

EDITORIAL

Already at the time of publishing the previous issue of the Quarterly Review, it was clear that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic would affect all thematic areas of the Prague Process. A few months later, we can only confirm this assumption. Mobility has halted, many labour migrants and regular travellers are stuck in limbo, remittances have dropped, asylum seekers could not file applications, and return became practically impossible. The focus on the negative trends has dominated the public and political discourse over the past months. For this reason, people get increasingly worried about the future. All current events and political strategies are observed through the coronavirus lens.

Yet, the virus also unveiled some positive developments. Many countries regularised swiftly the stay of migrants and tourists who could not leave because of the imposed travel restrictions. Some went a step further and almost equated the rights of stranded migrants with those of their citizens to ensure the disbursement of social benefits. Germany, for instance, suddenly allowed short-term migrants to seek employment. Moreover, a wave of civil initiatives helping migrants with shelter and food has appeared. The pandemic also forced states to rethink

the role of labour migrants in various vital occupations, as they proved critical for the national economy and health systems.

These past few months have also been extraordinary for the Prague Process Secretariat. We successfully launched the Prague Process Webinar series and organised a first online training. These online events gathered many actors who would otherwise not have been able to participate in the usual face-to-face meetings. These various remote activities have hopefully provided a useful tool for state officials to remain informed and keep up with their daily work.

This issue will provide you with a short overview of the activities implemented over the past three months, as well as wider regional developments. It also features a few reading recommendations, including the latest Policy briefs of the Prague Process Migration Observatory.

We wish you a pleasant read and safe summer holidays!

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Looking ahead: upcoming Prague Process activities

- 10 September ● Webinar '**Migration and the Platform Economy**' with Glen Hodgson (Founder and CEO, Free Trade Europa)
- 24 September ● Webinar '**How fit is the EU legislation on legal migration?**' with Fabian Lutz (European Commission, DG HOME)
- 6-8 October ● Online Training on **Posted Migrant Workers**
- 20-22 October ● Training on **Identification and Profiling on the Border**, Durrës, Albania
- 16-17 November ● **Senior Officials' Meeting**, Nuremberg, Germany

The Prague Process Webinar series

Over the past quarter, the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on all spheres of life have unsurprisingly dominated all media coverage, as well as private, public and policy discourse. Among the many questions referring to migration and mobility, the ones on the impact of the pandemic on labour migration have been most common. This issue was also addressed within the new Prague Process Webinar series, launched in April 2020.

The first webinar with Glen Hodgson, Founder and CEO of the Independent Think Tank *Free Trade Europa*, on 'The possible impact of COVID-19 on the EU's demand for high-skilled migrants', offered an analysis of the current EU legislation, highlighting some of its shortcomings. The webinar further assessed the potential impact of COVID-19 on the EU's labour market, looking at possible short- and mid-term labour shortages and the future of skilled work as a whole. Mr. Hodgson offered some possible solutions, referring to the swift ongoing digitalisation and the need for high-qualified migrants to support industries. Finally, he outlined some migration management tools to sustain national economies and welfare systems in the post-coronavirus period.

During the second webinar titled 'The impact of the Corona-crisis on migration', Professor Rainer Münz presented possible scenarios of how labour migration might evolve amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. He distinguished several groups of migrant workers such as those prevented from leaving or entering a country, those losing their jobs or irregular migrants. Professor Münz further assessed existing labour shortages in the context of the simultaneous explosion of unemployment rates and rapid digitalisation. He also compared the current situation with related experiences from the financial crises of 2008-2010.

The third webinar 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Ukrainian Labour Migrants in the EU' with Ruslan Minich and Pavlo Kravchuk from *Europe Without Barriers* looked at the situation of Ukrainian labour migrants inside the EU, focusing in particular on Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy. The webinar assessed the consequences of the various mobility restrictions on jobs, livelihoods and residence of the migrants, as well as their attempts to return home. It also raised questions concerning the sustainability of food supply chains amid the shortage of migrant workers. Pavlo and Ruslan outlined which of the migration policy measures introduced in response to COVID-19 had worked and which had not, proposing some practical solutions that could inspire other countries.

