INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
- Labour Migration in Central Asia and Russian Federation
- Building the Capacity of the Russian Authorities for reception and Protection of Returnees in the Framework of readmission
- Prevention of Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation: Direct assistance to the VoTs
- Rehabilitation Center
- Information and Counseling Centers
- Participation in the Seminar for NGOs under the Project “Prevention and improved Assistance to the Victims of Trafficking in the Kaliningrad Oblast (PIAVKO)”
- Series of Information Events in Rostov-on-Don
- Project “Reintegration Assistance to the Victims of Trafficking in the Russian Federation” funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Cooperation with the Russian Advocates Guild in Protection of Rights of Victims of Human Trafficking
- Cooperation Between the Economic Security Academy of MoI of Russia and IOM Moscow
- Counter-trafficking Study Visits of Turkish Police and NGOs held in Moscow
- Counter-trafficking Study Visit of the Delegation from Tajikistan to Moscow
- IOM Moscow Medical Unit
- Evaluation and Monitoring of Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration from UK Programme
- IOM Moscow Cultural Orientation

LABOUR MIGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND RUSSIAN FEDERATION

21-22 July, Conference in Kazan

For the purpose of strengthening the role of NGOs in the development of well managed and safe forms of migration and to contribute to cooperation between NGOs and government bodies providing legal, consultative and middleman services to labour migrants, the international conference "The Role and Responsibilities of NGOs in the Process of External Labour Migration Management in Russia and the Countries of Central Asia" was held in Kazan on July 21-22.

The conference was arranged by IOM in partnership with Peoples' Assembly of Tatarstan, Republican Agency for Employment and Legal Support to Immigrants. It was attended by NGO leaders from Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizia and Kazakhstan, government officials, delegates from FMS in Kazan and private employment agencies.

During the conference the issues of the role of NGOs in the encouragement of well-managed forms of labour migration were discussed. In his opening speech the Chairman of Tatarstan State
Council, Mr. Farid Mukhametshin underscored the need to contribute in the engagement of qualified migrants to the country in the context of rapid economic growth.

Besides, Mr. Mukhametshin emphasized the importance of social integration and creation of decent conditions for labour migrants to learn the language of the receiving country.

In response the Chief of Mission of IOM Moscow Mr. Enrico Ponziani acknowledged that IOM will be ready to ensure overall support for establishment of NGOs' network providing legal services and securing the rights of labour migrants. Recognizing the need to strengthen joint cooperation Mr. Ponziani emphasized that the Conference will allow the delegates to study the experience of the foreign countries in the field of labour migration management and to contribute to the development and strengthening of cooperation between NGOs, government and middleman recruiting agencies providing services to labour migrants.

The analyses made during the plenary sessions on the migration process in Russia and Central Asian countries, show that migration influences various areas of life in society and brings similar spectrum of problems to the countries of origin and countries of destination. This was proved during the discussions and in some reports touching the problem of low efficiency of management of migration flows both, in Russia and in Central Asia. At the same time the participants to the conference recognized the need of a more comprehensive approach to the migrants’ problems that at the same time would help to resolve such problems as visa application, issuance of travel documents to the country of destination, registration, social security and access to medical services.

Moreover, the participants noted it necessary to develop cooperation in the area of labour migration management aiming to support the improvement of the legal instruments establishing protection of labour and human rights for migrant workers as well as to facilitate involvement of NGOs in the provision of legal and information support.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES FOR RECEPTION AND PROTECTION OF RETURNEES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF READMISSION

Within the EC Aeneas Programme on Readmission in Russia, co-funded by the Governments of Germany and Finland, IOM continued to implement activities aimed at building the capacity of the Russian authorities and developing practical mechanisms for efficient implementation of readmission agreements.

Thus, during July 2008, IOM organized two technical visits to partner EU countries for Russian officials. First study tour was organized between 8 and 11 July to facilitate the Russian delegates’ learning of national practices of the Netherlands, one of the main destinations of irregular migrants in the EU, focusing on the structure building, management and financial operation of centres for temporarily accommodation of migrants before their expulsion.
During the study visit, Russian officials were briefed on issues concerning financial management, budgetary planning, safety and security measures including calamity plans. Dutch authorities also spoke about the existing mechanisms of inter-agency cooperation and distribution of responsibilities. Detailed attention was paid to return procedures implemented in the Netherlands within the framework of the EU legislation including AVR implementing jointly by the Government and the IOM mission in Holland. One of the focus areas during briefings was the identification and documentation of migrants.

