

Discussion Paper for the Panel Meeting on Information Campaigns

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I. Introduction

Visa liberalization is one of the European Union's most powerful tools in facilitating people-to-people contacts and strengthening ties between the citizens of third countries and the Union.¹

According to Ukrainian governmental sources, only during the summer period of 2018 over 760 thousand Ukrainians traveling to the European Union (EU) countries with biometric passports without a visa were registered at the border crossing checkpoints. This is almost 60% of the total number of citizens of Ukraine who have benefited from this right for the entire period of the visa-free regime² (since June 2017). As for Georgia, official statistics of the same period (1st June – 1st September 2018) demonstrates that up to 100.000 citizens of Georgia benefited from visa-free regime to the EU/Schengen that comprises 32% of those who have exercised this right for the entire period of visa free travel (since March 2017), while the total number of visits held to the EU/Schengen countries for the entire period exceeds 470,000³. At the same time, according to the Eurostat, in the second quarter of 2018, 2,180 Ukrainians requested asylum in the EU (against 2,300 Ukrainians who requested asylum in the same period of 2017 before the visa-free regime entered into force)⁴. The similar data showed increase in asylum applications filed by Georgian nationals (4,975 applications in first quarter of 2018 against 1,945 applications in the same period of 2017 before the visa free regime entered into force)⁵ that corresponds conclusions of assessment of migratory impacts of visa liberalization made by the EC for Georgia⁶. Consequently, the number of applications decreased in the following months and amounted to 1,230 in July 2018⁷.

The figures mentioned above demonstrate how the visa liberalization process could benefit the countries and people, while challenging the migration policies in place.

The recent European Commission's Communication on the Delivery of the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2017)558)⁸ envisages further efforts to enhance the EU communication strategy on migration, including information campaigns in third countries to ensure the provision of reliable information for prospective migrants. In particular, it stresses the need to use the full potential of mainstream and social media.

How targeted information campaigns could lead to preventing irregular migration from Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to the EU, and, in particular, the violation of visa-free and Schengen rules as well as the asylum system abuse? What communication channels are the most effective? How to convey the right messages to the target audience and to ensure necessary coordination between the stakeholders while designing and implementing the campaigns? And, finally, how to assess the impact of the information campaign to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved? – these and other important questions will be addressed by the representatives of state authorities

¹https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

² <http://eapmigrationpanel.org/en/news/over-million-ukrainians-use-visa-free-regime-eu-countries>

³ The official indicative data registered at border checkpoints of Georgias' international airports on direct flights of citizens of Georgia to the EU/Schengen countries or citizens of Georgia who have arrived from EU/Schengen countries, provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

⁴https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_quarterly_report#Main_trends_in_the_numbers_of_asylum_applicants

⁵https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:First_time_asylum_applicants_in_the_EU-28_by_citizenship_Q1_2017_%E2%80%93_Q1_2018.png

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015SC0299&from=EN>

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (first asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex; monthly data).

⁸https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170927_communication_on_the_delivery_of_the_eam_en.pdf

of EaP and the EU Member States (MS), international organizations, research institutions, academia and civil society during the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management (hereinafter – the Panel) meeting on information campaigns to be held on 11-12 October 2018 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

To facilitate the discussion, the present paper was developed as a background and preparatory information basis for the meeting participants. This document covers the following issues: (i) Current irregular migration trends from EaP states to the EU. Visa liberalization and Visa suspension mechanism; (ii) Information campaigns and their role in preventing irregular migration; Good practices and tools for designing an effective information campaign; (iii) Overview of national practices (strategic approach to campaigning; preventing irregular migration through targeted information campaigns: practical examples; most effective communication channels; measuring the impact of information campaigns and challenges in their implementation).

The discussion paper is prepared based on the answers received from six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and four EU MS⁹ to the questionnaire ([Annex I](#)) specifically designed for this purpose. The questionnaire sent to the participating states comprised seven questions aimed at finding out more on the policies and practices on developing and implementing the migrant information campaigns in EaP countries and the EU MS. Other sources of information on the EU policy and individual countries' programmes were also used, where applicable, including regarding those countries who did not submit their inputs.

⁹ The following EaP countries provided input: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; EU MS: Czechia, Italy (non-governmental source), Latvia, Romania.

II. Current irregular migration trends from EaP states to the EU. Visa liberalization and Visa Suspension Mechanism

Despite the preventing measures put in place, according to the European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), recent figures still show an increasing trend of irregular migration of EaP countries nationals, which raise serious concerns among the EU MS.

Utmost attention from the side of both the EU and its Member States is paid to the recent developments in three countries already benefiting from the visa-free regime with the EU, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The summary of available statistics below provided by DG HOME could demonstrate how the situation of irregular migrants from the mentioned countries was evolving over 2017-2018.

Georgia-Moldova-Ukraine 2017-2018

A slight decrease in illegal border-crossings at the EU's external borders

- The overall trend of illegal border-crossings (IBC) by visa-free nationals from the Eastern Partnership countries over the past 18 months is on **slight decrease**.
- In the first half of 2018, 97 illegal border-crossings between border crossing points were recorded for the three Eastern Partnership (EaP) visa-free nationalities, a number that represents a 35% and 32% decrease in comparison to the first and second half of 2017 respectively.
- This drop mainly results from a reduction in IBCs of Ukrainian citizens, which fell by almost half this year.
- Georgians and Ukrainians were the two most detected nationalities in IBCs, each accounting for 45% of all IBCs reported.
- Cyprus, Romania, Poland and Italy reported the highest numbers of IBCs by these three nationalities, followed by Greece. Combined, these countries reported the bulk of IBCs (95%).

Minor increase in illegal stay in the EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries

- A total of 22 287 detections of illegal stay of nationals of the three EaP visa-free countries were reported between January and June 2018, representing a 7% increase in relation to the same period of last year and a 11% as compared to the last six months of 2017.
- Ukrainians remained the first in detections of illegal stay reported in the first six months of this year, accounting for 68%; Moldovans accounted for the second highest rate of detections of illegal stay, representing 19% of the total share (similar to the 17% and 19% share registered in the first and second half of last year), followed by Georgians who represented the remaining 13% of illegal stays (10% and 11% in the first and last six months of 2017).
- Poland reported the highest number of illegal stays, alone accounting for almost half of all detections. Together with Poland, Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia comprised the top five EU reporting countries, collectively reporting 78% of all detections.

Increase on Refusals of entry by EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) level

- Between January and June 2018, 34 982 refusals of entry were issued by EU MS and SACs to nationals of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, which represented a 67% and 41% increase in relation to the previous two six-month periods respectively
- Ukrainians were by far the nationality most issued refusals of entry in the first six months of this year, accounting for 87% of all refusals, a figure slightly higher than those recorded last year (84% in the first half of 2017 and 79% in the second half).
- Second to Ukrainians were Moldovan nationals, who were issued 8% of the refusals of entry, and lastly Georgians, accounting for the remaining 5% of the refusals issued.
- Poland issued the majority of refusals of entry and, together with the other top reporting countries - Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Italy –was responsible for 90% of all the refusals of entry issued to nationals of the three EaP visa-free countries.

