

## EDITORIAL

The Prague Process turns 10 this year. Over these ten years, the Process has grown and advanced. It managed to implement a number of projects under its umbrella, raise awareness on the most important migration issues, enhance the common understanding of migration management among its participating states, and adjust the leadership structure through the rotating chair of the Strategic Group. Most importantly perhaps, the Process managed to establish and sustain the network of 50 states with an overall population of almost one billion people. These states, of course, remain overly diverse in terms of their size, geography, history, economy, exposure to migration and resulting policies.

The policy landscape has also changed over the past decade. The advocates of open borders were challenged by the substantial mixed migration flows experienced in some parts of the Prague Process region. Whereas eight participating states reached a visa-free regime with the EU, five countries formed

the Eurasian Economic Union. Various countries improved their migration management systems significantly, starting to share their successful experience with others.

Aiming to address issues of acute importance, this Quarterly review looks at the demographic developments across the Prague Process states and at the results of the so-called EU-Turkey Agreement. Moreover, Lithuania's Vice-Minister of Interior speaks about the current challenges in terms of labour shortages and efforts made to improve the understanding of migration among media and the public. The review further touches upon the thematic areas of IBM, return and migrant smuggling, and assesses the state of the European Agenda on Migration before the EU elections on 26 May 2019. Finally, it introduces the newest publications released by the Migration Observatory and presents some recent legislative amendments.

Have a good read!

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### Looking ahead: upcoming Prague Process activities 2019

10-11 June	●	<i>D</i> Senior Officials' Meeting, Bucharest, Romania
30 June -6 July	●	<i>TA</i> Prague Process Summer School, Georgia
23-24 July	●	<i>MO</i> Research Coordination Meeting, Vienna, Austria
24-26 September	●	<i>TA</i> Training Workshop on Legal and Labour Migration, Budva, Montenegro
15 October	●	<i>D</i> Lunch-time Lecture 'Legal Mobility in the Prague Process region', Brussels
22-23 October	●	<i>D</i> International Conference on Border Management, Yerevan, Armenia
October/November	●	<i>MO &amp; TA</i> Training Workshop on Data Gathering and Exchange, Vilnius, Lithuania

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

## Interview with Mr. Darius Urbonas (Vice-Minister of Interior, Republic of Lithuania) on assuming the chairmanship of the Prague Process Strategic Group in 2019

During the Senior Officials' Meeting held in Prague in December 2018, Lithuania announced its readiness to assume the leadership of the Prague Process' Strategic Group from the Czech Republic. To learn more on the current state of migration affairs in Lithuania, and his vision for the Prague Process, we interviewed Mr. Darius Urbonas, Vice-minister of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.



### Mr. Urbonas, what are the current state of play and Lithuania's priorities in the migration field?

In recent years, Lithuania has experienced considerable emigration, which represents the biggest challenge at present. The shortages experienced in various sectors of the national labour market, the aging of population and other important socioeconomic impacts put migration high on the political agenda. Since 1990, Lithuania has lost almost one quarter of its population. The low birth rate, relatively short life expectancy and low return rate among emigrants have further exacerbated the problem, turning demography into a key challenge for Lithuania.

The recently adopted Inter-institutional Action Plan (2019-2021) for the implementation of the Strategy on Demography, Migration and Integration Policy for 2018-2030 will play a key role in the years to come. Lithuania has improved its migration policy through consolidating and centralising various functions, by installing an effective

coordination mechanism and creating a user-friendly procedural environment. The new structure and management mechanism shall be operational as of July 2019.

Speaking more generally, we consider migration to be a global issue that requires a global approach and common solutions. We believe that close cooperation with partner countries is a key precondition for an effective migration management. Therefore, Lithuania supports and prioritizes partnerships with neighbouring and other relevant partner countries at bilateral and multilateral levels.

### Is Lithuania actively recruiting foreign labour force?

In order to become attractive for highly skilled workers and to minimize the experienced labour shortages, the competent authorities are continuously monitoring the labour market situation and updating the list of professions requiring additional labour force. They also consult the private sector concerning the particular challenges faced and suggested solutions.