Ahead of the release of the new EU

Migration Pact, Kristof Tamas, *Director of the Stockholm-based Migration Studies Delegation (Delmi)*, presented his assessment of the EU's External Migration Policy. The fourth webinar looked at how the EU's external cooperation on migration had revolved around the Global Approach to Migration (and Mobility) since 2005 (2011) and the Migration Partnership Framework under the European Agenda on Migration of 2016. In particular, it focused on the role of Migration Dialogues in the process of finding common ground between the EU and partner countries, while also proposing new ways to better accommodate the interests of the latter. Finally, Mr. Tamas briefly addressed the possible impact of the coronavirus on migration.

All four webinars are available on [the Prague Process website](#).

PRAGUE PROCESS WEBINAR SERIES



Glen Hodgson



Rainer Münz



Ruslan Minich



Kristof Tamas



Pavlo Kravchuk

1st Prague Process Online Training: Identification and Profiling at the Border

On 9-10 June, the first online training tested the usefulness and effectiveness of remote capacity building activities by ensuring rich interaction with the trainees. The targeted audience consisted of front line officers responsible for the first line border control, including border guards, border police, law enforcement agencies or migration authorities. The training aimed to strengthen their capacities in terms of profiling and identification of persons crossing the border(s) by introducing the respective key definitions and theoretical foundations, before providing an overview of the risk groups and vulnerable persons. The

training further focused on improving the national inter-agency and international cooperation in the fight of irregular migration and cross-border crime. Finally, it also touched on some key aspects and challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby supporting the daily work at the border. The training built the groundwork for the face-to-face workshop, currently foreseen to take place in Albania on 20-22 October 2020.

The recordings of the training shall provide a possibility for self-paced learning. They will be available to all participating states later this year

upon registration to the forthcoming e-learning platform of the Prague Process Training Academy.



Photo credit © Nick Morrison

Asylum Trends amid COVID-19

In June 2020, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) released a Special report on the asylum trends, showing a dramatic decline in the number of asylum applications across Europe over the past months. Due to the imposed anti-coronavirus restrictions, only 8730 asylum applications were registered in April in the EU+, representing a massive

87 % drop as compared to January and February levels.

The relatively low number of new applications allowed asylum offices across the EU to process older applications and to reduce the accumulated backlog that amounted to nearly 60 % by the end of April 2020. Over

35 % of decisions were attributed to applications lodged over a year ago, with another ten per cent to those older than two years. The number of positive decisions, most of which were granted to Syrian applicants, reached a record 52 % in April. In contrast, the recognition rate of Turkish applicants dropped from 55 % to only 36 %.

Eastern Partnership (EaP) and Western Balkan (WB) countries in the EASO Asylum Report 2020

- ⇒ About 38 000 applications – slightly over 20 % of all applications from countries enjoying a visa-free regime – were lodged by nationals of the respective EaP countries. In 2019, applications from Moldovans increased by 49 % compared to 2018. The number of applications by Georgians increased by 11 %. Applications from Ukrainians, in contrast, decreased.
- ⇒ The top receiving countries for applications from visa-exempt EaP states and WB countries were France and Germany.
- ⇒ Applicants from North Macedonia and Moldova received the least positive decisions, reaching only 1 %. Only 5 to 7 of every 100 applicants from Serbia, Montenegro and Albania were granted international protection in EU+ countries in 2019.

Under the current circumstances, an effective and safe access to international protection remains a challenge anywhere in the world. Social distancing rules allow only for a limited

number of face-to-face interviews, while online services cannot be implemented everywhere or at least in not a rapid manner. Travel restrictions have disrupted the traditional migration

routes with significant numbers of migrants and asylum seekers stuck in transit countries where they are perceived as potential spreaders of COVID-19. Moreover, the various

digital tracking systems introduced for disease surveillance purposes have also affected asylum practices. Countries with weak privacy regulations have subjected migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to tracking that goes beyond public health interests.

The forecasting of future flows remains challenging in spite of the modern technology employed, since much depends on the political decisions and behavioural patterns of individual countries, which lean towards approaches that are more conservative

in times of disease outbreaks. Nonetheless, some possible triggers of forced displacement linked to COVID-19 include rising food insecurity and other security concerns. A job loss and the resulting decline in the individual purchasing power, disruptions in the local food supply, and rising food prices represent the three key factors that may exacerbate food insecurity. The worsening food insecurity, in turn, could contribute to an intensification of social unrest, violence and conflicts. Coupled with weather conditions and reduced trust in the public institutions and

the information available, such lower economic prospects may increase the risk of asylum-related migration.

