

NEWS FROM UKRAINE

The Concept of the State Migration Policy has been approved by the President of Ukraine

The President of Ukraine approved the Concept of the State Migration Policy. The Decree of the President No 622/2011 was signed on 30 May, 2011. It was also published on the official website of the President of Ukraine.

The Concept defines trends, strategic challenges of Ukrainian migration policy, principles and priorities of state authorities' activities in the migration sphere, the ways of improvement of legislative and institutional support, the mechanisms of the Concept implementation, the press service of the State Migration Service of Ukraine informed.

Source: Europe without Barriers, 1 June, 2011

<http://novisa.com.ua/analytic/The-Concept-of-the-State-Migration-Policy-has-been-approved-by-the-President-of-Ukraine/en>

The Committee on Fighting Organized Crime and Corruption recommends the Parliament of Ukraine to reject the Bill on Combating of Trafficking in Humans

The bill (registration No 8469) sets organizational and legal fundamentals of combating trafficking in humans, fundamentals of the state policy in the sphere of combating trafficking in humans, authorities of executive power bodies, order of granting the status of victims of trafficking in humans, and order of assistance to such individuals. The Code of Criminal Procedure of Ukraine, the Laws "On Immigration", "On Social Services" and "On Social Work with Families, Children and Youth" and amended.

According to the Committee members, the bill has no appropriate subjects of legal regulation and contains a great number of ambiguous and legally unjustified provisions.

Source: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 3 June, 2011

http://portal.rada.gov.ua/rada/control/en/publish/article/info_left?art_id=262088&cat_id=105995

Ukraine and Russia extending consular presence

Ukraine and Russia will extend their consular presence in the two countries, according to the agreement reached at the fifth meeting of the subcommittee on international cooperation of the Ukrainian-Russian Interstate Commission in Odesa.

Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kostiantyn Hryshchenko said that it was necessary to expand consular presence in the two countries. In particular, the sides agreed on the opening of Ukraine's consulate general in Nyzhnii Novhorod (Russia) and Russia's consulate general in Donetsk (Ukraine). According to the Minister, the expansion of the consular presence is important for the development of bilateral economic cooperation.

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Serhii Lavrov, in turn, said that Russia wanted to open its consulates general in Sevastopol, Uzhhorod, and Dnipropetrovsk.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 4 June, 2011

<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=222988>

<http://zik.ua/en/news/2011/06/05/291591>

United Nations honors Ukrainian peacemakers in Liberia

The United Nations (UN) medals “In the Service of Peace” have been awarded to 275 Ukrainian peacekeepers in Liberia. The awarding ceremony took place during a “parade of medals” in the base camp of the 56th separate helicopter detachment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the UN Mission in Liberia.

“On behalf of the Secretary General of the UN Mission, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the Ukrainian authorities for participation in the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations. In problematic situations in which we operate in Liberia, many of the tasks of the mission are mainly carried out by our Ukrainian colleagues and reliable helicopters,” said Special Representative of the Secretary General Ellen Margrethe Loy.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 8 June, 2011

<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=223313>

Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM considered trafficking and irregular migration

Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM Secretariat in Kyiv, Ukraine hosted the 7th meeting of the Working Sub-Group on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Irregular Migration, which was held under the Moldovan chairmanship.

Participating delegations exchanged information about the development of national legislation, the operational situation, and measures being taken in terms of preventing and combating human trafficking and irregular migration.

Also during the meeting was considered the issue of developing bilateral and multilateral cooperation, discussed possibilities of broadening direct channels between the competent institutions of the GUAM member states, reached an agreement on conducting joint measures with respect to combating human trafficking and irregular migration Interception – 2011.

Read more: Information Agency “UNIAN”, 10 June, 2011

<http://www.unian.net/ukr/news/news-440489.html>

<http://guam-organization.org/en/node/1167>

Ukraine and Italy to enhance cooperation

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Kostiantyn Hryshenko has held talks with Italian counterpart Franco Frattini as part of a meeting of foreign ministers of the Central European Initiative (CEI) in Trieste, Italy, on 10 June, 2011, the information policy department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine reported on 11 June, 2011.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Hryshenko thanked the Italian Government for its decision to allocate EUR 26 million for the implementation of Chornobyl projects, which was announced by Prime Minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi.

