INSIDE THE ISSUE:

- Signing of Memorandum on cooperation between IOM and EEC
- Project: Support to implementation of the EU readmission agreements with the Republic of Moldova, The Russian Federation and Ukraine
- Central Asian Regional Migration Programme
- Preventing and Counter-Acting Trafficking in Human Beings in the Russian Federation
- Migration Health
- Moscow Programme on cultural orientation
- Moscow migrants’ processing and movements

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM ON COOPERATION BETWEEN IOM AND EEC

On April 12 Eurasian Economic Commission Minister of Economy and Finance Policy Timur Suleyменov and Director General of the IOM William Lacy Swing underwrite the Memorandum on Cooperation between the EEC and the IOM.

Director General of the IOM William Lacy Swing underwrote at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the International Organization for Migration.

The aim of underwriting of the Memorandum is to establish official and working contacts and to strengthen cooperation within the development of EEC international cooperation which is also aimed to streamline the effectiveness of the realization of tasks and functions placed by the EEC. This should also positively impact further development of integration processes in the Single Economic Space (SES).

The Memorandum provides grounds for a closer interaction in creating conditions for effective management of migration processes, which do influence functioning and further development of the SES member-states.

The document determines directions of cooperation of the Parties, such as monitoring of migration situation and implementation of migration legislation on the territory of the SES member-states well as studying of international experience in migration management.

The cooperation between the Parties will be realized inter alia through exchange of analytical and reference documents on migration issues, conducting joint events on migration, including experts’ advice on solving particular migration challenges, participation in international conferences and other arrangements which all the Parties are interested in.
Readmission and Assisted Voluntary Return - Final Regional Conference on SIREADA project

On 21 February the final regional conference on SIREADA project took place in Moscow. The goal of the conference “Readmission and Assisted Voluntary Return” was drawing upon key results achieved within the project funded by European Union and co-financed by the Governments of Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, as well as IOM.

The final conference also provided an additional platform for sharing experiences by the Russian Federation, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and other countries in the European space on developing assisted voluntary return of migrants institute and implementing readmission agreements.

The conference gathered together key specialists from governmental migration agencies of Russia, Moldova and Ukraine, representatives from Delegation of the European Union in Russia, and representatives from EU member-states and CIS region, as well as IOM staff from mission in Russia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The morning session was devoted to the questions of assisted voluntary return. European best practices in implementation of voluntary return programs were presented on the examples of Norway and Poland. These presentations highlighted the need for flexibility in designing voluntary return programs to ensure that the specific needs of each return can be individually addressed, for example in the case of a vulnerable migrant or a particular situation in the home country. Both contributions also stressed that voluntary return is not only more humane and dignified than forced return, but also more sustainable for the returnee and their community in the country of origin.

Russia, as well as Moldova and Ukraine, is at the early stage of legislative regulation of AVR, hence the primary goal for experts was to come up with the strategic decisions concerning necessity of introduction of new legislation as well as its extent, detализation and flexibility it offers for the
implementation of AVRR programs. Evolution of national legislations of Russia, Moldova and Ukraine and difficulties encountered were also to be discussed. Particular points of interest concerned categories of eligible migrants, until when voluntary return is possible and if it is possible from detention, if entry bans are obstacles to voluntary return etc.

The second thematic session covered readmission agreements with the EU and with third countries. Participants delivered presentations on main aspects and key challenges in the implementation of the readmission agreements between the EU and Russia, Moldova and Ukraine, status of negotiations on implementing protocols with EU member states, statistics on applications for readmissions of own nationals and third country nationals and actual readmissions.

It was unanimously agreed that legal bases and mechanisms for readmission have been created and adjusted, cooperation between the competent authorities developed. It should be mentioned that by the time of the conference the Russian Federation finished its work on signing implementing protocols with all EU countries.

As for readmission agreements with third countries, the participants outlined status of negotiation process on signing new readmission agreements and implementing protocols with the CIS member-states, European countries which are not EU MS, some Asian and African countries.

In conclusion the participants reiterated that the topics of AVRR and readmission are exceptionally relevant to the current migration situation in Russia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Regional conference became a platform for sharing experience and learning from one another as each country has particularly progressed in different areas.

Third SIREADA Regional Steering Committee

On 22 February the third and final meeting of the Regional Steering Committee was held in Moscow. The meeting was attended by representative of the Federal Migration Service of Russia, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova, the State Migration Service of Ukraine, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, representatives of the EU Delegation to Russia, IOM Missions to Russia, Moldova and Ukraine.