Slight increase in return decisions issued by the EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries

- Within the period January – June 2018, a total of 18 800 return decisions were issued to nationals of the three EaP visa-free countries - 11% higher than in the same period of last year and 4% lower than in the previous six month period. Overall, the trend over the past 18 months is experiencing **a slight increase**.
- Over three quarters of return decisions reported during this period were issued to Ukrainian nationals, who were, likewise, the main recipient last year. Georgians and Moldovans received 15% and 9% of the return decisions between January and June 2018.
- Poland, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Slovakia and Germany reported the highest number of return decisions issued to EaP visa-free nationals, together issuing 79% of all the decisions, a number relatively stable when compared to that reported last year by the same five countries (79% in the first half and 81% in the second).

Effective returns from the EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries remained relatively stable

- A total of 14 702 nationals from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were effectively returned in the first six months of this year. This value represents a 2% increase in comparison with the same period of last year and a 12% decrease in respect to the previous six-month period (July – December 2017). Overall, the trend in the last 18 months has been **relatively stable**.
- 73% of all the effective returns of EaP visa-free nationals carried out this year concerned Ukrainians (slightly lower than the 77% and 79% rate reported between January – June and July – December last year). Ukrainians were followed by Georgians and Moldovans, whose effective returns accounted for 17% and 10% of the total share reported this year.
- As regards EU MS and SACs returning nationals of these three countries, Poland, Belgium, Slovakia, Germany and France rank as top five, cumulatively reporting 75% of all the effective returns carried out.
- Whereas Poland and Slovakia returned a higher number of Ukrainian nationals, Georgians were the most representative nationality within effective returns conducted by Germany and Belgium, and Moldovans within effective returns undertaken by France.

As to the nationals of other three EaP states – **Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus**, the statistics¹⁰ vary depending on the country and type of migration rules violation. Thus, for instance, for Azerbaijani nationals, a slight decrease of entry refusals was observed in 2017 comparing to 2016 (290 against 335 respectively). At the same time, the number of illegally present persons increased from 1 315 in 2016 to 1 710 in 2017).

As for the Armenians, a significant increase of asylum claims was observed in 2016 (8 565) comparing to 2015 (5 315). However, in 2017, it dropped to 7 770.

The statistics on nationals of Belarus demonstrates the stable increasing tendency on refusals of entry over the past three years (4 280 in 2015, 5 055 in 2016 and 6 555 in 2017).

Although irregular migration from EaP countries to the EU cannot be compared to the magnitude of the migration phenomenon in the Mediterranean region, the current migration trends briefly described above still require an adequate response from the EU and EaP countries in order to keep positive developments in the facilitation of mobility and people-to-people contacts.

One of the main concerns of the EU is how to avoid misusing the benefits provided to third countries through visa liberalization/facilitation dialogues and to ensure compliance with obligations envisaged by the respective bilateral agreements. Although the EaP countries have reached so far different level of progress in visa liberalization/facilitation with the EU, all of them are interested in further developing and strengthening the cooperation in this area.

As it was stated in the EaP Summit 2017 Joint Declaration¹¹, *participants welcome the effective implementation of the visa-free regimes for the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. They look forward to strengthen cooperation and further progress in the area of mobility, in a secure and well-managed environment and to consider in due course the opening of visa liberalization dialogue with Armenia, provided that conditions for well-managed and secure mobility are in place, including the effective implementation of visa facilitation and readmission agreements between the Parties.*

Considering what mentioned above, specific measures should be taken to prevent the abuse of existing rules of entry and stay in the EU by nationals of EaP countries.

Alongside with an effective application of readmission agreements¹², one of the preventive tools created by the EU in relation to the third countries granted the visa-free regime is the **Visa Suspension Mechanism**. It was established in 2013 and then revised in February 2017 by the Regulation (EU) 2017/371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 1 March 2017 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (revision of the suspension mechanism)¹³.

The objective of the revised regulation is to strengthen the suspension mechanism. It does this by making it easier for EU MS to notify circumstances which might lead to a suspension, by enabling the Commission to trigger the mechanism on its own initiative, and by tasking the Commission to send annual reports to the European Parliament and Council on the extent to which visa-exempt third countries continue to meet the necessary criteria.

¹⁰ Data provided by DG HOME on the basis of Eurostat

¹¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31758/final-statement-st14821en17.pdf>

¹² More information on readmission agreements between the EU and EaP countries can be found at <http://eapmigrationpanel.org/en/meetings/panel-meeting-return-readmission-and-reintegration>

¹³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1520952367268&uri=CELEX%3A32017R0371>

The possible **grounds for suspension have been extended** and include a decrease in cooperation on readmission, a substantial increase in the refusal rate of readmission applications, including for third-country nationals in transit, and a substantial increase in the risk for public policy or the internal security of the member states.

The use of the mechanism will also be facilitated by shortening reference periods and deadlines in order to allow for a **faster suspension procedure**. In particular, the reference period for comparing the circumstances leading to the suspension with the situation during the previous year or before visa liberalization is shortened from six to two months.

The **suspension can be triggered by a notification of a member state or by the Commission**. If a simple majority of member states notify, the Commission will have to adopt an implementing decision temporarily suspending the exemption from the visa requirement for certain categories of nationals of the third country concerned for a period of 9 months. During this period, the Commission shall establish an enhanced dialogue with the third country concerned to remedy the circumstances in question.

If the circumstances persist, the Commission shall adopt (at the latest two months prior to the expiry of the 9 months) a delegated act temporarily suspending the visa waiver for a further period of 18 months, for all the nationals of the third country concerned. Before the end of the period of validity of the delegated act, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council. This report may be accompanied by a legislative proposal to transfer the reference to the third country concerned from Annex II (visa-free countries) to Annex I (countries whose nationals need a visa to enter the Schengen area).

A **monitoring mechanism has been introduced** with the purpose of ensuring that third countries which have been granted visa exemption following a visa liberalization dialogue continue to fulfil the criteria which were the basis for granting visa-free status.¹⁴

As a result of introduction of the revised Visa Suspension Mechanism, the first Report¹⁵ was prepared by the European Commission at the end of 2017 containing the assessment of the visa liberalization benchmarks by the states which have successfully concluded visa liberalization dialogues according to relevant action plans and roadmaps, i.e. Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, and highlighting the areas requiring the improvement.

Although the Report has found that overall the visa liberalization benchmarks continue to be fulfilled by all three EaP countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), some areas are still to be addressed. In particular, all these countries were requested to either **set up or continue targeted information campaigns clarifying the rights and obligations entailed in visa-free travel**.

