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**REPORT**

**OSCE/IOM INFORMATION-RESOURCE CENTRE FOR LABOUR MIGRANTS IN  
DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN**

The aim of this paper drafted by the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe in co-operation with the IOM Mission Tajikistan is to sketch the current OSCE/IOM activities on labour migration in Tajikistan and their potential follow-up. Particularly with respect to follow-up activities this paper is to be considered a base draft concept for developing such activities, thus subject to changes and elaboration following analysis and input by relevant actors.

**1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**i) OSCE and Labour Migration**

One of the main characteristics of a modern society is increased population mobility. Migration can be a positive factor in economic and social development and can contribute to understanding among cultures and to democratization trends. However, if migration takes place without a proper legal, social and economic framework, it could also cause disruptions in the economic and social structure of both sending and receiving countries which, whether real or perceived, could put migrants at risk of becoming victims of negative stereotyping, intolerance, and violations of human rights.

Since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 labour migration received attention within the OSCE framework. The OSCE participating states noted a number of *Economic and social aspects of migrant labour* that were considered relevant for building security through co-operation inasmuch movements of migrant workers in Europe had reached substantial proportions, and constituted an important economic, social and human factor for host countries as well as for countries of origin. Therefore, Participating States undertook a series of commitments aiming at ensuring conditions under which the orderly movement of workers might take place.

In 1996 a Migration Unit was created within the ODIHR with the tasks of assisting OSCE participating States in meeting their commitments in the areas of freedom of movement and choice of place of residence, migration, and human contacts.

The ODIHR works with other international organizations and NGOs to enhance the protection of rights and ensure non-discrimination of various categories of migrants.

The key issues dealt with by the ODIHR Migration Unit are:

- The right to free choice of place of residence;
- Combating discrimination against the most-vulnerable groups of migrants;
- Promoting interstate co-operation on labour migration and the rights of migrant workers;

- Facilitating interstate co-operation on migration-related information;
- Promoting public awareness of migration issues.

Given the importance of the migration topic, the Slovenian Chairmanship made it one of its priorities. It was therefore decided that the theme 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum be “Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons Belonging to National Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE Area”. Session IV of the Forum is devoted to the topic of “Providing Services for Migrants”<sup>1</sup>.

## **ii) Labour Migration in Tajikistan**

Over the past decade, Tajikistan has seen a rapid rise in cross-border seasonal migration. As the dominant feature of the country’s modern history, this trend affects all aspects of Tajik society, the national economy and government policy.

The majority of Tajik labour migrants fail to follow the necessary procedures of registration and work permission in Russia and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), thus finding themselves in illegal situations, which makes them more vulnerable to exploitation, harassment and hardship. This is generally due to their lack of awareness and knowledge on their own rights and obligations. At the same time there are substantial benefits. Tajik migrant workers acquire new experiences, skills and contacts, and their remittances are crucial to the survival of many households in Tajikistan.

Therefore, it is necessary to provide the larger possible number of migrants with information and also to support the current efforts of the government of Tajikistan to organise and regulate the labour migration process from the country.

## **2. THE OSCE/IOM INFORMATION-RESOURCE CENTRE FOR LABOUR MIGRANTS IN DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN**

### **i) Project description**

This project was proposed to the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe for funding by the IOM Mission in Tajikistan in June 2003. Considering the importance of labour migration for the social and economic security of Tajikistan the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe decided to support it.

The project, scheduled for of 18 months, started in January 2004. It consisted of the creation of an Information-Resource Centre for Labour Migrants (IRC/LM) in Dushanbe in order to enhance the awareness level of intending labour migrants and intending economic migrants.

By way of service oriented consultation and communication, trained resource persons made available accurate information related to labour migration, the legal, social, economic and cultural realities of transit and destination areas and the risks of irregular migration. This has been complemented by the development of labour-migration specific curricula for schools and the thematic awareness raising of labour migration issues through events for civil society in general.

