

Report of the Panel Meeting on Information Campaigns

11-12 October 2018

Tbilisi, Georgia



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 11-12 October the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management meeting on information campaigns took place in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The topic of the event is of great importance both for the EU, the EU Member States and the EaP countries due to the recent growth of irregular migration, violation of visa-free and Schengen rules and the asylum system abuse by citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries. Information and awareness raising campaigns addressing prospective irregular migration is a tool increasingly used by European and partner countries. These campaigns help migrants to make informed decisions since they often lack information or rely on false claims. Increasing awareness and changing migrants' perceptions and behaviour is a major challenge: aspirations to migrate are built over time on a narrative of a Europe of opportunities, perpetuated by mass and social media.

The Panel meeting gathered experts from the EU Member States, the Eastern Partnership countries, international organizations, representatives of civil society and academia to share and promote best practices on targeted information campaigns about the rights and obligations of citizens when travelling visa-free or under the provisions of the Schengen visa, address specific common challenges that may arise in the practical implementation of these information campaigns, and discuss a coordinated approach through which the EU, EU MS and partner countries can benefit from communication synergies and coherence of information and awareness actions.

On the second day, the participants were invited to take part in the interactive session organized by IOM that provided them with an opportunity to boost their knowledge in the field of developing, monitoring, and evaluating the effective information campaigns, discuss various important issues and share their practical experience.



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11 October 2018 – Day 1

Welcome and opening

Mr. George Jashi, Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI), Georgia, welcomed Panel meeting participants and thanked the European Commission and IOM for their support to the event organization. He stressed the importance of the information campaigns, especially in the context of the visa liberalization process and noted that despite different experiences and interests all should work together towards developing and implementing the effective campaigns.

H.E. Carl Hartzell, EU Ambassador to Georgia, in his welcoming remarks stated that migration management is an important part of political dialogue within the EU and Eastern neighbors, and the EU is supporting Eastern Partnership countries in developing a comprehensive approach to migration including promoting legal migration, efficient asylum procedures, integration policies, visas and readmission. He noted that unfortunately, the recent statistics have shown an overall increase in irregular migration trends among nationals of the Eastern Partnership countries. This raises serious concerns among the EU Member States and such concerns are equally shared by the partner countries which have already taken action to strengthen their information campaigns and approach the European Commission bilaterally for cooperation and assistance. The Ambassador also underlined that visa liberalization is a joint commitment of the EU and its partners and both of them are keen to see their migration policies working properly, bringing them closer together for the benefit of their citizens and communities.

Ms. Laura Scorretti, IOM Ukraine, welcomed the meeting participants on behalf of IOM. She noted that the information helps people on the move to know about legal provisions that are at the basis of their rights and obligations. The information is not only needed to be aware of the rights and obligations of a migrant and the conditions in the countries where he/she will travel but is also about the risks related to a journey. Information campaigns are hence an extremely important tool to make people aware about the consequences of their movements, and also to influence the behavior of prospective migrants in relation to their travel. Ms. Scorretti stressed that despite the importance of information campaigns, it is still difficult to understand their impact, namely on the behavioural change that they are meant to entail. She noted that two days of the Panel meeting will provide the participants with an opportunity to learn from best practices of EU MS and international organizations like IOM and to see the role of information campaigns as a tool to impact the behavior of travellers namely of countries enjoying a visa free regime or that are interested or in the process of discussing this regime with the EU.



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Session I - Current context and objectives

Moderator: Ms. Nino Sanikidze, SCMI, Georgia

Mr. George Jashi, SCMI, Georgia, devoted his presentation to the role of information campaigns for migration management in Georgia. He listed the key stages of EU-Georgia partnership and visa liberalization processes and the information campaigns implemented by Georgia. Mr. Jashi acquainted the participants with the structure and functions of SCMI - the corporation of state agencies in partnership with international organizations, NGOs and experts for migration policy design and management that acts as a consultative body to discuss and take decisions on various important issues related to migration management. He listed its main actors, partners and sources of funding, introduced the mechanism of SCMI's participation in designing and implementing information campaigns as well as the process of monitoring and evaluation of actions. He also presented the tools developed in Georgia to facilitate the run of information campaigns. He concluded his presentation with an overview of the three types of challenges faced by Georgia in the course of developing and implementing the information campaigns – media coverage and education, finances and resources and the changing environment in EU and neighborhood.

