

Director's welcome message



Dear Friends of the Prague Process,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the new issue of the Prague Process Quarterly Review, in which I for the first time appear in my new capacity of Director of the Prague Process Targeted Initiative!

First of all, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my predecessor Mr Piotr Mierecki, who without any doubt has contributed substantially to the success of the Prague Process!

I know that change is scary, but if you are one of the devoted long-time readers, please know that we remain committed to deliver the best possible content to our readers! Having said this, I gladly present to you this rather exceptional issue of the Quarterly review, which covers two quarters of the year at one blow. During this period from October 2015 to March 2016 we had almost a dozen big-scale activities – amongst others the important Senior Officials' meeting in

Prague, the two Final Workshops of the Pilot Projects 5 and 6, and two meetings of the National Contact Points – each of which is covered in this issue.

As "the figures speak for themselves", we decided to open this issue with some statistics on the number of activities, participants and publications produced since August 2012. In order to keep you informed on the latest policy developments in the EU, we prepared a short summary of the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy that was communicated by the EC in November 2015. You will also have a chance to learn more about the new endorsement procedure of the Migration Profiles, as well as the proposal of the Czech Republic to strengthen the Knowledge base. Last but not least, the interview with Mr George Jashi highlights why Georgia has put migration so high on the national political agenda.

The Prague Process is a living organism that strives to adjust its needs in accordance with the reality it faces. The question of the future of the Prague Process remains open, but no state doubts that this unique platform for cooperation, partnership and dialogue should pave its way into a better future for the benefit of all Prague Process states!

I wish you an interesting reading!

Sincerely yours,
Piotr Zuzankiewicz
PP TI Director

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- Interview with Mr George Jashi on the new Georgian Migration Profile (2015)

Planned activities within the Prague Process for the upcoming months

- **5 April**, 6th Core Group Meeting, Warsaw, Poland
- **20-22 April**, PP7 Closing Seminar, Berlin, Germany
- **14-16 June**, Senior Officials' Meeting, Krakow, Poland

Past activities for the period October 2015 – March 2016

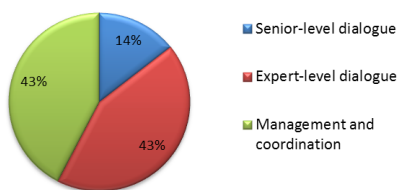
- **13-15 October**, PP6 Study visit to Lisbon and Porto, Portugal
- **5 November**, 5th Core Group meeting, Bratislava, Slovakia
- **17 November**, 2nd Workshop of the PP5 on Illegal migration, Warsaw, Poland
- **18 November**, NCP meeting on Illegal migration, Warsaw, Poland
- **7-8 December**, Senior Officials' Meeting, Prague, Czech Republic
- **4-5 February**, PP6 Final Workshop, Prague, Czech Republic
- **11-12 February**, NCP meeting on the Knowledge Base, Sofia, Bulgaria
- **17-19 February**, 2nd PP7 Seminar, Brussels, Belgium
- **24-25 February**, PP5 Final Workshop, Bucharest, Romania

Prague Process in numbers

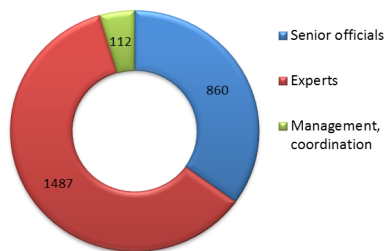
Overview		
Budget	3 600 000 EUR	DG Devco
Implementation period	53 months	3 August 2012 – 31 December 2016
Leading states	7	Poland with Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden
Participating states	50	28 EU MS+; EaP, CA, WB, RF, TR + EU institutions and international org.
Implementation team (leading state and Secretariat)	6	MOI Poland: Director (in-kind), Coordinator (50%), Project Officer (50%); ICMPD: Team Leader (100%), 2x Project Officer (100%), 2x Project Assistant (100% + 50%)
Activities	127	Senior level, expert level, management and coordination
Tangible results	20	Handbooks and Guidelines, Migration Profiles Light, Posters
Languages	2	All materials are in English and Russian

Activities 2012-2016		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Senior level	Ministerial C ¹	-	-	-	-	1	1
	SOM	-	1	1	2	2	6
	Core Group ²	1	1	1	2	2	7
Expert level	NCP	-	1	1	2	1	5
	Workshop	3	5	5	7	5	25
	Study visit	-	8	2	1	-	11
	Expert mission	-	-	3	2	2	7
	Training	-	5	4	-	-	9
Other	Ad-hoc ³	5	17	14	20	?	56
Total		9	38	31	36	13	127

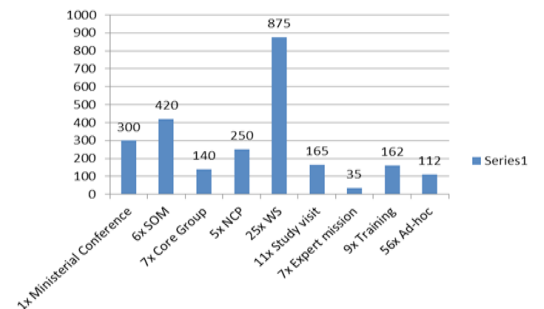
Types and number of activities (incl. 2016)



Participants / Target groups reached (average, incl. 2016)



Participants per type of activity (average, incl. 2016)



1 Funded by Slovak EU Presidency

2 Funded by participating states

3 Ad-hoc missions include managerial (PSC) and organisational consultations as well as participation in activities of partner initiatives (EaP PMA, Budapest Process, CIS, Almaty Process, RCP, EMN, Euromed etc.)