A significant part of the IRC/LM activities and also an important mean to reach the largest possible number of migrants was to produce and distribute publications on migration-related issues. The IRC/LM also supported the local media with specific information in exchange for which media partners will diffuse information on the Centre and its facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Permanent Council Decisions no. 624 of 29 July 2004 and no. 666 dated 7 April 2005.

The IRC/LM is under IOM management. An advisory board involving the Government, NGOs, Media representatives, IOM and the OSCE ensures overview and evaluation of activities. The IRC/LM is supposed to co-operate closely with the Tajik State Migration Service and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

The project budget for 18 months was 165,000 EURO, including besides the cost of the activities described below as well as staff, capital, equipment and operational costs. Apart from that the Danish government made a one-off contribution of 20,000 USD to start-up the project.

## **ii) The IRC/LM in 2004: overview of activities, successes and constraints.**

In 2004 the IRC/LM successfully implemented its scheduled activities, and particularly:

- i. Provided direct consultations to apx. 6,000 potential migrants
- ii. Published 20 information lists, brochures and booklets which are regularly updated, on relevant issues<sup>2</sup> for migrants including traffic and forced labour with contact information of institutions able to provide counselling and protection. This information lists are available in Tajik and Russian. More than 220,000 lists were distributed at different departure points, in regions, by institutions such as the State Migration Service and a network of voluntary distributors.
- iii. Provided more than 50 reports on Russian legislation, migration process and the situation of labour migrants from Tajikistan in the Russian Federation – the main destination country for Tajik migrants.
- iv. Prepared questionnaires to define visitors' request, thus laying the ground for a better understanding of problems affecting migrants;
- v. Hosted regular (fortnightly) informal press briefings on a topic set in the work plan;
- vi. Conducted five public discussions, participated in six TV debates and assisted in preparing 13 TV and one radio programmes, published 6 articles and gave 10 interviews on migration;
- vii. In close collaboration with Ministry of Education, began designing special lectures on labour migration for schools. In October the Ministry has confirmed the inclusion of these lectures in secondary school curricula. Selected teachers in pilot schools were trained to deliver these lectures.
- viii. Provided training to NGOs, employees of the State Migration Services and local authorities of different regions on migration-related issues, focusing on counselling and providing information.

It should be added that by implementing the aforementioned activities as well as by collecting information from visitors and distributing questionnaires, the IRC/LM is improving the knowledge of migration and migrants' issues specifically related to the context of Tajikistan, thus becoming a resource for any organisations involved in migration issues – including NGOs, governmental institutions and international organisations.

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<sup>2</sup> Registration, Legalisation of Employment (the rights for employment), Travel documents (passport and other documents), Health (First Aid and STDs), Crossing borders (the rights and responsibilities for both sides), Customs (customs procedures, the rights and responsibilities for both sides), Police (how to be protected from arbitrary decisions), Transport (air and railway), Traffic (preventing risks of labour migration and human traffic), Education (admission to educational institutions of CIS and foreign countries), Representatives of Tajiks abroad, National and international human rights organizations, Consular representations, Visas, Tickets (air and railway), Relationship

In general, the project met the expectations of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe. The IRC/LM established itself as the reference on labour migration in Tajikistan and plays a key role in providing information to labour migrants as well as about labour migration to the public. .

Particularly:

1. IRC/LM resources are accessible to all branches of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, NGOs and potential labour migrants.
2. Requests for information prior to labour migrants' departure are increasing.
3. Governmental, non-governmental and international organizations received counselling from IRC/LM on actual problems of labour migration of Tajik citizens;
4. Several international organisations requested to re-publish some of the Centre's information materials, lists and brochures;
5. Mass media approached the IRC/LM regularly on different issues related to labour migration.

The main constraint that has been identified by IRC/LM, and confirmed by NGOs, migration and employment services and other governmental structures, is that the IRC/LM, being based in Dushanbe, doesn't have the capacity to reach a large number of migrants located in different parts of Tajikistan. Official figures put at 400,000 the amount of Tajik nationals migrating every year. Even counting on a "generous" multiplier effect it is likely that the present IRC/LM can reach only a limited part of this number.

