

Illegal employment of foreign workers in Europe

The possibility for irregular immigrants of finding employment in Europe – mostly in construction, catering and textile industries and very often under exploitative conditions – remains a significant pull factor for irregular immigration.

Illegal employment of migrant workers arises when restrictions on labour immigration in national immigration legislation place barriers to entry, legality and residence of migrants. Employers may also take advantage of the vulnerability of migrant labour to reduce their costs and to give them access to a pool of cheap, flexible labour. (On pages 2 and 3 of this edition of LINK, you will find articles illustrating the issue of illegal labour and exploitation of foreign workers in the Czech Republic and Romania).



Chinese worker, Bucharest, Romania, January 2008
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Irregular migration and undocumented, clandestine work of migrants are closely interlinked and continue to challenge governments' and policy makers' pursuit towards managed migration. Economic interests of states, enterprises and individuals, protection of workers and the rights of migrants all come to play a part in the way illegal employment of foreigners is approached. Leading a coherent policy can be a tough balancing act for governments and policy makers.

IOM's recent research has looked into the reality of illegal employment of foreigners in seven European countries and what measures are taken to combat this phenomenon. The project **Combating Irregular Employment of Immigrants in an Enlarged EU**, managed by IOM in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and funded by the European Commission's ARGO programme and the Hungarian government, investigated the situation in Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Romania and Spain. The concluding Conference of this project, held in April 2008 in Budapest presented the results and policy conclusions of the project. Presentations from the conference are available at: <http://www.iom.hu/bpevents.html#argo2006conf> and the final research report will be available shortly at www.iom.hu

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Western Dreams: Chinese Migrant Workers in Romania



Following the accession of Romania to the European Union in January 2007 many Romanian citizens moved west, to countries like Spain and Italy, to find better paid work. This influx in migration has left a huge void in the labour market, forcing many Romanian construction companies to begin searching east to find cheap labour.

In Semănătoarea, an industrial neighbourhood near the centre of Bucharest, nineteen migrant workers live on a construction site by the Dambovită River. In August 2007, they came to Romania from Jilin Province in North Eastern China. Their dream was to earn more money to provide a better life for their families back home.

The men live in two cramped rooms, one housing eight plumbers and the other eleven electricians. They speak only Mandarin, which results in them being isolated both inside and outside of the construction site. The workers rarely venture outside; visiting the supermarket when necessary and the local park or lake on their one day off a week. This offers them their only chance to briefly escape from the bleak confines of their new home.

These men were brought to Bucharest by a Chinese employment agency on a five-year contract, having been promised US \$1000 per month. Once in Bucharest, they were made to sign a new contract in Romanian with no Chinese translation and only later discovered they had been offered a vastly reduced salary.

The small wage the workers earn each month is used to pay back the debt they owe the employment agency for their journey to Romania, whilst the remainder of the money is sent back to their families in China. The men are therefore left with little hope of saving enough money to pay for a plane ticket home.

According to Dani Kozak from IOM office in Bucharest, "because of the rather intricate system of intermediary agents, the workers have been promised more than they are actually getting. Cultural orientation and awareness raising could prevent abuse and discrimination. Cultural orientation before departure is crucial to prevent migrant workers from falling through the gaps of the system. Also receiving communities need to know more and be better prepared to deal in a fair way with migrants who are for the moment invisible, but nevertheless have needs, expectations and rights."

The IOM mission in Romania is currently working to put together a website with useful information for migrants and authorities, in order to better inform all and prevent discrimination and will be forwarding to the Romanian national authorities a request on behalf of the Chinese migrant workers to access Romanian language training.



