visa liberalization dialogue between the European Union and Armenia.

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



17/10/16

Azerbaijan turning into country of influx of migrant workers

Azerbaijan has been gradually turning from the country of origin and transit of migrants into the country of the influx of migrant workers. Fuad Alasgarov, Head of Department on Work with Law Enforcement Bodies at the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration, informed at the 19th meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Migration Agencies held in Baku on 12 October. As it was noted, the biggest density accounts for labour migration to Azerbaijan due advantageous geopolitical location of the country, a stable internal political situation, overall tolerance in the country, expansion of international communications in the energy and transport sectors.

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

23/12/16

First biometric passports to be available in Belarus by 2018 year-end

Belarus is planning to start producing biometric passports and national ID cards by the end of 2018, Alexei Begun, Head of the Citizenship and Migration Department at the Interior Ministry of Belarus, told the media on 16 December. ID cards are plastic cards with biometric information stored on the chip. They are successfully used in many countries around. Such cards are compact and wear proof. Their main advantage is that they are almost impossible to counterfeit. Biometric passports make travel across state borders faster and more convenient.

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

28/11/16

Belarus and the EU to hold technical consultations on visa facilitation

This was announced by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Alena Kupchyna. She added that these issues are to be discussed with consideration of the new migration situation in the EU. “Belarus is, first of all, interested in negotiating a readmission agreement. We are ready to undertake the corresponding obligations, however, there is a transition period which needs to be agreed,” she explained. Belarus is suggesting a three-year transition period.

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

09/11/16

IOM welcomes Belarus’s effort to accommodate Ukrainians who flee conflict

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomes Belarus’s significant efforts to accommodate more than 160,000 Ukrainian nationals fleeing from the conflict zone in the southeast of the country, IOM



Director General William Lacy Swing said during a meeting with the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva Yuri Ambrazevich. The sides discussed a wide range of issues related to cooperation between Belarus and IOM. William Lacy Swing also complimented Belarus's role in coordinating the international efforts to combat human trafficking. He stressed on the positive results of cooperation between IOM and Belarus within the platform of the International Training Centre on Migration and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

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

19/10/16

EU launches Mobility Partnership with Belarus

The EU-Belarus Mobility Partnership establishes a set of political objectives and identifies a number of areas in which further dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Belarus will be established in order to ensure that the migration flows are managed as effectively as possible. Under the Mobility Partnership, measures will be launched to increase cooperation in the areas of regular labour migration; asylum and the protection of refugees; prevention and combating of irregular migration, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings; maximizing the development impact of migration and mobility.

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

12/10/16

MIA Border Police of Georgia made an official report about the projects implemented in 2014–2016

Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Head of MIA Border Police of Georgia, Major-General Zurab Gamezardashvili made an official report about the implemented, ongoing and upcoming projects of the Border Agency in 2014–2016. According to him, the Border Police constructed ten new border sectors in the past two years, and with the financial assistance provided by the United States and the European Union seven more are to be built before the end of the year.

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

31/12/16

Extended Migration Profile of Moldova for the years of 2010–2015 developed

The Extended Migration Profile for 2010–2015, developed by the Bureau on Migration and Asylum of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova, contains four main information-analytical chapters: migration trends, impact of migration, migration management framework, main conclusions, policy implications and recommendations. Migration analysis shows that economic reasons remain the main driving force for



Moldovan migrants, particularly due to lack of employment opportunities and low salaries offered at the local labour market. Migration situation is predominantly characterized by the emigration of the Moldovan population rather than by immigration of foreigners to the country.

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

19/10/16

Ukrainian MFA will issue visas at the Boryspil airport 24/7

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine introduced 24/7 visa issuance service by its Consular Department office located at the Boryspil airport. “Such measure is aimed at facilitation of issuance of visas to the citizens of the countries which can obtain visas at the border crossing point to enter Ukraine with a tourist purpose for a stay that does not exceed 15 days,” the MFA of Ukraine states.

