

EDITORIAL

Covering the last quarter of 2018, this issue will shed light on a number of important events, outputs and regional developments.

The Prague Process Migration Observatory, launched in spring 2018, released its first analytical reports and policy briefs on Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. These publications are readily available at the Prague Process website. The first workshop organised within the Migration Observatory saw rich participation and lively discussions, highlighting the need for adequate migration data and for further training on data collection, analysis and dissemination. The Prague Process Training Academy held its second Training, addressing the issue of Human Trafficking. The methodology applied and feedback received during the training will shape the forthcoming Training Manual addressing Human Trafficking. The joint expert mission to the Republics of Uzbekistan and

Turkmenistan provided for some insights on the most recent migration (policy) developments in both countries. During their annual meeting, the senior officials of the Prague Process states expressed their satisfaction with the achievements of the “Prague Process: Dialogue, Analysis and Training in Action” initiative in 2018.

Beyond these updates on the Prague Process, this issue features an interview with Mr. Armen Ghazaryan, Head of the State Migration Service of Armenia. Finally, it will also take a closer look at the recently adopted Global Compact for Migration and at the new Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation.

The year 2019 marks the 10th anniversary of the Prague Process! Await more information on how we plan to celebrate this milestone in our cooperation.

Have a good read!

Looking ahead: upcoming Prague Process activities 2019

March-May	●	MO Internship in the Migration Observatory, Vienna, Austria
19-21 March	●	D Prague Process Strategic Group Meeting, Brussels, Belgium
8 April	●	TA Thematic Training on Integrated Border Management, and Return, Kyiv, Ukraine
9-11 April	●	MO & TA Study Visit to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of Germany, Nuremberg
May	●	MO Research Coordination Meeting, Vienna, Austria
10-11 June	●	D Senior Officials' Meeting, Bucharest, Romania
30 June -6 July	●	TA Prague Process Summer School

MO - Migration Observatory
TA - Training Academy
D - Senior-level Dialogue

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Senior Officials presented their policy priorities and assessed the ongoing co-operation under the Prague Process during their meeting in Prague

The Prague Process Senior Officials' meeting (SOM), held in Prague in December, gathered 65 participants representing 27 participating states, the European Commission, European University Institute, Migration Research Centre, UNHCR and ICMPD. The first day featured exchanges on the latest migration policy developments in the participating states, presentations by the ongoing Austrian and upcoming Romanian EU Presidencies, and an overview of the results accomplished by the Prague Process Migration Observatory and Training Academy. The second day focused on developing new project ideas relevant to the region, including on ways to enhance the narrative and public perception of migration, address migration management at the municipal level or improve anti-trafficking policies. All states had an opportunity to express their views extensively by answering to the guiding questions raised in the discussion paper.

The majority of states are in the process of developing, revising or adopting their national migration strategies. Thematically, return and readmission featured most frequently among the national policy priorities, followed by irregular migration, legal and labour migration, human trafficking and smuggling, asylum and international protection. Whereas some states struggle with labour shortages, others are aiming to offer their nationals further employment opportunities abroad. Integration and reintegration programmes belonged to the priorities of most Eastern Partnership states.

Participants expressed their satisfaction with the Prague Process' achievements in 2018 and supported the activities proposed for 2019. Many states voiced their readiness to host some of the latter activities or to help establish first contacts at municipal level. The important role of the media in shaping the discourse on migration and the need

to engage media actors was also widely acknowledged. The discussion on the Global Compact on Migration concluded that the Prague Process is well placed to monitor its implementation, in spite of the fact that some participating states did not endorse it. Finally, Lithuania announced its decision to chair the Prague Process Strategic Group in 2019. The year 2019 will mark the 10th anniversary of the Prague Process, which will be celebrated at the next SOM, organised under the Romanian EU Presidency in Bucharest on 10-11 June 2019.



Supporting the Elaboration of Moldova's Extended Migration Profile

On 8 November 2018, the Prague Process supported the Republic of Moldova in organising a seminar aimed at discussing and validating the **Extended Migration Profile (EMP)** for 2015-2017. The meeting in Chisinau gathered all actors involved in the drafting process and members of the designated inter-agency technical working group.

Participants discussed the current data and how it could contribute to improve the national policies. The institutions shared their insights on recent migration trends, analysed the risks of migration, including the probability of a regional migration crisis, as well as the dynamic migration situation in Moldova over the past three years. Participants acknowledged the need to

introduce more modern data collection tools, automatize the data exchange and adjust the indicators to the actual migration dynamics. The importance of increasing the data accuracy while



developing national policies was equally underlined.