Photographs © Stephen JB Kelly 2008

IOM Working to Prevent Mongolian Migrant Labour Exploitation in the Czech Republic

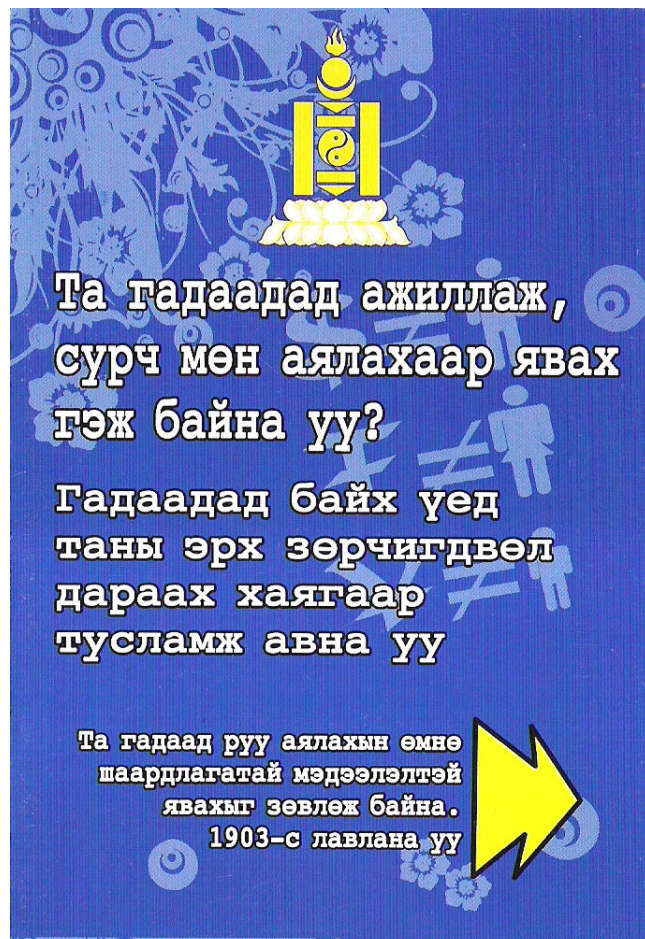
Due to social, economic, and political changes in Mongolia since the early 1990s, and constitutional changes in 1992 which enabled Mongolian citizens to travel abroad, the number of Mongolian emigrants, has dramatically increased in recent years. Much of that outflow has been directed towards the Czech Republic due to a strong tradition of cooperation between the Czech Republic and Mongolia, with many Mongolians having studied and worked in the Czech Republic in the past as well as relative strength of the Czech economy and available work opportunities.

As a result of these past connections, and recent changes, a significant increase can be observed in both legal and illegal Mongolian immigration to the Czech Republic in recent years. Employment figures from the Czech Republic indicate that, as of December 2007 there were 6,897 Mongolians working in the Czech Republic, more than double compared to the previous year.

Many Mongolian immigrants resort to the help of smuggling or trafficking networks and some use forged travel documents to enter the Czech Republic. There are many however, who also come to the Czech Republic on legitimate work visas obtained under false pretences (such as bogus invitations) and subsequently become irregular once their residence permit expires. According to the Czech Alien and Border Police, in 2006, 110 Mongolian citizens crossed the Czech border illegally and further 109 did not renew their residence permits (breached the residence regime). Recently, more and more cases of Mongolians exploited in their workplace or trafficked for labour exploitation in Czech Republic have been recorded.

These cases, as encountered by IOM, non-governmental organisations, and state agencies and reported by the media, often correspond to the definition of human trafficking, as defined by §232a of the Czech Criminal Code. According to the IOM reports, awareness of legal procedures for obtaining a visa or a work permit or basic information about living and working conditions in the Czech Republic is very low among Mongolian migrants. Many exploited Mongolian migrants do not speak Czech or other languages and are therefore dependent on their "employer" or "sponsor" for their accommodation and other life needs.

In many cases, Mongolian migrants have been subjected to labour exploitation by employers and/or "agents" who organised their employment in the Czech Republic. Lack of essential information in the work contract, unavailability of a work contract in a language understood by the worker, excessive working hours, deductions from wages in case of complaints, were frequently reported. As the work permit is tied to the employer, the loss of the job (as a consequence of a complaint, for example) is inextricably linked to the loss of a residence permit and legal status in the Czech Republic. This leads many migrants to accept exploitative



IOM leaflet informing potential Mongolian migrants about their rights abroad and assistance available

conditions and not seek assistance with authorities. In addition, the use of informal "agents" who frequently do not comply with administrative formalities leaves many Mongolian migrants in an irregular situation through no fault of their own and in some cases, even without their knowledge.

The Government of Mongolia has acknowledged that trafficking and labour exploitation of its citizens abroad is an issue and has tried to improve its ability to address the phenomenon; however, technical expertise and resources are still lacking.