During the meeting the results of national activities of the project in Russia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as joint regional activities were presented:
- the assisted voluntary return component was of dual nature: as direct assistance, the IOM Moscow supported 139 migrants to return voluntarily to over twenty countries of origin. As long-term measure, IOM’s close collaboration with the respective governments resulted in active work on its introduction and development of state-owned and state-funded voluntary return programs;
- reintegration of own nationals followed the same strategy: the IOM implemented a pilot program of reintegration assistance to own nationals-returnees, but also the component pursued the aim of establishment of state-owned mechanisms that would further serve as the basis for the institutionalization of reintegration systems at the national level;
- capacity building: about 100 FMS of Russia staff members acquired new knowledge and upgraded their skills in manifold migration-related areas, i.e. migrants rights protection, assisted voluntary return, cultural orientation, identification and documentation of migrants etc., which improved quality of the decisions taken and functions fulfilled by them;
- the legislative review of AVRR/readmission procedures was addressed to decision makers responsible for introduction and implementation of state-run voluntary return mechanisms. The review provided a summary of European best practices in the field of voluntary return and analyzed the national legislation in force, as well as proposed recommendations for its further improvement;
- the procurement of IT/biometric equipment for the amount of appr. EUR 13,000 contributed to the improvement of registration and documentation of foreigners, collection, storage and exchange of data between the migration management agencies, creation of electronic database for third country nationals.

The project partners and beneficiaries expressly referred to the project as traditionally well-organized and timely implemented.

Overall, SIREADA fulfilled its goals and met the requirements and expectations of the state authorities of Russia, Moldova and Ukraine. While encountering certain obstructions the project team and the government partners promptly reacted and jointly revised problematic components.

The interagency and sub-regional approach which brought together the European Union, various government agencies from Russia, Moldova and Ukraine, EU member states, international organizations and civil society proved to be
mutually advantageous. It allowed the key actors to assess and compare progress made, learn from each other’s best practices and challenges.

Visit of the Delegation from Pakistan to study Russia’s best practices in implementation of Readmission Agreements

On 16-17 April a delegation from Pakistan consisting of high-ranking officials in the field of migration, as well as IOM staff members conducted a study visit to the Russian Federation within the project, funded by the European Union and implemented by IOM Pakistan.

The purpose of the visit was to study Russian best practices on the implementation of the Readmission Agreement with the European Union and to establish contacts with colleagues from the federal Migration Service.

The Russian Federation was selected for this visit upon the recommendation by the European Union, which finds the implementation of the Russia-EU Readmission Agreement, as well as projects, implemented by IOM Moscow in this sphere since 2007, as most successful and deserving attention from other countries which start their work in the sphere of readmission.

The program of the visit was very reach: during two days the delegation from Pakistan had possibility to get from FMS of Russia a comprehensive information about migration management, readmission agreements implementation, asylum. The participants of the visit also visited Russian readmission centre and learnt useful information about its work (operational management of the centre, reception procedures, accommodation and transfer of foreign nationals, as well practical experience and peculiarities of work with different categories of migrants, detained in the centre). Also IOM Moscow staff provided detailed information about its experience in implementing different activities within readmission projects.

The representatives of the Government of Pakistan acknowledged that the information provided was highly useful, and established working contacts were valuable. The visit also allowed to touch upon the questions of conclusion of readmission agreement between Russia and Pakistan. The participants expressed their hopes that this meeting would further contribute to the enhancement of the negotiation process between countries.

CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL MIGRATION PROGRAMME

Regional practical seminar on economic migration regulation (Moscow, High School of Economics, January 2013)

On January 28 and 29, 2013 Higher School of Economics in its premises on Pokrovsky boulevard hosted the two-day regional practical seminar “Regulating Economic Migration: existing mechanisms and practices of attracting, selection and admission of foreign labour force and possibilities of coordinated management of labour migration in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”.

The seminar was organized upon the initiative of the International Organization for Migration, jointly with the Institute of Demography, Scientific Research University - Higher School of Economics. The event aimed to sum up the main results of migration policies conducted during the last three years in Central Asia and Russia, which is the period of implementation of Central Asia Regional Migration Programme jointly executed by IOM, UN Women and the World Bank, with the financial support of DFID.
More than 100 participants took part in the regional seminar - experts and practitioners in the area of migration, representatives of the state structures and research institutes working in migration policy area from Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Tajikistan. The event was greeted by the Director of the Institute of Demography, Mr. Anatoly Vishnevsky, Deputy Head of FMS Russia, Ms. Ekaterina Egorova, IOM Moscow Chief of Mission, Mr. Zlatko Zigic.