Publications and other results 2012-2016	
Prague Process Standards	Guidelines on Development of Migration Profile Light (2013)
	Handbook and Guidelines on Concluding Readmission Agreements and Organising Returns (2014)
	Handbook on Managing Labour and Circular Migration (2014)
	Guidelines on Training in the Asylum Process – Approaches to Achieve Quality (2014)
	Handbook and Guidelines on Establishing identity and/or nationality of irregular migrants (2016)
	Handbook on Enhancing international student mobility (2016)
	Handbook on Quality in Decision-making in the Asylum Process (2016)
Knowledge base	Migration Profile Light of Georgia (2014), Germany (2013), Hungary (2014), Czech Republic (2015)
	Migration Profile Light (draft submitted to state authorities): Armenia (2015), Belarus (2014), Kazakhstan (2015), Kyrgyzstan (2014), Russia (2014), Tajikistan (2014), Turkmenistan (2015), Uzbekistan (2015)
	Poster – Overview of the New Russian Migration Policy 2014
	Poster – Immigration and residence permits (East-West migration), 2012
	i-Map at www.imap-migration.org
Visibility	Web site www.pragueprocess.eu with online database of PP contact and experts
	Prague Process Facebook profile
	Prague Process Wikipedia entry (editors' approval pending)
	Quarterly Review 1-9
PP "Umbrella" projects⁴	European-Russian Integration Standards (ERIS): Joint Manual on Principles, Procedures and Standards on Integration Policies
	Eastern Partnership Cooperation in the Fight Against Irregular Migration – Support to the Implementation of the Prague Process Action Plan: (EaP SIPPAP): Guidelines on Drafting a Protocol on Joint Border Patrols; Standard Operational Procedures (SOP); EaP-SIPPAP Integrated Border Management Guidelines with e-learning tool.

POLICY

Main outcomes of the second preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting for the 3rd Ministerial Conference

The second preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) for the 3rd Ministerial Conference in October 2016 took place in Prague on 7-8 December 2015, gathering participants from 30 states, the European Commission Directorate General for Home Affairs (DG HOME) and Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), the Council of the European Union, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Frontex, as well as ICMPD, IOM and UNHCR.

5th Core Group Meeting was organised in Bratislava on 5th of November 2015 with the aim of preparing the ground for the Prague SOM in December 2015. Core Group participants reviewed the Evaluation report and its findings and concluded that the objectives set in 2009 no longer correspond to a dynamically evolving migra-

tion situation. Moreover, the CG called for the organisation of fewer events with the aim to further increase their quality, as well as a diversification of approaches, including innovative methods and formats.

With regard to the Ministerial Conference, it was emphasized that the key to its success lies in ensuring the participation of Ministers, in order to send out a strong message. The Ministerial Declaration should be forward-looking, setting a concrete vision for the further development of the Prague Process, while building upon the strong achievements of the past.

This particular SOM aimed at addressing three key issues: to review the implementation of the Road Map towards the 3rd Ministerial Conference; to discuss the future of the Prague

4 EU-funded projects supporting the implementation of the Prague Process Action Plan 2012-2016 outside PP TI but involving PP states and following PP TI approaches and methodology.



Process; and to share the latest updates on the swiftly evolving migration situation across the Prague Process region.

Endorsement of the Evaluation report – the first step towards the Ministerial: Throughout 2015 a team of experts worked on the Evaluation report on the implementation of the Prague Process Action Plan 2012-2016 and the resulting Remarks. A draft version of the evaluation had already been introduced and discussed during the previous SOM in Budapest in July 2015. As a result, only minor changes were introduced to it without changing the overall outcomes. It was underlined that the Prague Process is the first Migration Dialogue to carry out such exercise, which could serve as a good example for other Processes. The findings of the report were based on the responses received by 36 participating states and five partner organisations, and confirmed the Prague Process' significant contribution to international cooperation in the region. In spite of the agreement reached by the Senior Officials in July 2015 that the Poznan Action Plan 2012 – 2016 priorities would remain valid for the future, the current rationalisation of migration policies would nonetheless suggest a stronger focus on the most important migration policy areas and most pressing issues in the future. Another possible modification could consist in the intensification of training activities. The 'Remarks' established on the basis of the Evaluation Report should serve as the basis for the envisaged Ministerial Declaration. Both documents – *the Evaluation Report of the Implementation of the Action Plan* and the *SOM Remarks to the document* – were thereafter unilaterally adopted by the SOM.

Forthcoming Slovak EU Presidency: The host country of the 3rd Ministerial Conference, Slovakia, informed participants about the ongoing preparations of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Prague Process Ministerial Conference in autumn 2016. The future Ministerial Declaration is expected to define concrete action and timeframes. The Slovak Presidency will put a focus on the implementation of the Agenda on Migration and the Agenda for Security as well as on the Smart Borders Package, the reform of the Visa Code, and the issues of human smuggling, trafficking and return.

