



Serbian-Swiss migration dialogue

10 - 11 March 2016

Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia

Dialogue participants
at the Palace of Serbia



Seventh Serbian-Swiss migration dialogue

The seventh migration dialogue, regarding the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of Serbia, was held from the 10th to the 11th of March 2016. The Serbian delegation was headed by Mr. Vladimir Cucić, Commissioner for Refugees and Migration and his counterpart in the dialogue was Ambassador Mr. Urs von Arb, Director for International Cooperation, State Secretariat for Migration.

On the 10th of March 2016 the representatives of the two countries visited the Refugee Assistance Point in



Delegations of Switzerland and Serbia visited Miratovac

Miratovac. Thereat they were familiarized with the Point's capacities and held conversations with the employees of the Border Police, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR and UNICEF. This was followed by their visit to the Reception-transit centre in Presovo. On this occasion, those responsible for the Centre's administration, led by Mr. Milenko Nikic from the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social affairs, showed the guests the registration process which is being applied to migrants, the accommodation facilities and the various services available to migrants.



The Serbian delegation informed the Swiss delegation on how the Republic of Serbia reacted to the increased influx of migrants in the previous period, as well as on the activities of the Border Police undertaken in response to illegal migration, border control and the fight against human trafficking.

Commissioner Cucic presented to the delegation information concerning migration management, reception and accommodation of migrants, available capacities and predictions about possible future developments. Aleksandra Miletic from the Ministry of Labour presented an overview of the situation in the field of protection of unaccompanied minors and the results achieved in the project which is being implemented with the support of Switzerland and is aimed at improving the level of health care available to this vulnerable category of migrants.



Unified European position is needed: Ambassador von Arb and Minister Vulin



Dialogue participants during the meeting in Presevo

On the second day of the migration dialogue, talks and an exchange of experiences was continued amongst the representatives of the delegations of the two countries. Meetings were held at the Palace of Serbia.

On this occasion, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Aleksandar Vulin, met with Ambassador Urs von Arb and His Excellency, the Swiss Ambassador Mr. Jean-Daniel Ruch. Minister Vulin said that Serbia will continue to behave responsibly and in accordance with the decisions being implemented by the European Union. The officials agreed on the necessity for a unified position within the European region for finding long-term and sustainable solutions to the migrant crisis.

Ambassador von Arb stressed the strategic importance and the importance that Serbia has to Switzerland in the field of migration, as also the fact that Switzerland is satisfied with the results achieved in the framework of the migration partnership between the two countries. He

said concrete projects in this area amount to 4.3 million Swiss francs over the last four years.

Minister Vulin expressed his gratitude for the help provided and said that he hoped that Serbia and Switzerland will continue to cooperate, not only within the projects supporting the migrant population in Serbia, but also within other development projects of mutual interest.

Upon the conclusion of this meeting the representatives of the Swiss Confederation presented their data on migration flows and forecasts in this field in Switzerland, as also information concerning integration programs for persons granted some form of protection, the challenges they face regarding irregular migration and the fight against human trafficking.

An important part of the dialogue were the citizens of the Republic of Serbia, returnees under the readmission agreement. Both delegations expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation achieved in the field of readmission.

This was followed by the conversation about current projects and the potential for further cooperation in the field of migration management. Flexibility and complementarity in relation to projects and activities implemented by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and other donors were perceived as the added value of the support received from the Confederation of Switzerland.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of Serbia establishing a migration partnership, which was signed on the 30th of June 2009, set up a regular dialogue on migration between the two countries. The New Swiss Strategy for partnership in the field of migration for the Western Balkans from 2016 to 2019 comprehen-

sively covers issues concerning migration and has a budget of 10 million Swiss francs for the region. The priority areas are: efficient asylum system; migration management at the local level; prevention of irregular migration; migration and development; human trafficking; return and reintegration.

Good practices in migration management were exchanged during the migration dialogue, which is organized annually, treating both positive and the critical aspects of cross-border migration. Migration dialogues are an opportunity for the development of all points of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of Serbia, as well as a means by which to define ways to establish a regular and continuous dialogue with a view to devise an effective process of migration management and strengthen mutual cooperation.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration presented a joint proposal for the project, "Support to the system of migration management in the Republic of Serbia 2016-2019," with the overall objective of strengthening the system of migration management in the Republic of Serbia in accordance with international standards and the EU acquis, with a special focus on the mechanisms of cooperation and capacity building at the local level, in order to ensure the protection of the rights of migrants. In addition to migration management at the local level and support in the field of asylum, the project includes a component that relates to capacity building at the local level intended to combat trafficking.



Successful completion of the project "Support to the national coordination for reintegration of returnees - Phase 2"



Part of the project were creative workshops for asylum seekers

The project "Support to the national coordination for reintegration of returnees - Phase 2," whose implementation by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration started in 2013, was successfully completed in March 2016.

The project, worth 600,000 Swiss francs, was intended to assist the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the implementation of measures to manage migration and build capacities. According to Marina Čakić, project manager on behalf of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, the Swiss project was of great importance during the migrant crisis. Through the project in question, particular forms of assistance were provided in support of the first reception-transit center in Presevo.

Results of the project are numerous:

- Enhanced capacities of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration for efficient and effective coordination and implementation of activities within the asylum system;
- Employees of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration are trained and equipped to provide adequate support to asylum seekers and returnees based on readmission agreements;
- Improved inter-agency cooperation at the national and local levels; The project supported the organization of regular coordination meetings of representatives of relevant national and local institutions involved in the asylum system, who are organized

in order to improve overall cooperation;

- Improved and enhanced capacity of the centers for asylum seekers;
- Improved quality and diversity of services and activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of asylum seekers and persons who have been granted some form of protection in the Republic of Serbia; by engaging associates and support to civil society organizations recreational, creative, educational and occupational programs for persons accommodated in centers for asylum seekers were regularly organized;

Wider social environment was sensitised and an ambient was created in which basic human rights and needs of asylum seekers and persons who have been granted some form of protection in Serbia are respected; The project supported 23 projects of civil society organizations focusing on raising public awareness of the problems and obstacles faced by asylum seekers and returnees upon readmission agreements, the promotion and strengthening of tolerance, sensitization of local communities, the elimination of prejudice and fear of asylum seekers strengthening intercultural cooperation, and the development of communication and dialogue at national and local level;

- Coordination mechanisms for reintegration of returnees under the readmission agreements have been further strengthened.