



News Digest **Issue 19 (April 2017)**

Highlights: Country News

21/04/17

Armenia simplifies procedure of issuing entry visas to foreigners

Foreigners visiting Armenia will not be required to fill in an application-questionnaire to get an entry visa to Armenia at the border-crossing points. The government has decided to adopt the change to simplify the procedure and improve the quality of services provided to foreign citizens.

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

12/04/17

Azerbaijan to issue employment patents to labour migrants

Labour and Social Protection Minister of Azerbaijan Salim Muslimov stated that the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has developed and submitted to the relevant governmental agencies the amendments to migration legislation with the purpose of improving the labour migration processes. "The amendments envisage the improvement of migration quota in order to prevent participation of unskilled foreign workers in the market and the effectiveness of involvement of the local workforce, as well as development and application of the mechanism of granting patents for the right of work to qualified foreign specialists," the Minister said.

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

10/04/17

Belarus and China are preparing agreements on migration and readmission

Preparation of bilateral agreements on migration and readmission was discussed at a meeting between Belarus' Interior Minister Igor Shunevich and China's State Councilor, Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun during



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the visit of the Chinese Minister to Belarus. The current talks highlighted the arrangements previously reached within the framework of the visit of Belarus' Interior Minister to China. The parties also talked over the major vectors for further development of bilateral relations. Currently, two agreements – on migration and on readmission – are under China's consideration. The Belarusian Interior Minister expressed his hope that the parties will do their best to sign the agreements within the shortest time possible.

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

27/04/17

Georgian State Commission on Migration Issues presents Brief Migration Profile focused on remittances

[Brief Migration Profile \(BMP\) focused on remittances](#) developed last year and based on [Georgian Migration Profile 2015](#) was presented by the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia at International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET) on 24 April 2017. Another document presented is a BMP focused on [impact of foreign students on Georgian economy](#).

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

12/04/17

Moldova and Romania to establish joint border control

The authorities of Moldova and Romania will initiate negotiations on the carrying out the joint control of persons, transport means and goods at the state border checkpoints. The agreement is meant to ensure the development, improvement and strengthening of the cooperation relations between the relevant authorities of the two states in the sector of integrated management of the common frontier. Also, the document provides for new forms of interaction by carrying out the joint control of people, transport means and goods at the joint checkpoints of the Moldovan-Romanian state border, based on the principle of “one stop”, in order to speed up and facilitate the crossing of the common border.

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

25/04/17

IOM publishes updates on migration-related legislative developments in Ukraine

Summary of legislative monitoring in the area of migration and border management for March 2017 prepared by IOM Ukraine is available now at the Mission website.

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



25/04/17

Ukraine and Poland sign the implementation protocol to readmission agreement with EU

Ukrainian-Polish Implementation Protocol to the Agreement between Ukraine and the EU on readmission of persons was signed on 24 April in Warsaw during the official visit of the delegation of State Migration Service of Ukraine (SMS) to Poland. According to SMS, the implementation of this international treaty will positively affect the development of good-neighbourly relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland. It will determine, on the basis of reciprocity, rapid and effective procedures for the identification and safe and orderly return of persons who do not comply with the rules of entry, exit and stay on the territories of Ukraine and Poland. The protocol will also ensure the compliance by Ukraine with its obligations to the European community and the international community on the implementation of effective levers of state policy in the sphere of readmission.

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

16/04/17

New rules for issuing entry and transit Ukrainian visas are valid as of 16 April 2017

On 16 April, the Resolution No. 118 of the Government of Ukraine "On Approval of the Rules for Issuing Visas to Enter into Ukraine and Transit through Its Territory", dated 1 March 2017, came into effect. The new rules provide for the novelties in options to apply for a visa online, reduced periods for visa issuance, reduced visa fee, and possibilities to obtain a visa at the Ukrainian border.

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

06/04/17

The visa waiver for Ukrainian nationals is approved by the European Parliament

On 6 April 2017, the European Parliament endorsed an informal deal with the Council on visa waiver for Ukrainian nationals. Under the new law which still needs to be formally adopted by the Council of Ministers, Ukrainians who hold a biometric passport will be able to enter the EU without a visa for 90 days in any 180-day period, for tourism, to visit relatives or friends, for business purposes. The visa waiver shall not be applicable to travels with purpose of work.

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



Highlights: EU Spotlight

26/04/17

EU Member States granted protection to more than 700,000 asylum seekers in 2016

According to Eurostat, the 28 Member States of the European Union granted protection status to 710,400 asylum seekers in 2016, more than double the number of 2015. The largest group of beneficiaries of protection status in the EU in 2016 remained citizens of Syria (405,600 persons, or 57% of the total number of persons granted protection status in the EU Member States), followed by citizens of Iraq (65,800 or 9%) and those of Afghanistan (61,800 or 9%). These data on the results of asylum decisions in the EU are [released](#) by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

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

21/04/17

Schengen States receive 15.2 million applications for short-stay visas in 2016

Statistics published by the European Commission show that 15.2 million applications for short-stay visas were lodged at Schengen States' consulates in 2016, resulting in 14 million issued visas. The number of applications was 1.6% less than in 2015, declining for the third year in a row. In relation to the Eastern Partnership countries the statistics, in particular, show the 7.6 % decrease in applications in Belarus (to 700,000). At the same time the solid increase in applications lodged in Ukraine (to 1.4 million, +14.5%) was observed. Schengen visa statistics since 2010 is available [here](#).

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

14/04/17

Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group and the Eastern Partnership countries discuss the future of the Eastern Partnership

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Visegrad Group (V4) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries met on 12 April in Warsaw under the Polish Presidency of the V4. This event was also attended by the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations as well as by representatives of Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the European External Action Service. The V4



Ministers reaffirmed their strong support to the Eastern Partnership as a strategic dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy and a key and active factor of stability and economic progress in Eastern Europe.

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

07/04/17

Systematic checks of EU citizens crossing external Schengen borders mandatory as of 7 April 2017

As of 7 April 2017, EU Member States are obliged to carry out systematic checks against relevant databases on EU citizens who are crossing the EU's external borders, in addition to the systematic checks already being carried out on all third-country nationals entering the Schengen zone. Proposed by the Commission in a direct response to the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and the growing threat from foreign terrorist fighters, the new rules strengthen the management of the EU external borders. The revision ensures a good balance between the current security challenges and the need to avoid disproportionate impacts on traffic flows at border crossings.

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

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