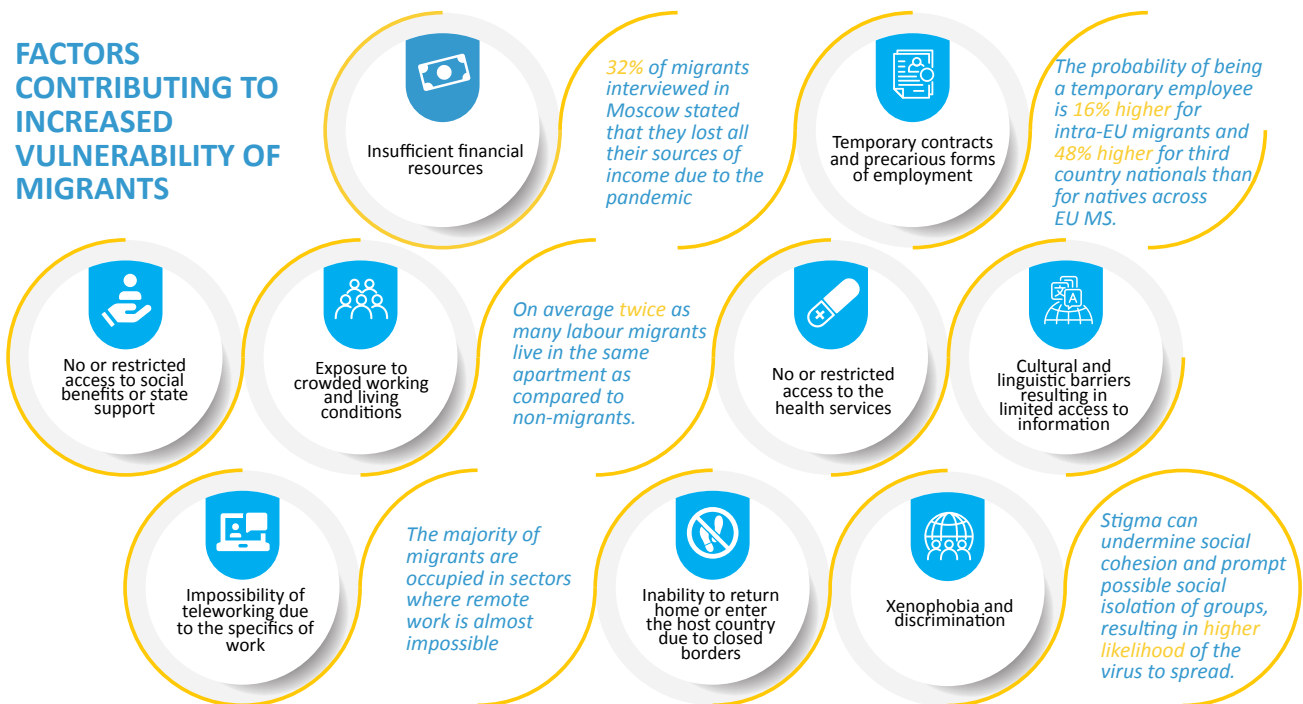
Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



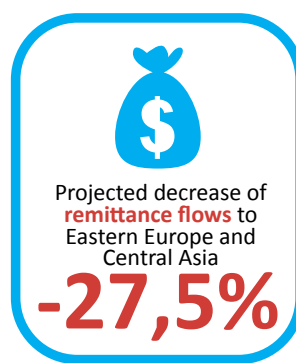
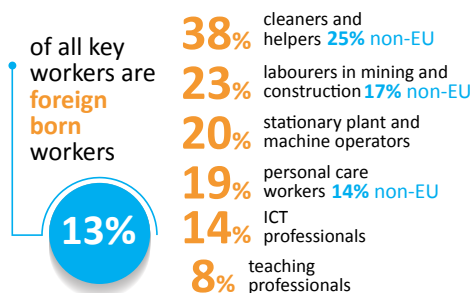
Photo credit © Tim Mossholder

MIGRANT VULNERABILITIES DUE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK

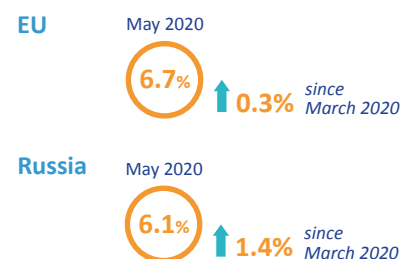
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASED VULNERABILITY OF MIGRANTS