Endorsement of the Migration Profiles: With the aim to adapt the Prague Process Knowledge base to the pressing realities, already during the SOM in Budapest the PP participating states agreed on *publishing of Migration Profiles without the explicit endorsement* of the respective state after being granted a three-month period for any eventual feedback. The methodology entails that the draft Migration Profiles should first be shared with the concerned states through the official diplomatic channels and, if no feedback is received, the publication would hold a remark that the document was not officially endorsed. The application of the adopted methodology will start in 2016, and participating states may expect publication of the Migration Profiles Light (with or without endorsement) in the early summer.

Migration situation in the region & policy implications: In 2015, the *European Commission* adopted two key documents, namely the European Agenda on Migration and European Agenda on Security. Other important measures planned for 2016 will be targeting policy areas such as human smuggling, Integrated Border Management, return and overall security issues. As a result of the ongoing migration crises, the related decision-making processes have accelerated substantially. The key question is how to manage migration throughout the next ten years. The EU has received over 800.000 asylum seekers in 2015 alone (FRONTEX states that some 1.5 Million people have come into the EU illegally in 2015; and UNHCR reports on 911.500 arrivals by sea), which has led to important decisions regarding relocation, resettlement or the so-called 'hot spots', two of which are already in place. The Civil Protection Mechanism has also been enhanced to become more operational and a Joint Action Plan was signed with Turkey, which also updated its asylum legislation due to the enormous number of refugees received. The ongoing cooperation with third countries shows that the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) is still applicable. The Summits in Valetta and on the Western Balkans in Luxembourg show the importance of the contacts and networks established by the various regional Migration Dialogues.

With regard to the pronounced refugee crises in Europe, *UNHCR* reminded participants that the creation of new borders

along the main migration routes will not lead to a solution, but only a diversion of the problem, while it is essential to also remember that both refugees and migrants are protected under the international law. Whereas states are of course entitled to carry out border controls, the right to asylum should be upheld.

In line with the Migration strategy until 2025, *Russia* has been taking steps to facilitate the employment of migrants. The duties of the main source countries of migration have been re-defined. The vast majority (81%) of the estimated 16,3 Million foreigners residing in Russia come from within the CIS region, with Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Tajikistan being the most important countries of origin. For citizens of the Eurasian Economic Union, there is no need for a residence or work permit. Moreover, equal access with regards to the pension, education and health systems has been granted to the latter nationals.

Kazakhstan underlined that over the past two years emigration has overtaken immigration with Russia representing the main destination country (80%), followed by Belarus and Ukraine. This trend is also a result of the incentives introduced by Russia, including the policies aiming for a return of ethnic compatriots, the facilitated labour market access and transferability of pensions. This has caused an increase of high-skilled outflows and thereby deepened the problem of “brain drain”. Meanwhile, immigration to Kazakhstan amounts to some 16.000 persons a year, mostly from other CIS countries, as well as China and Mongolia.

Overall, as noted by speakers and also participants of the meeting, the Prague Process features very differing geographical regions but the networks established enhance a joint learning process on expert and senior level, which is deemed overly important and unique. The next SOM is foreseen to take place in June 2016.

Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy

On 18 November 2015, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, Ms Federica Mogherini, presented the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which was initially launched in 2004, to help the EU support and foster stability, security and prosperity in the countries closest to its borders. The Review intends to outline the way *“how the EU and its neighbours can build more effective partnerships in the neighbourhood”* in the coming years.

The newly updated ENP should build its activities upon the following concepts:

- **Stabilisation** – main political priority in this mandate, which will *“seek to comprehensively address sources of instability across sectors”*;
- **Differentiation & flexibility** – creation of tailor-made approaches towards the EU neighbouring partners, respecting and acknowledging their *“interests and needs, their commitment to reforms, the level of ambition of the partnership as well as different challenges and the geopolitical environment”*;
- **Ownership** – EU proposes to launch *“a new phase of engagement with partners in 2016, consulting on the future nature and focus of the partnership. The expectation is that different patterns of relations will emerge, allowing a greater sense of ownership by both sides”*.

Ms Mogherini has depicted 5 pillars of the new ENP striving for stabilisation in economic, political and security terms, which include:

- 1) **Economic developments and job creation, especially in relation to youth:** The EU intends to continue the provision of support through Macro-Financial Assistance operations, while also focusing on a modernisation of the economy, the use of innovative approaches, and support

of entrepreneurs. Trade should allow for favourable approaches towards partners joining DCFTA, and provide lighter and more flexible trade agreements to other partners. Supporting young men and women, the new ENP proposes to foster out-of-school education, to widen the scope of engagement for neighbouring partners within the Erasmus+ Programme, and foster mobility in vocational education and training. Moreover, the EU will *“consult partners on the establishment of a panel on youth employment and employability within the Eastern Partnership”*.

