Expert Meeting on Labour migration –
the practical aspects of admission and control

6-7 May 2015, Minsk

CONCEPT PAPER

During the Eastern Partnership Panel meeting on labour migration last year (Warsaw, 6-7 November, 2014) various labour migration issues were discussed between the EU Member States and Eastern partnership countries. It is clear that labour migration in all its aspects has become a topic of increased importance both to EU Member States and Eastern partner countries. Shortages in labour markets, aging populations, need to promote economic growth and boost competitiveness in the global age of interlinked economies, fast and easy communications, flow of information and practical possibilities for movement of people between the countries – these are just some of issues linked to labour migration and are highly relevant both for EU Member States and Eastern partnership countries. If well managed, labour migration brings benefits to all parties involved on the individual and state levels. However, it may also pose significant challenges and even risks, and therefore countries must be ready to face them in an appropriate manner.

Labour migration management includes various aspects and elements – admission procedures and criteria for different groups of migrant workers, role of recruitment agencies and cooperation with state institutions, prevention and control of illegal employment of migrant workers – just to name few. These aspects could and should be discussed not only to learn more about best practices of partner countries, but also in order to promote formation of synergies and common approaches towards management of labour migration flows. Focus on the insights gained from practical experience and challenges should be one of the underlying principles, as the experts dealing with these issues on an everyday basis have the most valuable know-how on the topic.

Content-wise, the Expert Meeting on labour migration will be organized as a follow-up to the Panel meeting held last year in order to elaborate more on the conclusions drawn from the general discussions on the topicality and nuances of labour migration processes and policies.
Taking into due consideration the broader context of the complex phenomena of labour migration, this Expert meeting will put the emphasis on the practical dimension and will provide the participants with the opportunity to discuss various practical aspects of labour migration, to share their national practices and exchange experience with experts from partner countries dealing with labour migration issues on a daily basis.

The meeting will therefore be dedicated to several, closely interlinked dimensions of labour migration, focusing on three general topics –

- **procedural aspects of admission of labour migrants** - firstly, topics on general procedural provisions of the admission of migrant workers will be discussed and, secondly, special focus will be put on specific categories of migrants (highly skilled workers, seasonal workers, intra-corporate transferees, as well as researchers and students). Both EU Member States’ and Eastern partnership countries’ national situations, regulatory frameworks and schemes will be discussed, compared and analyzed to provide information, share best practices and to identify common challenges;

- **cooperation between public and private institutions in the recruitment of labour both from abroad and to work abroad** – under this topic, close linkages between various institutions, both public and private, related to the management of labour migration will be explored. The principles of work of recruitment agencies regarding sending workers abroad, as well as receiving foreign workforce will be discussed. Besides, also the issue of the effects of the national labour policy on the everyday operations of such agencies will be elaborated. Last, but not least the activities of state institutions in connection to the protection of rights and interests of labour migrants before leaving for work abroad, as well as provision of legal assistance in the case of necessity during their stay in a foreign country will be discussed.

- **issues linked to illegal employment of labour migrants** – illegal employment of migrants is a genuine and pressing problem, which requires strict measures to be put in place to fight it in an appropriate manner, whilst protecting rights of migrant workers. Based on this premise, practical issues and their solutions will be discussed under this topic, touching upon issues like risks posed by illegal employment, control mechanisms, preventive measures and cooperation between public and private institutions in the fight against illegal employment of migrant workers.

This Expert Meeting will bring together experts dealing with labour migration issues from both EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries, as well as representatives from European institutions, international organizations, academia and private sector.

A study visit to the Citizenship and Migration unit in Minsk will be arranged in the margins of the Expert Meeting to provide the participants with the possibility to learn how the practical work is being organized.