REPRESENTATION OF MIGRANTS IN THE KEY OCCUPATIONS ACROSS THE EU



OVERALL UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS



POLICY MEASURES INTRODUCED BY SOME EU COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS SEASONAL LABOUR SHORTAGE

Recourse to the native labour force (e.g. Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland)
Extensions of visa, residence permits and exceptional admissions (e.g. Germany, Spain)
Regularisation (e.g. Portugal, Italy)
Engagement of asylum seekers for helping with harvest (e.g. France, Germany)



REVEALED CHALLENGES

- seasonal agriculture workers have not been fully rewarded for their contribution to society
- lack of farming skills of the native labour force leads to losses in harvest
- need to make adjustments to the workplace practices in line with COVID-19 prevention measures
- unfair competition between employers who observe distancing measures and supply protective equipment to the workers (thus have higher expenses) and those who do not

Sources:

- IOM Migration Factsheet No. 6 – The impact of COVID-19 on migrants [LINK](#)
- ILO Brief on Seasonal Migrant Workers' Schemes: Rethinking Fundamental Principles and Mechanisms in light of COVID-19 [LINK](#)
- Foreign labor migrants in Russia in conditions of pandemia and economic crisis in Monitoring of the economic situation in Russia Trends and challenges of socio-economic development 2020. No. 11 (113). May (in Russian) [LINK](#)
- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on live-in care workers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland [LINK](#)
- A Vulnerable Workforce: Migrant Workers in the COVID-19 Pandemic [LINK](#)
- Immigrant Key Workers: Their Contribution to Europe's COVID-19 Response [LINK](#)
- Eurostat [LINK](#)
- Migration Data Portal [LINK](#)

EU Western Balkans Summit

On 6 May 2020, twenty years after the first Summit in Zagreb, the **EU-Western Balkans Summit** took place in an online format. Chaired by Charles Michel, the President of the European Council, and organised under the Croatian EU Presidency, the Summit brought together the leaders of the six Western Balkan (WB) states and the Heads of state or government of all EU member states. The event signalled the

importance of the WB region for the EU and culminated in the ratification of the **Zagreb Declaration**.

EU leaders reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the **European Perspective** of the six WB states, which shall pursue their political, economic and social transformation and approximation to the respective EU standards. In response, the WB partners confirmed

the continuation of the reform process towards the European values and principles, as well as to ensure the primacy of the rule of law, thereby making the European Perspective their firm strategic choice.

In the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Summit primarily focused on the **economy** and on finding an appropriate response to the economic

