

Newsletter

of the IOM International Organization for Migration in the Slovak Republic

Issue 02/2012 – April 2012

Dear colleagues and friends,

In 2012 IOM is continuing all established activities in its major areas of focus. In addition, several new activities developing new aspects of migrant integration started in the beginning of the year. Within the projects funded by the European Fund for Integration of Third-Country Nationals IOM will examine the concept of socio-cultural orientation of newly arriving migrants, which has been widely discussed among stakeholders but so far not put into practice in Slovakia. The project is based on exchange of information among international experts and relevant Slovak actors, based on which IOM will prepare a set of recommendations for the development and implementation of language and cultural training programmes. Another new EIF activity is a research into the experience of migrants with violence, abuse and exploitation in Slovakia in different settings, such as public space, home, work or official institutions. We seek to find out how often migrants experience these phenomena, how they perceive their causes, and what their impact on the lives of migrants is. The research findings will be used to push for the improvement of the position of, and services for, migrants living in Slovakia, with a focus on prevention and support to those exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation. Last but not least, the international project Next Door Family EU will test a new method of migrant integration at the local and individual level in the form of family meetings between migrant and local families. The concept was developed by a Czech NGO Slovo 21, which has since 2004 successfully organised more than 490 such meetings. In November 2012 the meetings will for the first time take place in 6 further countries of the European Union. More information on these projects will be made available in the course of the year.

In this issue of the newsletter we look back at 2011 and provide an overview of results and achievements within several of our main activity fields. At the same time, the newsletter brings information on events and activities implemented between January and March 2012. If you need any more information, please find contact details of our different units at our website www.iom.sk.

2011: Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration

As in previous years one of the main goals of the *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme* in 2011 was to inform migrants about the possibility to return to their country of origin with the assistance of IOM. For this purpose, IOM carried out a billboard/poster information campaign as a follow-up to similar campaigns carried out in 2009 and 2010. Basic information about the AVRR programme in 6 languages (Slovak, English, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic) was displayed on approx. 100 different carriers in the streets and at railway stations in Bratislava and Košice. The aim was predominantly to inform about the 0850 211 262 low-rate hotline through which IOM staff provide anonymous consultations on AVRR.

In 2011, 117 migrants were registered into the AVRR programme and 95 assisted voluntary returns were carried out to 17 countries of origin. Upon request, IOM assisted migrants also after their return. As outcome of the pre-departure reintegration counselling 60 reintegration plans were elaborated, out of which 26 were implemented in cooperation with the IOM missions in countries of origin. (More elaborated reintegration plans will be implemented in 2012.) Out of the many types of reintegration assistance available, migrants were most interested in starting a business either individually or through joining a partnership with established companies. Most often the implemented reintegration schemes aimed at setting up of small shops (e.g. a mixed goods shop, shop with electrical installation materials, construction materials shop, bookstore, etc.) or the expansion of family farms and other agricultural activities. Purchase of fodder or farm animals (pigs, cows, fish) constitutes a simple but efficient type of assistance which enables migrants to make use of the existing resources (land, buildings, crops) and make profit. Another popular type of reintegration assistance aims at improving living conditions after return, e.g. through home renovation (repairs of central heating system, insulation of the house, reconstruction of bathroom).



Purchase of flour for the confectionary. Author: IOM Tbilisi

One of the successfully implemented reintegration assistance plans was in Georgia where a client applied for business start-up assistance. Based on the collected information on his qualification, skills and intentions, IOM assisted the returnee in entering a partnership with an already established business. IOM mission in Tbilisi applied their experience gained from assisting another client from Netherlands who established a confectionary. Since both returnees live in the same town, IOM Tbilisi offered them a partnership. Following the signing of the partnership agreement, IOM assisted the migrant with the purchase of goods for the production of pastry, which constituted the returnee's contribution to the partnership.

The Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration Programme (AVRR) is co-funded by the European Union from the European Return Fund. Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows.

2011: Support for Victims of Trafficking

In 2011, IOM Bratislava identified 27 victims of trafficking of whom 21 decided to join the programme of *Return and Reintegration Assistance to Victims of Trafficking* implemented by IOM and funded by the Ministry of Interior. Clients were helped to return safely to Slovakia and provided with various reintegration assistance. Particularly, this was: medical and psychosocial support (provided to 19 clients), job placement and employment counselling (12 clients), material support (10 clients), safe accommodation (10 clients).