In order to increase the capacity of Mongolian government to combat trafficking and smuggling of its citizens and to prevent Mongolian emigrants from becoming victims of criminal networks, IOM offices in the Czech Republic and Mongolia will work closely with the Czech and Mongolian governments within the framework of a project "Informed Migration from Mongolia".

The project aims to provide the analysis of current trends in Mongolian-Czech migration, deliver training to the Mongolian state agencies and NGOs on prevention, identification and assistance to victims of trafficking and finally conduct an information campaign to warn any prospective Mongolian migrants of dangers of trafficking and labour exploitation. The programme is funded by the Czech Development Cooperation.

Helping Returnees from Central Europe



Agim, a young migrant recently returned from Hungary, is welding a fence for a local school in the Malishevë municipality, Kosovo. "It's a very big job for our business", says Agim with satisfaction, "and we hope to get more orders like that". Agim has recently rejoined the family metal processing and agricultural equipment repair business, and with the assistance of IOM, purchased a set of tools, such as a welding machine, a metal cutter and a drill.

The reintegration assistance to Agim was provided within the framework of the IOM project "Enhancing Mechanisms and Harmonizing Standards in the Field of Voluntary Return of Irregular Migrants in Central European Member States" funded by the European Commission RETURN Preparatory Actions programme and the governments of the host countries.

The project provides return and reintegration assistance to irregular migrants returning voluntarily from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. In 2008 this assistance will also be available for migrants returning from Bulgaria and Romania to their countries of origin.

The project provides all returnees with transportation assistance and a financial return allowance to be distributed in the host country (to cover for basic initial needs) and supports revenue-generating projects to selected interested applicants. IOM, in close cooperation with NGOs, reception centers and IOM missions in the country of return, supports the returnees to develop their business proposals and assesses the feasibility of each initiative, based on its market relevance, viability, impact on local community and the professional and educational background of the returnee.



So far 27 returning migrants from 9 countries have benefited from IOM's assistance setting up grocery shops, bakeries, internet cafes and other businesses as well as from assistance in completing their education, for example through vocational, language or computer training courses.

Roma Humanitarian Assistance Project (RHAP) Assists Elderly Roma in South-Eastern Europe

"It was so nice. I can die peacefully now that I have seen this".

Ljuba, an elderly Roma woman from the small Serbian town of Beocin, was very happy. Together with 25 other elderly Roma women and men from Beocin, she had just returned from a long boat ride on the Danube. For the first time in her life, Ljuba had been given the chance to travel along that famous river.

Ljuba is one of 14,000 beneficiaries of the Roma Humanitarian Assistance Project (RHAP). Since July 2007, IOM, with its NGO partners, has been implementing this project in five South-Eastern European countries: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia.



Beneficiaries of RHAP in Montenegro. © Krsto Vukadinovic.

The elderly Roma benefiting from this IOM project generally live in extremely poor and often desperate conditions. The broad range of medical, legal, social and material assistance that IOM is providing helps to address their most pressing needs.

Medical assistance covers check-ups, medicines and the provision of special equipment such as wheelchairs and hearing aids. Those who lack the necessary papers and documents to apply for existing state pensions or medical insurance are assisted by qualified lawyers hired under the project.

As prices for food and other commodities continue to rise throughout the region, the elderly are especially grateful for the food packages and firewood that they receive from RHAP.

Beneficiaries can also visit a number of social clubs that were opened for them in locations with a higher

concentration of Roma settlements. There, they can participate in regular social events, listen to presentations on health issues, attend painting workshops with their grandchildren, or simply meet with others to enjoy a game of chess, a cup of tea or some good conversation.

"It is the comprehensiveness of the approach that makes this Roma project unique", says Walter Brill, the Project Manager and Coordinator for IOM in Geneva. Thanks to IOM's earlier experience with similar large-scale Roma projects and the efficient field network of IOM Offices and NGO partners in the region, the project has been advancing according to plan. *"For this type of project, it was extremely important to gain the trust of the beneficiaries and the local communities",* adds Brill. *"Over the years, our NGO partners have built close relationships with the Roma communities in their areas. In fact, some of our partners are Roma organizations themselves. Without them, this project would not be possible."*

Further up the Danube in Northern Serbia lies the town of Novi Sad, capital of the autonomous province of Vojvodina. Here, in January 1942, more than 1,000 people were killed by fascists acting under the authority of the Axis Powers and thrown into the icy river. A memorial was put up on the river bank; its inscription reads: "Memory is a monument harder than stone."

