

OSCE Review Conference, Warsaw, 08.10.10
Working Session: Intolerance against Migrants
Intervention by the Public Movement “Multinational Georgia”

In Georgia grows number of immigrants from Uzbekistan, Turkey, China, Sri-Lanka, Pakistan, Nigeria, Iran and Iraq, from whom approximately 30 persons obtained the refugee status up to date.

Majority of temporary residence permits are granted for the purpose of employment, mainly to Turkish and Chinese applicants. The Law on Legal Status of Aliens in Georgia has only come into effect in 2006. Prior to this, no proper residence permit system was in place, which can explain the difference in figures between 2006 and the preceding years. Migrants who enter the country legally (with a valid visa or exempted from visa) can work in Georgia even without a work permit. Mentioned above makes Georgia very attractive to the migrants and creates problems in the gathering of the appropriate statistical data. According to the last reliable data produced by UN and cited by International Organization for Migration in its Country Migration profile for Georgia (2008), migrants constitute 191,220 (2005) and 4.3% (2005) as percentage of total population. With regard to the temporary resident permits in year 2006 there was more than 1000 of such permits issued, among which majority is for purposes of employment and much less for the purposes of studying. However number of the students from Africa and Asia started to grow since year 2006.

The migration flow is not perceived positively in the Georgian society. Considering the two conflicts in the regions of Georgia settled by minorities, distrust towards the representatives of other ethnicities formed in the aftermath of the conflicts, negatively influences on the attitude towards the “new” minorities/immigrants. Absence of information concerning identity features of “new” minorities and existence of stereotypes towards them entails appearance of xenophobic and racist attitudes in the society. Shops owned by the Chinese entrepreneurs in Tbilisi are covered with the black graffiti calling them in offensive form to leave Georgia. There was case of killing of Chinese farmer in Racha-Lechkhumi region in year 2008. Initial investigation suspected hate motives of the offence. However no appropriate legal evaluation has been provided, nevertheless defendants and witnesses even in the mass media programs directly stated that victim was “alien” trying to interfere in their lives and that is why was not tolerated by locals.

Public Movement “Multinational Georgia” discovered at least 6 attacks committed against immigrants of Chinese origin in the downtown of city of Tbilisi in November-December 2009 by the group of young people, who also draw symbols of hate on the walls in the areas of accidents. Currently investigation of these cases is provided. However we are deeply concerned that these facts are only top of the iceberg. Many of facts are not discovered because immigrants themselves afraid to interact with law enforcement and law enforcement is not prepared for the investigation of such cases as far as hate crimes are new phenomenon for Georgia.

Immigrants appear to be the most unprotected target of the current and potential hate accidents, as far as there is not appropriate statistical data about them, as well as outreach

of the immigrants by any service providers in line with mentioned above information about them available for the public at large.

The problems stated above have been highlighted in the report issued by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) issued on 15 June. In addition, ECRI has recommended the Georgian state authorities to sign and ratify the Convention on the Protection of Rights of Migrants and Their Families.

We call upon OSCE and especially OSCE/ODIHR to support process of the introduction of the appropriate legal and institutional environment for protection of migrants in Georgia.