The recent legislative changes concerning the access of foreign workers to the national labour market resulted in the following:

- reliable companies (officially listed as such) face fewer administrative requirements for hiring migrant workers;
- more favourable conditions for students and researchers to enter the national labour market;
- third-country nationals under certain conditions can now be employed by another employer or perform another job function with the same employer;
- the entry and residence conditions for citizens of the G7 and OECD countries arriving for business or employment purposes were eased;
- quotas were introduced for third-country workers who do not require a work permit.

### Some EU countries think that the 'migration crisis' is over. What is your take on this?

The current migration situation in the EU and actual numbers of arrivals suggest that we have indeed overcome the crisis mode. The 'migration crisis' has nonetheless largely determined recent migration policy developments at EU level and has shaped the public opinion and our attitude towards migrants. The EU continues to search for the optimal mechanism to address any eventual future crisis and measures to prevent them. There is a need to finalise and consolidate a balanced EU migration and border management system.

### Do you take any action on educating the public and the media on migration issues?

In 2019, a Strategic Communication Group was established as an independent structural unit within the Ministry of the Interior, which has already proven its benefit in the field of strategic communication and information dissemination on different key areas within the responsibility of the Ministry.

The Communication Strategy mainly focuses on raising awareness through various information campaigns. At present, the new Group is developing its activities, working closely with the media, online platforms and social networks while also organising thematic events.

Communication with the civil society and other key migration stakeholders became a priority in the context of the Brexit as well as the referendum on dual citizenships in Lithuania.

### What does it mean for Lithuania to chair the Prague Process?

Chairing the Prague Process, an inter-governmental dialogue among 50 states, is definitely a huge responsibility! The Prague Process is the only EU regional migration dialogue directed towards the East. It involves all EU+

countries and covers both close EU neighbours and distant Eastern countries as well as Turkey and Russia. For some of the participating states the Prague Process constitutes the only opportunity for engagement with the EU on migration issues. Therefore, Lithuania takes its current role as leader and facilitator in this migration dialogue very seriously.

At the same time, chairing the Prague Process provides a great opportunity to learn more about our partners in the region, to benefit from trust-building, networking and accessing more stakeholders, and to improve policy coordination. It is also a good chance to promote the EU values and standards.

After all, an effective EU migration policy largely depends on successfully engaging with our neighbours.

### **What concrete ideas would you like to implement within the Prague Process? What role do you see for it in the future?**

For Lithuania, the Prague Process represents an important instrument, which is ensuring the geographical balance in the EU external migration dimension. The Process brings our attention to the wider EU neighbourhood, beyond the Eastern Partnership region. As the Southern dimension continues to prevail within the EU agenda, Lithuania's priority is to advocate further

development of the Prague Process with the support of the EU. As a leading state, Lithuania is also working on the promotion and visibility of the Process.

With so many regional, interregional and global dialogues addressing migration issues across the world, we need to explore possibilities for future synergies. In our opinion, stronger cooperation and experience sharing can contribute to ensuring the sustainability of common objectives and reaching our goals more effectively.

Thank you for the interview, Mr Urbonas!

## **Training on Integrated Border Management and Return held in Kiev**

This three-day training, organised in March 2019, was the third one implemented within the Prague Process Training Academy, following the ones on International Protection and on Trafficking in Human Beings, organised in 2018 in Rome and Baku respectively. The training in Kiev gathered 50 participants, including representatives of 13 participating states, the European Commission and a number of renowned trainers.

The **Head of State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS), Mr. Petro Tsygkal**, opened the event, underlining that it represented a recognition of Ukraine's Integrated Border Management (IBM) system and of the

excellent collaboration with ICMPD, which was further enhanced through the recent signing of a Cooperation Agreement. Since the introduction of the IBM concept in Ukraine nine years ago, the country has successfully addressed ten IBM areas. The SBGS is ready to cooperate with all relevant international partners. Ukraine has realised several twinning projects with EU Member States, which will support the elaboration of the new Border Management Strategy. Ukraine has been returning irregular migrants seized at the borders to their respective countries of origin and transit, applying the respective best practice approaches. A unified readmission area shall be established jointly with the

State Migration Service. In order to enhance security in the region, all Parties were invited to join this area.