Because many of them were only small children at the time, Ljuba and her fellow Roma might not have been aware of the atrocity taking place on the banks of the Danube. Nevertheless, they are grateful for the humanitarian assistance that they are receiving, thanks to a generous donation from the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future". A few years ago, this Foundation also funded a large IOM project for survivors of Nazi persecution, with the aim of helping former victims and keeping the memory alive.

"Whatever you do for us will not be enough as we are very poor and neglected by the others", said Ljuba's friend who joined her on the boat trip. *"But it is so much more than we have ever had in our lives."*

Together with Ljuba and the others, she is already looking forward to the visit of a museum exhibition scheduled for the coming month.



Roma Children and Their Grandparents Celebrate the World Ecology Day

The beneficiaries of the Roma Humanitarian Assistance Project in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, together with their grandchildren celebrated the World Ecology Day in March 2008. The half-day programme was meant to inform, educate and inspire the respect and protection of our natural and human world and to encourage proactive approach of the whole community. To give a good example to their neighbours and friends the children and their grandparents organized a symbolic collection of the waste in their neighbourhoods. The initiative was warmly welcomed by the local community and other residents have joined seeing the enthusiastic group of children in action.

Photo © IOM & NGO Sumnal

Assessment of Professional Competences and Skills of Asylum Seekers in Poland

Within the framework of a project “You Can Learn to Understand – Możesz Uczyć się Rozumieć (MUR)” IOM undertook an audit of competences and professional qualifications of persons applying for refugee status in Poland.

Much research among refugees and asylum seekers in Poland to date focused on the directions of immigrant influx, conditions in receptions centres, and problems with integration, but very little emphasis was given to viewing applicants for refugee status as potential employees, who, once the procedure is completed and if granted refugee status, will stay in Poland and enter the Polish labour market.

The survey research on a sample of 501 respondents looked at their level of education, professional career, computer skills, knowledge of office equipment, but also factors which prevent migrants from finding permanent employment (such as functional illiteracy, lack of childcare provisions, or cultural patterns of behaviour).

The questionnaire also looked at attitudes to work, such as willingness to find and take up work, learn the language or acquire new skills, job-hunting strategies, expectations concerning remuneration and working hours, readiness to conscientiously discharge duties and opinions on the difficulties in finding a job in Poland.

The predominant group among the research respondents was Russian citizens (83.4%), in the majority of cases of Chechen origin (75%). Citizens of African countries accounted for approximately 8.5% of the respondents. Women constituted 45% of the group and vast majority of respondents (90%) were of working age.

26% of respondents finished primary school only, post-primary education has been declared by 55% of the research participants, and university education by 11%.

Some persons who apply for refugee status in Poland come with specialist and rare skills. The trained professions are dominated by jobs connected with the services sector – 29%. Only 22% of the respondents are able to confirm their skills with a diploma or a certificate; in the case of 45% of them, such documents have been left in the country of origin.

The factor which may affect the migrants' integration process is their economic activity in the country of origin. 40% of the research participants have never worked. The group includes 43% of the immigrants from Chechnya and the Transcaucasus; 38% of the Africans and as little as 10% of those who have come from Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. Only one in eight persons of Chechen origin (12%) has declared running their own company prior to leaving the country, as compared to 24% of immigrants from Eastern Europe. The immigrants from Africa proved to be the most economically active – almost half of them (43%) ran their own business in the past.

One of the principal obstacles in finding a job outside their ethnic enclave that they encounter is the language barrier. After at least a six-month stay in Poland 19% of the respondents are not able to communicate in Polish (mainly the immigrants from the Transcaucasus).

Transferability of human capital seems to be the highest among the migrants from Eastern Europe. This is the only group in which the conviction that finding a job in Poland is easy predominates. The persons who have arrived from Africa constitute the second group in which this opinion is expressed by almost every second of the respondents. The immigrants from the Transcaucasus are the most pessimistic about employment opportunities.