- 2) **Cooperation on energy:** This cooperation should be perceived as a security measure, but also a mean towards sustainable economic development. The diversification of energy sources, better cooperation on energy efficiency, and transition to the low carbon economy will be supported. Additionally, the EU will make attempts to cooperate on energy supply issue with partners beyond the neighbourhood.
- 3) **Security:** Cooperation on security will focus on a wide range of areas and could include security sector reform, border protection, tackling terrorism & radicalisation, and crisis management.
- 4) **Migration:** Cooperation in the sphere of migration will focus both on regular and irregular migration, increasing cooperation with partners beyond the neighbourhood, supporting those assisting and receiving refugees and IDPs, looking into the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, and continuing cooperation on returns, readmission and sustainable reintegration. Regular migration will have a strong focus on the development side, supporting circular migration, encouraging the recognition of qualifications and launching dialogues on academic mobility. Very importantly, the EU should look at *“allowing people temporarily residing in the EU to engage in a business, professional or other activity in the country of origin,*

while maintaining their main residence in one of the Member States". There is also an intention to establish a platform of dialogue with businesses, trade unions and social partners with the aim to better assess labour market needs and the role of migration in this respect. Not surprisingly, the EU will assist partner countries in developing their asylum and protection systems.

5) "Neighbours of the neighbours": This pillar will have an outreach beyond the boundaries of the ENP area as a

focus. Cooperation with "neighbours of the neighbours" would set new thematic frameworks to tackle common challenges, with migration, energy and security being the priorities.

The Review of the European Neighborhood Policy can be downloaded at: http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf

MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

The Study Visit to Portugal

The PP6 Study Visit, organized within Pilot Project 6 ("Enhancing the cross-border mobility of students"), took place in Lisbon and Porto on 13-15 October 2015, and was hosted by the Immigration and Border Service (SEF) of Portugal and gathered representatives of **nine states** – Albania, Armenia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo¹, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova.

During its visit to the **SEF Headquarters in Lisbon** the delegation was shortly introduced to its main duties and responsibilities, as well as to the national legal framework on migration. With regards to international students, the SEF is responsible for the issuance of visas and residence permits, as well as their possible extension. Seeking to strike a balance between security issues and the practical needs of incoming students, the Portuguese Law entitles foreign students and graduates to take up employment. In 2012, SEF ratified a Protocol with Portuguese Universities in order to facilitate administrative procedures and thus promote the mobility and integration of foreign students.

A representative of the **Directorate General of Higher Education** presented the good national practices established on the recognition of foreign certificates. The automatic procedure, introduced in 1997, eliminates bureaucratic hurdles, delays and costs. The website www.studyinportugal.edu.pt represents an important tool for informing potential foreign students. Participants were then introduced to the **Foundation of Science and Technology**, which accounts for 30% of Portugal's public funding for science and recently awarded 45 PhD studentships to PP states or neighboring countries. The following visit to the **One-Stop-Shop in Lisbon (CNAI)** granted participants an insight into the various administrative assistance offered to migrants. The latter can obtain all necessary documents in this institution, which unites representatives of all relevant authorities.



The second day took participants to the city of Porto, where they were welcomed to the **Porto University**. The institutional cooperation between the University and the SEF is operated through a joint electronic interface, allowing for a swift and smooth processing of foreign students' applications. On the final day the delegation visited the **Porto Business School** where the administrative challenges faced by foreign students, were further discussed.

During the **wrap-up session**, participants were introduced to the further timeline of the Pilot Project 6, which foresees a final workshop in early 2016, which shall serve the finalisation of the PP6 Handbook.

All participating states expressed their gratitude and appreciation of the Study Visit as a whole and of some agenda items in particular. The successful cooperation between the migration authorities and higher education institutions was in itself perceived as a highlight. Some participants underlined how interesting and enriching the observation of the different national practices displayed during the project was. A thorough description of these varying approaches could represent an important contribution of the envisaged guidelines.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Final workshop of Pilot Project 6



The meeting, held in Prague on 4-5 February 2016, gathered representatives of Albania, Armenia, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Portugal, Russia, Sweden and Turkey, as well as ICMPD and the Prague Process Secretariat.

Mr. Tomas Urubek welcomed participants on behalf of the Czech Republic, highlighting the significance of the Pilot Project 6 (PP6) in view of the ever growing phenomenon of international student mobility. The envisaged PP6 Handbook should be used in concrete terms for the everyday work of policy makers. Moreover, the current work should transfer into the future activities and especially trainings envisaged within the Prague Process. Ms. Timea Lehoczki on behalf of Hungary underlined the still outstanding work in order to finalise the PP6 Handbook, a draft version of which is to be discussed during this event. The importance of the development impact of student mobility was also pointed out.

The first session was dedicated to the issue of recognition of foreign credentials and consisted of two presentations. First Mr. Alexander Maleev (PP Secretariat) provided an overview of the inputs so far received from participating states with regards to recognition. Thereafter, Mr. Sebastian Steele from the Swedish Council for Higher Education introduced participants to some good practices on recognition, established in Sweden. The session was rounded off by a *tour de table*, allowing all participating states to shortly present their national policies on recognition.

During the afternoon session, participants were first introduced to the overall structure and introductory chapter of the envisaged “Prague Process Handbook on Enhancing International Student Mobility”, as well as the section entailing the main findings, before being asked to provide for their feedback.

