

Newsletter

of the IOM International Organization for Migration in the Slovak Republic

Issue 01/2012 – January 2012

Dear colleagues and friends,

In the final months of 2011 a number of IOM projects culminated in various closing events, such as conferences, expert seminars or publication of reports. In this issue of the IOM newsletter, you will find information about these events and other activities implemented in the period from October to December 2011.

On this occasion we would like to express our gratitude to our partners and colleagues who participated or helped realise our projects in 2011. We would also like to thank all clients who used our services thus giving meaning to our work.

IOM Bratislava

targeted future journalists – students of media communication and journalism – and was attended by students from universities in Bratislava, Nitra, Košice and Prešov. The workshops hosted as speakers migrants from different countries living in Slovakia: a student from Thailand, a journalist – refugee from Afghanistan, a medical doctor from Bangladesh, a doctoral student from Vietnam and an NGO activist from the United States. The workshop sessions provided an overview of migration and the specifics of reporting on migration as well as offered opportunity for practising the newly acquired skills within simulated interviews with migrants. Both journalists and students welcomed the training opportunity, as migration issues only appear marginally in the Slovak media. The workshops were a part of the international project *Migrants in the Spotlight: Training and Capacity Building for Media Representatives and Students*, which was funded by the European Union.

Journalists and Students Participated in Workshops on Media and Migration



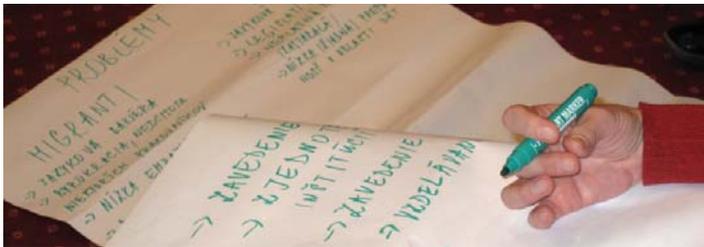
On 17 and 18 October 2011 IOM and the Milan Šimečka Foundation organised two workshops on migrants and media entitled *Migrants in the Spotlight*, at which among others a British journalist, Richard Cookson, and journalist/trainer Marie Stracenská from TV Markíza shared their experience and expertise. The first workshop was aimed at journalists and included participants from 8 nationwide print and electronic media. The second event

International Conference National Dialogue on Integration

On 15 November 2011 an international conference *National Dialogue on Integration* took place with the aim to support exchange of experience and good practice among selected EU Member States and propose recommendations in some concrete aspects of migrant integration in Slovakia. Altogether, more than 130 participants from various public and state institutions, local governments, migrant associations, non-governmental and international organizations attended the conference.

The actual conference was preceded by a one-day workshop for professionals from different institutions who had been trained through capacity building workshops organized by IOM in the course of 2010 and 2011 with the support of the European Fund for Integration of Third-Country Nationals. The workshop participants discussed on ways how to strengthen co-operation and coordination among various institutions at regional level and on the possibilities of increased, systematic use of cultural mediators to facilitate the work of institutions active in the field of integration. The discussion was fuelled by

experience and examples of good practice presented by representatives of NGO InBáze Berkat from the Czech Republic, the Portuguese High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI) – coordinator of the one-stop-shop centre – and of the Vienna City Council.



The recommendations put forward by the workshop participants were used as the basis for the conference panel discussion featuring as panellists the director of the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior, Mr Bernard Prielcel, the director of the Centre for Coordination of Migrant Integration at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ms Martina Janíková, the designated director of the Department of Alien Police at the Alien and Border Police Bureau of the Ministry of Interior, Mr Branislav Červenka, researcher from the Institute of Public Affairs, Ms Oľga Gyarfášová and Ms Huong Gašparovská, representative of the Union of Vietnamese Women in Slovakia.

Presentations and recommendations from the conference, including a transcript of the panel discussion, were summarised in a conference report, which will be available in February 2012 on the website of the Migration Information Centre www.mic.iom.sk. The conference was co-organised by the IOM Migration Information Centre and the National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN) under the auspices of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ms Lucia Nicholsonová.

Evacuation Transit Centre for Somali Refugees in the Slovak Republic

On 6 December 2011 a group of 40 Somali refugees from Eritrea, who were provided a temporary refuge by the Slovak government, came to Slovakia. The group of individuals and families with children comes from a refugee camp Emkulu on the Eastern coast of Eritrea, which currently hosts more than 4.000 refugees from Somalia. The refugees live in temporary shelters made from canvases and woven mats despite the fact that some of them have lived in the camp for as long as 8 years. They live on rearing livestock, such as goats and camels, or do various menial jobs in the nearby town since the climatic conditions make other gainful activities difficult. However, to a great extent, they are depending on food rations and humanitarian relief items provided by UNHCR. Resettlement to a third country is thus an opportunity to start a new, better life.

The group is accommodated in the asylum facility of the Ministry of Interior in Humenné, where they will stay for 6 months, until they are resettled to a third country. IOM is responsible for the transportation of refugees to the Slovak Republic and from Slovak Republic to the country of resettlement. Moreover, IOM provides medical services along with cultural training courses and/or language training to facilitate the resettlement.