20% of the respondents have declared they are determined to leave Poland. 72% (258 persons) intend to stay in Poland, out of whom 56% will look for hired labour, 10% plan to set up a business and 6% do not intend to take up any job (majority of them will continue education or run the home). Almost 6% intend to come back to the country of origin.

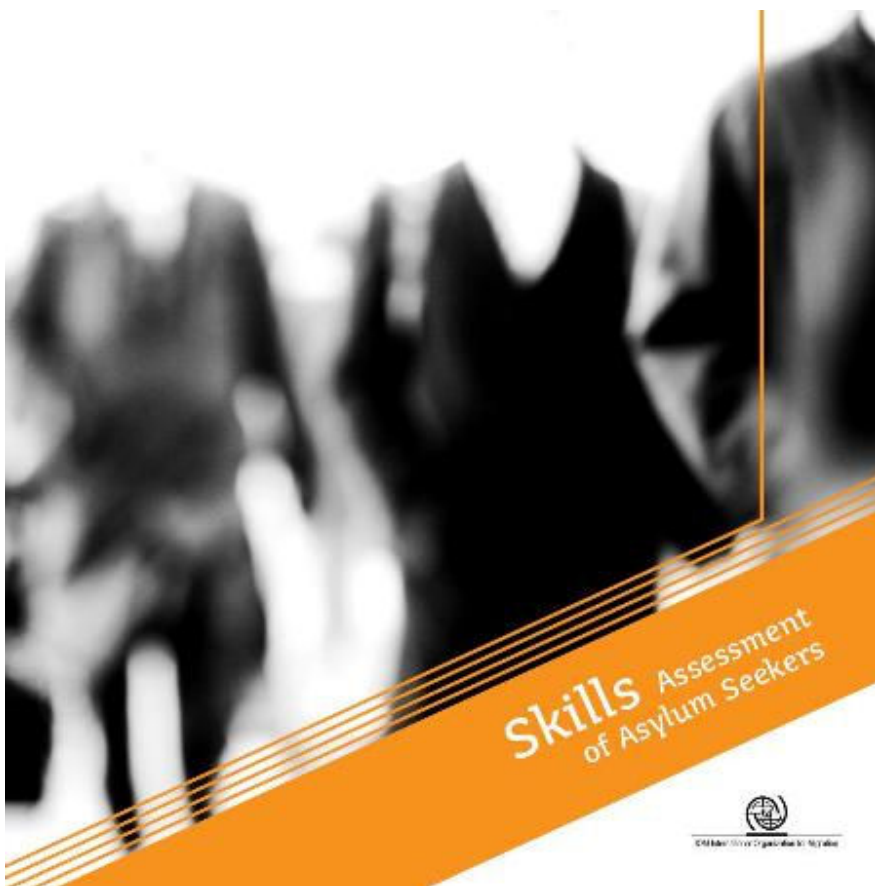
The respondents from Eastern Europe have the highest expectations regarding their future salary– on average they would like to earn PLN 4,000 net (EUR 1,182), whereas the migrants from Africa have the lowest – they would be satisfied with the average salary at the level of PLN 2,200 net (EUR 650). The migrants show little flexibility in their remuneration expectations, which is proved by a high level of expected minimum salary.

Asking friends is the preferred way of looking for a job – 52% of the respondents indicate compatriots or Polish friends as the source of information about possible employment opportunities. 29% try to find a job reading newspaper advertisements or checking advertisements displayed in employment agencies. The tendency to rely on collective strategies, focused on extending and maintaining networks of "contacts" is the most visible among the respondents from the Transcaucasus. The immigrants from Africa and the South-East Asia, who still lack the support of a strong diaspora in Poland, have to "rely on themselves" and on institutions of the host country.

The project "You Can Learn to Understand – Możesz Uczyć się Rozumieć (MUR)" was financed by the European Social Fund within the Equal Community Initiative and implemented by IOM in partnership with Polish Humanitarian Action, Office for Foreigners, Social Policy Department of Mazovian Voivodeship Office, Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre, Polish Association for Legal Education and Warsaw University Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. The publication of the report coincides with a change in the Polish legislation allowing persons with subsidiary protection status to participate in integration programmes.