The EMP elaboration process is guided by the **Bureau for Migration and Asylum under the Ministry of Internal Affairs**. The aim is to present a comprehensive overview on recent and ongoing migration trends, assessing the various effects and arising risks of migration in order to issue policy recommendations and thereby enhance the identification of effective policy responses.

Moldova produces the Extended Migration Profiles for the sixth time since 2007. In 2016, the country produced its first Migration Profile Light with the support of the Prague Process.

Migration data discussed in Skopje

The **Workshop on Gathering, Analysis and Sharing of Migration Data** held in Skopje on 2-3 October 2018 gathered some 80 participants representing 23 countries, as well as international stakeholders such as IOM, UNHCR, EASO, World Bank, Frontex, Eurostat, ICMPD and others.

Acknowledging that states need to tackle the common challenges linked to migration in a joint manner, the Minister underlined the Prague Process' significant contribution to this endeavour, also beyond the recent migration crises. The Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Macedonia, representing the leading state of the Prague Process, invited the attending states to the Senior Officials' Meeting in Prague in December 2018. Finally, the representative of the EU Delegation to Skopje expressed his support to the various products envisaged under the Migration Observatory underlining the benefit they could provide to policy-makers.

State representatives then shared their national practices in data gathering, analysis and sharing as well as particular challenges faced and good practices established. The majority of states envisage the collection and processing of migration data within their national migration strategies, relying mostly on administrative data sources. A number of states aim to establish a unified electronic migration information

system, connecting the various existing databases. **The monitoring of migration routes has become a priority although the proper forecasting of future migration trends remains a challenge.**

The workshop first addressed the Western Balkan region, including through presentations on behalf of IOM, MARRI and ICMPD. Different challenges and perspectives on gathering and analysis of migration data were tackled on behalf of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, Eurostat, the World Bank and Frontex. Meanwhile, the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford covered the issue of media reporting on migration. UNHCR, the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre and ICMPD made further interventions. Most participants expressed their satisfaction with the event and the various knowledge platforms and other data resources presented.



During his opening remarks, the Minister of Interior of Macedonia, Mr. Oliver Spasovski, referred to the challenges resulting from the substantial migration flows experienced as of 2015. The weaknesses exposed at the time have been addressed successfully ever since.

Expert mission to the Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

Representatives of the Ministries of Interior of **Hungary, Poland and Romania**, as well as the Ministry of Education of the **Czech Republic**, together with the Prague Process Coordinator at ICMPD carried out the mission to the Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in mid-November 2018. The mission began in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, before moving further south to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The previous such Prague Process expert mission to Turkmenistan occurred almost a decade ago in 2009, whereas Uzbekistan hosted a similar mission in 2015. Since then, the country's migration policies have seen considerable changes.

The mission featured meetings with the key migration authorities in both countries, such as the State Migration Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education, State Border Guards, and the local offices of international organisations dealing with migration.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan pursues the **principle of neutrality** and an **'open door'** policy in terms of its international cooperation. In geopolitical terms, Turkmenistan's neighbours play a key role. Afghanistan continues to represent the main source of uncertainty, thereby largely justifying the substantial security measures implemented by the Turkmen government.

Turkmenistan remains a **country of emigration**, though most Turkmen migrants prefer short-term migration due to their strong family ties. The state authorities do not oppose this type of migration. However, Turkmen migrants breaking the laws of their respective host country may face a five-year exit ban.

Turkmen students may also study abroad within student **exchange programs** (e.g. with different Romanian faculties). The bilateral agreement with Hungary grants Turkmen students access to the scholarship programme 'Stipendium Hungaricum'. Turkmenistan itself

welcomes some 200 foreign students per year through a yearly quota. These are mostly citizens of neighbouring countries with Turkmen ethnic origin, in particular from Afghanistan and China.

Recent developments in terms of **infrastructure** include the modernisation of border crossing points in 2016 and the upcoming opening of a new port in the Caspian Sea. These vast projects are implemented through contracts with foreign companies and the mobilisation of the domestic work force. The recent introduction of biometric passports and new visa categories (e.g. for sports) represent further milestones.