The **Deputy Head of the State Migration Service of Ukraine, Ms Natalia Naumenko**, underlined the timeliness of the training and importance of the border management and return. Ukraine continues to improve its migration management system as exemplified by the current Migration Strategy that reaches until 2025. The migration processes in the EU have resulted in a need to adjust Ukraine's IBM system. The concrete measures taken have included the introduction of biometric passports for Ukrainian and foreign citizens, the elaboration of new



ICT solutions to enhance inter-agency cooperation and improved linkages between the migration and border services. The establishing of a virtual contact centre shall help to address future emergencies. The overall objective is to improve simultaneously the national security and free movement of people. The important role of the Prague Process in bringing in excellent experts and enhancing the dissemination of good practices was underlined.

The first day of training focused on **IBM Strategic Planning**, including an introduction into the IBM Concept, its key areas of intervention and the current state of play within the EU. The sessions on Strategic development, risk analyses and information exchange were of operational nature and raised

interesting debates among the trainees during the following working group sessions. The importance of ensuring that human rights are protected was equally addressed.

The second day of training was devoted to the **newest border technologies** and respective technical solutions, including an outlook into the future design of EU borders. Group exercises then engaged the trainees to test their new knowledge by assessing technical needs, planning workflows at a modern BCP and discuss the limitations of using technologies. The following training-of-trainers session introduced an IBM Training Manual for independent capacity building and various novelties in the training methodologies on Border Management. The training

design was equally addressed, with an emphasis on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework.

The final day as entirely devoted to the issue of **return**, including an introduction into the EU's respective policy framework, as well as the concepts of forced and voluntary return. The fundamental rights applicable within return operations were discussed in detail before looking into forced return monitoring. The training ended with another interactive group exercise and the final feedback session, which saw many positive reactions on behalf of the training participants.

## Combating Migrant Smuggling through Cross-Border Cooperation: highlights from the latest MPF Workshop organised in February 2019

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), together with Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre, organised a two-day workshop on migration related cross-border crimes experienced within Mobility Partnerships (MPs) and Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility (CAMMs). Over 70 representatives of law enforcement authorities from EU and non-EU countries, the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council, the European Commission, as well as partner agencies and academic institutions attended the Workshop. The meeting provided an opportunity to address the links between migrant smuggling and document fraud, to share experiences and good practices, and look into possible joint solutions.

Migrant smuggling represents one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide. According to Europol, migrant smugglers and criminal groups facilitated 90 % of arrivals to the EU in 2015, which generated up to €6 billion in profit. Quite often professional smugglers belong to fragmented organised criminal groups using land, sea and air routes. While the states put efforts into developing more sophisticated border

control mechanism, the smugglers work towards ever more creative communication means and payment schemes. Connected to organised crime, document fraud is one of the key tools facilitating illegal border crossings.

The law enforcement authorities recognise the benefits of regional and international cooperation and the need for joint efforts in elaboration of effective strategies to counter irregular activities. The existing political frameworks, such as MPs and CAMMs, provide for a comprehensive and tailor-made channel for strengthening cooperation with partner countries along key migration routes.

Considering the geographical spectrum of criminal groups, their mobility, flexibility and engagement in different criminal markets, the conclusions of the meeting pointed out that an efficient response deserves a multifaceted approach involving various actors, an enhanced police cooperation as well as regular information sharing between the parties.

For more information on the latest developments related to migrant



smuggling and document fraud, please consult the MPF policy brief available online: [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/MPF\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_Enhancing\\_cross-border\\_police\\_cooperation.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/MPF_Policy_Brief_Enhancing_cross-border_police_cooperation.pdf)

## The third anniversary of the EU-Turkey Statement

In March 2019, Federica Mogherini confirmed the transfer of €1.5 billion representing part of the second tranche to the facility for refugees in Turkey. The overall EU contribution stipulated by the EU-Turkey agreement of March 2016 was set at €6 billion figure, with the first €3 billion fully allocated by now. These funds shall improve the humanitarian situation and ensure effective protection for over 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey.