During the meeting, the sides paid much attention to the prospects for expanding cooperation between Ukraine and Italy in the trade and economic sector, in particular, holding a meeting of the Ukrainian–Italian council on trade, industrial and financial cooperation in the last quarter of this year. They also agreed to organize a bilateral business forum during the Italian foreign minister’s upcoming visit to Ukraine.

Read more: Kyivpost, 11 June, 2011 - <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/106543/>

Albania allows Ukrainians to travel without visas for three months

The Albanian Government has allowed Ukrainian citizens to enter Albania without visas and stay in the country for up to 90 days within 180 days of the date of first entry, Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Oleksandr Dykumarov said at a briefing on 15 June, 2011.

Mr. Dykumarov said that this right had been granted in line with the Albanian Government's decision of 13 May, 2011 regarding a change in the requirements in procedures and documents for the entry and stay of foreign citizens in Albania.

Read more: Kyivpost, 15 June, 2011 - <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/106789/>

Single tariff for visas set in Ukraine

Ukraine has established a single rate for visa processing, and reduced the number of visa types. This is stated in Ukrainian Government decision of 1 June, 2011 on the rules of drawing visas for entry to Ukraine and transit through its territory which will come into force on 10 September, 2011.

According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine spokesman Oleksandr Dykumarov, the main purpose of the adoption of this resolution is to bring the legal framework of Ukraine in the visa field in conformity with modern requirements and European Union legislation, as well as to improve the efficiency of state bodies of Ukraine in the sphere of combating irregular migration. The decree also regulates the issue of long-term residence and employment in the territory of Ukraine by representatives of foreign non-governmental organizations, foreign business entities, foreign banks, providing for registration by the specified categories of aliens of long-term visas and temporary residences.

Source: National Radio Company of Ukraine, 16 June, 2011
<http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=146704>

Ukraine, Slovakia improve local border traffic conditions

New Ukrainian-Slovak documents have been signed in Bratislava, where President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych was in June, 2011.

In particular, this is the agreement, which amends and supplements the previous agreement on local border traffic. Uninterrupted stay of citizens of Ukraine and Slovakia in the border areas of both states was prolonged from 30 to 90 days within 180 days; free registration of permits for local border traffic was introduced; and the period of consideration of citizens' applications for registration of the said permits was reduced from 60 to 30 days.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 17 June, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=224198>

President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych and Leader of China Hu Jintao sign joint declaration establishing strategic partnership between Ukraine and China

President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych and Leader of China Hu Jintao have signed Joint Declaration on the Establishment and Development of Strategic Partnership between Ukraine and China.

The document establishes strategic partnership relations between Ukraine and China, and defines basic principles

on which these relations are founded.

Both sides stress mutual support to state sovereignty and territorial integrity; respect for each side's chosen path development; mutual non-use of force or threat of force, economic or other pressure; intensification of interstate political dialogue at the top, high and other levels.

The Declaration also specifies the activities of the Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, priority areas of cooperation, cooperation within the United Nations, joint efforts to ensure peace, stability and security in the world etc.

Read more: ForUm, 20 June, 2011 - <http://en.for-ua.com/news/2011/06/20/161025.html>

Ukraine, Israel increase tourist flows by 130% after cancellation of visas

Tourist flows between Ukraine and Israel have increased by 130% after the cancellation of visas, Israeli Minister of Tourism Stas Misezhnikov said after the sixth meeting of the Ukrainian-Israeli intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation in Kyiv on 23 June, 2011.

"Tourism has soared after the cancellation of visas between Ukraine and Israel, having already increased by 130%. And this is not the limit, and a sign of this is a rise in the number of flights between the two countries and the fact that direct flights will be introduced from September between Kyiv and Eilat, Israeli famous resort on the Red Sea, and they will be conducted twice a week," said Mr. Misezhnikov.

Israel expects that following the cancellation of the visa regime (from 9 February, 2011), the influx of tourists from Ukraine will grow to 200,000 people per year.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 23 June, 2011
<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=224672>

48,000 foreigners trained in Ukraine

Ukraine is training 48,000 foreigners on contract. This was announced by Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine Dmytro Tabachnyk.