The transit centre is operated based on a trilateral treaty signed on 22 December 2010 by the Government of the Slovak Republic, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. The Somali refugees are the second group, who were helped to resettle this year: in May 2009, a group of Afghan refugees – women and children – arrived in the facility and have by now been resettled to third countries. In 2009, based on a similar agreement between the Slovak government, UNHCR and IOM, refuge was offered to a hundred of Palestinian refugees.





New prevention film on trafficking in human beings

The national hotline number “0800 800 818” became the title of the new IOM prevention film, which came out in December 2011. The film builds on the existing prevention film “It Cannot Happen to Me” made in 2003, which focused mainly on trafficking for sexual exploitation. The new film reflects the rise of other forms of exploitation, such as forced labour and begging, thus allowing to target other groups of potential – including male – victims who have in recent years been becoming clients of the IOM assistance programme. The project included a pilot training for 20 prevention professionals, which took place in Košice on 5 and 6 December 2011.

The film was directed by Marcel Pázman and was made thanks to the financial support of the Government Council for Crime Prevention, the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It will be an important prevention tool for IOM and other organisations active in counter trafficking. In 2012 the film will be aired by the Slovak television (STV).



Information Meetings of the IOM Migration Information Centre

Information meetings are initiated by the cultural mediators, who are part of the IOM Migration Information Centre (MIC) network. The meetings, organized with the financial and logistical support of the MIC, can take on different forms, such as workshops, seminars, cultural and sports events or discussions. The aim is to disseminate important practical or legal information among the participants, support cultural and social life of the community and bring together migrant communities and majority society.

One of the events, that took place in the closing months of the year, was the meeting *We Are Here for You* (Sme tu pre vás) organised by cultural mediator for the Russian-speaking community, Ms Svetlana Stadnik, in co-operation with the offices of labour, social affairs and family in Svidník, Humenné and Vranov nad Topľou. The aim of the meeting was to initiate contacts with migrants, whose mother tongue is Russian, in order to introduce the activities of the IOM Migration Information Centre to them and to share practical information to support their job search, such training and requalification courses by the MIC. The offices of labour provided their premises and invited the participants from the registers of the long-term unemployed.

Another interesting event, entitled *Successful Business Woman* (Úspešná podnikateľka), brought together women-migrants intending to start doing business and was organised by the cultural mediator for the Ukrainian community, Ms Galina Korablevych. A lecturer, psychologist, presented on various topics relevant for running a business, like stress management, problem solving, resolution of discrimination problems as well as topics relating to unemployment, job search and preparation for a new job. Presentations to support the motivation of young women also included successful examples of businesses conducted by other migrant women from different parts of the world. Opportunities for further learning and retraining were also discussed by representatives of a further education institution and the Migration Information Centre. The programme also included herbal tea tasting offered by a migrant in India, home-made pastry from a successful business woman from Georgia and common preparation of refreshments.

From October to December 2011 altogether 9 information meetings took place, at which more than 500 people participated. Information about them is available from the Migration Information Centre website, www.mic.iom.sk.



We are here for you



Colours of Africa



Mexican night

International Conference on the Care for Unaccompanied Minor Asylum Seekers

The project *Best Practices for a Coordinated Approach to Assist Unaccompanied Minor Asylum-seekers (UAMAS) and Former UAMAS (fUAMAS) in EU Member States* culminated in the final international conference, which took place on 5 and 6 December 2011 in Budapest.

The research project was implemented by IOM in cooperation with non-governmental organizations in 10 EU Member States

(Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) and its aim was to contribute towards the harmonization of approaches of the individual EU MS to the care for unaccompanied minors claiming asylum, including those who have reached majority.

Within the project national studies were prepared by NGO partners and IOM in each country, which were methodologically based on a review of national legislation, literature and previous research in combination with in-depth interviews with experts and the unaccompanied minors themselves. The studies mapped policies, legislation and practice regarding key aspects of reception procedures, guardianship, legal advice and legal representation, asylum procedure, accommodation, education, leisure time, respect for cultural and religious habits, etc. Specifically, the research focused on education and skills development which are key for the future life of unaccompanied minors in the host country or elsewhere.

The final report entitled *Unaccompanied Minor Asylum-seekers: Overview of Protection Assistance and Promising Practices* compares the findings in each country, identifies major gaps and presents several selected examples of good or promising practice. The study is available from the www.iom.sk website. In 2012 IOM in cooperation with the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture, who was the partner of IOM Bratislava within the project, plan to prepare and issue the national study for the Slovak Republic.

IOM Košice New Premises

The IOM branch office in Košice moved to new premises on Poštová Street in Košice. The new premises enabled establishment of a separate reception room ensuring privacy for the clients of the Migration Information Centre or the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Returns and created space for the organisation of Slovak language courses. In future, the consultation room will be equipped with PCs for the clients of the IOM Migration Information Centre and a play area for children. Thanks to its central location the branch office has remained easily accessible for clients from all city parts.