The full report is available at:

<http://www.iom.pl/res/files/Skill%20Assessment%20of%20Asylum%20Seekers-%20word%20version.pdf>



Swedish Medical Team Programme Marks Its Conclusion in Kosovo

On behalf of the Swedish Government, IOM office in Prishtinë/Priština facilitated a donation of specialized medical and bio-medical equipment to the University Clinical Centre in Kosovo (UCCK) in April 2008. This humanitarian contribution was made possible in the framework of the Swedish Medical Team (SMT) Programme, which has been in continuous implementation in Kosovo since 2000 and which concluded the majority of its activities at the end of March 2008. The donation, worth over €71,000, consisted of microsurgical ophthalmologic instruments and biomedical equipment. Accepting the medical instruments on behalf of the UCCK, the Director of the Ophthalmology Clinic, Mr Naser Saliu, thanked IOM-SMT for the continuous support given over the last eight years, which has contributed to strengthening the health care system in Kosovo.



Swedish doctors performing surgery at the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo in 2002.

In 1995, IOM, in partnership with the Swedish Migration Board and the Linköping University Hospital, initiated the Swedish Medical Programme (SMP) in order to provide medical care for persons injured in the 1992-95 war and to meet the need for medical and surgical services not available in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as a result of the war. Based on its success in BiH, the programme was expanded to include Kosovo in 2000, in light of the fact that the conflict in Kosovo significantly damaged the existing pre-war health care infrastructure.

The main aim of the Swedish Medical Team Programme in Kosovo was to evacuate individual patients who could not be treated locally due to the lack of suitable diagnostic possibilities, complex post-operative intensive care, and specific highly specialized equipment. Together with local colleagues, the Swedish doctors performed needs assessment screenings to evaluate patients requiring complex operations and identify those requiring treatment through the Programme.

As a part of its wide-ranging strategy, the Programme strived to diminish the longer-term need to refer patients for treatment abroad by building local capacity, establishing greater professional cooperation within the region and between Swedish and local specialists, and introducing new medical techniques and procedures through training and donations of equipment.

As a result of the 165 visits of the Swedish Medical Teams in Prishtinë/Priština, 40 local medical specialists were trained abroad, and numerous other doctors received on-the-job training locally.

During the Programme's implementation, different equipment has been donated to the UCCK including an autoclave, anaesthesia machine, infusion pumps, microscopes, the equipment needed for sharpening surgical instruments, as well as the complete equipment needed for an immuno-histochemical laboratory, including spare parts, and related consumable items.

Since the inception of the Programme in 2000, a total of 86 patients from Kosovo were evacuated to Sweden or BiH for medical treatment and surgery; the majority of these beneficiaries were children. The IOM SMT Programme concentrated on the following medical fields of intervention: paediatric cardiology, orthopaedics plastic and hand reconstructive surgery, ophthalmology, oncology, and gynaeco-oncology physiotherapy/rehabilitation. In total, over one thousand Kosovars were examined and treated, and 301 surgeries performed by the Swedish medical teams.

Anti-Child Trafficking Campaign in Bulgaria

"Every child can fall into the trap of human trafficking." This was the message proclaimed recently in a public information campaign partially organized by IOM Bulgaria. The campaign, "Every Child is Precious," sought to increase awareness among parents about the realities of child trafficking. The comprehensive campaign included posters, brochures, and video presentations as well as open discussions held around Bulgaria to educate parents about the trafficking of children.

The campaign emphasized that children without adult supervision are often the most susceptible to trafficking. A brochure, distributed to parents, emphasized that parents should foster an open dialogue about safety with their children in order to protect them.

Partners in the campaign included the National Counter-Trafficking Commission, the Agency for Social Assistance, the National Assembly for Children, the Youth and Sports Affairs Committee, and the organization Face to Face. All materials distributed featured contact information for the IOM hotline for victims of trafficking.

Every Child is Precious campaign is one of many initiatives undertaken by IOM in Bulgaria in the field of combating trafficking in human beings. In April 2008, IOM Bulgaria marked the end of a four-year counter trafficking project, funded by USAID. As part of the project, IOM Bulgaria has provided assistance to help increase the capacity of the National Counter-Trafficking Commission and assisted in establishing local anti-trafficking commissions in high-priority regions of Bulgaria. Other achievements of the project included elaboration and assistance in the implementation of the National Counter-Trafficking Action Plan and the establishment of a national counter-trafficking network.