### The Statement in brief

On 18 March 2016, following the dramatic increase of migrant arrivals to Europe in 2015, the EU and Turkey agreed on a solution to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU. This solution foresaw the establishing of legal channels for resettlement of refugees from Turkey to the EU. The key points of the reached agreement are as follows:

- ▶ **Returns:** Irregular migrants and inadmissible asylum seekers crossing from Turkey into Greece are returned to Turkey as of 20 March 2016.
- ▶ **One-for-one:** For each Syrian returned to Turkey, another Syrian migrant is resettled to the EU. Priority is given to those who have not tried to enter the EU illegally. The total number of resettlements is capped at 72,000.
- ▶ **Financial aid:** The EU allocates €6 billion to support the Facility for Refugees in Turkey: €3 billion for 2016-2017 and €3 billion for 2018-2019. The focus areas are humanitarian assistance, education, health, municipal infrastructure and socioeconomic support.

### Progress made and challenges faced

By the end of 2018, over 1.5 million of the most vulnerable refugees received humanitarian assistance to cover for basic needs, over 410,000 students were supported in attending school, 600,000 children have been integrated into the Turkish school system, and 178 migrant health centres made operational. With

the first €3 billion fully committed and contracted, another €3 billion tranche will ensure further sustainability of the efforts already undertaken.

In 2018, the number of irregular arrivals to the EU dropped to 150,000, representing a 90% decrease as compared to the peak of 2015. This is mostly due to the significant decrease in arrivals through the Central Mediterranean route (to Italy and Malta). Meanwhile, arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean route in 2018 have seen a 30% increase, which puts continued pressure on the Aegean Islands and the Greek-Turkish land border. The slow pace of returns from Greece to Turkey combined with the limited reception capacities in Greece make the situation ever more challenging. Human rights groups have repeatedly denounced the degrading conditions in the Greek camps and the inefficiency in processing of asylum applications. The European Commission acknowledged these problems in its recent Progress report on the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration. Greece was called to urgently put in place an effective and sustainable migration strategy, focusing on efficient asylum procedures, the use of voluntary and forced return programmes and provision of adequate accommodation to the most vulnerable. The actual number of returns executed from March 2016 until 2019 amounted to some 2,200 persons. Meanwhile, the number of Syrian refugees resettled from Turkey reached 20,000 refugees, most of whom resettled to Germany, France and the Netherlands. By October 2019, the EU MS need to ensure 50,000 additional resettlement places.

### What's next?

While current efforts mostly focus on the returns and resettlements of Syrian refugees, both sides acknowledge the need for long-term solutions. According to the Turkish government, some 292,000 Syrians have returned to Syria by the end of 2018. However, most of the 3.6 million Syrians remain in Turkey under a temporary protection regime. They are granted legal residence, access to free healthcare, education, social aid and the labour

market. To reduce the dependency on humanitarian assistance, recent EU financed projects in Turkey have focused on their socio-economic integration: language courses, vocational training and job market integration. Although the Turkish government made it easier for Syrians to get work permits by reducing the fees, the unemployment rate among them remains high. One of the solutions currently discussed in this respect relates to the preferential trade access to the European market for agricultural products involving Syrian labour. This will allow recruiting Syrians (also those coming from rural areas) in the agricultural sector, facilitate their integration, reduce the economic burden of Turkey and international actors, while preventing potential irregular movement.

### To read more:

EU-Turkey Statement  
[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/&its Q&A](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/&its%20Q&A) [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-4321\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-4321_en.htm)

EU Turkey facility factsheet  
[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/frit\\_factsheet.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/frit_factsheet.pdf)

EC Communication March 2019  
[https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190306\\_com-2019-126-report\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190306_com-2019-126-report_en.pdf)



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## European Agenda on Migration: post-crisis state of affairs?

In 2018, 150,000 irregular migrants entered the EU thereby accounting for only 10% of those arriving in 2015. The flow of migrants to the EU has thus decreased to pre-crisis levels.

Since 2015, the EU invested 140 million Euro into strengthening border management in Morocco and assisted 37,000 migrants in Libya to return home safely. The EU-Turkey Statement (read above) reduced the irregular arrivals to Greece significantly. Moreover, the EU aims to intensify the negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation with Morocco, while also continuing the trilateral task force group African Union – EU – UN aiming at freeing migrants from detention, facilitating voluntary return and evacuating the most vulnerable from Libya.

