

Newsletter

of the IOM International Organization for Migration in the Slovak Republic

Issue 04/2012 – October 2012

Dear colleagues,

IOM Bratislava organized from July to October 2012 various activities and events in the field of foreigner integration, education and awareness-raising of the issues of migration, counter trafficking, research on violence against foreigners in the Slovak Republic and other areas about which you can read more in this newsletter. This issue brings a new section *IOM Client Stories* including a story about voluntary return assistance to Vietnam and reintegration in a home country and a life story of a refugee woman resettled from a refugee camp in Yemen, whom Slovakia has provided temporary shelter.

For further information about IOM Bratislava programmes and contact details for all units visit our website www.iom.sk.

be attended by, at least, a couple (spouses, mother and child/children, grandparents or partners - not individuals). Would you like to participate? More information as well as application for family meetings is available at www.iom.sk.

Conference on immigration of international students



IOM Bratislava as the coordinator of the European Migration Network (EMN) National Contact Point in the Slovak Republic is organizing a conference

on immigration of international students from third countries that will take place in Bratislava on 4 December 2012. Theme of the conference was selected in line with the topic of this year main EMN study on *Immigration of international students to the Slovak Republic*. Further information about the conference as well as activities of the EMN can be found on www.emn.sk and www.iom.sk.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Experience a unique Sunday lunch!



Would you like to gain an interesting experience, get to know other cultures and interesting people? IOM Bratislava is preparing 20 meetings of migrant and Slovak families that will share Sunday lunch on 18 November 2012 at 1:00 p.m. Each meeting will include one Slovak family and one migrant family. Apart from the Slovak families, the meetings are opened to third-country nationals who legally reside in Slovakia. The meetings shall

PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES

Foreigners from more than seven countries used services of the One Stop Shop

IOM Migration Information Centre organized One Stop Shop – Days of Specialized Counseling in Bratislava on 2 August 2012 and in Košice on 27 September 2012. Representatives of the Alien Police Department, Labour Office, Health Insurance Company providing public and commercial health insurance and MIC consultants were available for foreigners. Both events met with positive response; the opportunity to gain complex counseling provided by the representatives of several institutions was used by twenty foreigners living in Slovakia from Columbia, Egypt, India, Nicaragua, Syria, USA etc.



The aim of the One Stop Shop is to provide third-country nationals complex free of charge counseling focused, for example, on residence, work, business, insurance and other aspects of life in Slovakia at one place. The IOM Migration Information Centre plans to organize more counseling days in Bratislava and Košice this year. Beside the MIC consultants and representatives of mentioned institutions, counseling will be provided also by representatives of Social Insurance Agency, Registry Office and Trade Licensing Office.

More information on planned events is available on www.mic.iom.sk.

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

Experts on global and local migration at the EMN seminar

Fifteen Slovak and foreign experts together with 37 employees of the state and public administration, non-governmental organizations and academic employees from Slovakia participated in the educational seminar entitled *Migration Globally and Locally*, which was organized from 20 to 23 August 2012 in Bratislava by the National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN) in the Slovak Republic.

Experts from Bratislava, Prague, Oxford, Brighton, Brussels and Geneva presented there various aspects of migration: migration as a global phenomenon, migration policy of the Slovak Republic in the global and EU context, labour migration worldwide and ability of the Slovak Republic to respond to labour market needs through migration, migration and development, forced migration and irregular migration. The seminar also included two evening programmes – [discussion on integration of migrants Are we also at home here?](#) preceded by a screening of the movie [Next Door Family](#) and introduction to trafficking in human beings preceded by a screening of the film [0800 800 818](#).

The seminar served as an opportunity to make new contacts on regional, national and international level, discuss and develop initiatives which can be used in the future capacity building and work in the field of migration. Knowledge and contacts gained during the seminar will be helpful in the participants' further work – in policy-making, preparation of strategic materials, laws, statements, expert documents and academic papers on migration as well as practical implementation of migration policies or practical work with migrants.

Full-text article about EMN educational seminar as well as further information (photo gallery, programme, seminar materials and speakers' presentations) are available at www.emn.sk.



EMN was established via Council Decision 2008/381/EC and is financially supported by the European Union. The EMN activities in the Slovak Republic are co-financed by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. More information about EMN can be found on www.emn.sk and www.emn.europa.eu.

Preparatory programs and courses for a better integration of foreigners

What do foreigners need to know, so that they can start living in a new country and to successfully integrate to society? Experts from Czech Republic, Austria, Sweden as well as from IOM offices in Geneva, Prague and Bratislava presented their experience and recommendations from practice of providing social and cultural orientation at the international conference *Social and cultural orientation for foreigners from third countries* on 19 September 2012 in Bratislava.