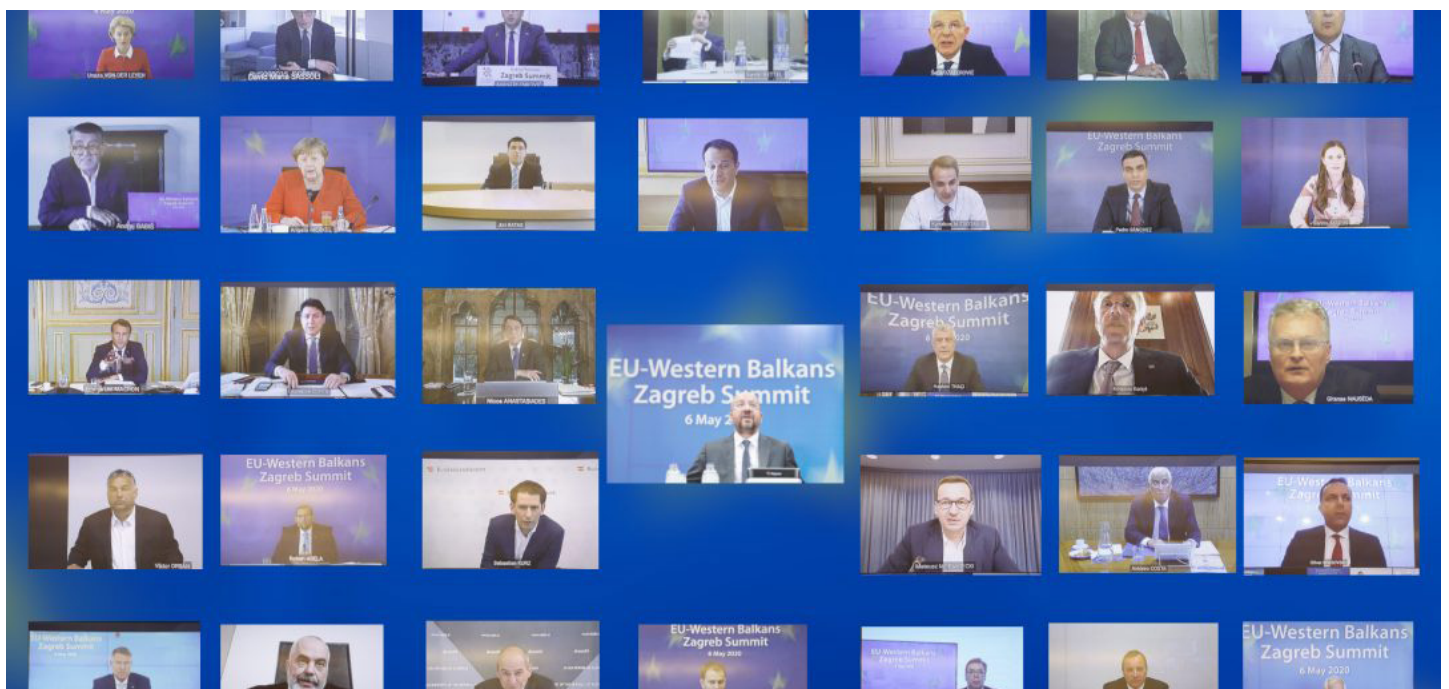


Photo credit © Europa.rs

hardship currently experienced across the six WB states. The EU has mobilised 3.3 billion EUR to support the health sector and to provide macro-financial assistance, as well as to uphold social and economic recovery. The latter requires a further deepening of the regional economic integration. The WB states should make extensive use of the joint Regional Economic Area in order to get closer to the EU Internal Market. In a next step, the European Commission shall come forward with a robust economic and investment plan for the region, which shall improve the overall business and investment climate and thereby generate new jobs and opportunities.

The parties further agreed to advance their cooperation on **key security and migration challenges**. These include the need for increased cooperation to counter terrorism and extremism, including financing, radicalisation and the return of foreign fighters. In the migration field, the need for continued actions against the trafficking and smuggling of human beings was underlined. The established cooperation with Frontex, EASO and Europol would require further deepening as well as the conclusion of the remaining Frontex status agreements. The EU shall also support the improvement of reception capacities across the six WB states.

EU leaders also stressed the importance of good neighbourly relations, regional stability, and inclusive regional cooperation. Finally, the EU encouraged their WB partners to contribute to the EU's missions abroad and fully align their foreign policy positions with those of the EU.

Read more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). See also the [Council conclusions on enhancing cooperation with the WB partners in the field of migration and security](#) of 5 June 2020.

The Eastern Partnership remains a foreign policy priority for the EU

On 18 June 2020, the EU-Eastern Partnership Summit took place remotely, gathering the Heads of State or Government of the EU member states and the six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, as well as the Presidents of the European Commission and European Council. Their aim was to discuss the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP region, the strategic importance of the partnership's achievements to date and the priorities for future cooperation. The meeting followed the adoption of the [Council Conclusions on the EaP Policy beyond 2020](#) of 11 May and the videoconference of foreign affairs ministers of 11 June.

In its [Conclusions](#), the Council reaffirmed the strategic importance of the Eastern Partnership, as a specific regional dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), supporting sustainable reform processes and offering close political association as well as economic integration with the EU and tangible impact on people's lives. The Council welcomed the strengthening and deepening of bilateral relations between the EU and each EaP country and underlined the importance of the multilateral dimension in order to advance the joint objectives set out in the [Joint Communication on the EaP beyond 2020](#), as well as in the Council Conclusions. The focus lies on **five long-term objectives**: 1. economy and connectivity; 2. accountable institutions, rule of law; 3. the green transformation;

4. the digital transformation; and 5. fair and inclusive societies. As outlined in the Joint Communication, the overarching goal of the new framework is to support the Eastern neighbourhood in strengthening resilience, in particular in the areas of democracy, society, economy, energy, security, cyber, media, environment, health and human security.