The mobilisation of new technologies for migration management and the related experiences of other states represent the key priority in terms of international cooperation. Another important challenge relates to the granting of citizenships to **stateless persons**. Since 2004, over 22.000 citizenship have been issued to the latter group, with the aim to eliminate statelessness in the country until 2024.

The **lack of comprehensive migration statistics** represents another key challenge, which mainly derives from the

missing coordination among the various state authorities engaged in data collection. Requests to share migration related data, received from abroad or on behalf of international stakeholders, thus often remain unanswered.

The State Migration Service expressed its willingness to **continue the cooperation within the Prague Process**. Whereas the Ministry for Education is mainly interested in any education-related actions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs considers further engaging in the Prague Process and possibly updating the national Migration Profile. Finally, the State Border Service would welcome the exchange of relevant experience at bilateral and multilateral level.

Uzbekistan

The country foremost represents an important **source country for labour migration**. As Russia remains the main country of destination for Uzbek migrant workers, good cooperation with Russian authorities in the field of legal migration was developed. However, the national authorities have tried to establish cooperation in this area with other states as well, including Kazakhstan, Turkey, the Gulf States and some EU Member



States. Agreements similar to the ones in place with Russia shall soon enter into force with Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. In spite of substantial foreign investments on behalf of China and South Korea, Russia also remains the most important economic partner for Uzbekistan.

The interest of the Uzbek state representatives mainly focused on **illegal migration** and on questions related to Uzbek citizens who had violated the Law on Foreigners in Romania and Poland. The question on whether re-entry bans would be issued to these individuals was of particular relevance as was the expressed need for lighter visa procedures for Uzbek citizens in the EU. Whereas the private sector (e.g. automobile industry) in Poland and the Czech Republic is in need of labour migration, such cooperation remains difficult in terms of visa issuance.

A new **law on entry, exit and transit** was adopted recently, introducing an electronic registration system for foreigners who remain in the country for more than three days. Meanwhile, the year 2017 saw the adoption of a new asylum law. Current policy priorities include the simplification of national visa procedures, including the introduction

of **visa-free entry for 39 countries** (including countries of the EU, East Asia, Middle East, India and USA), enhanced procedures for tourist visas and the introduction of an electronic visa system. Moreover, a special commission on human trafficking was established between the various competent authorities.

A new **law on protection of Uzbek citizens travelling abroad** was adopted in 2018. The law sets rules to improve the migration process, addresses the travel of migrant workers, establishes a special fund for training of future migrant workers and foresees return assistance in case of need. The responsible state agency is also eager to monitor the recruitment process as well as to analyse external labour markets in order to identify suitable jobs for Uzbek citizens. A new **law on licensing of private recruitment agencies** was also introduced in order for them to engage in the recruitment of Uzbek migrant workers.

The Uzbek authorities try to train their citizens before leaving the country, including through contacts with the community. This shall also prevent the migrants from possible radicalization

during their stay abroad. Supported by trainers from South Korea, the KOICA training centre in Tashkent provides training in mechanics, electricity, ICT and others.

The government in terms of job generation cannot properly manage the **annual entry of some 300.000 persons into the national labour market**. This leads to the quest for employment opportunities in foreign labour markets. As of beginning of 2019, Uzbek nationals are free to leave the country without an exit visa. As the last census took place in 1989, there is a **lack of reliable demographic data**. According to unofficial information, there are some 2 Million Uzbek migrants living abroad.

Illegal immigration to Uzbekistan is marginal due to the limited opportunities in the labour market (also in terms of illegal employment). However, this may change after the expected introduction of a visa-free regime with Tajikistan. More generally, relations with the neighbouring countries intensified recently. The country is opening to migration and is expected to become a transit country due to the liberalization of the visa regime with certain neighbouring countries.

Prague Process Anti-Trafficking Training held in Baku

In November 2018, 27 participants representing a dozen countries and UNHCR gathered in Baku for the activity '*Combating Trafficking in Human Beings - Training on a Comprehensive Policy Response*'. The aim of the Training was to enhance participants' knowledge on THB and in developing effective, victim-centered policy responses to prevent, identify and address the issue. As a result, participants' understanding of the situation and response to THB from across the Prague Process region improved, as did their ability to promote international good practices in the prevention, protection and prosecution areas of anti-trafficking policy.