Despite the positive results of the introduced actions, some structural problems at national and EU levels remain to be addressed: the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and in particular the Dublin Regulation, which has put great pressure on the EU frontline countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain. The decision of 2015 to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece has resulted in only 35,000 relocations by the end of 2018 thereby prolonging the discussions on alternative redistribution mechanisms. In spite of the various measures taken to strengthen the EU external borders, France, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway have maintained their internal border checks for the time being (until November 2019).

In 2018, the EC put forward a legislative package aiming at reforming the CEAS, including the following legal changes:

- ▶ reform the **Dublin system** to better allocate asylum applications among member states and to guarantee the timely processing of applications;
- ▶ reinforce the **Eurodac regulation** to improve the EU fingerprint database for asylum seekers;
- ▶ establish a fully-fledged **EU asylum agency**;
- ▶ replace the **asylum procedure directive** with a regulation to harmonise EU procedures and reduce differences in recognition rates among member states;



- ▶ replace the **qualification directive** with a regulation to harmonise protection standards and rights for asylum seekers;
- ▶ reform the **reception conditions directive** to ensure that asylum seekers benefit from harmonised and dignified reception standards;
- ▶ create a permanent EU **resettlement framework**.

Five of the seven laws have been agreed already, with the harmonization

of asylum procedures and relocation quotas remaining the main stumbling blocks. To move forward, the German interior minister called for detaching the agreed legislation from the full package. However, his idea did not receive the support of Italy, Austria, Malta and the Visegrad countries.

Until further progress is made on the revision of the Dublin system, the EC put forward a proposal for a temporary and voluntary mechanism to accommodate migrants rescued in the Mediterranean

France, Germany, Portugal, Ireland, Romania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy and Malta supported this concept at the EU informal Summit held in Bucharest in February 2019. Spain, which recorded 64,000 irregular arrivals in 2018, rejected the proposal arguing that the solution would exclude the part of the Mediterranean, which has been facing the most arrivals recently. Moreover, Cyprus opposed the creation of so-called “control centers” on its territory, where the asylum applications of people disembarked in the EU

would be processed. Such temporary measure, according to Cyprus, could prove permanent and halt the needed Dublin reform. The CEAS reform is unlikely to go through before the European Parliamentary elections on 26 May 2019.

According to Eurobarometer and contrary to the EU official position that the migration crisis is over, 40% of

Europeans consider immigration one of the top two issues in the EU.

**To read more:**

Non-paper on “controlled centers” in the EU:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migra->

[tion/20180724\\_non-paper-controlled-centres-eu-member-states\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migra-tion/20180724_non-paper-controlled-centres-eu-member-states_en.pdf)

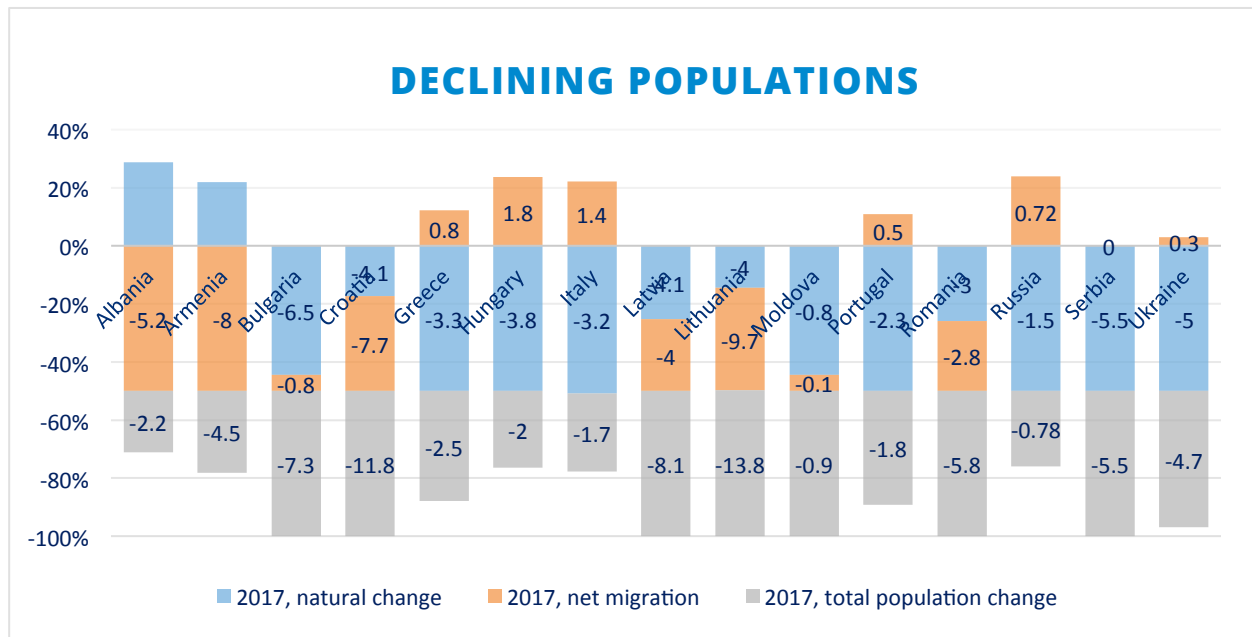
The European Agenda on Migration:  
[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-19-1496\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1496_en.htm)  
 Reform of EU asylum rules: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ceas-reform/>