Thematic sessions of the first day of the seminar were devoted to such mechanisms of economic migration regulation as quotas, point-based system, patents, organized recruitment programmes. Second day presentations and discussions focused on regulating migration of investors and entrepreneurs, migration of specialists in demand, as well as regulation of mobility of foreign labour in visa-free regional regimes and CIS region in particular. During the seminar, international experience was represented by USA experts, Prof. Muzaffar Chisti (Migration Policy Institute), Prof. B. Lindsay Lowell, (Georgetown University), IOM and HSE experts, as well as the representatives of the governmental structures of the countries in the region.

Results of the seminar will be summarized in the publication of its materials, which is planned to be published in the upcoming months. Presentations of the main report can be found at the following http://moscow.iom.int/russian/activities_labormigration_CARM_publications.html

Results of “Share Your Story” media action among migrants are summed up

December 18 is the International Migrants’ Day. Last December, four IOM missions – in Russia, Tajikistan Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – announced monthly media action among migrants- Share Your Story. We encouraged migrants from all four countries to share their experiences and stories of migration- why they migrated, how it feels to be a migrant, what are their dreams and aspirations. As a result of this action, eleven participants were selected as the winners. Here are the names of the winners and their life credos:

Dildosh Usmonov: “I would like to tell: I believe in myself, and I know my goals!”
Meerim Kurmanbekova: “When strengthens left me and was not able to act anymore, all of a sudden my life smiled to me- openly and softly. All I needed is to raise my head and open my eyes towards the world!”
Victor Sviridov: “Follow my dream, trying to find fortune in Russia”
Solizhon Yusupov: “When I am trying to help people at least with my words, I feel pleasure in my heart. We always should help to each others.”
Tatyana Garbar: “What is needed to be happy? Peace, tranquility, wellbeing and confidence in the future”
Umarali Sheraliev: “If a farmer is satisfied with his fall harvest, I am always happy when my patients recover.”
Aziza Gul’jabaeva: “I want my experience to be useful to every migrant form Kyrgyzstan”
Meerim Sultankul: “Bishkek, as Moscow, does not believe in tears. However, there are many good people. I did not want to leave Kyrgyzstan, because my country needs me. And I need this country too”.  
Avazbek Umarova: “There is saying that a clever tongue will take you anywhere. My family was brought by tongue to the settlement Tausugur”
Gobiev family: “Our heroes do not lose hope for better future in Aktobe. Maybe that is why we are excepting a new family member to be born soon in our family.”

IOM congratulates the winners and wishes them good luck in their future endeavors!

PREVENTING AND COUNTER-ACTING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Opening of a Shelter for Victims of Trafficking in Saint-Petersburg.

In April a shelter for temporary accommodation and social rehabilitation of victims of labour and sexual exploitation (for the Russian and foreign citizens) was established in St. Petersburg on the basis of St. Petersburg Centre for international cooperation of the all-Russian public organization «Russian Red Cross».

An initiative to establish the shelter for VoTs is a continuation of the activities of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the field of the provision of assistance to migrants in vulnerable situation in the Russian Federation, including victims of labour and sexual exploitation. The activities are realized in the framework of the provision of assistance to integrated efforts of Russian state structures and civil society on the implementation of the Program of cooperation of the states - members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in combating illegal migration for the years 2012-2014 and the Programme of cooperation of CIS member states in combating human trafficking for the years 2011-2013.

The IOM Moscow Times, Issue 28
“In recent years, a growing number of people are affected by illegal migration and offenses related to the exploitation of slave labour. A prerequisite for the return of victims to normal life is organization of comprehensive assistance for them, aimed at restoration of their physical, moral and psychological health. Victims of such crimes, as a rule, are badly in need of temporary safe shelter, where, along with the psychological and legal support, they can be granted various types of social services”, - stated in the statement of the Committee for social policy of St. Petersburg, published on the official site of the administration of Saint-Petersburg.

The shelter can provide comprehensive assistance to victims identified by the employees of social services, law enforcement agencies, and recognized as victims of trafficking, irrespective of their national and religious affiliation. The shelter is designed for the simultaneous presence of 8 persons; victims will be provided comprehensive assistance for rehabilitation: the consultation of a social worker, a psychologist, a medical examination, aid in the organization of the departure to their home countries.