The Head of Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of



Azerbaijan, Police General-Major Heydarov, opened the training and welcomed participants. The welcome notes further featured interventions by representatives of the State Migration Service, the Czech Embassy and the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, as well as ICMPD's Regional Coordinator for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The actual training first provided an overall understanding of human trafficking, including its legal context, the differences between THB and migrant smuggling and the most important sources of information. The different forms of trafficking were

addressed within a knowledge check, where participants also had a chance to describe the trafficking situation in their respective countries. Finally, participants learned about the key tools and strategies for developing anti-trafficking responses.

After looking at how THB is represented in the media, the second day focused on the identification of trafficking victims and on how concretely to respond to cases of THB. Several case studies were carried out, different indicators

introduced and video materials presented. The Director of the NGO Clean World (Azerbaijan) introduced the services required for addressing trauma and treating vulnerable individuals, as well as the general needs and rights of victims. Thereafter, the two ICMPD trainers addressed the various concepts and mechanisms for the referral of victims, as well as good practices in victim assistance. Azerbaijan concluded the day by introducing the main developments and challenges faced concerning THB, as well as the policy responses, operational

practices and international cooperation developed to combat THB.

The final day featured a Training of Trainers session, including guidelines on how to prepare a training agenda and key learning points, use the training materials and carry out exercises. The training manual used as a basis for this training will soon be available in English and Russian at the Prague Process website.



Interview with Armen Ghazaryan, Head of the State Migration Service of Armenia

Mr Armen Ghazaryan has been appointed the Head of the State Migration Service of Armenia in June 2018. Researcher and lecturer, with the PhD on migration and security in Armenia, he is also the youngest Head of the Service. Mr Ghazaryan is interested in migration, European studies and migration policies, communication studies and populism at large. We interviewed Mr Ghazaryan to get first insights on what has changed in the Service, and learn more about the recent developments in the migration sphere in Armenia.

Mr Ghazaryan, you have been the Head of Armenia's State Migration Service since June 2018. How do you assess the work accomplished since then?

Six months is a period in which you can merely establish the benchmarks of the upcoming work. Those benchmarks cover three important areas where we concentrate our efforts: First is the reform of the asylum procedures and improvement of the overall asylum system, including both the livelihood of the asylum seekers and the procedural,

legal guarantees for their protection. To that end, we have been fundraising for the new Asylum/Reception Center, and have done so successfully. With the help of our international partners we hope to launch the construction of the center still this year. Moreover, we have been conducting capacity building measures for our staff in order for the Migration Service to process asylum claims more efficiently and deliver quality decisions. These measures have already shown some results in terms of the improved quality of asylum decisions.

The second priority is the integration of foreigners, including long-term migrants, refugees, returnees etc. We have decided to do a comprehensive review of our integration strategy - once again with the help of our international partners, namely GIZ and others. A working group was set up to that end and a few meetings organised already. Our aim is to develop a comprehensive strategy, complemented by action plans for the specific target groups, which will have practical implications for the daily lives of their beneficiaries.

The third direction derives from the fact that our country is no longer merely a country of emigration but increasingly also a country of immigration. This is something new for Armenia, as we never faced this situation before. Therefore, we are currently in the phase of expert- and agency-level discussions to understand how to respond to this situation. This is a new line of work for us. The Migration Service has assumed the role and responsibility of coordinating this process, and we hope to manage well.



How did your background in social science and migration research affect your approach to the new position? Did you introduce any immediate changes to the MS?

I have a background in political science and media research, which have affected

my overall view on migration in terms of my string focus on evidence. My media research background is equally useful considering that the media sometimes creates an “alternative reality” or so-called “fake news” that are not based on evidence. Nonetheless, we as policy makers need to base our decisions on evidence and facts rather than emotions or rapid affective reactions. My thinking and mentality thus call for evidence-based research, also during policy discussions and policy processes where I try to concentrate on evidence rather than on assumptions. Consequently, I also want our staff to work in a more evidence-based manner.

As for the immediate changes introduced, I already mentioned the capacity building for our asylum unit, based on academic studies and through engaging some of the best specialists in the sphere of country of origin information.

Could you share a brief overview of the imminent priorities for 2019?

As said before, the new asylum center is the most pressing need. Secondly, we hope to complete the work on the integration concept and its action plans, which shall soon direct our work. Finally, I hope that we will be able to establish the policy benchmarks for our future work and have the policy and capacity in place for their implementation.

Armenia will be developing the Extended Migration Profile. What do you expect from this exercise?

We will introduce the Migration Profile to the larger public in the coming month. This is another important step for an evidence-based policy. The Migration Profile will give us a full overview of the national migration situation over the past five years. We hope to repeat this exercise in the years to come.