See [the presentation "Information campaigns in national management of migration"](#).

Ms. Laura Scorretti, IOM Mission in Ukraine, presented the discussion paper prepared by IOM Ukraine on the basis of the answers to the questionnaire submitted by all six EaP states and four EU Member States (Czechia, Italy, Latvia, Romania). The discussion paper focused on the following issues: an overview of current migration trends from EaP states to the EU; the role of information campaigns in preventing irregular migration and good practices in designing an effective information campaign; national practices including strategic approach to campaigning; practical examples of targeted information campaigns for preventing irregular migration; most effective communication channels; measuring the impact of information campaigns and challenges in their implementation. At the end, Ms. Scorretti highlighted the common for EaP countries and EU Member States challenges related to information campaigns and suggested the possible topics for discussion by Panel meeting participants.

See [the presentation "Information Campaigns. Overview of national experiences of the EaP countries and the EU MS"](#).

Ms. Tara Dermott, IOM X, explored the best practices of IOM-led information campaigns. She noted that knowledge awareness does not always lead to making the safest decisions. The specific to migration decisions obstacles may be as follows: overcomplex migration procedures, challenges with securing information, limited opportunities for or high costs associated with regular and safe migration. In order to change individuals' behaviour one



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should address their knowledge, attitudes and to consider the environment in which they live. Ms. Dermott noted that IOM applies Communication for Development (C4D) strategic communication framework which provides tools to overcome many challenges to behavior changes and works with knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of key targeted audiences around specific topics to create a positive change. She also presented main frameworks used in designing effective information campaigns (P-Process, social ecological model) and provided some examples of effective advocacy, social mobilization, and behavior change communication from the successful IOM-led information campaigns (Migrants as Messengers initiative, IOM-X, Holding on and Missing Migrants projects). Ms. Dermott concluded that the most effective information campaigns are strongly grounded in evidence and participatory approach. Whenever possible, information campaigns should also link to concrete actions supported by infrastructure and support services (such as MigApp). See [the presentation "Best practices of IOM-led information campaigns"](#).

Ms. Ketevan Khutsishvili, EU Delegation to Georgia summarized the developments in Georgia from 2009 when the awareness rising in the field of migration management efforts started. She stressed that knowledge itself does not automatically leads to behavior changing and it should come along with the social and cultural changes. Ms. Khutsishvili mentioned several challenges for communicating migration such as correct choice of target audience and messages (positive vs. negative). The relevant experiences from different topic, times and countries should be properly analyzed and could be used for the following information campaigns. For instance, in case of Georgia, the target of the third wave of information campaign should be the correct management of expectations. Ms. Khutsishvili also underlined the importance of the reporting under the Visa Suspension Mechanism for the information campaigns implementation as this report contains the specific recommendations on the matter. At the end, she touched upon the issue of asylum system abuse in connection to the visa free regime and, in particular, using the domestic violence as a ground for asylum claims.

Tour-de-table

During the discussion session the participants raised several important questions, e.g., how to inform on the risks of fake asylum and illegal employment without provoking a new wave of irregular migration, how to find the balance between promoting visa free travels and preventing the irregular migration, how to work with such specific groups as IDPs and how to address the dissemination of fake or unreliable migration information by the relatives of the potential migrants. In relation to the latter, the role of cooperation with diaspora was specifically highlighted. Additionally, the issue of exit control introduction for preventing the visa free rules violation and its correlation with human rights obligations of states was discussed.



