Migration remains one of the most debated topics globally and within the Prague Process region. The second quarter of 2018 saw the conclusion of the intergovernmental negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, resulting in the final draft, which is to be formally adopted in December this year. At the EU level, EU Heads of States agreed at the European Council Summit on 28 June to take in migrants rescued in the Mediterranean Sea and establish processing centres to assess their asylum claims. The European leaders confirmed there should be “a shared effort on a voluntary basis”.

Within the Prague Process, the second quarter of 2018 marked the official launch of the Prague Process Training Academy and Migration Observatory at their respective opening events held in June. The first training of the Training Academy focused on one of the most challenging aspects in the Asylum Process, the issue of Credibility Assessment, which was highly appreciated by the training participants. In the meantime, the Research Coordination Meeting under the Migration Observatory gathered a group of academic and state experts from the non-EU participating states, who will be working on a set of practical policy-oriented publications.

Important migration policy developments occurred also in Uzbekistan, which made a visible attempt to invest into the employment of its citizens abroad over the past year, while also aiming to ensure the protection of their rights.

We hope that you will enjoy learning more on the above issues in this summer edition of the Prague Process Quarterly Review!

Have a good read!

Looking ahead: Indicative timeline of Prague Process activities planned for the second half of 2018

August - November - MO 1st Internship in the Prague Process Migration Observatory, Vienna, Austria

2-3 October - MO Workshop on Data Gathering, Analyses and Dissemination, Skopje, Macedonia

September-December - MO & TA Expert Visit to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

November - TA Training on Trafficking in Human Beings, Baku, Azerbaijan

October-November - MO Study visit to Spain (tbc)

12-13 December - D Senior Officials’ Meeting, Prague, Czech Republic

- Migration Observatory
- Training Academy
- Senior-level Dialogue
Italy hosted the first training of the Prague Process Training Academy

On 5-7 June, the “Advanced Training for High-Quality Asylum Procedures” gathered over 40 state representatives working in the asylum field in Rome. The three trainers – Anna Bengtsson (Swedish Migration Agency), Judith Gleeson (Upper Tribunal Judge, Immigration and Asylum Chambers, United Kingdom) and Gabor Gyulai (Hungarian Helsinki Committee) - had previously engaged in the asylum trainings organised within the Prague Process. They also majorly contributed to the development of the Guidelines “Quality in Asylum Decision-Making - Using Jurisprudence and Multidisciplinary Knowledge for Training Purposes”, which served as a basis for this training.

Italy as hosting state launched the 2.5-days training by presenting the most recent statistics on asylum seekers and migrants who continue to cross the Mediterranean on a daily basis. In the past two years, Italy received over 314,000 persons with only a relatively small share of them (12,745) relocated and 6,500 expelled in this period. By the end of May 2018, slightly over 2500 persons received refugee status, with most of them coming from Nigeria, Syria and Somalia. The number of arrivals in 2018 has seen a considerable drop amounting to 13,400 (until 30.05.18) in comparison to over 119,000 arrivals in 2017. The number of decisions issued per month has increased from 7,400 to 7,700. These decisions are jointly taken by six evaluation panel members in order to make them fairer, more transparent and faster.

While outlining their national priorities during the introductory tour-de-table, most Western Balkan states, but also Armenia, Georgia and Turkey, highlighted that their national legislations are being harmonised with EU law. Referring to the implementation of its new law on forced migration, Belarus underlined that the legal changes were, amongst others, inspired by the trainings, meetings and resulting reports of the Prague Process.

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) reminded participants of the 22 existing training modules, covering most sub-areas within the sphere of asylum and refugee status determination, while also sharing EASO’s intention to focus more on reception in the future.

What is the Training Academy?