How do you assess the cooperation with the EU, including also within the Prague Process?

I would qualify our cooperation with the

EU as mature and mutually beneficial. We are grateful to our European colleagues for the support provided in various areas, including the cooperation through ICMPD, which has been crucial in many respects. Some EU Member States also support the building of our reception center, which we appreciate very much. We are engaged in extensive dialogue with our European colleagues on different matters, including especially return and readmission. The readmission rates from European countries have increased recently, particularly from Germany. We are thus trying to launch bilateral and multilateral projects with European countries to assist the returnees.

The ground that we prepared with the EU creates a good and conducive momentum for the start of the visa liberalization dialogue. We hope to start it soon. On the practical level, in terms of migration processes, I would say that we are ready. I hope that our European colleagues will be ready too. The first signals received from them seem promising, and I am sure that this positive trend will continue during our talks. We also value the cooperation within the framework of the Prague Process, which contributes to enhancing the capacity and expertise of our staff. I hope that our staff is also making a meaningful contribution during the various activities attended.

How do you assess the work of the Prague Process Migration Observatory, which was launched in 2018? What priority areas would you like to see addressed by it?

Our staff members contributed to the work of the Observatory in a meaningful and productive way, addressing the sphere of return, of overall migration policy development and asylum. I would like the Process to invest more efforts on studying the Eastern dimension of the European migration. I understand that the Southern dimension is extremely important because of the current trends, but the study of the Eastern dimension

is equally important. If we do not carry out the necessary measures to regulate migration – neither by banning it, nor by liberalizing it completely - in a meaningful, orderly and safe manner, we will face substantial problems in the future.

Armenia is among 162 states that ratified the Global Compact on Migration. What are your expectations from it?

The Marrakech Compact is a document, which outlines the main directions that countries should strive to follow. It is neither a legally binding document, nor does it establish a “right to migrate”. It merely creates the framework for understanding these matters. There has been much speculation about the Compact, which became very political. However, we need to keep in mind that there was no global framework for migration or for refugees until now. In

that sense, both the Global Compact on Migration and the one on Refugees establish multilateral frameworks and joint objectives for states. Our expectation is for this global framework to improve the understanding and enhance common views with many of our international partners. This will create a sense of mutual understanding and cooperation in this area.

Thank you, Mr Ghazaryan, for taking your time!

Prague Process Migration Observatory releases its first publications

Policy Brief by
Katerina Ivashchenko

“Ukraine: first visa-free year (successes, challenges and lessons learned)”



This policy brief analysed the context and main quantitative indicators of the first visa-free year between Ukraine and the EU. The visa liberalisation has had an overly positive impact on the country. It contributed to the comprehensive security reforms implemented, improved cooperation on IBM as well as the overall reputation of Ukrainian passports and citizenship. Moreover, it resulted in the development of transport and tourism infrastructure along the routes between Ukraine and the EU, boosted tourist and business travel and facilitated structural changes in the flow of travellers. Finally, it also improved the image of Ukraine across the EU and popularized the EU in Ukraine.

synchronized, including between the EU countries. Awareness-raising campaigns, explaining the principles of responsible visa-free travel should continue. After all, such visa-free travel constitutes a key step in transforming Ukraine into a safe, reliable and strongly developing neighbour and partner of the EU.

Link to download the brief:
<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=63>

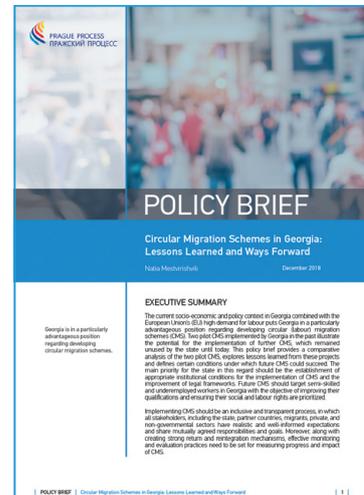
One recommendation put forward is for Ukraine to address the findings of the First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism by ensuring the security at all national borders, including the one with Russia, which would require the further attention of the European partners. Moreover, the counting methods at the borders should be

