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**Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and
environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the
OSCE region**

Regulation of labour migration and the employment problem in Armenia

Labour migration issues involving citizens of Armenia are regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, the laws of the Republic of Armenia and various international agreements.

On 24 October 2005, the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Employment of the Population and Social Protection in Case of Unemployment was adopted, the basic principle of which is the creation of conditions to ensure the full and productive employment of the population. The law mentions existing problems with respect to the organization of jobs abroad or in different regions to where the workers live, the regulation of these jobs being regarded as one of the main ways for the State to regulate employment. Measures being taken by the authorized State regulatory body of the Government of Armenia to create favourable conditions for the regulation of relations in this field are outlined in the law. These measures include: the publication of information on unfriendly countries from the point of view of migration, the signing of intergovernmental agreements regarding the organization of jobs abroad and also on the protection of the interests of labour migrants on behalf of, or by order of, the Government of Armenia.

Each year, the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia prepares an Employment Programme and submits it to the Armenian Government for consideration. Employment Programmes include both passive programmes (unemployment benefits, consultations, etc.) and active programmes (vocational training for the unemployed and disabled, wage compensation to assist job placements for vulnerable persons in the labour market, financial support to help the unemployed and disabled to set up their own businesses and become self-employed, organization of paid public work, etc.). These programmes may involve Armenian citizens returning from other countries as well as foreign citizens or persons without citizenship in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Armenia and the relevant international treaties. Armenia has signed a number of intergovernmental agreements connected with the regulation of the free movement of the labour force from countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in particular with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Georgia and Turkmenistan and also with the Republic of Qatar.

Under the law, job seekers are guaranteed social protection, in particular unemployed persons from vulnerable groups in the labour market and unemployed job seekers receiving a pension for long-term service or a pension under special terms have the chance to participate in a programme of professional training (vocational training, retraining and further training), which will make it possible, through the acquisition of skills and know-how, to choose appropriate work, including the option of going into business.

The State Employment Service provides funding for State registration as a private entrepreneur or a commercial organization to suitably qualified unemployed and disabled persons wishing to go into business, thus helping to increase the number of persons wanting to go into business and promoting entrepreneurship.

The purpose of entrepreneurial activity is:

- To encourage the development of the economy and social solidarity in Armenia;
- To improve the development of the skills needed for socially disadvantaged groups to be able to engage in business activities;
- To support the creation of initiatives for decent work, including a decent wage for work performed by socially disadvantaged groups;
- To ensure the accessibility of the funding needed for socially disadvantaged persons to be able to engage in business activities;
- To create solid and alternative financial capital.

Entrepreneurial activity takes place in trade, the provision of services, industry and agriculture.

The following social groups benefit:

- The unemployed;
- Refugees;
- Migrants;
- The disabled;
- Young people;
- Women (special attention will be focused on women with sole responsibility for supporting their families).

Small and medium-sized enterprises and local microfinance organizations may also benefit.

The programme can be effective if organizations involved in micro financing in Armenia co-operate with the agency of the State Employment Service with respect to solid and alternative financing and carry out the following tasks within the framework of the programme:

- Identify the prospects for the economic and social development of a selected region;
- Create solidarity groups within communities;
- Select the programme's beneficiaries from among vulnerable groups, taking into account their business skills and initiative;
- Organize the training of beneficiaries with a view to developing their business skills;
- Develop mechanisms for the introduction of a guaranteed system of microcredits, making them accessible for beneficiaries.

If entrepreneurship is to be developed, micro financing needs to be provided:

- According to the business plans submitted;
- At low interest rates;
- Long term;
- Security-free.

Persons registered with the State Employment Service as unemployed are guaranteed unemployment benefits equivalent to 60 per cent of the minimum monthly wage (18,000 drams).

Among the programmes being implemented by the State Employment Service one might single out the programme involving wage compensation to assist job placements for vulnerable groups in the labour market (the State Employment Service reimburses 50 per cent of the wage set by the employer, but no more than the minimum monthly wage). The programme helps to promote work, ensure employment and implement a just social policy according to the principle of social partnership. The percentage of vulnerable persons in the labour market receiving social support is rising and the possibilities for job placements are growing.

A programme for the reimbursement of costs involved in secondment to a different location makes it possible to implement a regionally balanced, uniform and effective employment policy through the regulation of the local movement of the labour force, thus helping to ensure employment in population centres in remote locations and border regions.

The aforementioned programmes help citizens, including persons returning from abroad, to assert their right to work and are conducive to full and productive employment in the country and the development of the economy.