The next Report will be prepared by the end of 2018 and will evaluate the progress made by the EaP states towards the improvements requested by the Commission in 2017.

¹⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/27/revision-visa-waiver-suspension-mechanism/>

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

II. Information campaigns and their role in preventing irregular migration. Good practices and tools for designing an effective information campaign

Even though a number of migration policies worldwide emphasize the importance of migrant information campaigns for ensuring the well-managed and safe migration, there is no common understanding between the policymakers, migration practitioners and researchers regarding the effectiveness of such campaigns. The reason lies behind the absence of a sufficient number of evaluations and studies assessing the real impact of the campaigns and, in particular, the level of behavioural change of (prospective) migrants achieved through information and awareness raising campaigns.

Some researchers have a very critical look on migrant information campaigns, questioning their real effect, however, recognizing the problem with an adequate evaluation. One of the studies which can trigger the interest of developers/implementers of information campaigns is *Migration Information Campaigns. A qualitative study on the role that migration information campaigns play in the migrant decision making process through the lens of practitioners in the field of migration* (K. Optekamp).¹⁶ The author provides an overview of various campaigns conducted over the past two decades in the EU and third countries and analyzes the evidence of their effectiveness.

At the same time, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other international organizations acting in migration field, information campaigns have been instrumental in raising awareness and addressing knowledge gaps on migration, whether in origin, transit, or destination countries. Information campaigns are a promising practice that can be of use in addressing a wide range of areas. Information campaigns are critical for an improved understanding of migration for a variety of stakeholders, whether civil society, service providers, international agencies, or local, national, regional or international policymakers. This is of particular importance as stakeholders work together to address migration in the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)¹⁷.

Nevertheless, IOM also recognizes that there are many challenges related to information campaigns and doubts as to whether campaigns can truly change behaviour, as noted in various publications and evaluations. Generally, the intention is not only to raise awareness but to have the target audience act upon the information, which is difficult to measure. Furthermore, there is limited evidence on the impact of information campaigns, particularly in relation to counter-trafficking efforts. It is therefore of significant importance that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a part of the development of an information campaign, and takes place throughout the campaign, as well as in post-campaign assessments.¹⁸

Considering the mentioned above, IOM suggests the following **recommendations for developing, implementing and evaluating information campaigns to improve their effectiveness:**

- Design campaigns that are focused on specific objectives and the target audience(s)
- Monitor and evaluate impact throughout the campaign
- Raise awareness through innovative and creative methods
- Engage and build capacity of government, media, and local community

¹⁶ <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/346453>

¹⁷ http://www.programamesoamerica.iom.int/sites/default/files/KU_Information%20Campaigns.pdf

¹⁸ Ibid

- Establish and ensure trust with the target community¹⁹

In addition to that, some practical tools could be mentioned which can help the governments and other stakeholders to develop the effective information campaign on preventing irregular migration.

The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) Toolkit for Guidance in Designing and Evaluating Counter-Trafficking Programs. Harnessing accumulated knowledge to respond to trafficking in persons²⁰

This toolkit recommends to keep into account the following questions when developing awareness-raising initiatives:

1. Who is the specific target group for the intervention?
2. What behaviour is the intervention trying to change or reinforce among the target group? What action do you want them to take?
3. How will these changed behaviours or actions contribute to reducing trafficking in persons (TIP) (e.g. through reducing the number of new victims, identifying existing victims, increasing reporting on TIP cases)?
4. What evidence is available to suggest these actions will contribute to the desired outcomes?
5. What is the existing level of awareness among the target group(s)?
6. What barriers exist to the target group(s) adopting the desired behaviours or outcomes? For example:
 - Are there cultural or social norms discouraging the desired behaviour?
 - If a campaign aims to discourage risky migration, do community members perceive realistic alternatives?
7. How will the planned intervention or program address these barriers?
8. What are the most trusted information sources for the target group? Is it, for example, particular members of the community, certain social media sites or a particular NGO/INGO?
9. Should the target group be segmented and, if so, how? For example, are separate messages or information sources needed for children and youth, men and women, ethnic minorities, different language groups, those with different education or literacy levels?²¹

IOM X C4D Toolkit: A step-by-step guide to applying Communication for Development (C4D) to counter-trafficking activities²²

The purpose of the toolkit is to provide practical guidance for strengthening ongoing awareness-raising information campaigns, specifically in relation to the prevention of human trafficking and exploitation. IOM X uses a framework with **five inter-dependent stages** to develop its evidence-based communication activities.

The stages are: 1) Analysis; 2) Strategic Design; 3) Development and Testing; 4) Implementation; and 5) Monitoring and Evaluation.

Each of these stages lends itself to the M&E of the information campaign, so as to measure the results intended. As explained in the IOM X toolkit, “monitoring” tracks outputs and outcomes so

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ http://icat.network/sites/default/files/publications/documents/16-10273_ICAT_toolkit.pdf

²¹ http://www.programamesoamerica.iom.int/sites/default/files/KU_Information%20Campaigns.pdf

²² http://iomx.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/23Apr18C4D-Toolkit_Final.compressed.pdf

that adjustments can be made to the activity during implementation, and “evaluation” measures how well a program achieves its outcomes.

Monitoring purpose:

- To correct, reorient or redesign
- To readjust communication activities and messages

Monitoring answers these questions:

- What is happening to the target audience?
- Why is it happening?
- What early signs of progress can we detect?
- What are the short-term effects? (In the target audience group, in the Migrant Resource Centers, etc.)
- To what extent are planned activities actually being realized?

Evaluation purpose:

- To demonstrate the impact of the communication activities
- To determine the level of behaviour change, adoption or discontinuation

Evaluation answers these questions:

- What happened as a result of the communication activities?
- What behaviour change(s) have taken place?
- What portion of the target audience adopted the new behaviour or continued and/or expanded a currently practiced one?
- Why did they adopt it or continue/expand it; and did they influence others to practice it?
- What was the impact on the target audience?²³

Handbook: Addressing Irregular Migration Through Effective Information Campaigns²⁴

The Handbook developed in the framework of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) facilitates the sharing of effective campaign techniques, considers the possibilities and limitations of information campaigns in affecting behavioral change, and provides clear, practical advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of information campaigns.

The Handbook provides practical recommendations on how to:

- Define your objectives
- Identify your audience
- Develop your messages
- Choose the right communication channel and format
- Measure the impact of your campaign²⁵

Although the publications mentioned above are not specifically focused on preventing the violation of the visa-free regime and Schengen rules, they contain a number of practical tools which could be easily adjusted to the needs of governments depending on the type of information campaign to be developed.