Policy Brief by
Natia Mestvirishvili

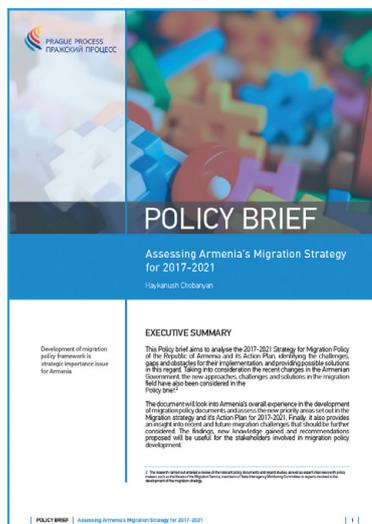
“Circular Migration Schemes in Georgia: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward”

The current socio-economic and policy context in Georgia combined with the EU's high demand for labour puts Georgia in a particularly advantageous position for developing circular (labour) migration schemes (CMS). Two pilot schemes previously implemented by Georgia illustrate the great potential of CMS, which has remained unused to date. A comparative analysis of the two pilot schemes explores lessons learned and defines the conditions under which future CMS could succeed.

In this regard, establishing appropriate institutional conditions and legal framework for CMS constitutes a key policy priority. CMS need to be developed in a transparent manner, including all relevant stakeholders, ranging from the states involved, to the private sector, civil society and the concerned migrants themselves. They all should have realistic, well-informed expectations and share mutually agreed objectives and responsibilities. The Policy brief also highlights the need for strong return and reintegration mechanisms, as well as effective monitoring and evaluation processes.



Link to download the brief:
<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=91>



Policy Brief by Haykanush
Chobanyan

“Assessing Armenia's Migration Strategy for 2017-2021”

This analysis identifies the challenges, gaps and obstacles for the implementation of Armenia's Migration Strategy and Action Plan and offers possible solutions. The Policy brief also reflects the recent changes in the Armenian Government and new approaches implemented since.

After briefly introducing Armenia's overall experience in the development of migration policy documents, the document assesses the new priority areas set out in the current Migration Strategy, looking also into the future. The respective findings and recommendations may be useful for migration policy development in other countries as well.

Link to download the brief:
<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=89>

Analytical Report by
Ivanka Hainzl

“Building comprehensive national responses to trafficking in human beings: the experience of Azerbaijan”

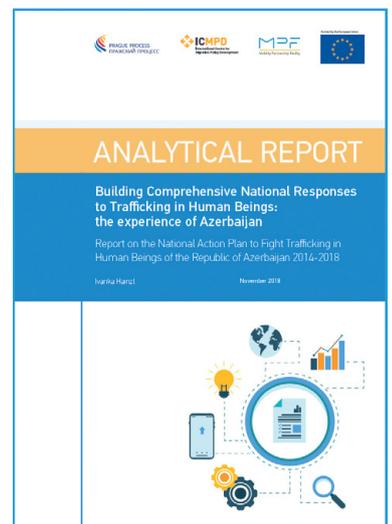
The report analyses the structure and content of Azerbaijan's third National Action Plan (NAP) to Fight Trafficking in Human Beings (2014-2018) by looking at the respective international standards and practices. The analysis focuses in particular on the following questions:

1. Which areas of the fight against trafficking in human beings are covered by the NAP?

2. What areas of action would require further elaboration in the light of relevant international standards and guidelines?
3. How to enhance the efficacy of the next NAP of the Republic of Azerbaijan?

The report also presents successful practices in developing, monitoring and evaluating national action plans. These constitute helpful guidelines for any country.

Link to download the report:
<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=87>



Global Compact on Migration adopted by 164 states in Marrakech

After a two-year process of preparations and unprecedented negotiations, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was agreed upon by 164 states during the intergovernmental conference held in Marrakech, Morocco on 10-11 December 2018.

A non-binding agreement, the GCM aims to better manage migration at local, national, regional and global levels, including reducing the risks and vulnerabilities the migrants or refugees face at different stages of their journey. "Migration is a natural phenomenon," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said. "It happens all the time all over the world. If it happens legally, it's a good thing."

The pact had been approved in July by all 193 member nations except the US, which backed out in 2017. In addition, Australia, Austria, Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Chile, Dominican Republic, Poland and Slovakia refused to attend

the summit and sign the accord. Meanwhile, Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Israel, Slovenia and Switzerland are still undecided on whether to agree to the new pact.

Not all aspects of the document are new as many of its provisions are already included in other regional frameworks. However, the UN led process provides these provisions a higher degree of legitimacy at global level, despite its non-binding nature. By default, the GCM represents a compromise and has - depending on the negotiation position - a number of gaps and shortcomings. Whether the GCM will help to create order in often disorderly migration processes and what further gaps will persist, remains to be seen. In fact, the acute challenges of mixed migration flows may be placed between the two Global Compacts and therefore persist in the future.

