

DRAFT RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

ENGLISH only

Session IV: Providing services for migrants

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Objective: The objective of this session was to develop policy recommendations based on best practices in providing services for migrants to be employed by others that could be adopted and implemented OSCE region-wide.

Mr. Maurizio Bussatti, Chief of Mission in Tirana, Albania for the IOM stressed that while international organizations can play a role in developing adequate migrant services that can serve as a model for state institutions, the goal of these organizations should not be to take over services that should be ultimately provided by state institutions.

The following are challenges that typically face those wishing to migrate from “source” countries and “source” country governments in providing quality migrant services: lack of IT facilities, lack of knowledge on the part of migrants as to how to conduct proper research about their destination country, common beliefs by migrants that information about immigration to a destination country is somehow “classified” information that destination countries do not wish to share, reluctance by destination countries to provide information to source countries, lack of migrant service facilities in rural areas or the provinces of source countries, and lastly lack of state and private information services.

Because most migrants are making their decisions to migrate based on poor or inaccurate information the primary goal of migrant services should be to provide accurate information about destination countries and assist migrants in language, cultural adaptation and vocational training for jobs in demand in the destination country. International organizations can assist in providing these services and building the capacity of government structures so that they can later take over the function of providing services such as: research, data collection, dissemination of information, counseling, and training.

Ms. Susan Martin, Migration Expert, Georgetown University

spoke about various ways to develop successful migrant services programs that aid in integration. Services should be directed not just at migrants, but also at communities that are affected by migration. Public/private partnerships, the government and civil society can play a very effective role in providing migrant services.

Pre-arrival services such as providing information through pamphlets, videos, internet based pre-departure orientation that discusses legal rights and responsibilities, government and history of the destination country, basic needs, health services, and immigrant benefits can expectations can be extremely useful information for migrants when they are planning their departure from the source country.

Post-arrival services such as housing services including information on tenant rights and responsibilities, medical services, education and degree accreditation, family law, gender relations, marital rights, domestic violence and spousal and child rights, drivers licensing and driver education, financial literacy and banking services, information on the best way to remit money back to the source country to avoid the loss of income through wire transfer fees, and language and job skills training.

Community oriented services could include information for the community on migrant characteristics, community relations between the community and incoming migrants and between various immigrant groups, how to combat anti-discrimination, anti-racism, and anti-xenophobia, informational trainings for law enforcement personnel, information and training for the educators and those in the health sector, and information on interpretation and translation services for immigrants.

Language training services: host language acquisition should be targeted towards children at 1 ½ and 2nd generation and should be balanced with native language retention. Both parents and teachers should be involved in the language learning process. Language classes for adults should focus on basic skills, literacy, host country language acquisition, and civics and vocational training.

The experts and participants made the following recommendations:

- 1) The OSCE should identify best practices in migrant/immigrant services within the context of OSCE participating state's needs. Those best practices should focus on how to best adapt/integrate migrants into society and how to make incoming migrants a positive impact on community relations and increase understanding of the issues of migration.
- 2) "Source" and "destination" countries could collaborate to provide a one-stop information source for migrants to find out pre-arrival and post-arrival information on their rights and responsibilities.
- 3) Awareness raising about migration should be done through a combination of government, international organizations, civil society and private sector groups such as business, ethnic, and religious organizations, but most importantly the message must be spread using migrant networks, because migrants are more likely to believe the information being channeled through these sources rather than directly from the government or international organizations.
- 4) The OSCE could serve as an information clearing house for how national migrant service programs could be improved.
- 5) The OSCE should render assistance to countries of origin in establishing migrant services and migrant information service centers and provide training to national specialists and government officials dealing with migration issues.

- 6) OSCE participating states should support an internet based informational platform between migrant groups in source and destination countries.
- 7) Access to information about legal rights and responsibilities is the right of every migrant.
- 8) The OSCE could support a regional dialogue on migration issues and regional organizations should be encouraged to begin this discussion.