Victims of trafficking are in dire need of comprehensive assistance for the restoration of physical, mental and psychological health. Therefore, these social institutions are very important for provision of the protection and rehabilitation of victims, who suffered from the violence in the past.

**MIGRATION HEALTH**

During the period from January to April 2013 the Migration Health Division (MHD) continued health assistance to mobile populations. Medical exams, medical escorts have been performed by MHD without interruption. IOM Moscow specialists engaged in core health assessment activities participated in some of the important public health events.

Contributing for future assistance of migrant beneficiaries and building partnership in Health sector the IOM medical team fulfilled three scheduled visits to Yekaterinburg (22-24.01.13), Rostov on Don (13-16.02.13), St Petersburg (12 – 13.02.13) and Novosibirsk (25-28.02.13). The targets of these trips were to examine TB situation and local practice focusing on TB diagnostics and treatment.

February 10, 2013

MHD participated in TB Interagency coordination meeting in the WHO premises. Agenda was devoted to what was planning to do together Stop TB Partnership marking the World TB Day 24.03.13:

http://www.stoptb.org/events/world_tb_day/2013/

March 8, 2013

Some IOM Moscow doctors attended the IPPA’s Intergovernmental Panel Physicians Training Summit in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The 2013 Summit was the largest gathering to date of Panel Physicians and discuss current concepts in the management of tuberculosis making an overview of Disease Etiology, Diagnosis, Treatment. Pre-summit workshops were devoted to Advanced Case Studies on Pansusceptible and Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Diagnosis and Treatment; Effective Strategies for Transitioning to the Culture and Directly Observed Therapy Requirements and other issues on prevention of overseas TB transmission.

March 18–22, 2013

In order to bring up the capacity of MHD Romania team a one-week training was given to Medical Coordinator in Bucharest who had arrived in Moscow to receive a comprehensive introduction to Health Assessment operations in the Region and to see practical solutions in organizing health setting for refugees and migrants.

March 28-29, 2013

IOM MHD took part in the Russian TB Health Forum with international participation in Moscow. It was the scientific and practical conference “Actual issues of TB prevention, diagnostics and treatment among children and adolescents” which summed up epidemiological results of 2012, achievements and drawbacks revealed in TB service dealing with young populations.

April 3-5, 2013

IOM Public Health Specialist visited St Petersburg to attend session of the Steering Committee to Fight TB in Barents Region (April 3), Conference of TB Specialists of North-Western Region of Russia (April 4) and panel session of the St Petersburg Institute for Lung Diseases (April 5). On April 3 a meeting with Ms. Outi Karvonen, International Technical Advisor for Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS) took place. Ms Karvonen acknowledged contributions made by the IOM-Russia to developing the draft of the “flagship” proposal to be submitted on behalf of the Expert Group. Specifically, she mentioned that this proposal has been included in the Strategic Plan of the EU for the Baltic Sea Region which means that its funding is secured. However, the draft needs to be finalized and some EU consultants indicated that it had to be more specific. Given this recommendation, Ms Karvonen encouraged additional inputs from IOM-Russia into the draft being prepared by the National AIDS Center of Poland.

At the Conference of TB Specialists of North-Western Region of Russia, directors of TB Dispensaries, presented overviews of TB situation in their respective oblasts as well
as assessed the effectiveness of response measures undertaken under the Federal Program "Preventing and Fighting Communicable Diseases: TB (2007-2012)". It was noteworthy that migrants emerged as one of risk groups for TB in every oblast in Russia's North-West.

Productive professional exchange on health of migrants with representatives of Russian medical society and NDPHs health experts opens avenues to new initiatives and strengthening collaboration between IOM and partners in health in N. European region.

April 15, 2013

The proposal document "Tackling the TB and HIV epidemics among mobile populations in Murmansk" was developed by MHD Mow specialists and submitted for funding to the Norwegian Ministry of Health. In order to have a partner for project implementation in the region the Cooperation agreement between IOM-Russia and the THINK Mental Foundation (Norway) was signed. The proposed activities are aimed at reducing risks to get infected with diseases such as TB, HIV and STI among those who migrated to Murmansk oblast as well as those who can, potentially, seek employment in Norway. This objective will be achieved through collecting baseline data on self-reported TB, HIV/AIDS and STI prevalence/incidence among migrants and mobile groups in Murmansk/Murmansk Oblast, providing them with health counseling session on reducing risks for infectious diseases; increasing their level of awareness of TB, HIV and STI risks and prevention measures, sexual and reproductive health and available medical and social support services. The project will also promote the idea of establishing coordination structure involving medical, welfare institutions and NGOs providing services to migrants and mobile workers.