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

07/10/16

Preparation to the 2nd phase of the introduction of ID cards in Ukraine is nearly over

In July 2016, the Parliament of Ukraine approved amendments to the legislation which create conditions for the launch of the second stage of the reform – farther introduction of a new type of ID documents. Since 1 October, the Law “On Amendments to Some Legal Acts of Ukraine regarding Documents, Confirming Citizenship of Ukraine, Identifying Person and Their Special Status Aimed at Liberalization by the European Union of the Visa Regime for Ukraine” enters into force. This will allow proceeding with the introduction of an advanced ID documents in a form of a card. Fundamentally new identification system, based on the Unified State Demographic Register that serves for issuing new documents, was developed as a response to one of the requirements of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan.

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

20/12/16

Unemployment makes men in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova vulnerable to human trafficking, IOM study reveals

An IOM study on trafficking in men from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova shows that the risk of falling prey to traffickers does not depend on victim’s education and place of residence. Over half of the surveyed male victims of trafficking assisted by IOM in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova have vocational education and 24 percent have higher education. Some 71 percent of them come from urban areas, according to the study, which was commissioned by IOM and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.

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



Highlights: EU Spotlight

27/12/16

EU identifies 20 key deliverables for 2020 for the Eastern Partnership

The last EaP Foreign Affairs Ministerial in May 2016 confirmed the shared view by both EU Member States and EaP Partner countries that the EaP needs to focus on delivering tangible results to citizens. Since then, the European Commission and the European External Action Service have developed a joint working document "Eastern Partnership – focusing on key priorities and deliverables" published on 15 December 2016. The document aims to identify 20 key deliverables for 2020, intended to contribute to the joint work of EU Member States and EaP Partner countries and step up actions in four key priority areas.

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

13/12/16

Estonia will allocate EUR 110,000 to prevent xenophobia in education

The Estonian government is set to earmark EUR 110,000 from its contingency reserve for the prevention of xenophobia in schools and kindergartens. Under a draft regulation filed by the Finance Ministry, the Government would grant EUR 227,804 to the Ministry of Education and Research to cover the costs related to the European Union action plan on migration. Nearly half of that money, EUR 110,000, will be spent on the prevention of xenophobia by means of arranging mobile counseling groups in educational establishments, publishing two methodology guides for teachers, and launching a campaign entitled "No Hate Speech".

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

13/12/16

European Commission launched Migration Data Catalogue and Dynamic Data Hub

On 2 December 2016, the [European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography \(KCMD\)](#) launched two new tools: the Migration Data Catalogue and the Dynamic Data Hub. These tools centralize migration related data, to better understand migration flows, trends and their impact on societies across the EU. The Migration Data Catalogue will classify and organize datasets in a series of predefined domains, including regular migration and integration, asylum-seekers and refugees, irregular migration and returns, as well as unaccompanied minors. Building upon the Migration Data Catalogue, the Dynamic Data Hub, a publicly available web-based application will provide direct access to single datasets through interactive mapping. As a result both tools will support the European Commission and interested organizations to formulate data-driven policies. So far, this data has been fragmented, which meant that available figures were underused.

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



13/12/16

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies published the Combined Europe Population Movement Operations Update for August–November 2016

“Since the EU-Turkey agreement, sea arrivals to Greece have significantly dropped compared to 2015, but many migrants continue to reach Europe. Since the summer, there was a shift of sea arrivals to Italy, but every European country has been affected by the migration crisis which is the biggest one for the continent since the Second World War,” states the report issued by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies covering August–November 2016.

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

01/12/16

Religious leaders met to discuss migration, integration and European values

The Commission hosted the 12th annual high-level meeting with religious leaders from across Europe. The meeting was dedicated to migration, integration and European values. The Commission's First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, together with European Parliament Vice-President Antonio Tajani, welcomed several religious leaders from across Europe in Brussels to discuss migration, integration and European values. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos also took part in the event.

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

22/11/16

The third European Migration Forum will take place in March 2017

The European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee will organize the 3rd meeting of the European Migration Forum, which will take place in Brussels on 2-3 March 2017. The [European Migration Forum](#) is a platform for dialogue between civil society and the European institutions on issues related to migration, asylum and integration of third-country nationals.

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

18/11/16

European Commission proposes a European Travel Information and Authorization System

The Commission is proposing to establish a European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) to strengthen security checks on visa-free travelers. The proposed system will gather information on all those



travelling visa-free to the European Union to allow for advance irregular migration and security checks. This will contribute to a more efficient management of the EU's external borders and improve internal security, whilst at the same time facilitating legal travel across the Schengen borders.