The Training Academy aims to provide tailor-made, targeted, high-quality trainings in line with the six thematic areas set out by the Prague Process Action Plan:

1. Preventing and combating illegal migration
2. Promote readmission, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration
3. Legal migration and mobility, with special emphasis on labour migration
4. Promote the integration of migrants legally residing in host societies
5. Make migration and mobility positive forces of development
6. Strengthening of capacities in the field of asylum and international protection

Building upon previous products and activities of the Prague Process, the Training Academy shall:

- Establish and mobilise a network of state and non-state trainers from the region;
- Strive to improve the performance of Prague Process state representatives through the further development of their skills and competences;
- Feature a training-of-trainers approach in order to contribute to enhanced training capabilities and to the independent organisation of trainings at national and local level;
- Establish a sound base of training materials in Russian and English, which should be further used for capacity-building activities;
- Ensure accumulation of training expertise and provide a dissemination platform for participating states willing to share their national training curricula and strategies with the Parties;
The first training session titled ‘Conceptual Framework of International Protection’ provided a comparison of the concepts of migration and international protection, an introduction to the ‘Core issues in international protection’, as well as presentations on ‘Refugee status and subsidiary protection: structured decisions’ and on ‘International protection beyond refugee protection’, which focused on the issue of statelessness. Thereafter, participants were divided into working groups in order to tackle the introductory case studies and come up with decisions on the presented asylum cases.

The second day, focusing on Credibility Assessment, began with the renewed division into sub-groups. The first group was acquainted with assessing credibility in religious-based claims through a role-play and a targeted focus on interview techniques. Group 2 received an insight into different aspects of credibility assessment, ranging from the legal framework and indicators to a multidisciplinary approach pointing to the limits of human memory and the impact of trauma, as well as to multilingual communication and intercultural barriers.

The first phase of the Training Academy is implemented within the EU-funded “Prague Process: Dialogue, Analyses and Training in Action” initiative, representing the strand C of the Mobility Partnership Facility 2 (MPF2) project. These objectives shall be achieved through implementation of the following actions:

- Serve as a laboratory for generating concrete new project and cooperation ideas for the Prague Process and MPF purposes.
- Produce training materials in the six thematic areas in English and Russian, available in hard copy and as an e-learning tool;
- Carry out six high-quality trainings in the described thematic areas, targeting practitioners from the Prague Process participating states;
- Organise an expert mission of EU MS experts to a non-EU country in order to review the existing national approach to capacity building and continuous learning within the state administration;
- Organise a study visit of non-EU state officials to an EU MS in order to learn from their national approach to capacity building within the state administration;
- Develop a comprehensive e-learning course for wider (remote) use among the Parties.

All results and publications of the Training Academy will be published onto the website www.pragueprocess.eu in English and Russian, shared on the Prague Process Facebook Profile and referred to in the Prague Process Quarterly Review (newsletter). Their further publication onto the ICMPD website will be taken into consideration when-ever relevant. The produced outputs will also be presented to the annual Senior Officials’ Meetings, representing the decision making body of the Prague Process.
Session 3 combined the focus on credibility assessment with a training-of-trainers approach. Specific challenges faced by decision-makers were addressed, including self-care and burnout prevention. The legal standards for credibility assessment were then presented, before providing an update on the most recent case law on credibility assessment on behalf of the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights and various national courts.

The final day was devoted to Training-of-Trainers, presenting various elements of how to be a good trainer, including strategies and hints for innovative and impactful training activities. Most participants used the closing session to express once more their satisfaction with the training, referring to its content and organisation.

Migration flows in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Interview with Marijan Baotic, Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Security

During the training in Rome, we talked with Mr. Marijan Baotic about Bosnia and Herzegovina’s asylum system and the recent migration flows in the region.

Dear Mr. Baotic, could you please describe the flows of incoming asylum seekers received by Bosnia and Herzegovina in the recent past?

The Ministry of Security represents the competent authority for dealing with asylum claims through its Asylum Sector. The number of claims received increased from approximately 40-70 applications per year in the period 2008-2016, to 340 in 2017, and 425 in the first five months of 2018.

Different migratory movements not arising from persecution based on race, religion, political opinion or affiliation to a particular social group were sometimes linked to a presumed need for international protection. This created room for major misuses of the international protection.

Asylum seekers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are accommodated in the Asylum Centre “Delijas”. For most of them Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a transit country, which they leave before their asylum procedures are completed. Therefore, their cases are usually suspended.