During the reporting period more than 100 migrant beneficiaries under IOM care underwent comprehensive radiology and laboratory testing with our medical partner - Central TB Research Institute of Russian Academy of Medical Science (Moscow).

CANADIAN ORIENTATION ABROAD MOSCOW

During the last Canadian Fiscal Year (April 2012 – March 2013) four COA sessions for Afghan refugees residing in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, as well as for Afghan and Iraqi refugees residing in Moscow were provided by COA Russia.

All groups showed a lot of interest in the COA session. The participants were eager to take part in the activities and discussions. The most popular topics for discussions were connected with education and career opportunities, for example:

Do men and women study together at schools/ language courses/ universities and colleges?

Is it allowed to wear religious or traditional clothes in Canada? Can we celebrate our religious holidays and are there any restrictions for celebrations?

Does the government provide any support to single mothers and disabled children? Are there any special schools for disabled children? Will the disabled children have a chance to enter a public school if they haven’t had any formal education before?

How long does it usually take to enroll a child in a Canadian school?

Do I have to go through assessment of my diploma and school certificate before I start working in Canada? Where can I apply for the assessment procedure?

I have a diploma in journalism. Is there any chance for me to find a job in this field in Canada?

When and under what conditions can I obtain Canadian citizenship?

One of the most vivid discussions during COA sessions in Dushanbe was devoted to packing and excess luggage. The local airlines and the Customs Service have established very strict regulations for passengers going abroad. Refugees departing to Canada have to pay their last money for their belongings, and this fact drives them to despair.

The airport assistant from IOM Dushanbe office was invited to COA sessions to explain the participants the local rules and regulations for those leaving the country and share his practical experience with the groups.

Among the participants in Dushanbe there was a family consisting of a single mother and two teen-aged children, both children were disabled and could move only in wheelchairs. The children could not attend school classes due to their illegal status in the country and their limited ability to use transportation (the city is not equipped with accesses to public areas for wheel-chaired persons). Both children were happy to participate in the COA session: they were fascinated by the video “Over Canada” and were eager to take part in all activities arranged by the COA facilitator.
The COA session gave the family a good opportunity to discover the new country and to feel that they are a very important part of society despite their disabilities. At the end of the session the family thanked the COA facilitator and the government of Canada with tears in their eyes for the great opportunity to attend the COA class.

Another group was composed of representatives of three nationalities: Afghans, Iraqis and a Georgian. The participants had an opportunity to spend two days in a “multicultural society” which was undoubtedly very useful for those going to Canada. The participants had one common language of communication (Russian) which helped them share information and discuss different topics during the seminar; the group strongly emphasized the importance of learning the language of their new country. Multiculturalism, being one of the basic Canadian values, was touched upon in all topics discussed during the COA session. It was obvious that the participants were happy and proud to realize they were moving to a country where different views, religions, races, traditions are accepted, and all the cultures are treated equally and respected in spite of their vast differences.

In February 2013 an in-Canada COA Refugee Training for Trainers from all COA sites was organized by CIC. This training provided an opportunity to see the resettlement process through a variety of eyes of different stakeholders in the resettlement field. One of the most important goals of COA is to shape reasonable expectations and the right attitudes towards resettlement and towards the people who are going to help the refugees settle in the new country. Talking to the service providers and seeing all the different scenarios and patterns of the refugee adaptation process through their eyes, is crucial for the trainers’ correct understanding of COA messages, which in its turn would help relay these messages properly to the populations we serve. The overall impression of the workshop was great! It was such a useful and very meticulously planned training!

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

Comprehensive statistics for 01 January through 30 April 2013 are as follows:

Applications received and processed: 1091 cases / 2502 individuals
Presented to DHS for status determination: 666 cases / 1228 individuals
Departures to the U.S.: 262 cases / 515 individuals

In total, IOM staff traveled to process cases, interview applicants, prepare files for interviews, assist U.S. government officials and provide Cultural Orientation in: Baku (Azerbaijan), Chisinau (Moldova), Kyiv (Ukraine) Malta and Timisoara (Romania)."