Throughout the second day, all states were introduced to the national policy examples collected in the Handbook and asked for their immediate comments. Mr. Agnes Tottos (Hungary) shortly reintroduced the chapter devoted to the EU legal framework on student mobility. Finally, the background information section of the Handbook was also presented. During the closing discussion, participants were once more granted the opportunity to provide their immediate reactions to the proposed content.

A consolidated draft version shall be disseminated to all participating states by March at latest. The states will then be granted several weeks to submit their final comments in written. The final version of the PP6 Handbook should be concluded by mid-April of 2016.

ILLEGAL MIGRATION

3rd Workshop of the Pilot Project 5 on Illegal migration

On 17 November 2015, the Ministry of Interior of Poland hosted the 3rd Thematic Workshop of the Pilot Project 5 (PP5) on Illegal Migration in Warsaw. The workshop was attended by representatives of 18 Prague Process participating states, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in its role of the Prague Process Secretariat, and Frontex.

The Workshop was mostly focused on the Prague Process states’ experiences on establishing identity and/or nationality of irregular migrants, while also addressing such aspects as the organisation of identification processes, protection of mi-

grants’ human rights, and challenges arising during the identification process.

After the welcome session, during which Mr Piotr Sadowski shortly outlined the aim of the meeting and next PP5 activities, Ms Aldona Piwko, Professor in Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, presented multicultural aspects in establishing/confirming identity/nationality of migrants in Poland, and highlighted some of the cultural and communication problems. As was noted, due to the significant differences between Arabic dialects, migrants from Arab countries often communi-



cate in English or the language of the destination country. In communication with a caseworker, not only language issues, but also personal experiences of migrants should be considered. For instance, as an outcome of tortures and persecutions committed by national military services in the country of origin, some migrants might fear people dressed in military uniform.

Mr Henri De Gyns from the Immigration Service of Belgium presented regulations of voluntary/forced returns, removals, prioritisation of AVR and availability of detention centers. The importance of the pre-identification process, carried out before the migrant's transfer to detention was underlined, as it provides a possibility to facilitate the voluntary return of foreigners who committed an insignificant crime without prosecuting them. National legislation systems might also impose additional tests or restrictions as regards return. According to the Belgian law, verification if a third country national is capable to be returned to a country of origin should be undertaken, while linking the identification procedure with other possible procedures is in some cases prohibited. As a good practice

in this field, Mr De Gyns mentioned study visits for identification purposes, the use of the EURINT network which provides very practical and highly-effective exchange of information between national experts, as well as the use of the Video Conferencing for Identification (VCI).

Mr. Istvan Tibor Takács, Head of Unit at the Ministry of Interior of Hungary portrayed the current migration situation in Hungary and in the region, including statistics on asylum applications and on illegal border crossings at the Serbian border. At present, Hungary has perceived the Schengen measures as inefficient, and therefore complemented the measures by introducing a list of safe countries of origin, additional procedures at the border with migrants going through admissibility checks, granting entry permits only after the approval of the initial application by national authorities (migrants would be kept in a transit zone meanwhile). Mr Takács positively exemplified joint operations held by Serbia, Kosovo and Austria fighting smuggling of Kosovo citizens staying in Serbia. Cooperation with Turkey ("The Budapest – Istanbul case") and Visegrad Group was also mentioned.

As an outcome of the meeting, participants came to the following conclusions:

- Recognition of migrant's cultural background can facilitate the process of communication between migrants and caseworkers. Thus, establishing a hot-line or reference point to experts knowing the culture of countries of origin can be a useful tool supporting caseworkers.
- In case of imprisonment, the migrants' identity and travel documents could be obtained before the person is released from prison. As a result, the following return procedure could be quicker and more efficient.
- Study visits of experts from countries of origin to countries of destination can facilitate the process of establishing/confirming identity/nationality of irregular migrants. This tool can also support building mutual trust and networking.
- Tightening practical cooperation can be especially efficient in case of extraordinary inflows of migrants.

National Contact Points' Meeting on Illegal migration

The meeting of the Prague Process National Contact Points on Illegal migration took place in Warsaw on 18 November 2015, following the discussion at the 3rd Workshop of the Pilot Project 5, held one day earlier. The event was attended by representatives of 25 countries, the European Commission, FRONTEX, UNHCR, MARRI and ICMPD in its capacity of Prague Process Secretariat. The meeting was focused on current migratory flows in the Prague Process region and provided a possibility to share information on challenges faced by migrants and countries of origin, transit and destination.

Participating states devoted special attention to the presentations of Balkan, Mediterranean and Eastern migration routes,

tackling economic, social and criminal aspects of illegal migration. Ms Marta Jaroszewicz from the Centre for Eastern Studies in Poland indicated the increased inflow of Ukrainians, and especially Ukrainian students, to Poland with the purpose to get a long-term permit. Mr Büşra Pekşen from the Directorate General for Migration Management in Turkey highlighted the current migratory situation in Turkey, largely influenced by the military conflicts in the neighboring countries. Ms Selimovic described a scope of activities undertaken by the MARRI Regional Centre, which supports Balkan states and implements projects pertaining fighting/combating illegal migration, terrorism and criminality (engages Balkan countries as well as Romania and Moldova), and a project maintaining a joint database

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for translators of rare languages. Frontex mentioned that due to the situation at the Hungarian border, the migratory routes were redirected via Serbia and Croatia.