Persons enjoying international protection in our country were mainly granted their status on grounds of the Qualification Directive’s Article 15 c) (serious threat to a civilian’s life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict), as it is transposed to our national legislation.

Could you briefly summarise the evolution of your national asylum system?

Initially, Bosnia and Herzegovina focused on the development of an asylum legislation, setting up the respective institutional framework, as well as on strengthening of its personnel, material and technical capacities. The legislation relating to migration and asylum was initiated by the Law on Movement and Stay of Aliens and Asylum, adopted in 2003. In 2008, a new set of rules was introduced to the Law on Movement and Stay of Aliens. In 2016, the country issued a new, separate Law on Asylum.

The changing EU asylum legislation raised the need for a subsequent harmonisation of the respective national legislation. In this context, the aim to remain in the scope of the source documents – the 1951 Convention on Refugee Status and its 1967 Protocol - required a great deal of efforts.

How would you see the immediate future? What policy developments and refugee/migration flows can we expect?

Over the past five years, the individual EU Member States addressed the issue of migration in different ways, including through policies that seem to be deviating from fundamental
The first Research Coordination Meeting brought together various experts and researchers from non-EU participating states

The Research Coordination Meeting held on 28-29 June in Vienna brought nine experts from non-EU participating states of the Prague Process together with the members of the Prague Process Secretariat. The meeting provided a first opportunity to introduce the Migration Observatory (MO) concept to the experts present and get their feedback on this initiative. Secondly, the selected experts were invited to present their intended research as per their previous agreement with the Secretariat while also providing feedback on the research outlines of their peers.

The main objective of the Migration Observatory is to address important migration aspects, establish a valued platform for participating states to express their voice and provide policy makers with interesting, up-to-date inputs. Ultimately, the work of the Migration Observatory should increase the limited attention devoted to migration (policy) developments across the Prague Process region, as also witnessed during the recent EU Summit. EU Member States neither have fully recognised the appearance of the Eurasian Economic Union, nor have they paid due attention to the dissolution of the Federal Migration
Service (FMS) of Russia. In this sense, the envisaged research aims at filling some existing knowledge gaps and at directly feeding into the discussions of policy-makers. The High-level Working Group on Migration is one such forum that brings policy-makers from the EU Member States together on a regular basis and the agenda of which often contains updates on the Prague Process. For this reason, the envisaged research outputs shall feature a short and concise format in the form of policy briefs and analytical reports. The Observatory should promote good practices and policy recommendations from the Prague Process region and thereby provide inspiration to other geographic regions. This also relates to the choice of topics that the attending experts will investigate further – these do not necessarily represent the most urgent priorities but specific issues that are worth looking into.

Topics of the envisaged Publications:

01. The EU Mobility Partnership with Belarus: The Way Forward
02. Labour migration among the countries of the Eastern Partnership and towards the EU
03. Ukraine: The first year since introducing the visa free regime (success stories, challenges and lessons learnt)
04. Internal Displacement in Ukraine: Mapping the Flows and Challenges
05. Analyses of the implementation of the National Migration Strategy/Action Plan of Moldova
06. Migration Policy framework in Armenia
07. Action plan in case of a mass influx of Asylum seekers in Armenia
08. Dual and Multiple Citizenship in Azerbaijan: Addressing the Legal and Practical Challenges
09. Unfolding the Potential of Circular Migration Schemes for Georgia
10. The impacts of the ‘One Road, One Belt’ initiative on migration flows and policies in Central Asia
11. Opportunities, risks and challenges for labour migrants in the context of the Eurasian Union
12. Migration Management Policies of the Russian Federation following the dissolution of the FMS
13. Migration flow analyses in the Western Balkan region
14. Lessons learnt from the 2015-2016 migration situation in the Western Balkan region and remaining policy and operational challenges
15. Addressing the policy challenges on reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkan states
While expressing their opinions on the concept of the Migration Observatory, several experts highlighted the challenges deriving from the absence of reliable data and statistics, as well as the limited access to information, especially within the post-Soviet region. Better exchange between the state institutions and academia is key in this regard. The information available throughout the research community does not always reach policy-makers on time. This gap between the evidence available and the policy-making process needs to be addressed by facilitating the interaction between the research community and policy makers. At best, the MO shall be adjusted to the needs of policy makers and provide practical outcomes. While migration is predominantly assessed from a security perspective nowadays, the MO shall provide a more balanced approach. Moreover, the outputs shall preferably be of a comparative nature and go beyond the national context whenever suitable. Finally, the Observatory could also feature a map highlighting the acute needs of every state. Such map could facilitate the policy-making significantly and enhance mutual learning and support.