The foreign ministers' videoconference, chaired by Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, allowed for an exchange of views on the EaP long-term priorities in order to pave the way for the development of concrete and operational

deliverables beyond 2020. The significance of solidarity and cooperation amid the Corona crisis, including the EU's considerable financial support, was acknowledged in both videoconferences. At the Summit itself, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the EC, underlined that the EU had pledged over 2.4 billion EUR to the six EaP countries, [including over 900 million EUR to support the socioeconomic recovery and 80 million EUR for immediate needs](#). The bulk of 1,5 billion EUR represent highly favourable loans to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, which shall allow them to cover for financing gaps and to strengthen their macroeconomic stability.



When it comes to enhancing mobility of people, Ms. von der Leyen stressed that following the entry into force of the readmission and visa facilitation agreement with Belarus on 1 July 2020, the EU has either reduced the visa fee, simplified visa application procedure or has fully waived visa requirement for all six EaP countries.

Stressing the remarkable achievements of the partnership, as well as multilateral and bilateral cooperation between the EU and the EaP countries, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, underlined that the EaP remains a priority for the EU's foreign policy. He stressed the importance of safeguarding democracy, human rights, rule of

law, gender equality, structural reforms and fighting disinformation.

The next EU-EaP Summit is planned for March 2021 in Brussels. It shall feature the adoption of a joint declaration based on the five mentioned priority objectives.

Call for Proposals under the Mobility Partnership Facility



The Mobility Partnership Facility (MPF) has an open Call for Proposals seeking applications to support the objectives of the Mobility Partnerships¹, Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM)² and other frameworks, as well as more broadly to support projects that facilitate legal migration.

The present Call for Proposals intends to support:

- Strand A: "Operationalisation of MP, CAMM Joint Declarations, Terms of Reference and other forms of migration dialogues with third countries through targeted actions"
- Strand D "Facilitation and upscaling of pilot projects in the area of legal migration with selected partner countries".

Under Strand D in particular, the Call for Proposals has very purposefully broadened the scope of eligible activities to allow for more holistic approaches, with capacity building, research and the delivery of mobility pilots all foreseen.

In addition to MP and CAMM countries, EaP countries are eligible beneficiaries under Strand D and may work as co-applicants with EU Member States, International Organisations or private sector leads (business platforms, labour unions, think tanks, NGOs, etc).

The overall objective of Strand D is to identify and award actions that will propose new modalities and priorities in order to deliver the EU's Agenda on Migration in relation to legal (labour) migration from third countries.

The pilot projects' objectives are to:

1. Offer additional safe and legal pathways to migrate for work or study;
2. Contribute to addressing labour shortage gaps in certain sectors of the labour markets of EU Member States;
3. Facilitate or further develop cooperation with third countries on a comprehensive management of migratory flows, including on issues such as prevention of irregular migration and readmission of irregular migrants.

The MPF Team is available to discuss concepts, support networking/partnerships and to answer any questions regarding the Call for Proposals. Please do not hesitate to contact us via mpf@icmpd.org. Follow [this link](#) for information on the Call for Proposals.

COVID-19 related migration policy measures across the Prague Process region

Visa and residence permits

Over three months into the pandemic, countries continue to adopt measures for regularising the stay of foreigners stranded due to continued travel restrictions. In June, France announced the issuance of provisional residence

permits to foreigners whose short-term Schengen visas had expired. Holders of French residence permits and long-term visas expiring between 16 March and 15 May will also be able to return to France. Meanwhile, travellers who received their Schengen visa for travelling to

France before the COVID-19 outbreak shall enjoy a simplified procedure when resubmitting their visa applications.

In [Luxemburg](#), the Prime Minister underlined that visas and residence permits will be valid throughout the

1. The nine Mobility Partnerships signed so far include those with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.
2. Two CAMMs have been signed to date, namely with Ethiopia and Nigeria.

coronavirus crisis regardless of their expiration dates. For the time being, holders of expired documents receive an extension until 31 August. Furthermore, those foreigners who arrived between January and the end of July have six months to apply for a residence permit instead of the usual three-month period.

Similarly, [Russia](#) extended the validity of visa and residence permits for another three months – until 15 September. Meanwhile, [Germany](#) did not only prolong the stay of foreigners with an expired Schengen visa to 30 September but also granted them the permit to seek employment.

The UK and Ireland, on the other hand, are slowly resuming their visa services. In [Dublin](#), foreigners who need to renew their documents shall file online applications through the newly launched online renewal system, which was piloted among students in 2019. As of 1 June, the [UK](#) re-opened a number of Visa Applications Centres both in- and outside the country. Priority is currently given to individuals whose appointments had previously been cancelled due to the pandemic. New applicants are not yet able to book biometric appointments but should submit their online applications before the expiry of their current visas.