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

14/11/16

First official refugee and migrant shelter opens in Paris

Opening of a shelter with 400 beds for single men is a part of an ongoing drive to help asylum-seekers living on the French streets. The centre, in a disused railway yard near Gare du Nord station, will take in 50-80 people a day – the estimated number of migrants that arrive in Paris daily, most of whom end up sleeping rough. They will spend up to 10 days at the site where they will receive medical care and advice on seeking asylum before being transferred to a French “Welcome Centre”.

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

07/11/16

EU Member States issued a record number of first residence permits in 2015

In 2015, 2.6 million first residence permits were issued in the European Union (EU) to non-EU citizens, a record number since the data collection began (2008) and up by 12.1% compared with 2014. This increase was mainly due to the higher number of first permits issued for employment reasons (+23.5%, from slightly less than 0.6 million in 2014 to more than 0.7 million in 2015). Accounting for 28.9% of all first residence permits issued in the EU in 2015, family remained the main reason of deliverance, followed by employment (27.2%), other reasons (23.8%), and education (20.2%).

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

31/10/16

Commission recommends to extend temporary internal border controls for a limited period of three months

The European Commission proposed a Recommendation, to be adopted by the Council, to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, where controls already take place – according to the Council Recommendation of 12 May – for a period of a further three months. Despite the progressive stabilization of the situation, the Commission considers that the conditions of the “Back to Schengen” Roadmap allowing for a return to a normally functioning Schengen area are not yet fully fulfilled.

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



13/10/16

European Commission's reaction to the Hungarian quota referendum

In the official comment to the results of the Hungarian government-initiated quota referendum on the EU's planned migrant distribution scheme the spokesperson of the European Commission Margaritis Schinas said: "If the referendum had been legally valid, our comment would have been that we take note of it. Since it was declared legally void by the Hungarian Electoral Commission, we can now say that we also take note of it. We respect the democratic will of the Hungarian people – both of those who voted and those who did not". Answering a question on whether the Hungarian government's plan to amend the Constitution based on the referendum's outcome could raise problems, the spokesperson said that taking action in the aftermath of the referendum is a right reserved for the cabinet and declined to comment.

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

12/10/16

European Border and Coast Guard Agency launched

On 6 October, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency was officially launched, less than a year after it was first proposed by the European Commission. The launch event took place at the Kapitan Andreevo Border Checkpoint at the Bulgarian external border with Turkey and included a presentation of the vehicles, equipment and teams of the new Agency, as well as a press conference. Building on the foundations of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency will closely monitor the EU's external borders and work together with Member States to quickly identify and address any potential security threats to the EU's external borders.

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

12/10/16

Close to EUR 2.4 million awarded to support cultural projects for integration of refugees

In response to the refugee situation in Europe and in line with the European Commission's Action Plan on integration of third country nationals under the European Agenda on Migration, the European Union, through its Creative Europe programme, has awarded over EUR 2 million in funding for cultural projects to help refugees integrate into European societies. The transnational projects will involve 62 organizations in 20 countries. The organizations involved come from a whole range of sectors, including creative writing, publishing, libraries and museums, dance, music, theatre, digital arts, film, video, graphic arts, painting, drawing and photography. The projects will focus on promoting mutual cultural understanding, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, tolerance and respect. They will primarily seek to tell the stories of refugees, but many also focus on refugees working with host communities to promote the sharing of experiences. The



projects will be led by organizations from Croatia, Denmark, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

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

Highlights: International Arena

18/12/16

18 December, International Migrants Day: Message from IOM Director General William Lacy Swing

A report arriving on my desk twice weekly tells a tragic story. It details the number of migrants who have died. They die when the vessels smugglers cram them into sink, they die of exhaustion crossing deserts, or much worse they die when those holding them captive – in places like Libya – take everything they and their families can give, only to murder and bury the migrants in mass graves. There is no longer any point in expressing sorrow, or horror, or guilty feelings. We must recognize migration is the mega-trend of our time. It's a mega-trend which has pushed migration into the public's consciousness and to the top of every government's agenda.

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

10/10/16

The 67th session of the UNHCR Executive Committee

The 67th session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR took place in Geneva on 3 to 7 October. The links to the official statements made by some EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries in the course of general debate can be found in the [article](#).

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.

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