The need to strengthen operational cooperation between the migration services was highlighted repeatedly. EU Member states try to increase cooperation, aiming to streamline actions with regard to the migration situation, and this trend will continue in the future, stated Mr Sebastian Rysz from the EC Representation in Poland. As was noted by Mr Szabolcs Csonka from Frontex, such factors as the lack of cooperation with countries of origin, lack of documents, forged/falsified documents, or obstacles with fingerprints collecting obstruct migration management and certainly influence security. Therefore, participants agreed that a proper and comprehensive risk analysis in the current situation has special importance, as it outlines current and future issues of concern and allows developing concrete actions.

The meeting was rounded up by presentations of the outputs from the High-level Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean



– Western Balkans Route in Luxembourg on 8 October 2015 and the Summit on migration between Africa and EU held in La Valletta on 11-12 November 2015 with an outline of future steps that were agreed at both meetings.

Final Workshop of the Pilot Project 5

The Final Workshop of the Pilot Project 5 on Illegal migration in Bucharest was hosted by the Ministry of Interior of Romania on 24-25 of February 2016 and gathered representatives of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and representatives of the IOM and ICMPD.

The meeting was devoted to the discussion of the last topics envisaged by the Project, namely – Identification of vulnerable groups of migrants, as well as the presentation of the draft PP5 Handbook on Establishing Identity and/or Nationality of Irregular migrants, the work on which should be completed before the forthcoming Senior Officials' Meeting.

Discussing the identification of vulnerable migrants, IOM Romania presented programmes on Assisted Voluntary Return. Concrete return cases have proven that the long journey to a destination country can make migrants vulnerable. In this regard, IOM relies on the definition of vulnerable migrants to be found in the EU's 'Return Directive' (2008/115/EC). The identification of vulnerable cases helps to address them adequately as return programs allow for providing vulnerable migrants with additional support. As was additionally noted by Romania, such additional support implies the provision of the necessary financial means, as well as accommodation and clothing.

The identification process goes hand in hand with the conduction of interviews, as put forward by Hungary, and includes also various techniques such as the identification of accents and dialects by interpreters from Somalia, Nigeria or Pakistan



(the group of countries with the most illegal border crossings). Participants, however, acknowledged that interviews lasting 1-2 hours allow for hearing only 12 persons a day, which is considered too lengthy in a crises situation. Despite of the substantial efforts made to perform the identification and return efficiently, the process is challenged by the poor quality of fingerprints, medical constraints and limitations related to the obtainment of travel documents.

The constantly evolving migration crisis was also discussed. Hungary reported that in 2016 the number of illegal border crossings to Hungary decreased due to implementation of a new legislation, introducing new criminal offences related to crossing the border or damaging the border fence. Moreover, the sentence for organizing illegal migration was increased to up to 15 years of imprisonment. Macedonia reported on almost 1 million border crossings, with the share of economic migrants amounting to 30 %.

The meeting then served the discussion of the draft PP5 Handbook, the work on which is at a final stage. Supporting the Handbook recommendations, participants underlined the role of readmission agreements in return procedures, the need to update additional protocols to readmission agreements so that they reflect the dynamic development of co-operation, and stressed the need to ensure cooperation

on informal level. Russia advised to make a reference in the recommendations to other agreements (e.g. to conventions on data protection). All additional written comments, amendments and recommendations on behalf of the participating states are expected by mid-March. The Handbook thereafter will be amended, translated and shared with the PP5 participating states for their final approval.

ASYLUM

XII. 2nd Seminar of the Pilot Project 7 “Quality in Decision-making in the Asylum Process – Continuous Training Using Content of Jurisprudence”

The 2nd Seminar of Pilot Project 7 (PP7) gathered representatives of Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Luxemburg, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine, as well as various experts, representatives of the European Commission, UNHCR, ECRE and ICMPD.

Representatives of the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) and the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) as the leading states authorities of the Pilot Project 7 (PP7) opened the event, underlining the importance of training in view of the sig-

nificant flows of asylum seekers received at present. Both states reported on the substantial increase in the number of staff and the resulting need for in-house training. In this context, countries can certainly benefit from the experience of other states.

The 2nd PP7 seminar focused on the issues of credibility and evidence assessment, thus contributing to ensuring quality in decision making, while also providing training of trainers with a special focus on training methodology and the use of case law. The main aim is to enable participating states to carry out their own trainings independently.

During the opening *tour de table* the participating states shortly introduced their own situation and main challenges as follows:

Country	Quantity of asylum seekers	Challenges
Albania	no increase	Country of Origin Information (COI), integration, first screening
Bosnia and Herzegovina	decreased to 50 persons in 2015	Art. 15c (subsidiary protection)
Kosovo	19 asylum seekers in 2015	New law and contingency plan currently drafted
Luxemburg	significant increase to 2.500 in 2015	Limited staff (25), quality, COI, RSD, credibility assessment
Poland		limited staff, ensuring quality
Turkey		credibility, COI, burden of proof
Serbia	89.500 asylum seekers entered the country in 2016	Limited staff (16)
Russia	300.000 applications per year with numbers growing	reduce the processing time and limit the stay in the shelters, COI, countering abuses, distribution across the country
Moldova	560 asylum seekers in 2015 (480 in 2014)	lack of interpreters
Kyrgyzstan	no increase registered (100 per year)	
Kazakhstan	no increase registered	
Georgia	1.500 applications in 2014	limited staff
Belarus	increase	limited staff (15 persons), ensuring quality in RSD
Armenia		harmonisation to EU standards, credibility assessment, future risk assessment
Sweden	160.000 in 2015	limit the numbers of incoming asylum seekers