Re-opening of borders?

The closure of borders was a difficult but needed decision. Several months after the introduction of travel restrictions, EU member states have started to consider the [reopening of their external](#)

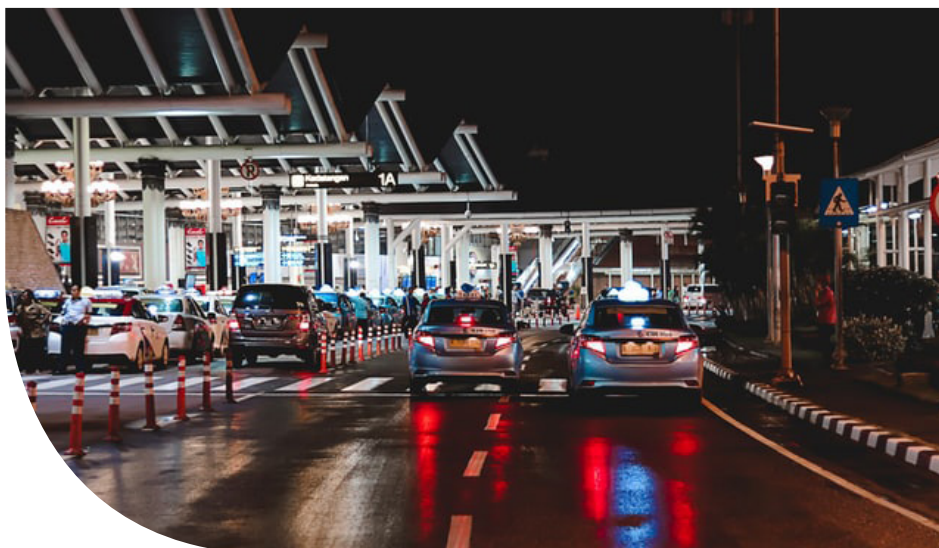


[and internal borders](#). Gradually and with caution, they are resuming travel within the EU. Even though the European Commission issued [a recommendation](#) to open the internal borders by mid-June, the lifting of travel restrictions across the Union is still ongoing. Some EU countries, such as [Finland](#), have only allowed the entry to nationals of few EU MS until July. [Denmark](#) still refuses entry of Portuguese and Swedish nationals.

The opening of external borders to third-country nationals proves even more challenging. In late June, the EU agreed to allow the entry to third-country nationals [from 14 countries](#), including Georgia, Montenegro and Serbia, as of

1 July. EU member states are nevertheless entitled to take individual decisions and exclude countries from the pre-agreed list. This has resulted in diverging assessments: the [Czech Republic](#), for instance, allows entry to only eight countries from the list, whereas [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Finland](#), [Hungary](#) and [Sweden](#) have kept their borders closed to all third-country nationals. Such disparities represent an [enormous challenge](#) for travellers and travel providers, let alone for the urgently needed recovery of the aviation and tourism industry as well as the EU single market. Moreover, the list of 'safe countries' is to be reviewed every two weeks.

Similar disparities are witnessed outside the EU: On 15 June, [Ukraine](#) opened its borders to all foreigners, obliging them to present an appropriate medical insurance upon arrival. [Georgia](#) opened its air borders with France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The epidemiological situation in [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Kazakhstan](#) and [Azerbaijan](#) still does neither allow to loosen the quarantine measures nor to fully open the borders. Meanwhile, [Uzbekistan](#) has resumed international air traffic, dividing countries through a 'traffic light system' into three categories and imposing corresponding quarantine measures to travellers from 'green', 'yellow' (e.g. EU) or 'red' (e.g. Russia) countries.



Newly released publications

Policy brief by Rainer Muenz

'How will migration to Europe look in the future? Trends, open questions and four plausible scenarios'

The Policy brief looks at the migration trends of the past 20 years, outlines open questions to be addressed by national migration policies and makes an attempt to set forward four plausible scenarios of how migration to Europe may look in the future. In doing so, the brief also considers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration.

Access the brief [here](#).



