

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
22 September to 3 October 2014
Warsaw, Poland

Rapporteur's report
Wednesday, 2 October 2014

Working session 16 (specifically selected topic): Rights of migrants

Rapporteur: Ms. Anna Grabowska, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE

No. of statements:

Delegations: 9

Civil Society: 11

OSCE Inst./Int'l Org: 1

Rights of Reply: 2

Working session 16 was devoted to one of specifically selected topic – rights of migrants. ODIHR Director Michael Georg Link in his opening remarks underlined that migrants in the OSCE region constitute more than half of the world's migrant population. At the same time, over half of all international migrants are woman. The challenges stemming from rising flows of migration include i.a. access to education, the health system, housing, labour market as well as acquisition of nationality. To address all challenges a proper legal framework should be in place.

Ms. Despina Syrri, Senior Expert on sustainable growth, Regional Cooperation Council, who was the first introducer, stressed that asylum, migration and integration have become closely related to the phenomena of xenophobia and intolerance. To address the challenges faced by societies, policy responses to the movement of people need to keep fundamental rights at the centre of the decision-making process. Efforts to actively promote migrant inclusion into receiving societies, as well as to combat racism and xenophobia, need to be guided by democratic values of equality, pluralism, non-discrimination, diversity, and social cohesion. The host societies also need to be educated about the migrants, for example through improving coverage of migration issues in the media.

The process of developing migration legislation could promote democratic governance practices, provided that all the interested stakeholders are involved, such as governmental agencies, employers, trade unions, and representative of migrant communities and groups. These processes in themselves promote cohesion and inclusion as well as democracy. Ms. Syrri underlined the importance of addressing the issues of migration at the governmental as well as local level.

Ms. Jitka Markova, Deputy Chair of the European Network of Migrant Women, who was the second introducer, focused her remarks on female migrants. She stressed that migrant women are facing multiple discrimination – both gender and ethnic. She called for truly gender

sensitive migration policies. In order to adopt such policies there is a need to acknowledge the diversity of migrant women, with different social-economic backgrounds, levels of education, ages, sexual orientations, cultures, ethnic and religious roots.

Both introducers assessed that rising popularity of far-right political parties in Europe, tendency to preserving national identities as well as austerity measures taken by States in times of economic crises have impacted on the rights of migrant workers and the efficiency of national migrant integration policies.

During the session 21 interventions were delivered, including 9 by participating States, 11 by non-governmental organisations and 1 from other international organisations. In addition, 2 participating States exercised their right of reply.

The representative of the Council of Europe presented projects being currently developed under the aegis of this organisation. One of them - "Communication for integration" addresses challenges stemming from economic crises and its impact on public perceptions of migrants; the second one - "Intercultural Cities: Towards a model of intercultural integration" was a response to a widespread criticism of multiculturalism.

Certain participating States acknowledged that protection of migrants is essential for strengthening democracy and safeguarding basic humanitarian principle in the OSCE region. The linkage between economic crises and rise of discrimination and intolerance against migrants, including Muslim migrants was pointed out. The key role which media can play in changing the attitude to those who now are often perceived as "other" or "different" was underlined. Some delegations raised the problems that economic migrants from Central Asia encounter suggested the need of bigger legal as well as consular assistance. There was support for seeing the integration of migrants as a process of mutual adaptation. The role of education, also education of language of the host country, and integration through education was indicated. The issue of crises in and around Ukraine and its impact on migration, including the aspect of forced migration, as well as rights of those who left Ukraine was addressed in some interventions. The need for open dialogue on migration and partnership with all stakeholders was also underlined. One country mentioned the need for the European Union to support Malta in addressing challenges stemming from migration flows from Mediterranean region.

Recommendations to the participating States:

- Anti-migrants sentiments could be fought by public condemnation where media play key role. As part of such campaign, inclusion with diversity should be promoted while highlighting possible measures to prevent hate crimes against migrants.
- OSCE should raise awareness on the violations taking place in Crimea in the area of maritime affairs, on the forced conferral of citizenship and the changes in the education system.
- States should be obliged to integrate migrants, depending on their legal status. Participating States to guarantee rights of children and the related conventions.
- OSCE should deploy monitoring mission to Crimea.
- Government of Tajikistan should improve its consular services in the RF. Procedures for repatriation of deceased migrants from the RF to Tajikistan should be developed.
- Migrants should be trained as to what are the best ways to access labour market.