"We have more than 48,000 foreign contract students studying in Ukraine. What it gives is more than USD 100 million or over UAH 800 million annually only to the revenue budget of educational institutions," said Mr. Tabachnyk. Mr. Tabachnyk also reminded that in 2010, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine prepared an order allowing all universities to choose the language of instruction of foreigners. "I think this is an absolutely right step, which allows Ukraine to be a competitive player in higher education," the Minister noted.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 27 June, 2011 <http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=224932>

NEWS FROM MOLDOVA

Woman gets eleven years for procuring

A 32 years old woman was sentenced to 11 years in prison for procuring and trafficking in children, news agency Info-Prim Neo reports, quoting a communiqué from the Prosecutor General's Office.

Prosecutors of the Human Trafficking Combating Division said that in 2010 the woman rented an apartment in Chisinau

and hired a number of girls to provide sexual services for money. The services cost Lei 600 per hour (Lei 100 = USD 8.5708). Lei 400 of this sum was taken by the procurer. The woman was also convicted of procuring an underage girl.

Source: IPN, 31 May, 2011 - no link available

Less Moldovans reported to be working abroad

As many as 268,700 people were reported to be working abroad in the first quarter of year 2011, against 286,600 in the same period of the year 2010, according to data by the Moldovan National Statistics Bureau. Men account for 61.7 % of all those reported to be working or looking for a job abroad. Most of those who leave are from rural areas, those who remained without jobs or have low salaries; the quota of the people who left from rural settlements in the first quarter of year 2011 was 68.2 %.

Read more: Moldpres, 31 May, 2011- <http://portal.moldpres.md/default.asp?Lang=en&ID=153712>

Moldova-Romania joint border contact centre set up

Moldova and Romania inaugurated the Galati Joint Contact Centre that will assist the law enforcement bodies of the two states in combating irregular migration and cross-border crimes. An agreement in this respect was signed on 31 May, 2011 by Moldovan Minister of Internal Affairs Alexei Roibu and Romanian counterpart Constantin Traian Igas. Moldovan and Romanian policemen and border guards will work at the Galati Joint Contact Centre. The agreement between the two states is open for signing for Ukraine too, in order to carry out the initially planned trilateral format of the accord.

Source: Moldpres, 1 June, 2011 - no link available

Europe's crisis stirs unrest on its Eastern edge

Economic and political tremors from the financial crisis that struck affluent Western Europe are shaking the least prosperous edges of the Continent, raising the pressure on families and nations across Eastern Europe and the Balkans and fueling social unrest.

As migrant workers from Europe's periphery have lost jobs or seen their wages cut amid the downturn, the amount of cash they are sending back has dropped sharply. And jobless rates have soared as those out of work return to communities they had left in search of a better life.

Moldova, a former Soviet republic that is Europe's poorest country, has also been the most dependent on funds sent back by citizens working abroad - in the West as well as in Russia. In 2008, remittances hit a high of about USD 1.7 billion, or more than one quarter of the nation's gross domestic product.

After the downturn hit, inflows dropped precipitously. Last year, total remittances were about USD 1.2 billion in this nation of 4.3 million people, down more than 25% from the previous peak. Moldovan authorities are hopeful migrants' earnings will improve in 2011, but it could take years to bounce back completely.

"Migrants are earning less and remitting less," said Coordinator of the International Organization for Migration's migration and development programme in Moldova Ghenadie Cretu. "It has hit households and the state budget hard."

Read more: The Wall Street Journal, 1 June, 2011

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703784004576220292415000236.html>

Visa free travel to European Union by 2012 is an optimistic scenario

Visa free regime with European Union (EU) by 2012 is an optimistic scenario, the head of the EU Delegation to Moldova Dirk Schuebel told the daily "Adevarul" in an interview. The EU official said: "we should not speculate on this topic, but you have to fulfill every condition of the Action Plan. We must not create some false hope in the minds of people, but this does not mean that we have a ban on dreaming. This is an optimistic scenario, I'm not saying it won't happen, but I think it is an optimistic scenario."

Source: Adevarul, 6 June, 2011

http://www.adevarul.ro/moldova/actualitate/Ambasadorul_UE_la_Chisinau_-_Ridicarea_vizelor_in_2012-un_scenariu_optimist_0_494350620.html

United States will help Moldova with European integration

The United States supports democratic changes in Moldova and the republic's European aspirations, Senator John McCain said in Chisinau on 12 June, 2011. In Chisinau Senator met acting Moldovan President Marian Lupu, Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat and incumbent Chisinau mayor Dorin Chirtoaca.