During the three-day trip a total of two migrant accommodation centers were visited. The Alphen aan den Rijn newly established facility provides accommodation for irregular migrants during the process of establishing their identity and arranging documents for return to their country of origin. Technologies, structural arrangements and procedures used in the center were studied in detail and found by the Russian delegation as a useful example to take into consideration while Russia builds its own new facilities of this kind. One more center in the Schiphol airport was visited and presented an example of how different types of migrants can be accommodated in the same facility while their legal status is being determined. In both centers the Russian delegation was able to exchange experiences in management strategies with their Dutch counterparts. The second technical visit to Germany and Austria was organized on 20-25 July 2008.

Throughout the study visit, the key emphasis was on the practical implementation of the EC-RF Readmission Agreement, bilaterally between the governments of the RF and the Federal Republic of Germany; and the governments of the RF and the Republic of Austria. The programme included a series of bilateral discussion meetings in Berlin, Munich and Vienna; and site visits to initial reception centers in Munich (Germany) and Traiskirchen (Austria), and two closed facilities pending deportation in Austria: Eisenstadt and Vienna.

Central to the work of the technical meetings were discussions on:
1. procedures related to submission, review and answering of readmission applications – means of communication for the purposes of correspondence;
2. organization and conduction of interviews for the purposes of verifying identity and confirming the RF citizenship; and
3. return transportation arrangements.

The role and functioning of the competent authorities as well as the procedures concerning asylum applications and removal of irregular migrants in the German and Austrian immigration management systems were extensively presented.

The members of the Russian delegation acquired valuable information about every aspect of the day-to-day works related with handling of asylum applications and detention, removal processes...
and were constantly in touch with relevant authorities throughout the study tour. At the same time, the Russian officials paid much attention to a detailed explanation of the procedures for the RF citizenship verification and conditions for issuing of a return certificate, which raised a lot of interest from the side of their EU colleagues.

The technical discussion meetings have confirmed that willingness to consult or negotiate, and generally engage in a regular dialogue is a key to successful implementation of a Readmission Agreement.

**DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL MECHANISMS FOR RETURN AND READMISSION**

The general approach of EU and IOM is that voluntary form of return is a much preferred option for a migrant in an irregular situation. As a result, in August 2008, IOM launched a pilot Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Project which aims to assist irregular stranded and destitute migrants currently in the Russian Federation who choose to voluntarily return home and whose countries of origin or permanent residence are not the CIS or OECD or EU Member States.

The beneficiaries are selected on the basis of their particular vulnerability. The general criteria of candidate selection is that the applicant is in irregular situation, stranded and destitute and is willing to return home voluntarily however has no means and/or permission to leave the Russian Federation. IOM’s assistance includes counseling and provision of information on the availability of voluntary return assistance; support in obtaining necessary travel documentation through relevant consular authorities and the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation; return transportation arrangements; and departure assistance.

By end September 2008, IOM was able to assist a total of 11 persons who were found eligible to benefit from the AVR programme. The pilot AVR project targets to assist up to 100 persons with returning to their homes by the end of 2008.

**PROJECT: PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

*Direct assistance to the VoTs for the period from July to September 08.*

For the period from July to September 2008 in the framework of the Project “Prevention of human trafficking in the RF” IOM Moscow provided full range of assistance to 15 victims of trafficking (13 women and 2 – men).

Under counter trafficking projects IOM Moscow provides medical, psychological and social assistance to victims of human trafficking as well as cooperates with the Russian Law Enforcement agencies in their identification and referral.

In July 2008 a victim of trafficking assisted at the Rehabilitation center informed IOM on two more women, citizens of Ukraine, exploited for begging by group of gypsies in Moscow region. IOM Moscow has passed this information to Law Enforcement partners and as a result of a raid conducted by the law-enforcement bodies’ of Moscow oblast two victims of trafficking were released and later referred to IOM Moscow Rehabilitation Center for medical and psychological assistance. IOM Moscow organized the repatriation of the victims escorted by medical staff. The reintegration of the victims will be arranged and monitored by IOM Kiev.