After discussing the concept of the Migration Observatory, the attending experts presented their research topics and received feedback from their peers. In addition, the Prague Process Secretariat presented the outlines of those experts who could not attend the meeting and collected the immediate feedback and inputs in order to pass them on to the absentees.

**Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

The text of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was finalised on 13 July 2018. This is the first time that Member States of the United Nations have come together to negotiate an agreement covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The Permanent Representative of Switzerland, which together with Mexico has served as co-facilitator and thus led the negotiation process and drafting of the document described the GCM as follows: “This text puts migration firmly on the global agenda. It will be a point of reference for years to come and induce real change on the ground. I view the successful conclusion of our negotiation as a strong commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation.” The agreement, which will be formally endorsed in December 2018, provides a basis to improve governance and international understanding of migration, to address the challenges associated with migration today, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

The Prague Process is committed to contribute actively to the implementation of the GCM’s objectives across the Prague Process region. The document shall not only inspire the individual activities organised in the future but also be duly considered in the overall conceptualisation and implementation of the Prague Process Migration Observatory and Training Academy.

The following 23 Objectives of the GCM greatly coincide with the provisions of the Prague Process Action Plan 2012-2016, whose validity was confirmed at the 3rd Prague Process Ministerial Conference in 2016. It is therefore no surprise that the GCM will also figure on the agenda of the next Senior Officials’ Meeting of the Prague Process, taking place in Prague on 12-13 December 2018. The meeting will be preceded by the formal adoption of the GCM in Marrakesh on 10-11 December 2018.

Credit: Eduardo Munoz/Reuters
Objectives for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

1. Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies
2. Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin
3. Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration
4. Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation
5. Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration
6. Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work
7. Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
8. Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants
9. Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants
10. Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration
11. Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner
12. Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral
13. Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives
14. Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle
15. Provide access to basic services for migrants
16. Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion
17. Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration
18. Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences
19. Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries
20. Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants
21. Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration
22. Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits
23. Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration

Migration among priority areas for the Austrian Presidency of the EU Council

On 1 July, Austria took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Bulgaria. Being part of a trio Presidency together with Estonia (second half of 2017) and Bulgaria (first half of 2018), Austria continues implementation of the trio programme, adopted by the Council on June 20, 2017, and based on the European Council’s “Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change” of June 2014. The slogan “A Europe that protects” points to some of the focal areas of the Austrian Presidency: migration, internal and external security, protection of external borders, EU enlargement, European neighbourhood and many more. Moreover, as the European Parliament’s legislative period is ending in spring 2019, it will be crucial to reach agreements on as many open legislative proposals as possible.
Security and the fight against irregular migration is the first of three priority areas of the Austrian Presidency. Confronted with the impacts of the large-scale migration flows of 2015, the Presidency will focus on the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and strengthening of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) to ensure efficient protection of the EU’s external borders. Besides, closer cooperation with third countries shall contribute to effective return policies and allow providing assistance to those in need of protection before they enter the EU. Meanwhile, those migrants who are not in need of international protection shall be prevented from setting off on the dangerous crossing to Europe. The Heads of State or Government will deal with these issues at their informal summit in Salzburg on 20 September 2018.

Austria will continue playing the role of bridge builder, in particular with the Eastern Partnership region. During the Austrian Presidency, a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Eastern Partnership countries will take place to evaluate the recent progress made and discuss further steps. The crisis in Ukraine will require particular attention. At the same time, since Russia plays a key role for security and stability in Europe and globally, Austria aims to pursue EU-Russia relations and to strengthen the EU-Russia dialogue.