An expert from Sweden presented an e-learning form of education of migrants with use of a virtual class. A representative from Czech *Centers for support of integration of foreigners* presented his experience with courses of social and cultural orientation which they offer in various locations in the Czech Republic, along with social and legal counseling and Czech language courses. An expert from Vienna has introduced the model *StartWien*, which provides entry counseling for third-country foreigners coming to Austria – guidance for the first couple of months of their stay in Vienna and services adjusted to their individual needs. *StartWien* also offers a study card, vouchers for German language courses and information modules that help foreigners better understand various areas of life in Vienna and Austria.



At the end, IOM Bratislava introduced to the participants – representatives of state and educational institutions, non-governmental organizations working with foreigners and representatives of migrant communities – a summary of recommendations for the preparation of a unified methodology, curriculum and content of the preparatory programs and courses of social and cultural orientation for foreigners in Slovakia.

A summary text-book from the conference, including the recommendations for the Slovak Republic, will be accessible on the web page www.mic.iom.sk.

The conference was held in the framework of the project “Providing social and cultural orientation for migrants – Exchange of experience with foreign experts from EU member states”, which is co-financed by the European Union from the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows.

I N B R I E F

IOM-led counter trafficking trainings

From March until October 2012 IOM Bratislava delivered 10 trainings on identification of victims of human trafficking and its prevention and 6 trainings on forced labour. In each of the training, on average, 25 people from various institutions partici-

pated (e.g. police officers, employees of labour inspectorates, employees of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, field social workers and children’s homes employees). The integral part of IOM training activities is also to prepare consuls and employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic for cooperation with Slovak authorities within the support to human trafficking victims. In May, 22 staff members of the Slovak consulates were trained. The next training is planned to be held in November 2012.

Oriental Dance at Festival Devín

A representative of the Russian community in Slovakia performed oriental dance at the 9th edition of the *Festival of historical fencing, music, dance and handicrafts* which was held on August 25 – 26, 2012 at the Devin Castle. The performance was organized within the framework of the IOM Migration Information Centre information meetings which provide representatives of the migrant communities with an opportunity to present their cultures to the public as well as to organize events aimed at mutual understanding between communities and majority population.

IOM at international conferences

At the end of August 2012 members of the IOM Bratislava [research team](#) introduced the Research on experiences of migrants living in Slovakia with violence and abuse by presenting a lecture on the topic *Migration to Slovakia, Violence and Gender*, at international conference *Down to Earth: Identities, Bodies and Spatial Scales* in Hamburg. Furthermore, they participated in the conference held by the international research network IMISCOE called *Mobility as the new paradigmatic perspective in the social sciences?* at the University of Amsterdam. Information gained at these conferences will be of use for further research work.

EMN Working meetings



On 3 and 4 September 2012, the European Migration Network (EMN) National Contact Point in the Slovak Republic arranged a [meeting with representatives of state institutions and non-](#)

[governmental organizations](#) whose aim was to enhance cooperation among respective stakeholders operating in the field of migration and asylum. At the meeting, EMN introduced its activities and outputs as well as ways of using them in the above-mentioned fields of work.

EMN held other two meetings in the form of [working breakfasts](#). The first one took place in Bratislava and was focused on the upcoming study on *Intra-EU Mobility from the Perspective of the Slovak Republic*. The second one was organized in Košice where media representatives had an opportunity to hear about EMN activities and outputs and ways of using them in their work.

IOM and migrants at the Diversity Festival



The main idea of the [Diversity Festival](#), which took place from 7 to 14 October 2012 and was one of the events of Košice - European City of Culture 2013, was to connect citizens of Košice and the members of minorities living in Košice, and enable them to get to know different cultures. IOM International Organization for Migration was an active festival partner and together with the representatives of migrant communities supported organization, programme and medial campaign of the Diversity Festival.

IOM CLIENT STORIES

Assistance with a new beginning in Vietnam

Mrs. Le Thi Binh from Vietnam came to Slovakia legally to visit her son. After her visa expired, she was living there illegally for another four years. For return home she was missing valid travel documents and money. Therefore she requested for IOM Bratislava assistance and registered into Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR). After registration IOM Bratislava helped her to return back to Vietnam safely.

Shortly after return Mrs. Binh decided to use also offered reintegration assistance through which she expanded a family-run pig and fish farm. IOM Bratislava in cooperation with IOM Hanoi purchased the animals and supplies needed to build a shelter

for pigs which protects animals against bad weather and reduces the risk of infection by various diseases. In future Mrs. Binh plans to expand her farm even more in order to secure long-term source of income for the whole family.