Policy brief by Ruslan Minich and Pavlo Kravchuk

'The Impact of COVID-19 on Ukrainian Labour Migrants in Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Italy'

The Policy brief scrutinises the main effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Ukrainian labour migrants who form the largest group of foreign workers in the European Union (EU). The four EU member states featuring the most significant number of Ukrainian workers are in the focus, i.e. Poland, Italy, Czechia, and Hungary. The challenges that migrants encounter nowadays include unemployment and the loss of their livelihood because of the crisis, overstays, and difficulties with return when countries impose travel bans for foreigners. Meanwhile, the host country economies suffer from the lack of migrant farmworkers who are essential for the food supply chains.

The countries in focus address these issues with varying success. The Policy brief therefore aims to show what works and what does not. For instance, the host countries may allow for online applications and organise journeys for seasonal workers from Ukraine to sustain their food supply chains. Meanwhile, Ukrainians toiling and mulling abroad would benefit from longer-term stay permits to find a new job and from being relieved of the required connection to a particular employer or position. More information in Ukrainian language would help labour migrants to protect their rights and get some host state support. Furthermore, chatbots may help to manage the communication overload suffered by the competent authorities. Tailor-made support and more options of return would assuage the plight of those who lost their livelihood.

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Access the brief [here](#).

**Policy brief by
Haykanush Chobanyan**

'Armenia's migration cooperation with the European Union and Eurasian Economic Union'

This Policy brief analyses Armenia's cooperation on migration with the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, looking in particular at the resulting simultaneous efforts and obligations, as well as their impact on the national migration policy and actual flows experienced.

Access the brief [here](#).



**Policy brief by
Stefan Vogtenhuber**

'Labour migration from East to West: The example of foreign workers in Austria'

Similar to other high-income countries, Austria is an attractive destination for many labour migrants who compensate for the existing labour shortages in a wide range of economic sectors and occupations. Immigrants from the East predominantly fill vacancies in the following economic sectors: accommodation and food, cleaning and support services, and agriculture. While the Austrian economy benefits from immigration, emigration negatively affects the countries of origin whose working-age populations have been shrinking and giving rise to economic and

social tensions. The Policy brief assesses the immigration of workers from 19 Prague Process states to Austria, as well as its impact on the sending countries and Austria.

Access the brief [here](#).

Interesting reads

Expert Voice: 'How the COVID-19 'Infodemic' targets migrants' by Marco Ricorda

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a threat to health. It has also increased the potential for [panic](#) within societies. Aggressive states and political extremists want to use the pandemic for political ends by spreading disinformation — to the extent that the UN has declared a global 'infodemic' alongside the health crisis itself. Migrants represent typical scapegoats and a suitable target, considering their [over-representation](#) in ten of the 15 countries featuring [the highest numbers](#) of COVID-19 cases.

[Read more.](#)



Expert Voice: 'Immunity passports – unwise and unnecessary' by Bernhard Perching

Several states have suggested that immunity passports could allow those who have recovered from a COVID-19 infection free travel as long as travel restrictions and closed borders persist. On 25 March, the World Health Organization expressed a strong warning against the issuing of immunity passports due to the [lack of reliable medical evidence](#) that recovery from a COVID-19 infection definitely leads to long-lasting immunity. Even if this was the case, many [experts are warning](#) that immunity passports could have detrimental effects on labour markets, seriously infringe health-related privacy rights, and endanger the collective fight against the pandemic, both within states and internationally.

[Read more.](#)

Expert Voice: 'Schengen's summertime blues'
by *Hugo Brady*

The Great European Summer is back on. EU countries began lifting COVID-19 restrictions on non-essential travel within the Union, whilst gradually relaxing the internal border controls they introduced back in March. Airport testing and mandatory quarantine requirements are set to dwindle to spot checks and heightened vigilance in July and August. What can go wrong? Actually, a lot.

[Read more.](#)



Expert Voice: 'National consular services are stretched to the limit by COVID-19' by *Aurélie Sgro*

Amidst the current pandemic, foreign posts are at the frontline of overseas citizen protection. Consular officials have to deal with a flood of queries linked to health, finance, travel, accommodation and even loneliness. Getting their own citizens home is the priority. For most countries, it is their [largest ever repatriation operation](#). The challenge is colossal due to the high number of tourists and short-term migrants stranded around the world, the need to respect physical distancing measures, the limited consular coverage of many countries worldwide and, most importantly, the wide-ranging travel bans and border closures. National services need to coordinate with host authorities, like-minded countries, private stakeholders (such as hotels and airlines), community leaders... the list is endless.

[Read more.](#)



ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

Expert Voice:
"National consular services stretched to the limit by COVID-19"

By *Aurélie Sgro*





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