At a briefing at the end of the visit the Senator said that the United States will bend efforts to support Moldova on issues of European integration as well as democratic reforms and the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

Read more: Interfax, 12 June, 2011 – no link available

Three persons stand trial for forging passports

The Moldovan Prosecutor General's Office sent to court the legal case opened against three persons who are accused of forging and holding official documents and of organizing irregular migration. According to a communiqué from the Moldovan Prosecutor General's Office, sufficient proofs were collected to prove that the three persons founded an organized criminal group with the aim of organizing the irregular migration of citizens to Russia on the basis of forged passports.

In 2007 – 2009, the members of the group recruited potential migrants, collected the necessary documents from them and forged Russian passports for them. Eighty persons were issued with forged passports. A document cost between EUR 1,000 and EUR 3,000.

The group was directed by a 44 year old woman from Chisinau, who headed the public association "Russian Community in Rybnitsa Town". Upon a search of her home, there were found and seized fake stamps and seals and official documents. The case is examined by the Centru district court. The three persons are tried outside prison.

Source: IPN, 10 June, 2011- no link available

Moldova, Georgia to cooperate in the border sector

The Moldovan Border Guard Service (BGS) and the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs signed a cooperation agreement on strengthening mutual cooperation and developing the relations in the border sector.

The Director General of the Moldovan BGS, Roman Revenco, and Georgian Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and

Head of the Border Police Zaza Gogava, signed the document in Chisinau on 13 June, 2011.

Roman Revenco said that the agreement includes provisions and procedures for constructive and efficient border cooperation between the two states. “The document will allow carrying out a large spectrum of activities, which will facilitate cooperation between the Moldovan and Georgian border authorities in preventing irregular border crossing, combating irregular migration and human trafficking at the state border,” Mr. Revenco said.

Source: EAP Community, 13 June, 2011

<http://www.easternpartnership.org/daily-news/2011-06-14/moldova-and-georgia-cooperate-border-protection>

Parliament of Moldova amends citizenship law

The Moldovan Parliament has introduced a number of amendments to the Citizenship Law. According to them, children born of foreign citizens in the Moldova territory shall not be automatically regarded as Republic of Moldova citizens, as used to be before. It is believed that this new rule should improve the position of those foreign citizens, whose native countries do not permit dual citizenship. To receive the Moldovan citizenship, the parents’ consent shall be necessary. Persons married to a Republic of Moldova national shall be acquiring the Moldovan citizenship through naturalization. The Law also stipulates that a foreign citizenship shall not serve the ground for denying persons the Moldova citizenship.

Source: Allmoldova, 10 June, 2011

<http://www.allmoldova.com/en/moldova-news/1249050571.html>

Sexual misconduct in Chisinau penitentiary, inmates, prison staff involved

“Jurnal de Chisinau” newspaper publishes an extensive article on sexual misconduct and other irregularities in the Chisinau penitentiary No13. According to inmates they face sexual abuse both from fellow detainees and prison staff. A detainee tells the paper a case of an inmate which got pregnant as a result of the abuse.

According to the article, administration of the penitentiary is well aware of the irregularities and has been involved in the sexual abuse cases.

Read more: Jurnal de Chisinau, 14 June, 2011

<http://www.jurnal.md/ro/news/-puscari-noastra-cuibusor-de-nebunii-scandal-sexual-206520/>

Number of domestic trafficking cases rise

The number of persons trafficked within the country increased by five between 2005 and 2010. 12% are cases of labour or sexual exploitation. The figures were presented by non-governmental organizations at a press club on June, 2011.

“Trafficking in humans doesn’t mean only sending them abroad. It only refers to cases of exploitation, which most often occur within the country”, said representative of International Organization for Migration in Moldova Tatiana Jardan.

The most likely victims are poor people from villages. The usual forms of exploitation are sexual services, agricultural labour, housework or forced begging. “Obviously, sexual exploitation is the most widespread, but the number of people exploited through labour is increasing”, said lawyer Tatiana Catana.

Mrs. Catana added that children were often trafficked for land works. Tatiana Catana explained that the Moldovan legislation punished children trafficking, but not their exploitation through labour. “There is a legislative gap, as we have no regulation on day labour...” said Mrs. Catana.

Source: IPN, 17 June, 2011 - no link available

Members of Salun human trafficking ring remain behind bars

Alexandru Covali, alias Salun, and other members of the group that he created, will remain in prison. In a communiqué, the Moldovan Prosecutor General's Office informs that the Supreme Court of Justice on 20 June, 2011 rejected the appeals of the convicts' lawyer, whereby asked quashing the Supreme Court of Justice's decision of 15 July, 2010 and retrying the case. There were invoked violations of the procedural rules.