## Demographic situation in the Prague Process states

At the beginning of 2019, a number of countries across the Prague Process reported a population decline. According to Eurostat, in 2018 as compared to 2017, the most drastic population loss occurred in Lithuania, Croatia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Armenia. Bulgaria, Serbia and Ukraine are leading in the natural decrease of population, with the number of deaths exceeding the number of births. To

some extent, such natural decrease can also be observed in Greece, Italy, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Kosovo, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, and Russia. Overall, Romania has lost over 1.5 million inhabitants since 2007, recording a 50-year low in 2018. Analysts warn that such a demographic decrease will have a large impact on economic growth in the coming decade.

For Bulgaria, Romania and most recently Croatia, their EU accession accelerated the exodus of their citizens. Bulgaria, which suffers from a low birth rate and lost almost 52.000 persons in a single year, has one of the fastest-shrinking populations in the world. Apart from the ever-falling birth rates, emigration has been most influential in countries such as Lithuania, Croatia, Albania and Armenia.



Meanwhile, population growth in other states is often linked to higher immigration rates. 23% of the Dutch population now have a migration background. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of people living in the Netherlands increased by 280.800, but about 75% of

the increase result from immigration. Similarly, in Finland, Denmark, Norway and especially Sweden the net migration contributed 81% of the total population increase, whereas in Malta, immigration accounted for 95% of the population increase.

Turkey, Azerbaijan, Ireland and the five Central Asian countries are the sole Prague Process states experiencing a positive demographic evolution, thanks to the natural replenishment of their populations.

## Newly released publications of the Prague Process Migration Observatory

### Analytical report by Yelena Sadovskaya

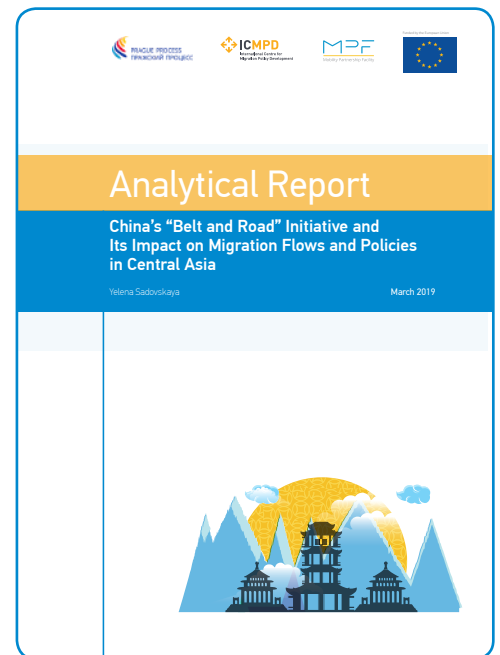
#### “China’s “Belt and Road” Initiative and Its Impact on Migration Flows and Policies in Central Asia”

The report focuses on analysis of China’s “Belt and Road” Initiative (BRI) and more specifically on the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) project, representing the component aiming to build land transport corridors from China through Central Asia (CA) to Europe – and its impact on migration flows and policies in the CA region. The report analyzes the importance of SREB for the land-locked countries in the region, identifies the main migration trends that have developed in the context of the movement of capital, goods, services and labor force from China; analyzes individual types of migration by

countries. Despite the increasing mobility in the region and the importance of regulating migration, the regional co-operation, including the harmonization of policies and information exchange, is not well established. Systematic research and forecast of the migration processes provoked by SREB/BRI are unavailable.