²³ http://www.programamesoamerica.iom.int/sites/default/files/KU_Information%20Campaigns.pdf

²⁴

www.baliprocess.net/UserFiles/baliprocess/File/FINAL_Handbook%20on%20Addressing%20Irregular%20Migrat%20Through%20Effective%20Information%20Campaigns_12052017.pdf

²⁵ http://www.programamesoamerica.iom.int/sites/default/files/KU_Information%20Campaigns.pdf

III. National practices

A. Strategic approach to campaigning

Considering the complex nature of migrant information campaigns requiring in most cases the involvement of various stakeholders and solid financial resources, the strategic approach to development and implementation of such campaigns is essential for the governments in order to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

As mentioned above, the EU has included the information campaigns into the scope of actions crucial for delivery of the European Agenda on Migration²⁶ recognizing their importance for migration management and for the preventing the irregular migration in particular.

The need of adequate information provision to migrants and refugees in order to help them taking the informed decisions, as well as awareness raising regarding the risks connected to the irregular migration is also referred to in the global strategic documents, such as UN Sustainable Development Goals²⁷ and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants²⁸.

In general, at the national level, the governments of EaP countries and the EU MS also recognize the importance of a comprehensive approach to developing and implementing migrant information campaigns. According to the answers provided by the states responding to the Panel meeting questionnaire ([Annex I](#)), almost all countries included the provisions regarding the migrant information campaigns or activities into migration policy documents of different levels. In most cases, such provisions could be found in national migration strategies (**AM, CZ, GE, MD, RO, UA**) or/and related action plans (**AM, AZ, RO, UA**).

Some countries incorporated the communication activities into other strategic documents, e.g. Integrated Border Management and Border Security Strategy (**MD**), Public Relations Strategy of the General Inspectorate for Immigration 2016-2019 (**RO**), or Communication Strategy for European Integration for 2018-2021 (**UA**).

*In accordance with the "Concept on Studying and Preventing Irregular Migration Originating from the Republic of **Armenia**" Action Plan, approved by the Minutes of the RA Government Session No 51 of December 29, 2011, an 8-hour hotline operates and receives potential migrants for orientation in Migration Service.*

*The communication strategy is an integral part of the Migration Policy Strategy of the **Czech Republic**, aiming to inform the general public about the key principles of Czech migration policy. The main target group is thus national public, not foreigners.*

*National Migration Strategy of **Georgia** for 2016-2020 has a separate chapter on awareness raising action which in-depth covers 5 main directions: irregular migration, statelessness, legal migration, integration and reintegration, migration and development. The info-campaigns are based and proceeding from the objectives and goals of the Strategy. They are drafted and implemented by the member agencies of the State Commission on Migration Issues, which among its partners has consultative status holder*

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170927_communication_on_the_delivery_of_the_eam_en.pdf

²⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

²⁸ http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1

NGO's and International Organizations, who all are involved in info-campaigns' initiation, preparation and implementation.

*In **Ukraine**, the Strategy of the State Migration Policy provides, in particular:*

"Raising public awareness of the opportunities of migration is an effective tool for promoting legal migration, as well as preventing irregular migration and trafficking in persons. Citizens of Ukraine should be aware of both the existing opportunities for legal employment abroad, the peculiarities of the migration legislation of the destination countries, and the possible risks associated with the irregular status. Official websites of interested state authorities, links with the Ukrainian diaspora; free social advertising on the Internet, etc. can be used for this."

The corresponding Action Plan provides for constant awareness-raising among the population of Ukraine on the possible risks associated with irregular external labour migration, including getting in the situations related to human trafficking; reintegration into the society of labour migrants - citizens of Ukraine and their family members upon return to Ukraine; the rights of migrants to social security and state social insurance; other information, increases the level of awareness on migration issues.

It should be also highlighted that two EaP states (**MD, UA**) have mentioned specific policy documents covering the communication activities related to the visa-free regime with the EU.

*In **Ukraine**, in May 2017, in the context of the communication strategy and / or activities aimed at preventing violations of the visa-free regime and / or the Schengen rules, the Action Plan was adopted to conduct an awareness-raising campaign for the citizens of Ukraine regarding their rights and obligations under the EU visa-free regime for Ukraine. Also, the authorities and regional state administrations have developed appropriate internal Action Plans. Reporting is conducted quarterly.*

*Considering the European Commission's First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism of December 2017, the Governmental Commission for European Integration endorsed on March 21, 2018, a Calendar of actions to address the recommendations concerning Republic of **Moldova**. The Calendar covers all the EU raised concerns starting from the adoption of needed laws and strategies and ending up with operational activities that will contribute to making even more efficient the process of the visa-free regime with the EU implementation. A special attention is devoted to strategic communication and information activities on the rights and obligations stemming from a visa-free regime with the EU targeting distinct categories of potential travelers to the Schengen zone.*

More details regarding the reflection of communication strategies and activities in migration policy documents of responding states are provided in the table below.

Country	Migration policy documents containing a reference to communication strategy/activities
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The "Concept on Studying and Preventing Irregular Migration Originating from the Republic of Armenia" Action Plan;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017-2021 Strategy for migration policy of the Republic of Armenia
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Action Plans in the field of preventing the irregular migration prepared by the State Migration Service with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Border Service; Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and Forced Labor, as well as to prevent and eliminate the consequences of these phenomena
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of the national migration policy in the Republic of Belarus is currently under development
Czechia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The communication strategy is an integral part of the Migration Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Migration Strategy of Georgia for 2016-2020 has a separate chapter on awareness raising action which in-depth covers 5 main directions: irregular migration, statelessness, legal migration, integration and reintegration, migration and development
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Calendar of actions to address the recommendations of First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism of December 2017 concerning Republic of Moldova was endorsed by the Governmental Commission for European Integration endorsed on March 21, 2018. A special attention is devoted to strategic communication and information activities on the rights and obligations stemming from a visa-free regime with the EU targeting distinct categories of potential travelers to the Schengen zone; National Strategy on migration and asylum (2011-2020), Objective IV: “promoting a climate of legality in immigration and stay of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova by increasing the level of information for potential migrants who want to come to the Republic of Moldova for a short time (tourism, business, private visits) or long time (work, studies, family reunion); Draft National Strategy for Integrated Management of the State Border (2018-2023) and implementation plan (2018-2020): Objective V, Action 10: „Increasing the level of information / awareness of foreigners on the risks of irregular migration”
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Immigration Strategy for the period 2015-2018 and the Action Plan for 2015 for the implementation of the Strategy; The Public Relations Strategy of the General Inspectorate for Immigration 2016-2019
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy of the State Migration Policy of Ukraine for the period up to 2025 and the Action Plan for 2018-2021 on the implementation of this Strategy; The Communication Strategy for European Integration for 2018-2021 (approved on October 25, 2017) and the Action Plan for 2018 (the plan is adopted for each year)

A strategic approach to the migrant information campaigns requires strong coordination between the main developers/implementers and other stakeholders involved. While in most cases the campaigns targeted at preventing the irregular migration belong to the responsibility of state

authorities acting in migration field, the engaging with other, non-governmental actors, is essential for achieving the objectives of such campaigns.

