



## News Digest Issue 18 (January-March 2017)

### Project News

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27/03/17

#### Expert meeting on border and migration management in emergency situations

On 23-24 March, the experts from the EaP countries, the EU Member States, international organizations and NGOs gathered in Budapest, Hungary, to discuss emergency situations caused by natural or manmade disasters which have resulted in mass migration and involved large numbers of vulnerable migrants. The meeting had a special focus on the issues related to the management of mass migration from war-stricken regions. The aim of the meeting was to present tools, mechanisms and best practices which provide for the balance between the facilitation of movement, protection of those who cross the borders in emergencies and the security of the national borders.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

### Highlights: Country News

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26/01/17

#### Armenia published its Demographic Handbook - 2016

The Demographic Handbook of Armenia - 2016 is available at the [website of the National Statistical Service](#) in Armenian and English. Part 7 of the document is specifically dedicated to migration.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)



The Project is funded by the  
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02/03/17

## Azerbaijan defines its demand for labour migrants

A focus group on improvement of the methodology for determination of the quota for labour migrants held a meeting at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Azerbaijan. Elnur Suleymanov, Head of the Employment Policy and Demography Department, stated that the question of protection of internal labour market from the global economic crisis is one of the matters in the centre of attention.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

16/01/17

## Migration statistics of Azerbaijan for 2016

By means of the Unified Information System on Migration it was calculated that last year 1,143,951 foreign nationals and stateless persons entered the country on 2,242,783 occasions while 1,137,351 foreigners exited the country on 2,242,788 occasions. 672,337 foreigners registered their place of stay, 51,710 permanent and temporary residence permits were issued. 9,480 persons received work permits. During the last five years the citizenship of Azerbaijan was granted to 68,270 persons.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

06/03/17

## Centres for irregular migrants in three Belarusian towns not earlier than 2018

Detention centres for irregular migrants will be created in the cities of Vitebsk, Gomel, and Lida, Belarus' Interior Minister Igor Shunevich said in an interview. The establishment of these centres is monitored by a working group which is composed of representatives of the Interior Ministry and the Belarusian Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). "By the end of the year, they are expected to solve a number of practical issues. Therefore the initiative will be launched not earlier than 2018," the Minister said.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

30/01/17

## EU allocates EUR 7 million to support Belarus in dealing with irregular migrants

Information on the establishment of centres for irregular migrants in Belarus [appeared on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus](#) (MIA) on 17 January 2017. It was reported that the European Commission has decided to allocate to Belarus EUR 7 million for the implementation of the international technical assistance project to support the country in dealing with the increasing number of



irregular migrants. International technical assistance for the implementation of this project will be provided by the European Union through the Mission of IOM in Belarus. MIA will partner with the State Border Committee (SBC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNHCR Representation in the Republic of Belarus, as well as some Belarusian NGOs providing assistance to the most vulnerable categories of migrants.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

10/01/17

## **Belarus introduces five-day visa-free regime for citizens of 80 countries**

On 9 January, President of Belarus signed the decree “On the Introduction of Visa-Free Entry and Departure for Foreign Citizens”. The document introduces visa-free entry through the border checkpoint at the Minsk National Airport and the visa-free stay in Belarus for up to five days for citizens of 80 states. These are 39 countries of Europe, including the entire European Union, Brazil, Indonesia, the USA, Japan, and other countries. First of all, these are favourable countries in terms of migration, Belarus’s strategic partners which have introduced visa-free regimes for Belarusian citizens on a unilateral basis. New regulations also apply to the non-citizens of Latvia and stateless persons of Estonia.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

30/03/17

## **Georgia needs to tap into migration to foster its development strategy**

Georgia would benefit from strengthening its whole-of-government approach to making migration become an integral part of its overall development strategies, argues a new joint OECD Development Centre - Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC) report titled, [Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development \(IPPM\) in Georgia](#). The report was launched on 28 March 2017 at the Public Service Hall in Tbilisi, along with the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI), CRRC-Georgia and key policy makers from several ministries in Georgia. It examines how migration affects key policy sectors in Georgia, particularly the labour market, agriculture, education, and investment and financial services. It also analyses how sectoral policies influence different migration outcomes, such as the decision to emigrate or return, and remittance patterns.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