Link to download the report:

<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=150>



### Policy Brief by Yan Matusevich

#### “Evaluating the Future of Uzbek Labour Migration”

Despite being the region’s largest exporter of migrant labour, Uzbekistan has only recently identified migration as a key policy area with a particular focus on diversifying labour migration flows and incorporating migration into broader development planning. As part of this renewed emphasis on migration, Uzbekistan is expanding organized labour exporting schemes with third countries such as Russia, South Korea, Japan and Poland as a safe and lasting alternative to irregular and precarious forms of migration. In their current form, however, these organized labour recruitment programs cannot adequately channel the existing

demand for labour migration within Uzbekistan and have not proven to be effective in protecting the rights of labour migrants. This policy paper outlines the inherent limitations of government-to-government organized labour recruitment programs, suggests mechanisms for ensuring the fair treatment of Uzbek labour migrants abroad and identifies how improved migration data collection can help better inform Uzbek migration policies.

Link to download the brief:

<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=95>



## Policy Brief by Petros Aghababayan

### “Closing the policy gaps concerning an eventual mass influx of asylum seekers to Armenia”

By acceding to the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol in 1993, Armenia launched the creation of its asylum system, which eventually resulted in the adoption of the Law on Refugees in 1999. Ever since, Armenia has received some 3.400 asylum seekers, granting protection to 2.271 persons. Most of these people escaped from armed conflicts in the Middle East. Whereas Armenia thus received some 200 persons per year on average, this number in reality oscillated when hostilities or armed conflicts erupted in the regions of origin.

To present, the Law on Refugees and its subsequent amendments have failed to set out a concrete policy for addressing an eventual mass influx of asylum seekers at the Armenian border. In

this context, the Law on Refugees and Asylum of 2008 (amended in 2015) referred to the provision of temporary protection. Nonetheless, the standing legislation remains incomprehensive as it fails to set forth concrete measures to ensure an immediate emergency response, including the accommodation and support required by those in need, or clear provisions on their necessary documentation.

This Policy brief suggests amending the Law on Refugees and Asylum in a way to stipulate the elaboration of an Action Plan setting out the adequate steps to be taken by the competent authorities in case of a mass influx of asylum seekers. Such measures foremost relate to the construction of camps, the provision of emergency assistance and the granting of temporary protection at the very Border Crossing Points (BCP).

Link to download the brief:  
<https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory/publications/document?id=93>



## Facts and figures on new legislative amendments

### Belgium

Belgium has transposed the EU 'Single Permit' Directive (2011/98/EU). From now on, a new single application procedure for obtaining a single permit to work and reside in Belgium for a period longer than 90 days will apply. However, the respective decision may take up to 4.5 months.

Besides, the Flemish Region introduced a new economic migration model based on three separate profiles: highly qualified and special profiles, certain medium-skilled profiles (only for professions listed in a shortage list updated twice a year) and profiles in a residual category subject to a labour market test and for whom 'special economic and social reasons' must be established. These new rules only apply in Flanders.

### Germany

Citizens of 61 states, including Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro,

Serbia and Ukraine, will no longer require a visa to enter and stay in Germany for business trips of up to 90 days within a period of 180 days. This regulation will not apply to individuals who come to Germany for employment purposes.

### Poland

As of 1 January 2019, Polish employers may recruit foreign nationals without having to prove their inability to meet the staffing needs on the local labour market. Therefore, a new subtype of temporary residence and work permit



was introduced. The simplification will only apply to professions desirable for the Polish economy, as stipulated by the Ministry of Labour. It will also give foreign nationals faster access to a permanent residence permit in Poland.

### Portugal

On 1 January 2019, the Tech Visa programme came into force in Portugal, aiming to certify tech companies for the

employment of highly skilled foreign nationals. The companies should develop their activity in the technological and innovation areas. Their certification is valid for two years.