The current practice in the responding EaP countries and the EU MS in relation to mentioned above is more or less similar. Usually, the state migration authorities (migration services, ministries of interior, border guard services) take the leading role in developing and implementing relevant campaigns, often in cooperation with other state agencies (**AM, AZ, BY, CZ, GE, LV, RO, UA**). At the same time, the international organizations (IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, ICMPD), the EU agencies (FRONTEX), media, various civil society organizations (national and international), diaspora, private sector are almost always invited to contribute to effective campaigns implementation.

*The Migration Service is responsible for all migration-related processes in **Armenia**. Apart of that, local authorities and the other state agencies (Mobile Resource Centers for Migration of State Employment Agency of Ministry of Labor and Social Issues of RA in regions of Armenia; Passport and Visa Office of Police, The General Department on Combating Organized Crime of Police), international organizations (including IOM) as well as civil society organizations ("Armenian Caritas", "People in Need Armenia", "The International Center for Human Development"(ICHD)), are engaged in the process of implementing of various information campaigns. Mass media is a key player in coverage of migration-related topics in the news, reportages, programs, interviews, by inviting state responsible entities' representatives as a guest or as an interviewee.*

In some cases (**MD, IT**), the ministries of foreign affairs and their specialized structures could be also in charge of migrant information campaigns. Furthermore, in **Moldova**, the special task force groups were established to address the communication needs related to the visa-free regime with the EU.

*In **Italy**, information campaigns aimed at preventing irregular migration from third countries characterized by high migratory pressure are mainly sponsored by Italian Development Cooperation Agency through the financial and operational involvement of international, national and, most of all, local partners such as IOM, countries of origin competent Ministries and NGOs. The coordination is usually ensured by agreements and bilateral deals between the parts. "Aware Migrants", the most important Italian information campaign, was sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Interior and the IOM Coordination Office for the Mediterranean.*

*In 2014, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) of the Republic of **Moldova** was in charge of information campaigns on the rights and obligations of Moldovan citizens when travelling in the Schengen zone. In this regard, before the official date of entry into force of visa-free regime with the EU (April 28, 2014), MFAEI representatives participated in a wide range of TV programs, official visits in the regions and engaged in discussions with the travel agencies on explaining the procedure and documents needed in order to enjoy visa-free travel to Schengen zone.*

Within the MFAEI the Visa Task Force Group was created. This group was in charge of preparing diverse actions on information campaigns on visa-free (2014, 2015, and 2018). Later on, a Taskforce group for communication within the ministry was created. It embodies diplomats from various divisions and has the mission to further strengthen the Ministry's institutional capacities in the field of digital diplomacy, media and communication of critical messages to foreign/national audiences.

For more information on the authorities in charge of migrant information campaigns in responding EaP countries and the EU MS, as well as other stakeholders involved, refer to the table below and the [Matrix](#) of responses to the meeting questionnaire.

Country	Authorities responsible for developing/implementing the migrant information campaigns	Stakeholders involved in developing/implementing the information campaigns
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development ▪ Passport and Visa Office of Police; ▪ The General Department on Combating Organized Crime of Police ▪ Ministry of Foreign Affairs ▪ Ministry of Labor and Social Issues of Armenia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Media, international organizations (including IOM) as well as civil society organizations (“Armenian Caritas”, “People in Need Armenia”, “The International Center for Human Development” (IChD)
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The State Migration Service ▪ Regional and city executive authorities ▪ Public Council established under the State Migration Service in 2015 to increase the activity of the civil society in the processes carried out in the sphere of migration, to deepen the interaction in this field with NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diaspora, higher educational institutions, representatives of local self-government bodies, employers, media, foreigners, international organizations
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Internal Affairs ▪ The State Border Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other interested state bodies and organizations, under the guidance of the Council of Ministers; international organizations (IOM, UNDP)
Czechia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of Interior ▪ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil society organizations; international organizations (IOM)
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member agencies of the State Commission on Migration Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NGO’s and international organizations (IOM, ICMPD)
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Italian Development Cooperation Agency and other state authorities (e.g. Ministry of Interior) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil society organizations; international organizations (IOM)
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Ministry of the Interior and its institutions under subordination – State Border Guard and The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latvian Center for Human Rights and Legal Aid Administration
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) and the Visa Task Force Group and Taskforce group for communication created within MFAEI ▪ The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diaspora, international organizations and EU agencies (IOM, UNHCR, FRONTEX) ▪ Nexus Moldova Center

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bureau for Relations with Diaspora ▪ General Inspectorate of the Border Police ▪ Ministry of Internal Affairs ▪ Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection together with the National Employment Agency 	
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Inspectorate for Immigration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NGO's and international organizations
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The State Migration Service of Ukraine ▪ The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine; ▪ The Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine ▪ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine; ▪ The Ministry of Education of Ukraine and regional state administrations etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public councils of government bodies, representatives of NGOs diaspora, local authorities, international organizations, private sector

B. Preventing irregular migration through targeted information campaigns: practical examples

Given the topic and objectives of the upcoming Panel meeting described in the [Concept Note](#), the information campaigns related to preventing the abuse of the visa-free regime with the EU conducted (or being conducted) in the EaP countries would become the main focus of this paper.

First of all, it should be mentioned that all three EaP countries (**Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**) granted with a visa-free regime with the EU have recently implemented (or continue to implement) specific information campaigns, objectives of which are to provide their nationals with a comprehensive information regarding the rules of entry and stay in the EU MS and Schengen countries, as well as regarding the consequences of misusing the opportunities of free travel.

Moldova, which was the first EaP country finalized the visa liberalization dialogue with the EU in 2014, started to implement relevant communication activities even before entry into force the visa-free waiver. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) acting through special task force groups ensured the communication with local population using a wide range of TV programs, official visits in the regions and engaging in discussions with the travel agencies to explain the procedure and documents needed in order to enjoy visa-free travel to Schengen zone. The activities of MFAEI were supported by the Ministry of Interior, Border Police and the Bureau for Relations with Diaspora.

The following communication activities implemented in the framework of the targeted campaign could be mentioned:

- Developing and distributing a guide booklet containing concise information on free movement, including the countries which are the part of the Schengen zone and the travel

documents needed when enjoying visa-free travels²⁹. The guide was updated in April 2018 and distributed.

- Producing and disseminating several videos on the topic of visa-free travel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHoKEHN5byk>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IprOHQj1Gts>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cf8Mqoxgcm>;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2XpX_w31r0
- Placement of information panels at the border crossing points, including at the territorial offices of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum;
- Publishing information leaflets on the rights and obligations in countries with which the Republic of Moldova has a liberalized visa regime;
- Providing the recommendations to diaspora members to consult the guide regarding free movement of people to Schengen area
- Participation of the General Inspectorate of the Border Police in TV Shows and giving the interviews on various topics: "Border crossing rules for Moldovan citizens", "Losing documents abroad and how to return into the country", "The term of stay of Moldovan citizens in other states", "Crossing the border by foreign citizens", "Documents and term of stay" etc.;
- Facilitation of the access of the media representatives to the border, especially at the crossing points, for preparing the reports on the necessary documents and the procedure for crossing the border with the EU;
- Updating the relevant information on the web page / social media;
- Creating two special sections on the Border Police website, where visitors can learn about the rules and conditions of the free movement in the EU.