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Session II - State of play and best practices in the field of migration-related campaigns

Moderator: Ms. Nino Sanikidze, SCMI, Georgia

Ms. Oxana Paduraru, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Moldova, revealed Moldova's experience of visa liberalization action plan implementation; general importance of internal and external communication and use of new digital means of communication; internal calendar of actions designed by the MFA of Moldova to follow-up recommendations provided by the Report of the European Commission under the Visa Suspension Mechanism; best practices from the projects and initiatives implemented by Moldova within the Mobility Partnership with EU. Ms. Paduraru also presented a guide booklet developed by the MFA of Moldova that contains concise information on freedom of movement, including travel documents needed when enjoying visa-free travels in Schengen Zone; thematic videos on visa-free campaign in Moldova; and statistics on visa-free travel for Moldovan citizens from April 2014 to June 2018, which indicates a responsible attitude of Moldovan citizens to the freedom of movement.

Ms. Daniela Chipenco, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Moldova, presented migration projects implemented by the MIA of Moldova aimed at raising awareness of foreigners and persons crossing the state border of Moldova on the risks of irregular migration. She also provided an overview of the main communication products developed within those projects – a leaflet on the rights and freedoms of the foreigners in the Republic of Moldova and foreigner's admission rules, and a guide handbook for migrants developed in five languages and available at the documentation units of the Bureau for Migration and Asylum and at the border crossing points.

See [*the presentation "State of play and best practices in the field of migration-related campaigns, including visa-free regime with the European Union"*](#).

Ms. Ruth Müller, Federal Foreign Office (FFO), Germany, devoted her presentation to the German experience of strategic communication in the field of refugees and migration. She noted that the strategic communication of the FFO is the targeted medium- and long-term communication of important foreign and Germany related topics in order to enforce German and European interests at home and abroad. Mr. Müller listed main FFO's communication goals in the field of refugees and migration and effective approaches in this sphere, i.e., direct communication, supporting the communication of international organizations, civil society and media, and conceptual and research groundwork. She presented an overview of communication projects implemented in Germany and highlighted the website "Rumours about Germany" as an example of best practices in the field of digital strategic communication.

See [*the presentation "Strategic communication in the field of refugees and migration"*](#).



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Mr. Serhii Gunko, State Migration Service of Ukraine (SMSU), presented the Ukrainian experience of providing information support to the launch of the visa-free regime between Ukraine and EU with the purpose of informing Ukrainian citizens about the rules of stay in the EU countries. He noted that one of the most common reasons for migration rules violation is a lack of understanding of the consequences and liability for the committed offenses. The SMSU assumed that informing citizens about their rights and responsibilities during travels to the EU countries should protect their interests and prevent the increase in the number of Ukrainian citizens who violate the migration rules. The task of information campaign conducted in Ukraine was also to refute several myths regarding the introduction of the visa-free regime with EU. Mr. Gunko exposed the main features of the implemented campaign, its target audience, channels, and tools.

See [the presentation "Information campaign to inform Ukrainian citizens about the rules of stay in EU countries"](#).

Tour-de-table

After this session the discussions focused mainly on the addressing the problem of migrants stigmatization, in particular through mouth counselling with diaspora and civil society engagement as well as on the interrelation of visa free liberalization and state reforms in other fields, including anti-corruption.

Session III - Main challenges (I): The right mix of messages and communication channels

Moderator: Ms. Olena Lobova, Change Communications, Ukraine

Ms. Iryna Sushko, NGO Europe without Barriers, Ukraine/EaP Civil Society Forum, focused her presentation on the selection of communication channels for campaigning on the visa-free regime. She described in detail five steps of the visa-free information campaign planning process and six main types of communication channels suitable for campaigning, namely events, mass media, social media, billboard, leaflets, hotlines and legal advice, own websites. Ms. Sushko formulated challenges of the information campaigns on the visa-free regime and concluded her presentation with recommendations for an effective information campaigns, e.g. enhancing partnerships with the EU Member States which are the most popular destination countries for the migrants.

See [the presentation "Communication channels for campaigning on the visa-free regime"](#).