Over its 6-month term, Austria will host some 300 events, 60 Council meetings, and welcome almost 48,000 guests. At the end of its term, Austria will hand the Presidency to Romania.

Please see the full programme of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU here: www.eu2018.at/agenda-priorities/programme.html

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**Uzbekistan strives to ensure appropriate conditions for Uzbek migrant workers**

The Republic of Uzbekistan with its growing population, which increased by 0.7% in the last six months of 2018 and currently amounts 32.9 million people, has recently been recently striving to improve the situation of Uzbek migrant workers abroad.

Already in 2017, following a visit of President Mirziyoyev to Moscow, Russia and Uzbekistan signed an agreement granting migrant workers from Uzbekistan the opportunity of formal and targeted temporary employment in Russia. The agreement implies that Uzbek migrants shall know their employer, salary and living conditions in Russia already before their departure. Their official recruitment will be coordinated through the Agency for External Labour Migration of Uzbekistan, which will also open its branches in some of Russia’s most populated cities such as Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Novosibirsk. The main rights of the migrant workers, including the right of a citizen to work, rest, social insurance (except compulsory medical insurance) and pension provision, will be ensured in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation. The Centre for pre-training of labour migrants, which opened in December 2017 in Samarkand, and the Federal Service for Labour and

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Credit: Adventure.com
Employment of Russia, responsible for the provision of information on existing vacancies, working conditions and required qualifications, will be the key stakeholders in the future migration process.

According to the Minister of Employment and Labour of Uzbekistan, in 2018, Uzbekistan plans to send approximately 50,000 nationals to Russia through this formal recruitment scheme, as compared to the official figure of 922 citizens sent in 2017.

While Russia remains the main destination country for Uzbek migrant workers, Uzbekistan strives for diversification in this respect as manifested by the improved cooperation with South Korea. Following the signature of a Memorandum of Cooperation in November 2017, the two countries held meetings on various key aspects: i.e. the opening of an Agency for External Labour Migration in Gwangju City; enhanced cooperation on training of personnel willing to work and study in the Republic of Korea; and on the possibility to increase the quota for Uzbek labour force under the Employment Permit System (EPS) of South Korea. During the first half of 2018, 1,343 people have accessed employment in South Korea through the regulated channel.

In 2018, Uzbekistan also carried out an organised dispatch of migrant workers to Turkey for work in the tourist sector. In May 2018, Uzbekistan and Turkey signed an agreement on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families.

Similarly, by mid May 2018, Uzbekistan signed cooperation agreements with 10 Polish companies specialised in construction, textile, agrarian and food industries. The first migrant workers from Uzbekistan thus arrived to Poland already in June. According to the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy of Poland, the number of Uzbek migrants in Poland has been steadily growing. Last year alone saw more than 1,200 work visas issued to citizens of Uzbekistan.

To further improve the system of external labour migration, legal entities registered in Uzbekistan will be allowed to send Uzbek migrant workers to foreign states as of September 2018. Moreover, Uzbekistan established a Fund to support and protect the rights and interests of its citizens working abroad. The Fund shall provide for legal and social protection, as well as material assistance to citizens who have been subjected to violence, forced labour and discrimination, violation of labour and other rights, have fallen into a difficult financial situation or were left without documents.
Facts and figures from the region:

- On 15 July, Uzbekistan will start issuing an electronic visa to citizens of 51 countries, including EU (except Cyprus), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lichtenstein, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland

- In June, Armen Kazaryan was appointed the new Head of the State Migration Service of Armenia, replacing Mr Gagik Yeganyan, who served in this position for almost 20 years.

- In the first year of visa-free agreement more than half a million Ukrainians crossed the EU border without a visa

Interesting reads:

ICMPD Working Paper, Lost in Categorisation: Smuggled and Trafficked Refugees and Migrants on the Balkan Route, by Claire Healy, June 2018


Science Advances 20 Jun 2018, Vol. 4, no. 6. Macroeconomic evidence suggests that asylum seekers are not a “burden” for Western European countries by Hippolyte d’Albis, Ekrame Boubtane, Dramane Coulibaly

http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/6/eaaq0883/tab-pdf