### **3. FOLLOW-UP PLANS**

#### **i) Background to follow-up: project status, lessons learned and proposals.**

The current OSCE funding for IRC/LM will terminate on 30 June 2005. The OSCE Centre in Dushanbe intends to extend its support until the end of the year, and consider funding for 2006 as well from its Core Budget resources. This support would not target the mere continuation of the current IRC/LM activities but their enhancement, particularly in order to tackle the aforementioned main constraint by increasing the IRC/LM's outreach.

The IRC/LM is currently studying ways to tackle the outreach issue within its existing structure and capacities. These would include a large-scale information campaign to increase awareness of the existence of such a Centre, mobile training and counselling so as to provide services outside of Dushanbe and to operate a transfer of counselling capacity by organizing training seminars on informing and counselling in the regions for specialists of the State Migration Service and Republican Employment Centres, with the aim to build/enhance capacity for these structures to deal with labour migrants. The aforementioned plans, some of which already started in the during the third project's quarter (January-June 2005) will be continued and enhanced within the work plan of the second half of 2005, that the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe plans to support.

This, however, may be not enough. Tajikistan is affected by a poor transport infrastructure that makes travel difficulties. The telephone system, the Internet, media distribution systems are also poorly developed –particularly in the poorest rural areas where a significant share of migrants comes from. As a consequence those who are in most need of receiving the information the IRC/LM provides are at the moment less likely to have access to it. Specific indications confirmed that, if on the one hand the IRC/LM is a much needed institution in Tajikistan, on the

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with Employer (labour contracts and its risks), Housing (housing agreement and its risks), Employment abroad (realities and risks for Tajik citizens), The Train Dushanbe (Kulyab) – Astrakhan, Rules of migrant behaviour.

other hand its outreach is limited and should be enhanced. For example, the results of a questionnaire distributed to visitors showed that 80% of respondents suggested the creation of branch offices in the regions. In addition many requests and proposals including such expansion have been received from NGOs, migration and employment services, the Parliament.

Based on all the above, the OSCE centre in Dushanbe and the IOM Mission in Tajikistan are currently developing a comprehensive programme including continuing support to the IRC/LM in Dushanbe and opening branches in the regions.

## **ii) Follow-up plans description**

This comprehensive programme should include three basic components:

- a) Continuing support for the IRC/LM in Dushanbe;
  - b) Opening branch offices in the provinces;
  - c) Networking with existing structures.
- a) Continuing support for the Dushanbe IRC/LM, including activities set in the original project proposal and those, described above in this paragraph, aiming at enhancing its outreach. Support should also include activities aimed at building the capacity, training and co-ordinating work of branch offices and structures to network with.
- b) Opening branch offices in the provinces. Locations will be identified according to the main outgoing flows of migrants from Tajikistan. At the moment it seems that six locations in addition to Dushanbe would be appropriate sites for IRC/LM branches.
- c) Networking with existing structures / capacity-building for local authorities and civil society. In addition to the strict co-operation with relevant government institutions as foreseen and laid out in the original project proposals, a first analysis based on meetings with other international organisations indicated that in addition to open branch offices in strategically located cities of Tajikistan, an organised linkage between the IRC/LM and existing networks of NGOs and community development activities supported by organisations like the UNDP and the Aga Khan Foundation could greatly enhance the outreach of the IRC/LM. OSCE projects including the creation of Resource Centres and related structures in the provinces will also be involved. This networking will aim at increase awareness of the existence of IRC/LM main and branch offices as well as providing first-hand basic information to potential migrants.