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Mr. Tornike Nozadze, MFA, Georgia, presented the Georgian experience in visa-free travel campaigning. He noted that visa-free regime to the EU is a major tangible benefit of Georgia's European integration. He revealed the cross-governmental approach and its three stages and three phases of implementation of information campaigns, their objectives, channels of communication, current situation and identified challenges. Mr. Nozadze described the tailor-made approach targeting potential asylum-seekers from Georgia and presented follow-up actions undertaken by the government of Georgia in the spheres of legislative changes, facilitation of regular migration, international cooperation, and law-enforcement cooperation. He concluded that the Georgian visa-free travel information campaign will continue until the desired results are achieved.

See [*the presentation "Information campaign on a visa-free regime with the EU"*](#).

Ms. Violeta Wagner, ICMPD, shared the experience of implementing the information campaigns on visa liberalization in the framework of the EU-funded ENIGMMA (Enhancing Georgia's Migration Management) project implemented in close cooperation with the SCMI of Georgia. She presented the scheme of information campaign cycle and revealed its key elements: agenda setting, formulation of key messages, target audience analysis, selection of appropriate communication tools and channels, implementation through cooperation and monitoring and evaluation. Ms. Wagner listed challenges and lessons learned and presented the recommendations for successful implementation of information campaign, e.g., to look at the root cause of specific behaviour and apply awareness as part of complex activities to affect and change the behaviour.

See [*the presentation "Sharing of Experience on Organization and Implementation of Information Campaigns on Visa Liberalization"*](#).

Session IV - Main challenges (II): Measuring the impact of our communication campaigns

Moderator: Ms. Olena Lobova, Change Communications, Ukraine

Ms. Olena Lobova, NGO Change Communications, Ukraine presented the main results and challenges of communication campaign on the visa-free regime in Ukraine. She described the process of elaborating the campaign strategy and its key messages, selecting the target groups and planning three waves of campaign implementation aimed at educating frequent travellers about new rules and opportunities, showing new opportunities to potential travellers and distributing information materials. Ms. Lobova stressed the importance of research activities that provide key information about insights of target groups and help to focus the communication, as well as the importance of the partnerships with state and business stakeholders for conducting the effective campaign.



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See [the presentation “Communication campaign on the visa-free regime in Ukraine: challenges and results”](#).

Prof. Pierluigi Musaro, University of Bologna devoted his presentation to the role of media in shaping migrants’ perceptions on Europe. He noted that the perceptions of Europe are formed in the country of origin and are based on a multitude of sources. Understanding the reasons for leaving are a key part of creating a successful campaign. Prof. Musaro stressed the role of narratives and social imaginaries for the migration decisions and presented good and weak points of several migration information campaigns implemented in Italy and other countries.

Ms. Valentina Iadarola, NGO Arca di Noe, presented the types of measurable impacts of communication campaigns aimed at deterring irregular migration and noted that such campaigns have very limited effects on migrants’ decisions to leave, while other factors play a more important role in migrant’s decision-making. Ms. Iadarola listed factors which may increase the effectiveness of information campaigns and provided recommendations on improving the campaigns developed both for audiences in the countries of destination and origin and illustrated them with examples from recent information campaigns.

See [the presentation “Aware migrants. Reflections on how media performances contribute to shaping perceptions of Europe”](#).

Session V - Ensuring a coordinated approach.

Moderator: Ms. Olena Lobova, NGO Change Communications, Ukraine

Dr. Stepan Grigoryan, Armenian Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation, highlighted recent migration tendencies in Armenia and revealed ways of overcoming challenges in this field by using tools of information campaigning. He also stressed that the reform process in Armenia is under way and called the EU, partner countries and international organizations to cooperate with Armenia in the field of migration and visa liberalization.



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12 October 2018 – Day 2

Interactive session “The Art of Campaigning”

Facilitators: Dr. Leonard Novy, Institute for Media and Communications Policy gGmbH,
Ms. Tara Dermott, IOM X

On the second day of the Panel Meeting, the participants were invited to take part in the interactive session **“The Art of Information Campaigning”** organized by IOM. The session was moderated by Dr. Leonard Novy and Ms. Tara Dermott.