Overcoming the recent crisis mode does require an adequate governance

framework, based on a thorough understanding of global migration, its drivers and motives. As the majority of origin and destination countries endorsed the GCM, it is also going to be a reality - in one way or another - for those countries, which have formally decided to stay away from it. Moreover, the UN and in particular IOM as the main driver of the GCM and its implementation will reorganise their way of working, aiming at delivering effectively on the GCM objectives.

The implementation of the GCM also foresees a role for regional consultative processes, such as the Prague Process, which are well placed to support and facilitate reporting on the actions taken at regional level. The Prague Process, being an intergovernmental dialogue, may represent a useful mechanism for those states that endorsed the GCM and for its implementation at inter- and intra-regional levels, as well as for the ones who have decided not to endorse the GCM.



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Russia's new Migration Policy Concept: Repatriation, naturalisation, and highly-skilled labour

Approved on 31 October 2018, the new Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019-2025 has replaced the previous such document adopted in 2012. The issuing of the accompanying Action Plan for 2019-2021 shall follow within three months.

Migration situation in Russia in 2012-2017

Between 2012 and 2017, Russia's internal migration increased by 10 percent. However, the population is distributed disproportionately across the country with the major part of population residing in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and the Krasnodar region. Over the same period, the immigration flow has compensated for the country's demographic decline. More than 1 million people received the Russian citizenship, with over half of them receiving the citizenship under the Program for the voluntary resettlement of compatriots.

Every year, some 3 million, primarily low skilled, labour migrants come to Russia, thereby constituting 3-4% of its total labour force. At the same time, over 60.000 Russians leave the country on an annual basis to find employment abroad. In total, over 2 million Russian citizens have registered with the Russian Consulates abroad.

Aims and priority areas outlined in the Concept

The Concept highlights that the natural reproduction within the Russian population shall remain the main source of demographic replenishment and labour force. Meanwhile, **migration policy shall remain an auxiliary tool for solving the demographic and related economic problems.** Yet the proposed Migration Policy Concept prioritises the repatriation of Russian citizens and recruitment of skilled and highly skilled labour.

The Concept aims to improve the following policies

⇒ **Repatriation and voluntary relocation of migrants capable of integrating into the society.** Such repatriation and relocation efforts shall target highly skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, investors and prominent artists. The voluntary resettlement to the so-called priority resettlement areas¹ shall see appropriate financial support and an abolition of administrative barriers. More attention should be devoted to regulating the number of foreign workers, as well as to developing organised recruitment schemes.

⇒ **Entry and stay of foreigners contributing to the economic, social and cultural development of the state.** The Policy proposes a simplification of the procedures for entry, stay, work and naturalisation.

⇒ **Establishing the conditions for the adaptation/integration of foreigners to the legal, socio-economic, cultural and other living conditions of the country.** This shall include the development of mechanisms and institutions supporting social and cultural adaptation and actions against the spatial segregation of migrant communities.

⇒ **Educational migration.** Russian education institutions shall become more accessible to foreigners, whereas the mechanisms for attracting foreign talents, including teachers, should be improved.

⇒ **Actions tackling the disproportional distribution of population across the country.** The Concept suggests that conditions for internal migration shall be supported by development of infrastructure, public employment policy instruments, including the access to information on employment possibilities.

⇒ **Actions combating irregular migration and violation of immigration law.** This shall, among others, be tackled by improving the legal framework for countering irregular migration, border control and border infrastructure, information sharing and execution of deportations, as well as by increasing the use of biometrics and involvement of the civil society.

⇒ **Assistance to persons seeking international protection.** The policy will look into the further development of assistance mechanisms for foreigners seeking international protection, prepare all relevant institutions for an eventual mass influx of asylum seekers, and support actions on the integration of refugees.

The international cooperation on migration, as outlined in the Concept, should continue in the framework of existing cooperation platforms, shaping a positive, balanced and unified international agenda, and allowing for exchange of best practices with



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regard to different migration policy aspects. The implementation of the policy foresees annual reporting to the President, trainings for state officials dealing with migration issues and objective reporting on migration and the related policies implemented.