## **iii) Follow-up preparatory activities**

- a) The OSCE Centre in Dushanbe has already received a project proposal to continue support to the IRC/LM in Dushanbe. This proposal is currently under consideration and it is expected to be started in July. It will include activities set in the original project proposal and those aiming at enhancing its outreach as indicated in paragraph 3.ii.a above and will be funded with the Centre's Core Budget.
- b) At the same time and until the end of the year, the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe and the IOM Mission in Tajikistan will draft a project proposal, to be launched for extra-budgetary funding by the end of this year. This proposal will include activities set out in paragraphs 3.ii.b, i.e. the opening of branch offices, in addition to continued support for the IRC/LM in Dushanbe as in 2005 but including also training, capacity building and co-ordination of work of branch offices. The drafting process will include and involve

NGOs, relevant government institutions and international organisations such as the ILO (International Labour Organisation).

- c) Plans on networking with existing structures will be considered and developed in parallel with the opening of the branch offices. Inasmuch and to which extent they may involve additional capacity-building and training activities, as well as other costs such as staff and equipment, it is necessary to carry out a careful needs assessment including the extent of their involvement. This may take longer than drafting the follow-up project alone. Therefore, the project may start without an established “networking” plan, to be added to it at a later stage.

**iv) Work Plan for 2005**

<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible entity</b>
1	Developing and approving Follow-up project – support to IRC/LM (June-December 2005).	May-June 2005	IOM Tajikistan, IRC/LM, OSCE Centre in Dushanbe
2	Drafting a proposal on opening IRC/LM branches	June-November 2005	As above
3	Launching the comprehensive programme for Extra-budgetary contributions for 2006	December 2005	OSCE Centre in Dushanbe

**v) Overall objective and expected results**

i) Overall objectives

Enhance awareness on the realities of migrating and working abroad and thus reducing irregular migration flows within media, civil society, migrants themselves.

Providing relevant governmental institutions with capacity to provide a public information service to the target group and to the general public.

ii) Expected results

- a) Accurate and reliable information and advice is provided to intending and potential economic migrants;
- b) Capacity of governmental institutions to meet the awareness gaps and needs of migrant workers is enhanced;
- c) Available information on migration trends and flows is fine-tuned with input based on information-gathering activities (questionnaires et al.) by IRC/LM and branches, thus providing a feedback on implemented activities and a background for future ones, including those supported by international donor and development organisations;
- d) Media capacity to analyse issues related to labour migration is raised, thus providing more and better insight to the public on the realities of labour migration;

**vi) Partner organizations / Co-operation**

The OSCE Centre in Dushanbe will work in close co-operation with the IOM in implementing and managing the programme as well as in evaluating it.

Governmental structures will be involved in the work of the IRC/LM via an Executive Board arrangement. Other international organisations as well as NGOs and Media will be involved in the work of the IRC/LM via an Advisory Board arrangement.

**vii) Tentative budget for one year**

<b>N.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost (EUR)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	Support to IRC/LM Dushanbe	110,000	Estimate based on 2004 costs and 2005 follow-up proposal, including activities and staff, minus capital expenditures and taking into account enhanced information activities as per paragraph 3.ii.a, above
<b>2</b>	Opening and operating 6 (six) branch offices	60,000	Estimate based on 2004 pilot project by OSCE Centre in Dushanbe. Includes capital, staff, operating costs and basic activities (counselling, information dissemination, etc.).
<b>3</b>	Training for partner entities (NGOs, community development organisations, etc.)	35,000	Estimate based on 2004 pilot project by OSCE Centre in Dushanbe – two-days training costs for an estimate of 100 organisations/groups country-wide.
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>205,000</b>	

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- 2. Creation of information centres for labour migrants in 3 districts of Khatlon region, Project document, OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, 2004**
- 3. First and Second Interim Reports to the OSCE / Information-Resource Centre for Labour Migrants, IOM Dushanbe, 2004;**
- 4. Labour Migration in Tajikistan, IOM Report, Dushanbe, 2003;**
- 5. Permanent Council Decision no. 624 of 29 July 2004**
- 6. Permanent Council Decision no 666 dated 7 April 2005**
- 7. OSCE Website, [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)**

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