In September 2008 IOM Moscow was approached by the Embassy of Nigeria with request to arrange voluntary return of four young girls exploited on the territory of Russia. IOM social workers conducted screening interviews with the girls and confirmed that they are victims of trafficking and are eligible for assistance under CT Projects. The Nigerian girls have been offered a job of hairdressers in Russia, however after arrival in Moscow their documents were withdrawn by criminals, and the girls were forced to work as prostitutes. After a certain period of time they managed to escape and to get to the Nigerian Embassy. In cooperation with FMS IOM Moscow facilitated the issue of the exit visas for the VoTs as well as their repatriation to Nigeria. IOM Moscow has passed all the relevant information on the return of the VoTs to IOM Nigeria in order to ensure the assistance upon arrival and provision of reintegration assistance and support.

**Rehabilitation Centre**

For the moment the IOM Moscow Rehabilitation Center is the unique and the only facility providing victims of trafficking with qualified complex medical, social and psychological assistance and temporary safe accommodation. Since it was established a year ago the Center has received and provided assistance to 260 victims.

The agreement between IOM Moscow and the Hospital where the Rehabilitation Centre is located expires in October 2008. IOM Moscow has made numerous efforts to extend the contract with the Hospital. However the Administration of the Hospital took a negative decision. As an alternative and short-term solution the Administration of the Hospital proposed to accommodate victims of trafficking in other part of the Hospital.

Meanwhile the main goal of the Project is to transfer the model of provision of assistance to victims of trafficking as well as the furniture and equipment of the Rehabilitation Center to the relevant governmental or non-governmental structures.

In this regard IOM Moscow is addressing various governmental structures to get their support of the Rehabilitation Center and to help identify state premises where to re-locate the Center after the expiration of the Contract with the Hospital.

The consequences of the closing of the Rehabilitation Center can be the termination of provision assistance to victims of trafficking which can lead to decrease of number of the investigated cases, increase of re-trafficking rates, loss of the unique experience gained in rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking.
Not only the private individuals but also legal entities made their queries regarding labor legislation, human rights observation, etc. (12%). Besides, both Russian and foreign nationals made their interested in the issues pertaining to the employment/travel abroad the residence permit procedures (5%). The Russian nationals were (22%), migration registration (16%), naturalization in the RF (9%) and migrants staying in the RF) regarding the work permit procedures queries originated from the foreign nationals (mainly from the labor

The main topics of the queries were as follows: the great bulk of the queries originated from the foreign nationals (mainly from the labor migrants staying in the RF) regarding the work permit procedures (22%), migration registration (16%), naturalization in the RF (9%) and the residence permit procedures (5%). The Russian nationals were interested in the issues pertaining to the employment/travel abroad (12%). Besides, both Russian and foreign nationals made their queries regarding labor legislation, human rights observation, etc. Not only the private individuals but also legal entities made their queries; nearly 2% of the total number of queries was provided to the employers. The employees of the Centers (including Psychologists and Lawyers) work with at-risk groups and victims. They deliver lectures at schools (to both teachers and students and their parents), in specialized juvenile centers and they also individually work with those persons who are in need of psychological counseling. The counter-human-trafficking information materials are widely disseminated.

**INFORMATION AND COUNSELING CENTERS**

During the period from June to September 2008 the Information and Counseling Centers in Astrakhan, Moscow and Petrozavodsk received over 1730 calls (the great bulk of them, i.e. more than 1300, were handled by the Moscow Center) and provided over 1110 consultations (more than 700, by Moscow Center; 350, by Astrakhan Center and 59, by Petrozavodsk Center).

Since their opening (in May-June 2007) the three regional Information Centers handled approximately 8300 queries and provided around 6300 consultations in total.