You can find more information about reintegration assistance provided to migrants who return home with the help of IOM in the frame of the AVRR on the website www.avr.iom.sk.

The AVRR is co-funded by the European Union from the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows.

Zahra is waiting for her dream to come true



A group of 50 refugees from Yemen who landed at Košice airport on 19 July 2012 will spend 6 months in Slovakia. The Slovak Republic provided the refugees with a temporary shelter on its territory; the refugees will be accommodated in the Evacuation Transit Centre located within the asylum facility of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic in Humenné and they will be gradually resettled to the United States of America. Zahra is also in the group of refugees who will spend half a year of their lives in Slovakia.

Zahra was born in Eritrea where she worked in a state administration until 1993. It is clear that Zahra is well-educated and she starts speaking about her fate in fluent English: "In 1993 Eritrea was confronted with serious problems and there was

nothing left for me but leave my country." She followed the suit of thousands of other refugees and escaped to Yemen on a boat. Zahra is a Christian and due to her religion, being different from the majority Muslim one, she encountered many problems in Yemen. For years she had lived in the capital Sanaa in a small rented apartment, "the size of a kennel", remembers Zahra with a bitter smile on her face. Sometimes she would earn money by doing small jobs, but she never had stable work for more than 2 or 3 months and so lived in permanent instability. Resettlement to the United States is a chance for a new life for her as well. Transit centre in Humenné is a midway stop on her journey. "I'm happy to be here, there is peace here, no bombs exploding on the streets, I finally don't feel any fear." She learns how use a computer in the camp and would like to improve her English and find a decent job after arriving in the USA. "First you learn the language, then you find work – that is the order applied in America", Zahra explains with a peaceful smile and determined expression.

The Slovak Republic provided a temporary shelter on its territory to the refugees for a period of 6 months based on a trilateral treaty between the Government of the Slovak Republic, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and IOM signed on 21 June 2012. IOM is responsible for the transportation of refugees from a refugee camp to the Slovak Republic and from the Slovak Republic to a country of resettlement, as well as for security interviews, medical examinations and cultural orientation courses aimed at preparing the refugees for life in a new country. A successful completion of these steps means for refugees a new beginning in the United States of America.

(Names have been changed to protect the persons' identity.)

The activities of IOM in this project are financed by the US Government through its USRAP Program – United States Refugee Admissions Program.

WE OFFER

Socio-cultural orientation courses for foreigners

Are you a foreigner living in Slovakia and would you like to get practical information on history, traditions, customs and culture of Slovakia? Or do you need to get more information on the bureaus or the Slovak system of education, healthcare and social security? The IOM Migration Information Centre offers you the opportunity to attend the courses of socio-cultural orientation for free.

The interactive course offers the foreigners necessary information to help them orientate themselves in important aspects of life in Slovakia. The topics are modified according to the needs and interests of the participants during the course; e.g.

the topic City of Bratislava/Košice in form of a sightseeing tour was initiated by the participants themselves.

The free of charge course takes place once a month in the premises of the IOM Migration Information Centre in Bratislava and Košice. The course is intended for third-country nationals with legal residency in Slovakia. The course can be attended without prior registration.

More information on the next course of socio-cultural orientation is available on the web page www.mic.iom.sk.

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I O M I N M E D I A

News selection about activities of the IOM Bratislava published in the Slovak media from July to September 2012:

Looking for a job? Do not be fooled by modern-day slave traders
Plus 7 dní, 8. 7. 2012
<http://www.pluska.sk/plus-7-dni/z-domova/hladate-brigadu-venalette-novodobym-otrokarom.html>

Commission evaluates the European Migration Network positively
EurActiv.sk, 1. 8. 2012
<http://www.euractiv.sk/obrana-a-bezpecnost/clanok/ek-hodnoti-europsku-migracnu-siet-pozitivne-019751>

SOCIAL: IOM organized a counseling day for foreigners
TASR, 2. 8. 2012
<http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/socialne-iom-zorganizovalo-precudzincov-poradensky-den/18901/>

State Secretary discussed migration in Europe
SITA, 23. 8. 2012
http://www.piestanskydennik.sk/sita-detail/?tx_kiossita_pi1%5Bdetail%5D=112954

The IOM website helps migrants to return home
Medialne.sk, 27. 8. 2012
<http://medialne.etrend.sk/internet-tlacove-spravy/webova-stranka-iom-pomaha-migrantom-vratit-sa-domov.html>

Slovaks 'at risk of slavery'
The Slovak Spectator, 10. 9. 2012
http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/47509/2/slovaks_at_risk_of_slavery.html