With regard to the purpose of trafficking, 2011 confirmed the rising trend of trafficking for the purpose of economic exploitation (13 cases in total) as opposed to trafficking for sexual exploitation (6 cases). There was one case of forced begging and one of forced marriage. At the same time, there was also an increase in the number of men (10) who joined the programme, which almost equalled the number of women (11). Most clients were over 25 years (16 clients), others were in the age group of 18 to 24 years.

The National Counter Trafficking Hotline 0800 800 818 received 821 phone calls and provided 677 phone consultations (the rest were misdialled or misusing calls). The main fields of consulta-

tions provided by the hotline staff included: provision of general information about the National Counter Trafficking Hotline, crisis assistance, screening of employment agencies, preventive information about working abroad, referral to the Police of Slovak Republic (e.g. in case of a missing person search), referral to other state institutions, e.g. labour office, trade register and labour inspectorate (e.g. for job search, screening of employment agencies mediating work abroad or for complaints about working conditions), referral to relevant NGOs and individual counselling to the clients of the Programme. The National Counter Trafficking Hotline enabled seven victims of trafficking to join the programme.

2011: Integration Counselling and Assistance: IOM Migration Information Centre

The IOM Migration Information Centre (MIC) provides third-country nationals with free counselling and services in the areas of residence, employment, business, family reunion, housing, social security, health care, health insurance, education and citizenship. Counselling is provided during the daily opening hours in MIC Bratislava and MIC Košice, via help line 0850 211 478 and email mic@iom.int.

In 2011 MIC provided services to more than 1,500 clients through more than 2,500 consultations. The number of clients has been rising significantly in recent years, showing a threefold increase from 2009. The main areas of clients' interest were residence, documents and employment.

The MIC counsellors provide information and one-off consultations as well as long-term integration support including communication with state authorities and further assistance with legal proceedings. An integral part of the MIC counselling services is the website www.mic.iom.sk which contains analytically processed legislative and practical information from the main areas of foreigners' life in Slovakia (In 2011 it recorded almost 90,000 individual visitors). In addition, MIC also publishes multilingual thematic brochures. In 2011 MIC a new set was produced including: [Frequently Asked Questions for Foreigners in Slovakia](#) where you will find useful information regarding residence and employment, [Address Book of Useful Contacts for Foreigners in Slovakia](#) containing useful contacts of relevant institutions and offices in Slovakia

**PORADENSTVO
A INFORMÁCIE
PRE CUDZINCŔOV
NA SLOVENSKU**

**THÔNG TIN VÀ TƯ
VẤN CHO NGƯỜI
NƯỚC NGOÀI Ở
XUOVEN**

**向在斯洛伐克
的外国人提供
咨询和信息**

**خدمة تقديم المشورة
والمعلومات للأجانب في
سلوفاكيا**

**COUNSELLING
AND INFORMATION
FOR FOREIGNERS
IN SLOVAKIA**

**КОНСУЛЬТАЦИИ
И ИНФОРМАЦИИ
ДЛЯ ИНОСТРАНЦЕВ
В СЛОВАКИИ**

MIGRAČNÉ INFORMAČNÉ CENTRUM IOM
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HELPLINE 0850 211 478
WWW.MIC.IOM.SK
MIC@IOM.INT

with a description of their competences and [Social Security for Foreigners in Slovakia](#) as well as information about the social security system for foreigners in Slovakia.

Another area of MIC services is labour and social counselling and assistance with the integration in the labour market including for example assistance with CV and motivation letter drafting, job search, support in communication with employers, preparation for a job interview etc., as well as providing financial contributions towards educational and retraining courses. In 2011, MIC assisted 477 clients in this way and simultaneously granted 40 contributions to undertake various courses. Unfamiliarity with the local language has shown to be a major obstacle in finding a job. At the same time, availability of courses suitable for migrants is very low in Slovakia. Thus, based on clients' interest, MIC introduced Open Courses of the Slovak Language in 2011 (for more information see below), so far enjoying a total participation of over 360 people. In 2011 MIC was also able to introduce a pilot project of outreach work: a team of MIC employees in cooperation with cultural mediators visits places with higher concentration of migrants who are not able or are willing to visit the MIC premises. Outreach work focuses on the provision of information about the MIC services, data collection, mapping the social situation and current needs of foreigners living in Slovakia.

Within the cooperation with migrant communities, MIC co-operates with a network of trained cultural mediators who organize multicultural information meetings which serve to present the community to the public, to mediate information and services to community members or to support the social life of the community. In 2011, more than 2,700 people participated in a total of 25 such meetings. In addition, MIC also continued its training and educational activities for representatives of state administration, self-governments, non-governmental organizations and cultural mediators in the field of migration and interculturality, legislative and institutional framework of the Slovak immigration and integration policy, as well as in involving cultural mediators in the integration process.