The Information and Counseling Centers are designed to provide information and consultancy to various population groups, as well as to migrants from other Russian regions and foreign nationals in order to secure an early prevention of forced labor and other human trafficking situations. Free-of-charge counseling is provided on a broad spectrum of issues (legal issues; inquiries; various risk prevention issues related to the human trafficking phenomenon; issues of operative response whenever an individual becomes a human trafficking victim; available regional opportunities for employment, integration and reintegration, etc.). The all-Russia hotline number 8 800 333 00 16 is being operated by the Moscow Center providing free-of-charge counseling on an anonymous basis (calls are free for callers from all RF regions).

The queries handled by the Centers originated from both foreign (61% of the total number of queries) and Russian (39%) nationals. The queries regarding the work permit procedures queries originated from the foreign nationals (mainly from the labor migrants staying in the RF) were of particular interest: (22%), migration registration (16%), naturalization in the RF (9%) and the residence permit procedures (5%). The Russian nationals were interested in the issues pertaining to the employment/travel abroad (12%). Besides, both Russian and foreign nationals made their queries regarding labor legislation, human rights observation, etc. Not only the private individuals but also legal entities made their

**SERIES OF INFORMATION EVENTS IN ROSTOV-ON-DON**

During August and September 2008 four different information events were organized and conducted by IOM in Rostov-on-Don within the frameworks of the project “Preventive Counter-Trafficking Activities in Rostov-on-Don” financed by the Swiss Agency for development and Cooperation (SDC) and in collaboration with the NGO “Regional Resource Center for the Prevention of Violence”. The events, in which a total of over 160 people participated, contributed to raising the awareness on the issue of human trafficking among different groups of professionals as well as among at risk groups and the general public in the region.

Training for social workers on the provision of social and psychological assistance to victims of human trafficking was conducted on 8th of August by a psychologist from the IOM Rehabilitation center (Moscow). The participants were instructed on crucial skills regarding the specificities of providing assistance to victims of trafficking and received useful in-depth information on the problem of human trafficking.

In the second half of September two information events were held for teachers, professors, and school psychologist on the risks of human trafficking for minors. A lecture on the issue, given by Ms. M. Mokhova, a specialist from Moscow (Director of the Center for assistance to victims of violence “Sisters”), was attended by over 50 teachers and other professionals working in the field of education. The lecture allowed to widely disseminating information on the risks

**PARTICIPATION IN THE SEMINAR FOR NGOs UNDER THE PROJECT “PREVENTION AND IMPROVED ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN THE KALININGRAD OBLAST (PIAVKO)”**

On 18 -19 September 2008, the representatives of the Project “Prevention of Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation”, i.e. Coordinator and Social Worker, participated in the seminar organized in Kaliningrad by IOM Vilnius. The seminar was also attended by the Kaliningrad Regional Administration officials, as well as regional NGOs specialized in the migration and counter-human-trafficking. The IOM Moscow representatives made their presentation of the Project “Prevention of Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation”, in particular the methodology and the current practices of the Rehabilitation Center and the Information and Counseling Centers. In the course of the seminar IOM Moscow, IOM Vilnius and Kaliningrad NGOs raised points on discussion regarding their joint development of the trafficking victim referral mechanism.
of child trafficking, and on how to prevent it. Many participants for the first time learned about this important matter. The second event, a comprehensive training on the risks of trafficking for minors, was also conducted by Ms. M. Mokhova, allowed 25 participants to gain in-depth knowledge on the issue. The training not only provided the participants with valuable information on child trafficking and on how to prevent it, but also that is most important offered to the participants the ways of delivering the received information to their pupils, by means of role plays and interactive group works.

On 29th of August the training for journalists of Rostov-on-Don region was conducted by IOM Moscow. The structure of the training was based on the thematic contents of the Media Guide, recently developed within the EC project “Prevention of Human Trafficking in the RF”. The session was conducted by one of the authors of the book – Mr. I. Dzyaloshinskiy – Professor of Higher School of Economics.

The training was opened with the presentation of an IOM CT Assistant on the main forms of human trafficking, at-risk groups, main reasons for existence of this phenomenon, myths and reality; the introductory presentation also included brief overview of the information dissemination activities, carried out by IOM within the current CT projects.

