Panel Meeting on Migration Data Management and Migration Trends

5-6 March 2015, Budapest

CONCEPT NOTE

There is a growing need to better understand long term migration trends, as well as their effects on labour markets, national and regional economies. In order to develop and implement effective migration policies and strategies, enhanced migration data and empirical evidence are of crucial importance. A more precise, evidence-based picture on the migration trends would contribute to increase the positive and mitigate the negative effects of this phenomenon, both at national and regional level. The meeting of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum on migration data management and migration trends, co-hosted by Hungary and Moldova, will provide an opportunity for policy-level dialogue among the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU Member States on migration data management, as well as on migration trends based on the available datasets.

Despite the growing need to standardise and harmonise migration related data collection within the Member States of the European Union, fully comparable migration data are still scarce. There is also an interest to mainstream migration data in registries and large-scale surveys in order to allow better international comparison of migrant groups. Increasing international dialogue among relevant stakeholders (statistical offices, research institutes, policy makers) would contribute to the process to gain comparable data on migration. Meanwhile, it cannot be overlooked that the implications of migration, such as integration or the results of emigration are mainly dealt with at the local level. Therefore, there is also interest for local databases and the quality of available statistical data has to be improved at the level of local communities, as well.

New methods in data collection and analysis are also worth exploring. Using “big data” to address migration related questions, meaning by that large and complex data sets which cannot be processed by traditional applications - such as the data derived from social media - are still at an early age of development.

The discussions will contribute to the review of what migration related data is collected, how they are processed at national, regional and EU-level, how data is analysed, what are the main
challenges in this process and how policy recommendations can be formed on the basis of the available data. At the same time, it is also challenging that data protection has to be guaranteed so that personal data are not traceable beyond statistical purposes. Under EU law, including the Data Protection Directive (Directive 95/46/EC), personal data can only be gathered legally under strict conditions, for a legitimate purpose.

Migration intelligence is derived from a systematic analysis of migration data and operational information. It can provide forecasts and prognosis on migratory movements and predict future migration trends, and as such, it can be a major contributor to the development of migration policies.

Beyond the various aspects of data collection, management and data protection, the meeting will also have an outlook on long term migration trends in the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as in the European Union.