IOM Bulgaria has also extended 17 grants to local organizations and municipalities for community projects targeted at high-risk groups. The grants supported activities to raise awareness about trafficking and to promote educational and employment opportunities among vulnerable groups.

Всяко дете може да стане жертва на трафик,

особено, което виждаме, рядко!

Всяка година в света 1 200 000 деца стават жертви на трафик с цел експлоатация. Според Международната организация на труда повече от половината от тези деца са сексуално експлоатирани.

Изграждането на защитена среда за децата ни е от изключително значение за намаляване на броя на децата жертви на трафик. Според специалисти родителите са една от опорите на тази защитена среда. Те са тези, които имат способности, знания и са непосредствено отговорни за грижата и закрилата на децата.

Статистиката показва, че висок процент от децата жертви на трафик са били лишени от такава защитена среда и доверителни отношения в семейството. За едно дете е важно да общува с родителите си, както и те с него, да усеща атмосфера на любов и приятелство.

Горещ телефон
93 94 777
Международна организация по миграция

FACE TO FACE
THE FACE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Deputy Prime Minister Daniel Vulchev, the US Ambassador, and the USAID Mission Director all attended the closing ceremony. A group of schoolchildren gave a lesson about counter trafficking to the attendees of the ceremony. The children's display of their knowledge about the risks of trafficking highlighted the effects of the project's work with vulnerable groups at the grassroots level.

IOM in Serbia Assists Former Military Personnel to Integrate Into Civilian Life

Mr Branislav Škrbić, 49, retired from the Serbian army in July 2006 as a Sergeant Major 1st Class, and decided to open a digital mapping company. As a former army aerial photography technician, who he had worked for more than 30 years in the Air Force, he commanded considerable experience in this field. On his retirement, he gained some experience in a similar agency and saw that there was a growing demand for this type of services.

Digital mapping is used in topographic mapping, architecture, engineering, manufacturing, quality control, police investigations and geology as well as by archaeologists to quickly produce plans of large or complex sites. The possible customers are public institutions and private companies dealing with construction, urban planning, roads, water and electrical planning and installation.

Mr Škrbić opened his own company called *Falcon Survey* in September 2007 and has since offered his services to several companies: he provided aerial photography and geodesic work to the German company *Actec* and the Dutch company *Reas Euro*. His main customer is a local company *Geoinfo Strategic*. He is also in contact with a British company, *Gardline Environment* and a French one, *Horizon International Business*.

Mr Škrbić is one of the beneficiaries of the **Project for Assistance to Discharged Defence Personnel** in the Republic of Serbia financed through the NATO Partnership for Peace Programme and implemented by IOM mission in Serbia.

The project targets discharged defence personnel, as well as their families and dependants, to integrate into civilian life. The beneficiaries are offered the opportunity to access grant schemes in amount up to €1,500 and/or micro-credit up to €3,000 for setting up or joining micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as receive enhanced support services, assistance in employment generation, referral services and where appropriate vocational skills training. The project aims at reintegrating a total caseload of approximately 1,850 redundant military personnel in the next 2 years and reaching a target of 5,100 over 5 years.



Mr Škrbić and his employees at Falcon Survey.

By supporting their process of reintegration, IOM contributes to population stabilization – the prospect of securing employment helps prevent the emigration (especially its irregular form) of a skilled and disciplined workforce; on the other hand, reintegration programmes targeting these individuals in turn contribute to economic development through the creation of self-sustainable solutions such as small businesses, which benefit the wider community.

For Mr Škrbić the prospects look good: *Falcon Survey* has signed a number of contracts with national authorities and private agencies for the provision of digital mapping services and now employs three permanent employees and two on-call specialists.

Information and Communication Strategy on Migration Issues of Albania elaborated

During September and October 2007, with the coordination of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, IOM undertook a series of consultations with stakeholders on the shape and content of an Information and Communication Strategy on Migration Issues, as well as research into Albanian migrants' realities and needs.