The next presentation was made by Elena Zolotilova, Head of the partner NGO in Rostov-on-Don – Regional Resource Center for Prevention of Violence. She spoke about the human trafficking situation in the region and told more about the activities planned within the two projects, implemented by IOM in Rostov region: “Reintegration Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in the Russian Federation” and “Prevention of Human Trafficking in Rostov-on-Don”, both funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The core training session was conducted by one of the authors of the Guide for Journalists, Professor Iosif Dzyaloshinskyi. The main topics delivered to the audience reflected the contents of the main chapters of the Guide:
- Problem of Human Trafficking in the Mirror of Russian Periodicals;
- Mass Media in the System of Institutions of Public Influence;
- Strategies and Technologies of Influence;
- What does Effectiveness of Mass Media Activities Mean and How is it Possible to Measure it?

All the topics were presented from the angle of present day coverage of the theme of human trafficking by the Russian mass media.

Presentations of topics were concluded by interesting question-and-answer briefings.

These four events contributed significantly to IOM’s work of raising the awareness on the problem of human trafficking in the South Federal Okrug of the RF.
PROJECT "REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIMES OF TRAFFICKING IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION" FUNDED BY SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

Project Development Competition for NGOs

In March 2008 a Project Development Competition for NGOs was launched. Out of numerous submissions from Russian NGOs the four best project proposals on reintegation, prevention and direct assistance to victims of human trafficking were chosen and received a grant in the amount of USD 8000 each. The winning NGOs were offered contracts, and the start of the project activity is planned since June 2008. The following four projects were selected:

- "Prevention of Human Trafficking among At-Risk Groups in the Republic of Tatarstan" by Women Crisis Center "Fatima", Kazan. Implementing activities: Conducting information and awareness raising campaign among risk groups and providing direct assistance to victims of human trafficking (VoTs).
- "Preventing Human Trafficking and Providing Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking in Astrakhan and Astrakhan Region" by "Oratorium" NGO, Astrakhan. Implementing activities: Direct assistance to VoTs, conducing awareness raising campaigns.
- "Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking and Providing Assistance" by the "Far East Center", Vladivostok. Implementing activities: Conducting an awareness raising campaign among at-risk groups, holding seminars and trainings for governmental and non-governmental organizations with the purpose of promoting closer cooperation among them in the area of victim’s assistance provision; providing direct assistance to VoTs.
- "Information Center for the Prevention of Human Trafficking" by "Angara" NGO, Irkutsk. Implementing activities: Conducting lobbying activities during a political election campaign (for the local Parliament), with the purpose to introduce the issue of countering the phenomena of human trafficking to the political agenda; conducting an awareness raising campaign.

The term for the projects’ implementation – June – November 2008.

COORDINATION WITH THE RUSSIAN ADVOCATES GUILD IN PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Back on 13 May, 2008, during the seminar on judicial investigations of THB crimes in Russia at the Russian Academy of Justice (RAJ), the specialists of the project on prevention of human trafficking in the RF got into contact and reached preliminary understanding of cooperation with representatives of the Russian Advocates Guild in the sphere of legal protection of victims’ rights. On the 7th of July, 2008 the project staff organized a meeting with the representatives of the Guild of Lawyers, during which they discussed a topic, raised by IOM Kiev, of possibility of provision of legal defense for Ukrainian sailors, who worked at the Far East and were identified as victims of exploitation of slave labour.

As a result of cooperation, for the first time on the 23rd of July, 2008 during the court hearings in the Supreme Court, the rights of one of the victims were defended by the lawyer Oleg Zuev, Assistant to the Chairman of the Guild of Russian Lawyers, Honorary Lawyer of Russia, Head of the "Lawyers for Human Rights and Decent Life" - Moscow based all-Russia public organization. The legal assistance was provided on a free basis.

The initiative of the Guild is without doubt a notable phenomenon, taking into consideration the growing interest in society to the problem of provision of protection for victims’ rights and freedoms, including compensation and reparation of damages.

Today IOM Moscow and the Russian Advocates Guild are working on draft of Memorandum of Understanding to be signed soon.

COORDINATION BETWEEN ECONOMIC SECURITY ACADEMY OF MOI OF RUSSIA AND IOM MOSCOW

On August 19, 2008, IOM Moscow hosted delegation of ESA of MoI Russia headed by Major-General Alik Khabibulin, Head of the Academy. During the meeting both parties discussed prospect of cooperation between IOM Moscow and ESA, including development of CT manual for LE officers on financial investigations human trafficking crimes.