The main goal of the session was to enhance the participants’ skills to develop and implement migration information campaigns. It focused on campaigns addressing irregular migrants, specifically visa-free/asylum abuse, the goal being to support aspiring migrants to make well-informed decisions regarding migration.

Agenda and Methodology of the Interactive session

The interactive session consisted of six interconnected segments:

- Check-in

The opening segment of the workshop (“Check In”) was devoted to a general welcome of the participants, an introduction of the themes, key concepts, goals & scope of the seminar.

- “What could possibly go wrong?” – Fail Factors

The segment was aimed at identifying the typical mistakes, false premises and specific challenges of information campaigns in the field of migration. While working in the small groups the participants were asked to collect as many factors as possible that would guarantee a “failed campaign”. All groups identified a number of the flawed premises which (implicitly) guide many campaigns as well as wide-spread problems, notably:

1. The assumption that potential migrants lack information or rely on false Information;
2. The notion that migration decisions are individual decisions;
3. Aspiring migrants are ignorant about the risks involved;
4. The idea that fear is a deterrent;
5. Lack of resources of the campaigns;
6. No clear target groups.

- The Art (and Science) of Information Campaigning

The segment focused on the “science” of campaigning by embedding the concept in a broader framework of strategic project management. For this purpose, the facilitators introduced the Communication for Development (C4D) framework described in the recently



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published IOM X C4D TOOLKIT and originally applied to counter-trafficking activities. Special emphasis was placed on a practical case study in the working groups, where the newly-acquired knowledge could be applied. Specifically, participants were asked to come up with SMART objectives and identify and prioritize target groups according to their relevance (influence) in attaining these objectives as well as receptivity to being influenced. To facilitate the discussions, the working groups were given a hand-out (“Questions for analysis”) from the IOM X guidebook, listing key questions in the strategic planning process.

- **Strategic messaging and the Power of Storytelling. The role of Monitoring and Evaluation for information campaigns**

In this segment, participants were introduced to the latest research and best practices at the intersection of neurolinguistics and strategic communications. In a moderated discussion, the group watched and analyzed two highly successful campaign spots: Evan (Sandy Hook Promise) and Most shocking second a day (Save the Children), discussing its strategic approach (goals, target groups, messages), formal structure and storytelling. In the second part of the segment, Tara Dermott (IOM X) gave an overview of monitoring and evaluation as an essential part of the strategy process.

- **Campaigning Lab**

The participants were encouraged to apply their newly acquired knowledge to the context of the professional work. Hence, they were asked to develop the first components of a campaign on the visa-free regime for a country in Eastern Europe. To facilitate the discussions, the working groups were given a hand-out, which comprised key questions in the strategic planning process (“Strategic Mapping”).

- **Presentation**

In the final part of the session, the results were presented by the rapporteurs of the groups, challenged and discussed by the entire group.

Materials of the interactive session are available [here](#)

Summary and closure

Ms. Laura Scorretti, IOM Ukraine, noted that the Panel meeting touched upon the very sensitive issue of shaping messages related to migration which requires special attention as the risk of manipulation of messages is extremely high and the consequences of bad information on migration can be catastrophic. She stressed the role of communication experts in governmental, non-governmental and international organizations and highlighted the importance of the right selection of target audience and communication channels in



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information campaigning. Ms. Scorretti revealed the Panel's work plan for 2019 and thanked all the participants for their inputs.

Mr. George Jashi, SCMI, Georgia, in his closing speech expressed gratitude to the partners from EC, IOM EaP countries and EU Member States and noted that the meeting was interesting for both the countries which have already obtained visa-free regime with the EU and for those that are still in the process of the visa liberalization dialog.

Ms. Sanja Celebic Lukovac, IOM Georgia, expressed gratitude to the participants for two days of fruitful discussions and stressed the importance of appropriate use of information campaigning as a sensitive element of migration management mosaic. She also highlighted the role of knowledge and experiences sharing between practitioners within the framework of such partnerships as the Panel, and the importance of further use of this knowledge in practice.

All the presentations mentioned in this report, as well as all the materials related to the meeting, can be found on [the Panel website](#). The presentations are accessible to logged-in users only.



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