The communication activities to be continued in accordance with a Calendar of actions to address the recommendations of First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism of December 2017, endorsed by the Governmental Commission for European Integration on March 21, 2018.

Georgia, which received the visa-free regime in 2017, has managed to implement already three waves of relevant information campaign.

The preparation of the main wave of the campaign started in early 2013 under the State Commission for Migration Issues (SCMI)' concept of a joint action of all stakeholders in awareness raising. On that basis, three waves of targeted information campaigns were held throughout the country involving practically all potential and present migrants.

The above-described campaign focused on a prevention of violation of the visa-free regime was built on the structure created for the awareness raising on legal paths of migration and negative consequences of irregular migration. By now, the two phases of the campaign in 2015 and 2017 were completed.

Following these phases, the analysis of statistical data processed by EU institutions and the EU MS, as well as relevant state agencies, was conducted in order to address the gaps in awareness of visa-free travel rules to the EU. **The analyzed data demonstrates that while the majority of the population is aware of their rights under the visa-free regime with the EU, there is a lack of common understanding of the consequences of travel rules violation.**

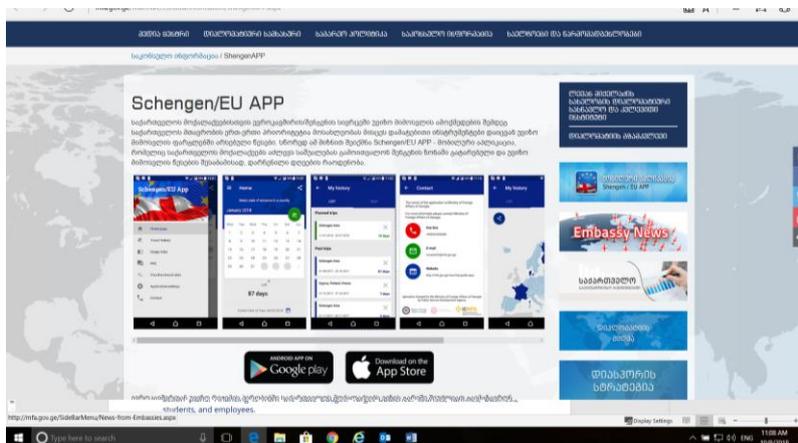
²⁹<http://www.mfa.gov.md/conditii-de-calatorie/>

To address the gaps mentioned above, from March 2018, the third wave of the information campaign on visa-free travel to the EU was launched. **The objectives of the campaigns** were: to increase general public awareness on visa-free travel to EU/Schengen states, to update citizens of Georgia on their rights and duties under the visa-free regime **with a particular focus on preventing the abuse of asylum-granting procedures.**

The messages of the campaign vary according to the target groups, but mainly cover the notion of asylum and its aim according to international law, individual responsibility and outcomes, its impact on the country as a whole, the concept of safe country of origin, etc. The target audience is a population of Georgia with a specific focus on potential migrants and ethnic minorities.

Communication plan entails a wide scale media and social media campaigns as well as information meetings covering the whole country. The campaigns were funded by the state budget and donor organizations. **Monitoring and evaluation** were based on internal public opinion surveys, analysis of the most effective ways of communications, target audience analysis and statistical data of the previous campaigns.

Among the communication means used by the Georgian Government for implementing the information campaign creating the **EU/Schengen mobile application** could be highlighted. The application allows Georgian nationals to have a fast access to relevant information regarding the visa-free travel.



In Ukraine, since May 11, 2017, an awareness-raising campaign has been conducted for the citizens of Ukraine regarding their rights and obligations within the framework of the introduction of the visa-free regime with the EU. The corresponding Action Plan was approved by the Government of Ukraine which was supplemented by the internal plans developed by the authorities and regional state administrations.

As well as in Georgia and Moldova, the campaign in Ukraine is implemented by several state authorities responsible for their own components. To coordinate the activities and prompt decision-making within the framework of the campaign the Working Group (headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) was established.

The campaign is also conducted by the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine within the framework of the Communication Strategy for European Integration for 2018-2021 and the yearly

action plans. Financing is from the state budget. Target audience: tourists, families, business, students, and employees.

The following **key messages** of the Ukrainian campaign on the visa-free regime with the EU can be identified:

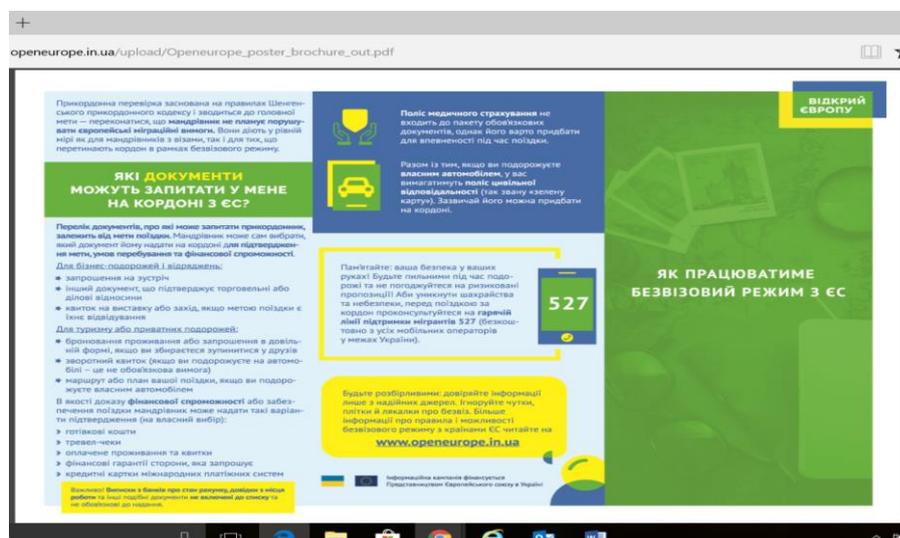
1. The visa waiver is applicable only to owners of biometric passports.
2. It assumes short-term stay in European countries up to 90 days within 180 days.
3. When crossing the border, you should have documents confirming: the purpose of the trip, availability of residence, sufficient financial means, intention to return, and medical insurance policy.
4. It is necessary to apply for a visa for a long period of stay in the EU.
5. Does not give the right to a residence permit, employment or study in the EU.
6. Violation of the period of stay in the EU entails a further entry ban.

Duration of the campaign: from May 2017 until reaching the maximum awareness of citizens of Ukraine of their rights and responsibilities within the framework of Ukraine-EU visa-free regime.