Head of the ESA delegation underlined the importance of this counter-trafficking specialized course/manual. He confirmed that such course would be developed under the ESA with support of IOM’s implemented Project “Combating trafficking in Human Beings in RF” (funded by Sida). This unique course will be used at the upgrading LE faculty as well as in ESA itself. Mr. Alik Khabibulin mentioned that they would organize courses for CIS police officers and proposed IOM Moscow to provide their trainers for the lecturers. Besides CT Project Coordinator Mr. Alberto Andreani narrated about Vladivostok CT project and planned training activities. Mr. Alik Khabibulin proposed to have distance learning classes between ESA and MoI training establishment in Vladivostok by the means of videocoverage. Today this idea is under consideration at the MoI, Russia.

In conclusion a Memorandum of Understanding was signed and computer equipment was donated to the Academy.

COUNTER-TAFFICKING STUDY VISITS OF TURKISH POLICE AND NGOs HELD IN MOSCOW

IOM Turkey together with IOM Moscow organized a working visit for Turkish police officers and NGO representatives. From July 7th to 11th of a series of working meetings were conducted with Russian MoI officers, representatives of General Prosecutor’s office, NGOs representatives and professors of Russian Academy of Justice.
Meetings helped delegates to establish contacts with their Russian counterparts. Participants received valuable information re law enforcement and NGOs work. Delegates had a working meeting at IOM Moscow rehabilitation center and received important information re assistance to VoTs.

Six Turkish NGO representatives participated in a round table between Russian and Turkish NGOs “Combating human trafficking in the Russian Federation and Turkey, further cooperation between NGOs”. The aim of the round table was to share experiences and discuss further cooperation.

The study visits let delegates learn more about Russia. Tajikistan delegates could share their experience and learn from their counterparts in Russia. The contacts were established for the both sides. The participants understood the role of rehabilitation and reintegration process. The judicial, prosecutorial and operative-investigative systems were well presented to 10 Tajikistan participants of the study visit. Delegates could see the methods of IOM work in Russia and meet with some general partners of IOM Moscow.

From 8th to 11th of September IOM Moscow assisted IOM Tajikistan in organizing a counter-trafficking study visits of Tajikistan delegation consisted of Tajik MoI, Prosecutor General’s office, Migration service and NGOs representatives.

The IOM Moscow Times, Issue 12
who were determined to be eligible for international protection and assistance. The part of the group originates from the African countries such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, but it includes also citizens of Afghanistan and Iran who weren’t able to return to their home country despite recent positive change there. These migrants applied for protection in connection with failure to obtain legal registration in Russia and encountering harassment from local population and authorities. Some of them had exhausted the national asylum procedure and lacked alternative prospects for local integration while others demonstrated compelling legal, physical and social protection needs. Some applicants belong to the group of so-called “refugees sur place” i.e. former foreign students who weren’t able to return upon completion of their studies due to change of power in their home countries and live in Russia for many years. In order to survive they are engaged in non-qualified low paid work. Such mode of life has resulted in poor health condition, undernourishment and multiple cases of TB, which was revealed in the course of medial examination performed by IOM Doctors.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF VOLUNTARY ASSISTED RETURN AND REINTEGRATION FROM UK PROGRAMME

The Assisted Voluntary Return programmes implemented in various European countries in co-operation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have facilitated the return of 621 Russian citizens in 2007 and of already 1016 during the eight months of 2008. One of the important components within these programmes is evaluation and monitoring which are conducted some time after the reintegration assistance is provided to the returnees.

In the beginning on June 2008 IOM Moscow organized a visit of our colleague from SLM London Ms. Erica Busteed who is in charge of VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration of Unsuccessful Asylum Seekers Programme) to Eastern Europe. The purpose of the visit was evaluation and monitoring of reintegration assistance provided to the returnees to the Russian Federation in the framework of the VARRP from UK. The programme’s beneficiaries are Russian citizens who had applied for refugee status in UK and whose applications were rejected or who abandoned their claim for refugee status. IOM assistance within this programme includes counseling on return opportunities, arranging of the return travel and assistance with reintegration. All the returnees are entitled to the reintegration grant money in the average amount of GBP 2500 per individual. The established mechanism of assisting voluntary returnees with their further reintegration in the country of origin has proved to be an effective tool in making the return sustainable.