Quarterly Review

№ 8–9: October 2015 – March 2016



During her presentation on **core issues in international protection**, Judge Judith Gleeson highlighted the fact that asylum law is constantly evolving. There are two major systems in place, namely the Geneva Convention and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In times of mass flows, as presently experienced, there is the risk that some of the 120 signatories to the Geneva Convention might drop out of it. This is why limits need to be drawn and controls reinforced, she said. In the following presentation on **structured credibility assessment**, Gabor Gyulai (Hungarian Helsinki Committee) reminded participants that there is no clear definition of 'credibility'. Thereafter, Jane Herlihy (Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law, UK) introduced participants into the **role of psychology in RSD**. The remaining afternoon was used for **case studies in break-out sessions**, facilitated by the various experts. Day 2 related to psychological elements such as **memory and trauma** as well as an introduction to the **multidisciplinary approach**. Samuel Boutruche (UNHCR) introduced the **UNHCR Manual on the Case Law of the European Regional Courts** and the role of the organization when it

comes to the development case law ('third-party intervention'). There has been an incredible increase in the number of cases at all levels, from national to ECtHR and ECJ.

Later on, participants were divided into the three working groups according to their interest: 1. Credo Manual; 2. Training of trainers on facilitating case study sessions; 3. Open session for discussion of own (national) cases. The day was rounded off by a short overview on **database searches** and the available sources, newsletters and blogs with regards to asylum case law, as well as a short discussion on the envisaged **PP7 Guidelines**.

The final third day started with an introduction of the **EASO Practical Guide on Evidence Assessment**, followed by some good practices in terms of **training methodology**. During the **final feedback session**, all states expressed their satisfaction with the seminar. For some participants this was in fact the first training received in years. Several states expressed their commitment to implement the recommendations received and share them with their colleagues. The challenge of compiling the recommendations and transpose them into the national system and to the practice on the ground was also mentioned. The sharing of experiences among states was perceived as highly beneficial in order to receive lessons learnt from other states, work towards further harmonization and allow for a 'bird perspective' on the problems faced by the different states and a self – reflection on own practices.

The Final PP7 seminar will take place **in Berlin on 20-22 April 2016** and will mainly focus on **exclusion clauses, internal flight alternative, subsidiary protection** and the discussion of the **draft PP7 Guidelines**.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Objective 2: National Contact Points' Meeting

The National Contact Points' meeting on the Knowledge base, data collection and analysis took place in Sofia on 12-13 February 2016. Hosted by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria, the meeting gathered participants from 26 states, the EU Representation in Sofia and Frontex, as well as the ICMPD, the OSCE and the UNHCR.

The event proved very timely in the context of the increasingly challenging migration situation, faced by many participating countries. The agenda was consequently structured in a way allowing to account for the experience of the individual states. Moreover, the work of the international bodies in assisting with the associated challenges was presented, as well as the efforts of the Prague Process to facilitate the intergovernmental dialogue on migration in the regions most affected by the extraordinary on-going events. The sessions were, respectively, dedicated to the migration situation and the management thereof in the Western Balkan countries, the analytical

assessment and practical assistance furnished to these states by Frontex, the ICMPD, the OSCE and the UNHCR, as well as the activities of the PP, including the concluded Expert missions to Central Asian countries or the Knowledge base as an aggregate platform for the sharing and dissemination of migration information. The discussion was geared toward the transformation of the Knowledge base into a newer and better platform with a capacity building component in the form of a Training Academy and Migration Observatory. In order to assist the achievement of this goal, the non-EU countries also shared their experience in working with migration data.

In the course of the round-table discussion, all participants agreed that the current migration developments represent a common challenge that cannot and should not be addressed by individual states alone. Rather, coordinated responses are necessary in order to ensure opportunities for finding mutually acceptable – and beneficial – solutions to the crisis on be-



half of the countries of transit and destination as well as for the migrants themselves. Given the considerable numbers of migrants involved, unlocking their economic potential upon arrival, as put forward by the OSCE, would represent one pos-

sible step in devising a compromise solution to the complex problem.

Most relevant in this context was the discussion of the future of the Prague Process as an intergovernmental dialogue, which is to be used as a stepping stone on the path to the creation and launching of a Training Academy on migration and a Migration Observatory with a specific focus on the PP countries. The idea of such transformation was put forward by the Czech Republic already in the beginning of 2015, which also re-confirmed its commitment to lead the new project as stated during the Senior Officials Meetings in Budapest and Prague in July and December 2015. The Ministerial Conference in September will discuss the Ministerial declaration, which will also entail these new initiatives and the feedback obtained from the participating states during the meeting in Sofia. Taking into account the results of the round table discussion, a detailed concept note outlining the next steps will be prepared by the Secretariat and shared with the member states in the coming months.