The specific feature of the Ukrainian visa-free information campaign is that apart from communication activities developed and implemented directly by the state authorities in accordance with national communication strategies, the EU Delegation in Ukraine provides a direct contribution to the campaign through the involvement of the non-governmental implementing partner.

The PR agency Change Communications (hereinafter the “Agency”) was contracted by the EU Delegation to develop the concept of the visa-free information campaign **“Open Europe”**. The document is intended for a broad target audience including at the local level, with the involvement of all information resources and direct cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (as coordinator) and other authorities.

Among the activities implemented by the Agency could be mentioned the developing and provision for distribution and use by central and local authorities the posters, infographics, and videos (social advertising).



The several **good practices of cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders** can be highlighted in the course of implementation of the visa-free campaign in Ukraine:

- Mobile operators (sms communication with Ukrainian citizens crossing the border);
- Key Ukrainian banks (campaign posters placed in 58 branches and 24 offices, infographics in Facebook (audience of 25,000));
- PJSC "Ukrainian Railways" (posters at railway stations and in the high-speed trains);
- Insurance company AXA Insurance (posters in branches);
- Private postal company (social ads in branches, infographics in social networks);
- PJSC International airlines of Ukraine (infographics in Facebook - an audience of 100 000).

A dedicated website was developed (<https://openeurope.in.ua>) to explain Ukrainians their rights and obligations. The website provides detailed information and provides an opportunity to apply for clarifications.

A number of activities were also implemented by the state authorities at central and local level, e.g. developing a guidebook "*We Travel on Visa-Free: Question-Answer*"; placing on the official website of state authorities the banners and headings on clarifying the key requirements of Ukraine-EU visa-free regime, as well as links to the website "Open Europe".

The relevant information was also placed:

- ✓ on the websites of the Legal Aid Coordination Center under the Ministry of Justice and regional centers for the provision of free secondary legal aid (23 websites);
- ✓ in the premises of libraries, theaters, specialized educational institutions, museums, nature reserves, etc. (Ministry of Culture);
- ✓ in the branches of tour operators and hotels - a total circulation of 1800 pcs (Ministry of Economic Development);
- ✓ in health facilities of state and municipal forms of ownership, higher education institutions and regional/ district education departments (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science);
- ✓ at the state border checkpoints (State Border Service);
- ✓ in the territorial bodies / units of the State Migration Service;
- ✓ in the centers of the administrative services provision.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided for the placement of external social advertising (billboards (more than 1000), city lights (about 700), posters) in the center and regions of Ukraine, on websites of news agencies, and on television.

In addition, two permanent hotlines have been established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: +38 044 238 15 15 (Department of Consular Service), +38 044 238 18 12 (Department of the EU and NATO). As of June 2017, three additional telephone lines and a separate e-mail address were created: bezviz@mfa.gov.ua to respond to citizens' requests.

Although the campaigns implemented in three EaP states definitely have some common features, there are certain differences in the approaches to strategy development, choice of communication channels and means, identification of target audience and the stakeholders which could contribute to the effectiveness of the information campaigns. These differences, best practices and challenges should become a topic for discussion during the upcoming Panel meeting.

The experience of other countries, both EaP and EU MS in developing and implementing of the campaigns aimed at preventing the irregular migration could be also considered. Even though these campaigns have more general objectives, not focused on the visa-free travel rules and obligations,

there are many common features and challenges pertaining to such campaigns. Thus, the solutions could also be common.

As an example of relevant campaign implemented in **Armenia** the «The Preventing Irregular Migration from Armenia to the Kingdom of Belgium by Raising Awareness of Potential Migrants» project can be highlighted. It was implemented in 2012-2013 by the International Center for Human Development (ICHD) with a support of Belgium.

The overall goal of the action was to prevent irregular migration of Armenians to Belgium and other EU countries, specifically through (a) raising awareness about irregular migration and exposing its consequences to Armenian potential migrants and general public; (b) encouraging involvement of media in expert discussions in order to enrich their knowledge on current social and policy discourse and developments on migration; and promoting evidence-based coverage of migration issues, and (c) providing a hotline access to information related to migration for potential Armenian migrants.

The project outputs particularly include over 16 000 potential Armenians migrants and their families who have become more aware of the perils of irregular migration through relevant information booklets, leaflets and public social advertisement. The later specifically included several posters highlighting the costs and consequences of irregular migration.

Within the media campaign, three talk-shows and three radio programs were produced and broadcast on public stations, covering all the territory of Armenia. Most importantly, a hotline was established and operated throughout the entire duration of the project and it has served 348 citizens. Finally, to enhance evidence-based media coverage of migration issues, at least 100 media representatives were invited to three roundtable discussions on migration issues, attended also by state agencies and NGOs.

Another example could be a campaign implemented in the **Czech Republic**. In its framework, a pre-departure information package “Next Stop the Czech Republic” was developed:

- It consists of a brochure and a film. It is intended for citizens of non-EU countries who are considering residing in the Czech Republic for a longer period than 90 days and will, therefore, be applying for either a long-term visa or a long-term residence permit.
- The project was implemented by NGO “Slovo 21” in cooperation with other NGO and non-profit organisations, IOM, representatives of Integration Centres and staff of the Ministry of the Interior - Department for Asylum and Migration Policy.
- It was co-financed by the European Union, from the European Fund for the integration of third-country nationals, and the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic.
- The movie is available in Czech, English, Russian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, French, Mongolian and Arabic language <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJBu4ZcCPe0>.

In 2017, the Czech Republic issued a leaflet regarding the conditions for temporary deployment of third-country nationals holding residence permits issued by other EU MS for the provision of services by an employer established in other State. The information campaign was necessary as the status of “deployed third-country national” was widely misused by citizens of Ukraine in possession of Polish visas for working in the Czech Republic.

Another interesting outcome of the analysis of information campaigns conducted in EaP countries and the EU MS is the **effectiveness of various communication channels**. The most popular and the most effective channels according to responding states are **television and social media (AM, AZ, GE, IT, UA)**. Other important information sources are **internet** (mostly web resources of

migration authorities) (**AZ, BY**) and **face-to-face meetings with the target audience (AZ, GE, RO, UA)**.

*In **Armenia**, according to the opinion expressed by a number of Migration Service experts (based on 10+ years work experience) TV shows were the most effective ones because of their popularity, large audience and high rates. Social media is on the second stage and radio reportages are third ones.*

*According to experience of **Romania**, activities involving direct contacts between immigration authorities and third-country nationals, both at the offices for the residence settlement within the institution's territorial units, as well as in accommodation and procedures centers for asylum seekers, represents the most effective channel used in information and communication campaigns because this manner assures a large scale dissemination of all necessary information regarding the rights, obligations and related aspects that concern foreigners in order to prevent irregular migration.*

More details on the communication channels which are considered to be the most effective by the responding state are provided in the table below.