### Russia

As of 16 January 2019, the party that invites a foreign national to Russia must ensure his timely departure upon expiry of the visa. The inviting party must also ensure that the invitee complies

with the declared purpose of stay in Russia. For any breach, inviting parties may be subject to an administrative fine, ranging from RUB 2.000-4.000 for individuals and up to RUB 500.000 for legal entities.

### Slovakia

As of 1 January 2019, Slovakia introduced an amendment to the National Law simplifying the employment of foreigners in shortage sectors. The amendment cuts the processing period for seasonal employment permits and simplifies the use of so-called temporarily employment agencies. The shortage occupation list will be updated on a quarterly basis. The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family will identify shortage occupations in districts where the average registered unemployment rate for the calendar quarter was less than 5% and publish the list online in a timely manner.

### Denmark

The Danish Parliament has passed new restrictive migration laws, introducing a ceiling on chain migration, making residence permits temporary and easier to cancel, and allowing an uninhabited island to become a deportation centre. The latter aspect has been the most controversial one.



## Interesting reads

### Bridging the Gaps: Linking Research to Public Debates and Policy-making on Migration and Integration

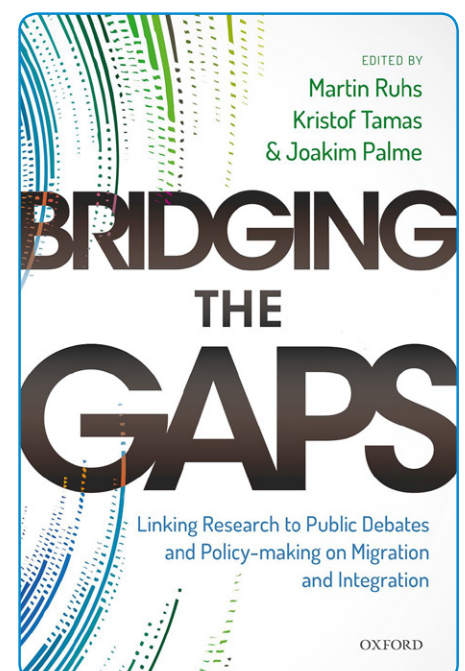
The book edited by Martin Ruhs, Kristof Tamas and Joakim Palme

This book explores the interplay between social science research, public debates, and policy-making in the area of international migration and integration. It has three core aims. First, the book seeks to contribute to the conceptualization and theorization of the potential relationships between research, public debates, and policy-making on migration and integration. A second aim of the book is to critically

discuss and identify the reasons for the failure or success of a range of initiatives aimed at using research to inform public debates and/or policy-making on migration and integration, both within national contexts and at supra-national levels of governance. The third main objective of the book is to identify effective strategies and institutional designs for linking research to public debates and policy-making on migration and integration in different national and institutional contexts.

Link to access:

<http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/academic/pdf/openaccess/9780198834557.pdf>



## ORF ISSUE BRIEF

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### Russian Far East and Central Asia: Impediments to Sino-Russian Partnership

DHANANJAY SAHAI

**ABSTRACT** This brief analyses the politico-economic relations between Russia and China and the recent changes in their power equation owing to Russia's fall in economic and demographic strength and, for its part, China's economic and military growth. Russia's unfavourable position has been identified as a possible reason for the rise in Chinese influence in Central Asia and the Russian Far East (RFE), in areas of military power and trade. The brief analyses the possible methods of coercion Beijing might employ in both these regions. It suggests ways for Russia to address the same, to secure its 'near-abroad' and RFE interests. The brief closes with recommendations for India to position itself as a strategic partner for Russia while subverting Chinese influence.

(This brief is part of ORF's series, 'Eye on China'. Find other research in the series here: <https://www.orfonline.org/series/eye-on-china/>)

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### Turkey's Evolving Response to Migration Management: Facts and Policy Steps

by Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar  
and Gülşah Dark

Турция – ранее транзитная страна. Previously a transit country for migrants trying to get asylum in Europe, Turkey has now become a country of immigration and residence not only for Syrian nationals, but also for other people from the MENA region. Because of the growing numbers of arrivals, the issue has topped the public and

political agenda, prompting significant changes in the hosting and integration of refugees into the local community. Nevertheless, a number of steps is still needed to improve the refugees' standard of living and to increase the sustainability of the process for the hosting state and society.

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FACTS AND POLICY STEPS**

**Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Gülşah Dark**

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