Interview with Mr George Jashi

By the end of the year 2015 Georgia has published its new Migration Profile based on a new format and a new methodology, both being developed in order to meet Georgia's specific needs. With the intention to understand what has driven the work on the Profile, as well as to get the overall impression of last developments in the sphere of data collection in Georgia, we have approached Mr George Jashi, Executive Secretary at the Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia, who unveiled to us some interesting details!

Dear Mr Jashi, could you please tell our readers a bit about your work?

The State Commission on Migration Issues is an advisory body to the government of Georgia. Established in 2010, the 13 members strong Commission had gone through the dynamic process of reforms and challenges shaping its machinery designed to define and manage the national migratory policy. Having an outstanding support from EU, its member states and partner international and non-governmental organiza-



Mr George Jashi

Executive Secretary at the Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia

tions, among of which ICMPD deserves a special recognition, the Commission along with its Secretariat had become a strong state driven mechanism equipped with an effective coordination functions and analytical skills capable to develop an international standards based system of migration management.

As we know, Georgia lately has been very rapidly developing its migration system striving to make use of the most progressive tools in this sphere. What is the reason? Why migration was put so high on your agenda?

The very first attempt to regulate migratory situation and adjust it to international requirements was made in late 1997,

when the Concept of the State Migration Policy was elaborated and adopted as a decree. Despite its innovative character neither state's internal policy, nor international environment have supported this document to be realized on actual basis. A whole decade after, while enhancing EU integration activities via common instruments of joint action, the new policy document had been developed, and in 2013 the Commission has adopted the first national Migration Strategy (2013-2015) with accompanying action plan. The adoption of the Strategy followed the handover of EU Visa Liberalisation Action Plan to Georgia, which on the one hand clearly defined the working directions to modernize the national migration management system, and on the other hand increased the dynamics of the action while posing the need to start working on a new strategy document to be compatible with modern requirements. Three years later, when migration had become a top priority issue at a world and especially EU policy level, in 2015 while having vast experience out of lessons learned from implemented strategy, Georgia has adopted its brand new Migration Strategy. Drafted by the SCMI Secretariat's analytical unit, running with the support of ICMPD through EU financial support, this very document radically differs from its predecessors. It provides with standardised approaches to the issues toping the worldwide agenda, and is based on the mix of principles deriving from national interests and international policy developed in the course of recent years.

In 2015 Georgia published its unique Migration Profile in a new format. Could you tell us about it and specifically on how the work on collecting and analysing the data was organised, who played the key / coordination role and what guided them in identifying the selected format?

The national migration management system consists of four inter depended modules: strategy, migration profile, unified migration analytical system and migration risk analysis system. All together they form machinery, which connects these modules in synchronized manner and provides with evidence based policy making tool. Among of those mentioned, the Migration Profile is indeed an important part of entire mosaic, allowing the decision makers to elaborate policy by means of various statistics put together and analysed in a unique routine. And again, created with the help of Secretariat's analytical unit, the profile represented in a so called third – medium version, differs from existing, extended or light models elaborated earlier. Well-structured, informative, understandable and user friendly – these were the starting points the authors were oriented to, while working on the document. When the structure composed of those elements was finally ready, the Secretariat shifted to the second phase – data collection. For that particular purpose, the specially designed data request templates were prepared in a way that the collected data could be easily manipulated and calculated. Thus, the time earlier used for

the technical works, now was allocated for the analysis and elaboration of proceeding recommendations.

Collection and proper analysis of migration data is a key to the process of planning sound policies and making well-informed decisions in the field of migration. We have heard that for a little over a year Georgia has been working on the Electronic system UMAS for information sharing? Could you tell us about this system and the way you plan to make use of it?

Indeed, the data collection is a very complex and specific work harmonizing the process of collection, the time and preliminary defined patterns adjusted to the thematic characteristics. Based on this recipe the Public Service Development Agency along with the other SCMI member agencies, has developed a concept of Unified Migration Analytical System (UMAS). The idea of the above system is to connect different e-data bases of all entities dealing with migration, and link them to the central analytical hub hosted by PSDA. The core module is assigned to collect the necessary data and produce a comprehensive statistics through preliminary defined patterns structured and managed by the specialised group of analysts. Hence, UMAS will significantly reduce the time spent for the production of MPs and equally increase the SCMI capacities in respect of risk analysis, which largely depends on reliable data. The system supported by EU through ICMPD and IOM is planned to be launched in 2016 and converted into the migration management system described above.

Having an experience with development of the Migration Profile what suggestions and recommendations would you give to other states willing to work on their own profile?

Differing from above said, the answer to this question is much simple and not that sophisticated. There are several important rules that are desirable to be observed while working on MP: a) the document has to be informative and at the same time user friendly. Sometimes badly structured (especially important) information can misguide reader and make the enormous efforts of authors useless; b) if producing own MP by using already existing models, the authors must not limit themselves in attempts of fine tuning, so enriching the document and adjusting it to the country specific needs; c) the data collection can only start after the preliminary and detailed assessment of what can be obtained from the data source and how much time will it take to translate the collected material into a single document; and finally, d) try not to complicate the document by using unnecessary features, as that can add no value but misguide the reader.

Dear Mr Jashi, thank you very much for your time and involvement in the Prague Process!

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