Further information is available on the Migration Information Centre website www.mic.iom.sk.

MIC is co-financed by the European Union from the European Fund for Integration of Third Country Nationals. Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows.

Open courses of Slovak now also available in Košice

The IOM Migration Information Centre (MIC) offers courses of Slovak to third country nationals holding permanent, temporary or tolerated residence in Slovakia. The courses take place in the MIC premises in Bratislava and from April 2012 also in Košice, regularly twice a week.



Lesson of Slovak at MIC Bratislava. Author: IOM Bratislava.

They are free of charge and low-threshold meaning that no registration, entrance tests or regular attendance are required. It is possible to join the course at any time: each lesson is dedicated to a separate topic, thus if a participant skips one or more lessons no "catching up" is needed. The curriculum focuses on learning the basic vocabulary, practising communication in Slovak and acquiring general information about Slovakia. As people from various countries meet in the same group, the courses provide opportunities for getting to know new people, for sharing information and experience about life in Slovakia.

Further information about the courses is available on the MIC website www.mic.iom.sk. If you are interested to attend the course, please contact MIC by telephone 0850 211 478 or +421 2 5263 0023 or by email on mic@iom.int.

Studies of the European Migration Network in 2011

Production of national studies in the field of migration is one of the main pillars of the European Migration Network (EMN) activities. The studies are produced as outcomes of secondary research based on which European synthesis reports are drawn up to provide comprehensive information to policy-makers as well as to experts from the academic community and the wider public at national and EU levels.

The newest EMN national study entitled [Practical Measures for Reducing Irregular Migration in the Slovak Republic](#) provides an

overview of the policies, legislation and, in particular, practical measures and trans-national cooperation in the area of illegal migration in the Slovak Republic. It also encompasses estimates and statistical analyses of irregular migration and examines impact of the EU policies and legislation on the national level. In line with the focus of the EMN, this study deals with the migration flows of third-country nationals, and not of EU nationals or nationals of the European Economic Area. The study is available for downloading in English and Slovak from www.emn.sk.

On the basis of the national studies, the European Commission will produce a comparative synthesis report which will provide an overview of existing approaches, mechanisms and measures implemented in the

the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



Refreshment in Humenne after the journey from Egypt, Author: UNHCR, Lucia Kolpáková

The refugees are accommodated in the asylum facility of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic in Humenné, where they will stay for a period of 6 months until they are gradually resettled to Canada. IOM is responsible for the transportation of refugees to the Slovak Republic and from the Slovak Republic to Canada. Moreover, IOM provides services related to refugees' health assessment, their cultural orientation and/or language training for the purpose of resettlement.

EU Member States to combat irregular migration so that the EU can react with further proposals of common measures.

Besides the above-mentioned study, EMN issued the following publications in 2011: [Visa Policy as a Migration Channel in the Slovak Republic](#), [Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies in the Slovak Republic 2010](#), Synthesis [Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies 2010](#), Slovak translation of the Synthesis Report on [Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Policies 2009](#), Slovak translation of the Synthesis Report on [Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration](#), Slovak translation of the Synthesis Report on [Temporary and Circular Migration](#) and [Multilingual Migration and Asylum Glossary](#). All of these reports are available in the Downloads section at www.emn.sk

The EMN activities are co-funded by the European Commission and Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Republic Provided a Temporary Refuge to Another Group of Refugees

On 30 January 2012 a new group of 35 refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq and Somalia from the refugee camp Salloum (Egypt) arrived in Slovakia. The group consisting of single people and families with children were given a temporary refuge by the Slovak Republic based on the trilateral treaty signed on 22 December 2010 by the Government of the Slovak Republic,

The group of 35 refugees is ethnically diverse, however what connects them is the fact that they all had to leave their homes due to wide-spread physical violence, torture or rapes in their countries finding temporary refuge in Libya. The men tended to work as farmers, construction workers or handymen, while the women worked as cleaning ladies or maids in private houses. After a civil conflict erupted in Libya at the beginning of 2011 a lot of African migrants became the target of violence by Libyan nationals. Many of them thus tried to flee to Egypt, where they remained in a Salloum camp just near the borders with Libya. The capacity of the camp is not sufficient for a dignified stay of over 2,000 refugees placed in the camp at the moment. The prospects of local integration of these migrants in Egypt are bleak and the return to their countries of origin is not possible. Resettlement to Canada is therefore the last chance for many to start a better life.

The project is financed by the US Government through its USRAP Program – United States Refugee Admissions Program.