The returnees residing in Moscow and St. Petersburg were visited by IOM London and IOM Moscow staff in order to learn whether the reintegration assistance received was helpful, how successful the implementation of the reintegration plans was. All the interviewed beneficiaries agreed that the reintegration assistance received upon return was extremely helpful. The allocated financial assistance made it possible to live through the tough period of adaptation to the life back home after living in Great Britain for several years.

Some of the returnees used the reintegration money to acquire or improve their professional skills which enabled them to find well-paid jobs, those having health problems spent the money for medical treatment and medicines, the others purchased professional equipment in order to pursue their former professional activities, while the rest choose to set up small business.

The evaluation demonstrated that not all the businesses started were successful because of various reasons. The main reason is that the reintegration grant amount is not sufficient to start up any serious business in Russia where small business is not yet that widely spread especially in Moscow and St. Petersburg. It’s very difficult to start-up a small-scale business without personal funds to be used as start capital, relatives’ help, social connections and local authorities’ support. The crediting system to start small and medium scale businesses started in Russia not so many years ago and not developed yet. The procedure of receiving a loan is very long and complicated. The banks prefer to give credits to the experienced entrepreneurs. As a rule they request a proof that the money will be paid back, and such a guarantee could be securities or a bail. That’s why receiving a loan for the business set up is very problematic.

The other reason is that the returnees do not have any previous experience in running private business. Despite of the fact that the reintegration grant can be partially used for paying for the various educational courses none of the returnees who came back in 2007-2008 took up business training. This is because no special knowledge is needed for those opening food kiosks or providing delivery service. Thus many of those who ventured to be a private entrepreneur have given up and sold their business and relevant equipment to the competitors having more stable position on the market. Nevertheless they consider this a useful experience which enabled them to earn their living before they found an alternative.

The most popular and successful types of business among the returnees are: taxi business, delivery service, partner’s business (joining restaurant business; working for construction companies); selling goods in private stores and growing plants/vegetables (in the Southern regions of the country).
IOM MOSCOW CULTURAL ORIENTATION

IOM Moscow has two CO programs which serve refugees approved for resettlement to the US and those approved for Canada (USCO and COA). At the moment, there are three staff who facilitate these pre-departure orientation training programs.

In the past few months, IOM Moscow trainers have traveled to various locations to deliver orientation sessions. The trained refugees may be based in different countries, have different cultural and educational backgrounds, but all share different pieces of information and expectations of the receiving countries. A pre-departure orientation training session is an opportunity for the migrant to discuss the migrants’ fears and concerns, to answer their questions, to set the record straight in terms of expectations, and to give accurate information about their new country. Often, facilitators report that refugees share a deep sense of anxiety and non-acceptance of the fact that moving to another country is just the beginning of a long road to self-sufficiency and success, and that this road starts with hard work, continued learning, and perseverance in achieving one’s goals once again in their lifetime.

It is also very illustrative to see how different C.O. sessions can be from one place, one group to another, depending on where the refugees have recently resided. In fact, the only common feature is usually the sharp interest and open-minded attitude of the beneficiaries towards the offered sessions. Everything else, from content to response to various teaching techniques is different. These out-of-Russia trainings are considered valuable experience and a challenge for the trainers.

Our Cultural Orientation team reaches out to these migrants and takes an active part in assisting other IOM missions in setting-up new CO sites as well as training new facilitators throughout the world. It has been a busy and eventful summer for us and here are some highlights:

USCO

| June 2008: | C.O. traveled to Malta to deliver orientation to a very large group of mostly Eritrean and Somali refugees who will soon travel to the US. |
| July 2008: | CO trainer traveled to Banja Kovilja, Serbia to conduct a 3-day CO session. The seminar took place at the UNHCR refugee camp. The majority were from Iraq. We would like to thank our UNHCR colleagues who made all the necessary arrangements for us, including interpreters as the training was translated into Arabic and Kurdish. |
| August 2008: | C.O. seminars were also delivered in Chisinau, Moldova as well as in Kyiv. Most of the attendants were from Afghanistan and Iraq. |

COA

Due to the fact that no refugee interview trips have been held by the Canadian Embassy since August 2007, the number of Canada-bound beneficiaries has been quite low, and only one COA session was conducted during this reporting period. The participants, as usual, demonstrated much interest in the seminars. The COA session was the opportune moment to share information, ask questions, get useful information concerning their move to the new country.