Country	The most effective communication channels for implementation of migrant information campaigns
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV shows, social media, radio reportages
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television channels, social networks ("Youtube", "Twitter" and "Facebook"), the official website of the Migration Service and events conducted in the regions of the country
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central mass media, as well as information Internet resources of state authorities acting in migration field
Czechia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face meetings (especially in remote regions), TV and social media
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital channels (web page, social networks: facebook, twitter, instagram and youtube); an effective communication strategy was creating videotaped stories narrated by migrants themselves.
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication through thematic videos with a targeted message on the importance and meaning of travelling without a visa in Europe
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities involving direct contacts between immigration authorities and third-country nationals
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television channels and social networks; Direct communication with the target audience

More national experiences in EaP countries and the EU MS on developing and implementing various information campaigns targeted at preventing the irregular migration could be found in the [Matrix](#) of responses to the meeting questionnaire.

C. Measuring the impact of migrant information campaigns and challenges for their implementation

Evaluation is essential for an effective information campaign implementation. However, performing an evaluation could be really challenging for the campaign developers/implementers due to various reasons, e.g. lack of information, inability to set up the contact with the target audience, absence of relevant evaluation tools and methodology, insufficient financial resources. In addition to that, whereas it is feasible in most cases to assess whether the information has reached the target audience, the real impact of the campaign on behavioral change can be rarely evaluated.

Nevertheless, some countries, both EaP and the EU MS responding to the meeting questionnaire provided quite positive feedback on the results of the implemented information campaigns (**AM, AZ, RO**). Other countries (**GE, MD, UA**) reported that monitoring and evaluation of campaigns are conducted constantly, which allows to identify the areas for improvement and to adjust the communication activities.

The evaluation of the **Ukrainian** visa-free campaign was recently conducted by the implementing agency (Change Communication) and the results to be presented during the upcoming Panel meeting.

In addition, the Panel meeting participants will be able to benefit from special interactive session dedicated to the role of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for effective information campaigns during which the in-depth discussion of available M&E tools will be conducted on the basis of IOM X C4D Toolkit.

Apart from challenges related to measuring the impact of information campaigns, the lack of sufficient financial resources is the most common challenge for EaP countries in the process of implementation of campaigns (**AM, GE**) alongside with difficulties in formulating the correct messages to target audience (**MD, UA**) and lack of data from the EU MS regarding irregular migration trends (**UA**).

Further details on the information campaigns impact evaluation in responding EaP countries and the EU MS, as well as challenges related to such campaigns, could be found in the table below.

Country	Impact evaluation of conducted information campaigns	Challenges in developing/implementing the information campaigns
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to Eurostat results, the quantity of Armenian asylum seekers in EU countries is lower in the years when special communication actions are implemented. This proves the effectiveness of such actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sufficient financial resources
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of educational activities conducted over the past 10 years, including those implemented jointly with local executive authorities and international organizations to eliminate cases of statelessness, a decrease in the number of irregular migrants and those living without documents has been observed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the measures taken in the sphere of documentation from 2008 to the present time, 1,529 stateless persons have been accepted into the citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is a positive result of the educational work conducted 	
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a
Czechia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analyzed data demonstrates that while the majority of the population is aware of their rights under the visa-free regime with the EU, there is still a necessity to further disseminate information both within the country and abroad in the states of destination through Georgian diaspora and diplomatic missions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main challenge is linked to financial sources necessary to run permanent and active information campaigns with clearly defined targets
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, it is quite difficult to evaluate the effects of those informative campaigns for different reasons, specifically calculating the correlation between access to information about the dangerousness of the journey and the reduction of irregular departures it's problematic because other variables play a relevant role. For instance, there is huge mistruth about official communication channels and governmental ones; potential migrants tend to rely more on different information channels, mostly related to informal networks. Furthermore, the knowledge of the very high risk of the journey doesn't automatically imply the decision to stay country and not leaving, this because the causes of migration are generally structural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A particular assessment was not conducted, although the feedbacks and outcomes from different barometers of public opinion are usually considered. Furthermore, it is taken into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of the correct messages for target group/audience (considering the age, topics of interests etc.)

	account the evaluation of the risk of irregular migration at the border of the Republic of Moldova, through different reports and evaluations	
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of the implementation phase, all projects on information campaigns are subject to results and impact assessments in terms of effectiveness and sustainability. The experience gained so far has shown that these specific programs have achieved their objectives by sending correct messages and discouraging the phenomenon of irregular migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State Migration Service monitors the influence of information campaigns on the situation, in particular, on the number and subject of citizens' complaints based on content analysis of social networks and the like. Depending on the results, changes are introduced to the campaign Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the information campaign related to the visa-free regime is ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of official EU information (on a regular basis) on the dynamics of changes in the migration situation with Ukrainian citizens in the EU countries - in particular, the number and main causes of violations of migration legislation by Ukrainian citizens. This makes it difficult to formulate campaign goals and create key messages

Possible topics for discussion	<i>How to identify the correct target audience of the migrant information campaign and to formulate the messages leading to behavioural change?</i>
	<i>How the coordination between various stakeholders can be improved?</i>
	<i>Should countries of origin cooperate closer with destination countries while developing and implementing migrant information campaigns?</i>
	<i>How to measure the real impact of information campaigns on (prospective) migrants behaviour?</i>

Annexes

Annex I. Questionnaire distributed among the participating countries

1. Do strategic migration policy documents adopted by your country contain any provisions regarding communication strategy and/or communication actions for the prevention of irregular migration, in particular, violation of the visa-free regime and/or Schengen rules? If so, please describe briefly.
2. Which authorities in your country are usually responsible for developing and implementing information campaigns in the field of migration? Are other stakeholders (civil society organisations, diaspora, local authorities, international organizations, partners in countries of origin/destination, private sector etc.) engaged in the process of developing and implementing such information campaigns? How is the coordination between various stakeholders ensured?
3. Did your country implement an information campaign (s) targeted at preventing irregular migration within the past ten years? If so, please provide a brief overview of the objectives, target audiences, main messages, communication channels, scope (duration, national/local), funding sources, ways of monitoring and evaluation.
4. Has your country implemented any specific information campaign aimed at the preventing violation of the visa-free regime and/or Schengen rules? If so, please provide a brief overview of the objectives, target audiences, main messages, communication channels, scope (duration, national/local), funding sources, ways of monitoring and evaluation.
5. Regarding specifically the mix of communication channels that have been used in campaigns implemented in your country, which of these channels are considered to be most effective and why?
6. Has your country conducted an evaluation of the results and impact of any of the information campaigns implemented in the past, in particular, to assess their effectiveness and sustainability? If so, what were the main outcomes/lessons learned from this evaluation?
7. What are the main overall challenges in the development and implementation of information campaigns related to the visa-free regime and/or Schengen rules in the context of your country?