To get acquainted with the Concept please visit [in Russian]: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/58986>

1. <http://government.ru/docs/33747/> and <http://government.ru/docs/2130/>

Facts and Figures on Visa and Entry Procedures

Uzbekistan

On 5 October 2018, Uzbekistan introduced a visa-free regime for citizens of France, who can now stay in Uzbekistan for up to 30 days without a visa. This decision supports the development of bilateral relations and facilitates cultural, scientific and educational exchange. Throughout 2018, Uzbekistan also abolished the visa regime for citizens of Israel, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Tajikistan Turkey, and Japan.



Georgia and Ukraine

In October 2018, Georgia and Ukraine simplified their entry procedures, making it possible for their citizens to travel between the two countries with only a valid electronic ID card. The Agreement provides for visa-free stays of up to 90 days.

Moldova

Moldova simplified the procedure for obtaining a Moldovan visa and residence permit for 60 states. Following this change, tourists or business travellers coming to Moldova will only require a visa application, accompanied by the valid passport of the applicant, without a need to present a roundtrip ticket or reservation of accommodation anymore. Overall, citizens from 100 countries can now travel to Moldova without visas.

EU, Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries

On 19 December 2018, the European Commission published the Annual report on the functioning of the visa-free regime with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine.

All eight countries continue to fulfil the visa-liberalisation benchmarks, thus preventing any steps to suspend the visa-free travel. However, the report calls for individual countries to introduce concrete measures on particular challenges: money laundering in Moldova; the high number of unfounded asylum applications in the Schengen+ area from Moldovan and Georgian citizens; corruption and irregular migration in Ukraine; significant irregular migration from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the EU; combating irregular migration and strengthen border controls in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia; prevent irregular migration in Serbia, which shall also “step up the effective implementation of the EU-Serbia Readmission Agreement”; or organised crime in Montenegro.



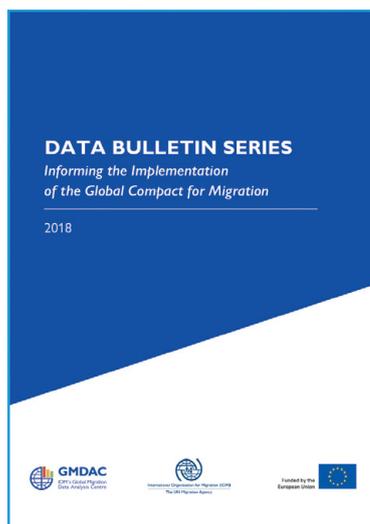
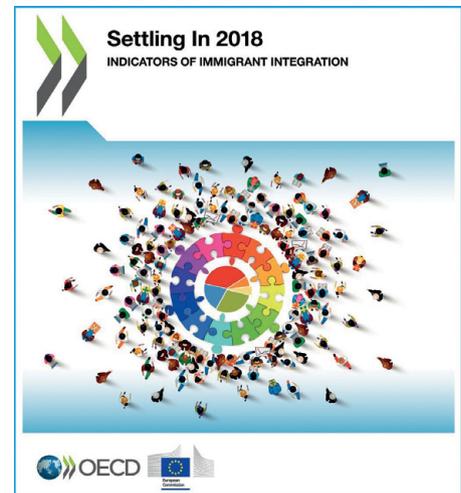
Interesting reads

Settling In 2018: Indicators of Immigrant Integration

This joint OECD-European Commission publication presents a comprehensive international comparison across all EU and OECD countries - as well as selected G20 countries - of the integration outcomes of immigrants and their children, using 74 indicators based on three strands: labour market and skills; living conditions; and civic engagement and social integration.

Link to access:

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2018_9789264307216-en



Data Bulletin Series: Informing the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration

The “Data Bulletin Series: Informing the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration” contains 17 Data Bulletins produced by IOM as well as external experts and partner agencies. It spans a broad range of topics covered by the Global Compact for Migration, highlighting currently available data sources as well as data gaps and challenges relevant to each of them.

Link to access:

<https://publications.iom.int/books/data-bulletin-series-informing-implementation-global-compact-migration>

Skills for Evidence-Informed Policy Making: Continuous Professional Development Framework

The mapping of skills essential for researchers and policymakers active in the science-policy interface is broad. Therefore, the professional development framework consists of eight skills clusters with each cluster addressing a specific part of the collective skillset required to increase the impact of research evidence on policymaking.

Link to access:

<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/en/community/evidence4policy/news/framework-skills-evidence-informed-policy-making>



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