29/03/17

## **Second edition of the Guidebook on legal emigration developed in Georgia**

In 2015, a Guidebook on legal emigration was developed within the framework of the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) of Georgia that soon after publishing on the websites of the state agencies – members



of the SCMI – as well as of the partner international and non-governmental organizations has become a principal information source for migrants and other persons interested in migration. In order to facilitate the regular migration, the SCMI Secretariat continues to carry out awareness-raising activities, envisaged as well by the [Migration Strategy of Georgia 2016-2020 and its Action Plan](#). In the framework of the Strategy, the SCMI Secretariat prepared a second edition of the Guidebook on legal emigration.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

28/03/17

## EU grants Georgians visa-free travel

From 28 March 2017, Georgians who hold a biometric passport can travel to Schengen countries visa-free for a period of stay of 90 days in any 180-day period. A [communication video](#) explains: "They can visit for business, they can visit for tourism, they can visit for family purposes, but not to work. Georgia has complied with all EU criteria including fighting organized crime. The Commission will continue to monitor the fulfilment of all benchmark. EU citizens don't need visa to travel to Georgia."

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

10/02/17

## European Union helps to improve security on the Georgian-Turkish border

European Union handed over border surveillance equipment worth EUR 3.4 million to the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs on 1 February. The support comes as part of the EU-funded and IOM-implemented project "Reinforcing the Capacities of the Government of Georgia in Border and Migration Management". The donation included communication, surveillance and detection equipment for the strengthening of Georgia's capabilities of guarding the green border with Turkey. The specialized equipment includes, among other items, watch towers that are currently being constructed along the Georgian-Turkish border. Once fully in place, these towers will be equipped with various types of surveillance equipment and connected to equipment that will detect any sort of irregular movement across the green border.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

27/02/17

## Constitutional Court of Moldova determined as constitutional the provisions incriminating the organization of irregular migration at transnational level

A lawyer lodged a petition before the Constitutional Court of Moldova claiming that article 362<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code, which incriminates the organization of irregular migration aimed at gaining – directly or indirectly –



financial or material benefits, relates to the crimes committed only on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and not to those committed outside its territory.

In its reasoning, the Court held that the organization of illegal migration is a crime that exceeds national borders, and the wording “State’s territory” was introduced into the legislation regarding actions on the organization of irregular migration not only on the territory of the Republic of Moldova but also at the transnational level.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

21/02/17

## **Joint border and customs control at the Ukrainian-Moldovan border**

Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman and Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Pavel Filip during the talks on 13 February called for expanding the practice of joint border and customs control at international crossing points at the Ukrainian-Moldovan state border. In particular, Volodymyr Groysman expressed his Government's interest in the introduction before the end of this year of joint control at the Kuchurgan-Pervomaisk international border crossing point at the Transnistrian segment of the state border. Joint control will also be implemented at the border crossing points Mayaky-Palanka-Udobne (on the territory of the Republic of Moldova) and Reni-Giurgiulesti (in Ukraine).

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

20/02/17

## **Measures to reform the State Migration Service of Ukraine**

Ukrainian Government approved the Action Plan for reforming the State Migration Service (SMS) in 2017. The list of measures includes:

- connecting the centres for the provision of administrative services to the process of issuing of biometric passports;
- unification, standardization and simplification of the procedures for the provision of administrative services to the population by the SMS departments;
- establishing a contact centre, hotline support service for the population, ensuring communication via skype and social media;
- profession-oriented training of the migration service staff;
- exchanging experience with foreign countries and international organizations in the sphere of migration in order to enhance professional skills of SMS staff on matters of identification of Ukrainian nationals, foreigners and stateless persons;
- conducting the analysis of the legislative framework and procedures with the aim to identify corruption risks and produce recommendations for legislative amendments.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