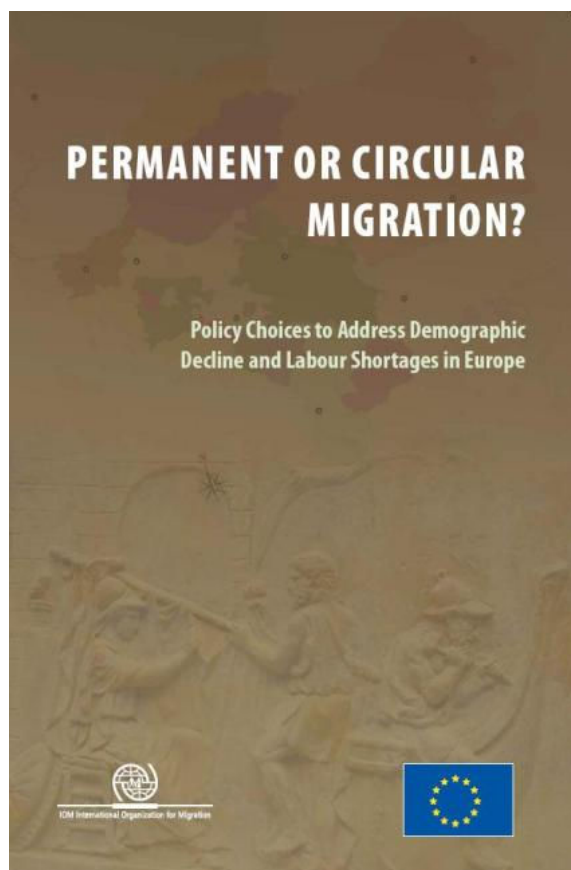
IOM team comprised the IOM Tirana project staff and an IOM communication expert with experience in the drafting and implementation of more than 40 information and awareness-raising campaigns all over the world. After a first revision by the concerned actors, the consolidated draft of this document was presented in a roundtable held on 18 February 2008 in order to discuss the inputs collected and to agree on a final version of the Strategy document. A draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy was also presented at this event. This draft Action Plan is in the process of undergoing a revision by concerned actors. Subsequently, it will be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval along with the Strategy.

The Information Strategy focuses on three key migration issues which the Government of Albania intends to address: Albanian migrants' rights, return migration and migration and development, in particular relations with the Albanian diaspora. The Strategy aims to inform potential Albanian migrants on the realities of migration, inform Albanian migrants abroad about their rights and obligations and finally inform Albanian communities abroad about return opportunities, remittances and skills transfer to Albania.

Bilateral discussions with the principal line ministries involved in the implementation of this project are also planned in May, in order to determine their priorities as regards the development and implementation of a wide information campaign for Albanian migrants on the issues indicated by the strategy, to be implemented in the framework of this project during 2008 and early 2009. The campaigns derived from this strategy will target Albanian migrant communities in Greece and Italy, potential candidates for voluntary return or relocation to Albania and potential migrants in Albania. Subsequently, the distribution could be broadened to include other countries with large Albanian migrant populations, in particular, the UK, Germany, the US and Canada. The campaigns will convey the messages on:

- migrants' rights – what they are and how to exercise them;
- voluntary return possibilities, incentives and assistance facilities
- how to involve members of Albanian diaspora into the development process of the country through investment, skills transfers, remittance channelling or relocation.

The development of the Strategy has been made possible in the framework of the project "Fostering the further implementation of the National Strategy on Migration", in line with the provisions of the National Action Plan on Migration (measure 39).



Permanent or Circular Migration? Policy Choices to Address Demographic Decline and Labour Shortages in Europe

This report discusses migration policy options for eight European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine based on thorough demographic and economic analysis. Authors of the country reports included in the volume have reviewed demographic projections, past and forecast structural developments of the economies in general and of the labour force in particular, as well as recent labour migration trends and policies. The studies aim to provide solid knowledge basis for national and European policy makers, encouraging them to take on more determined migration policies. Both immigration, especially through well-managed migrant recruitment schemes, and other policy options such as mobilizing domestic labour reserves are recommended as a comprehensive response to population ageing and shrinking labour force in Europe. This can serve both short- and medium-term labour force needs and medium- to long-term demographic challenges.

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