Panel Meeting on Labour Migration

in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum
6-7 November 2014, Warsaw

MEETING OBJECTIVES

The issue of labour migration is becoming increasingly important within the European Union with regards to aging populations and long term deficits in the labour market. The EU has adopted several directives in order to boost and facilitate the movement of labour to and from the EU, but also in order to encourage internal movement among the Member States, defined as mobility within the internal labour market. Labour migration is also of great importance to the Eastern Partnership countries that are facing similar challenges in terms of mobility to and from the EU and regional migration, but also in terms of domestic shortages in several business sectors which need adequate responses. The Association Agreement with the European Union is a first step, through intensified trade and investments, towards the integration of the labor market of the EaP countries (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) to the European labour market.

Contingency and flows of labour migrants are not similar. For this reason there are different forms of migration; namely long-term (over 1 year), short-term (up to 1 year), border migration (return to the country of origin at least once a week), seasonal migration (associated with certain period of the calendar year) and circular migration. Albeit a common European framework of several forms of labour migration, a large variety in regulations still prevails in Europe, catering for different needs and policy approaches depending on skills, length and employment status. This is reflected through varying migration schemes, regional initiatives and different legal provisions – all with the aim of fostering mobility while maintaining a balance on the domestic labour market.

Lately, the private sector and national employment agencies have also gained new interest in the opportunities offered through labour migration and a lot of the progress in both the EU
and the Eastern Partnership can be attributed to a successful partnership between the public and the private sectors. It has proved to be an efficient management tool, not least in terms of countering abusive recruitment agencies.

The positive effects of labour migration for both sending and receiving countries are widely acknowledged, yet the issue of the rights of labour migrants remains a subject of discussion and it is identified as a crucial factor for successful integration in the hosting societies as well as a prerequisite for reintegration in the migrant’s country of origin.

Economic growth will partly depend on how successful the interaction of the EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries will be in dealing with migration issues, including the formation and use of common approaches to migration policy. In this regard, the issue of migration policy harmonization between the Eastern Partnership and the EU and its mutual acceptance acquires great importance, particularly in the context of consecutive identification of common approaches to policy implementation, as well as the ways to ensure social and legal protection of labour migrants, which is also capable of enabling their return and reintegration in the country of origin.

Bearing these considerations in mind, the Panel Meeting will offer an opportunity for the participants to discuss their experiences and share national practices in the field of labour migration. It is also dedicated to encourage the active cooperation between different stakeholders. The meeting will consist of five sessions:

- on general overview and EU framework
- on migration schemes and the different approaches adopted by states
- on legal aspects of labour migration, with an emphasis on the EU
- on public employment agencies and the role of the private sector
- on migrant’s access to rights

As a part of the Panel meeting there will also be a study visit conducted on the first day of the meeting.

In the closing session under general panel business, the work program for 2015 will be adopted. Participants are therefore encouraged to consider and propose the subjects of interest for the coming year as well as the willingness to host the meetings and communicate it, if possible, by 24 of October to the European Commission and the Swedish Migration Board in order to prepare a proposal for the meeting.