As of 01 July, COA was officially established in four additional permanent sites throughout the world, including Jordan, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The global management of COA also moved from Manila to Amman in July. One of our COA Moscow trainers traveled to Amman to assist the Global COA manager in setting up these sites and train new COA facilitators. The COA Amman training is also gathering full pace. There also has been a lot done in the last couple of months to enhance the performance and knowledge of COA trainers and to boost the training sessions for Canada-bound refugees in other locations in the Middle East, such as Damascus, Syria, and also in South America (Bogota, Colombia).
The IOM Moscow Times, Issue 12

MIGRANTS’ PROCESSING AND MOVEMENT

IOM Moscow works with the Russian government, the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and various UNHCR offices and U.S. Embassies across Europe and the ex-USSR to implement a program of voluntary resettlement to the United States for migrants and refugees. Activities include receipt of applications, initial screening, supporting interviews with the U.S. Immigration Service, and assisting approved applicants with cultural orientation, placement in the USA with resettlement NGOs, arrival documentation, and departure.

The biggest beneficiary groups are (1) religious minorities from the ex-USSR joining immediate relatives already in the United States; (2) refugees referred for resettlement by the United Nations, including Afghan refugees in Central Asia, and Afghan and African refugees in Russia and Ukraine; and (3) African boat people stranded in Malta.

Comprehensive statistics for January through the end of September of this year are as follows:
- Applications received and processed: 7'549 individuals
- Presented to DHS for status determination: 4'848 individuals
- Departures to the U.S.: 2'097 individuals

In total, IOM staff traveled to process cases, interview applicants, prepare files for interviews, and assist U.S. government officials in: Almaty (Kazakhstan), Baku (Azerbaijan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Chisinau (Moldova), Frankfurt (Germany), Kyiv (Ukraine), Malta, Paris (France), Prague (Czech Republic), Tirana (Albania), and Tashkent (Uzbekistan), as well as Krasnodar, Moscow, and St. Petersburg (Russia).

MIGRATION NEWS

Recently a new project was launched at Vnukovo airport that was determined the experimental site as the one with advanced equipment. Comments regarding the project were provided by the Head of Immigration Control Department of FMS Russia Major-General Alexandra Zemskova.

Two passport control cabins were specially equipped at the point of control in the passengers’ terminal and currently function in the test mode regime. The border guard officer inserts the passport of a foreign visitor in the device that reads and translates the information into the format of migration card. The migration card consisting of two parts is printed out. One part is issued to the guest and the other stays with the border guard officer.

All the required information about visitors to Moscow is collected and processed right at the border and within several minutes is delivered to the relevant services. This procedure was introduced as the result of the implementation of the law on migration registration.

It is envisaged that in the future every staff member of the Immigration Control Department will be equipped with such scanners, that would allow access to the database immediately (information is available at FMS official site).

Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Iceland on Readmission was signed on the 23rd of September 2008. This Agreement will become a legal basis for Russian-Iceland cooperation in the field of readmission and will ensure valid return of illegal migrants staying in the territories of both countries with violation of legislation on entry and exit. (information is available at FMS official site).

As of January 2009 Vietnam introduces a non-visa regime for the Russian citizens visiting the country for the period not exceeding 15 days. The new regulations apply to all Russian visitors to Vietnam irrespective of the purpose of their visit, says RBC.ru with the reference to the representatives of the National Department of Tourism of Vietnam.

As of September, 20 a non-visa regime to Israel for the Russian nationals came into force. All the Russian nationals including dependant children would be able to enter and exit Israel without visas on a multiple basis within 180 days. The total period of stay in Israel should not exceed 90 days. The new regulation applies to the guest and tourist trips only.