17/03/17

## **Lviv hosted international conference on integrated management of common border**

On 15 March, Lviv hosted the international conference on integrated management of common border “Border Security in Action. Success in Partnership”. Apart from promoting a coordinated approach to border management, the purpose of the event was to mark the successful completion of SURCAP-2 project, aimed at strengthening the security in the region in general, but also along the common Belarusian-Ukrainian border.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

03/03/17

## **Ukraine simplifies its visa application procedures**

From April, foreign nationals will be able to apply for Ukrainian visas through simplified rules approved by the Government of Ukraine on 1 March. The number of foreigners wishing to visit Ukraine, despite the current challenging situation in the country, is growing, therefore the rationale for adoption of the new Rules for issuance of visas for entering Ukraine and transiting through its territory was to align the visa issuance mechanism with the international standards and to create favorable conditions for visiting Ukraine.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

02/02/17

## **New EU-funded project will help Ukraine to foster migration and asylum management in accordance with best international practices**

The European Union has launched the project “Support for Migration and Asylum Management in Ukraine” to foster migration management in the country in line with best international and European practices. The EU will allocate EUR 27.2 million over the next three years. “This is the biggest ever EU project on migration management in one of the Eastern Partnership countries,” said Hugues Mingarelli, Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

# Highlights: EU Spotlight

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13/03/17

## **Frontex held conference of heads of international airports**



On 7 March 2017, Berndt Koerner, the Deputy Executive Director of Frontex opened the 9th heads of airports conference in Cascais, Portugal. The conference, hosted by the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service, gathered more than 140 participants representing all major European and non-European airport authorities responsible for border control. The main topics discussed during the conference included threats to airport border security, methods to detect forged and fraudulent travel documents, foreign terrorist fighters and trafficking in human beings. Specific areas such as Schengen evaluation and monitoring activities, risk analysis forecasts, and cooperation with non-European partners and international organizations were also featured during the meeting.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

06/03/17

## **European Commission presents new measures for an efficient and credible EU return policy**

After the Malta Summit of 3 February 2017 highlighted the need for a review of EU return policy, the Commission is following through with a renewed EU Action Plan on Return and a set of recommendations to Member States on how to make return procedures more effective.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

17/02/17

## **Frontex published Risk Analysis for 2017**

In 2016, migration pressure at Europe's external borders remained high with the detection of over half a million irregular border-crossings. Frontex estimates that this figure corresponds to about 382,000 migrants coming to Europe from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Compared to the 1.8 million irregular border-crossings reported in 2015, 2016 saw a significant decrease, but this figure is still higher than any annual figure for arrivals between 2010 (104,060) and 2014 (282,933).

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

18/01/17

## **EU needs Turkish-style migration deal with Libya, says Maltese PM**

The European Union needs to reach a deal with Libya to curb the flow of migrants trying to sail on smugglers' boats to Italy, Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said on 18 January. He said it should be along the same lines as an agreement struck with Turkey last year which was instrumental in cutting the number of migrants and refugees reaching Europe to 387,487 from well over a million in 2015, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).





For further information, please follow [this link](#)

## Highlights: International Arena

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13/02/17

### **Azerbaijan hosted PACE Committee meeting on migration issues**

The PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons hold its next meeting in Baku on 15-16 March. [The agenda of the event](#) published on the PACE's website contains the following topics that were discussed during the meeting: "Possible ways to improve the emergency refugee situations funding", "Migration as an opportunity for European development", "Human rights implications of the European response to transit migration across the Mediterranean" and others.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

28/01/17

### **UN agencies express hope US will continue long tradition of protecting those fleeing conflict, persecution**

The United Nations agencies dealing with global refugee and migration issues expressed the hope that the United States will continue its strong leadership role and long tradition of protecting those who are fleeing conflict and persecution. "The needs of refugees and migrants worldwide have never been greater, and the US resettlement programme is one of the most important in the world," says a joint statement from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

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