The prosecutors proved that in 2001 – 2006, Alexandru Covali had headed a criminal organization that operated in Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. It directed a large procuring and human trafficking network. The victims were recruited in Moldova, mainly in the Transnistrian region. They were taken to homes in Chisinau municipality, where they provided sexual services. There were identified 24 young women who were involved in the scheme, 11 of whom underage. Two of the girls were from Ukraine.

Source: IPN, 20 June, 2011 - no link available

Israel cancels visa fee for Moldovans

Israel will facilitate the visa regime with Moldova and, as a first step, it decided to no longer charge fee for visa to Moldovan citizens. The statement has been provided at the meeting of Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova Iurie Leanca, with Israeli colleague, Avigdor Lieberman, in Tel Aviv.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, the parts considered the level of bilateral relations, supporting the cooperation consolidation, adoption of the Israeli experience in the national economy development, namely agriculture and health sector, as well as in energy efficiency.

Source: Infotag, 22 June, 2011 - no link available

Economy Institute forecasts 7% economic growth in 2011

The Moldovan Institute of Economy, Finance and Statistics (IEFS) has presented the most optimistic forecast of economic growth in Moldova in 2011 – 7%. The Ministry of Economy of Moldova forecasts the Gross domestic product within 4.8%, but Prime Minister of Moldova Vladimir Filat, International Monetary Fund, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – 5%; the World Bank – 4.2%.

Within the presentation of the study Tendencies in the Economy of Moldova, The Director of the IEFS, Alexander Stratan, said the growth is a consequence of structural reforms, foreign aid and remittances from abroad of the Moldovan citizens temporary employed abroad.

Mr. Stratan attached attention to exports growth outstripping the imports one, as well as of goods supplies to the European Union over the Commonwealth of Independent Countries.

Source: Infotag, 22 June, 2011 - no link available

New high level meeting on visa arrangements with European Union to take place in fall

A third meeting as part of the visa regime liberalization dialogue with the European Union (EU) will take place this fall.

The announcement was made by Prime Minister of Moldova Vlad Filat on his recent return from Brussels. The Moldovan Prime Minister said he was glad to hear the appreciations of European Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmstrom, who was impressed with the rate at which Moldova implemented the initial conditions of the negotiations for visa regime liberalization.

According to Mr. Filat, Mrs. Malmstrom saluted the first report on the progress of visa regime liberalization and said the document proved Moldova's intense efforts in this regard.

Vlad Filat added that Moldova reached a new level of relationship with the EU in the commercial and economic sector as well. The European Commission has already sent a draft agreement on strategic cooperation in the customs sector to the Chisinau authorities. "We will examine the document. After its signing, a concrete plan of actions will be developed. The agreement could be signed by the end of the year 2011. It will stipulate the technical equipment of these services and information exchange in this sector", mentioned Vlad Filat.

Source: IPN, 24 June, 2011 - no link available

Moldova receives upgrade in United States Trafficking in Persons Report

The United States Government upgraded Moldova to Tier 2 in its 2011 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report in recognition of the progress made. Before receiving the upgrade, Moldova was on Tier 2 Watch List and previously on Tier 2.

The 2011 TIP Report remarks that the Moldovan Government "does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so". The Moldovan Government has made progress over the past year in addressing the protection of victims and the prevention of trafficking. Specifically, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGO) reported that the Moldovan Government's ability to identify and provide care for victims improved; it increased the participation of NGOs in the investigative process, including special provisions for child trafficking victims.

Moldovan Government expanded the National Referral System, a programme lauded by NGOs and viewed as a model for other countries in the region.

Read more: The US Department of State Diplomacy in Action // the US State Department 2011 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report - <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164232.htm>

NEWS FROM BELARUS

Citizens of Qatar can visit Belarus without visas

Belarus has abolished entry, exit and transit visas for the citizens of the State of Qatar. Qatar nationals will no longer need visas if they stay in Belarus up to 30 days and enter the country via international checkpoints. The visa-free regime will be applied to the citizens of the State of Qatar who have valid passports or other equivalent travel documents issued by government bodies of Qatar.

Source: Belteleradiocompany, 7 June, 2011 - <http://www.tvr.by/eng/president.asp?id=49310>

Belarus grants refugee status to 830 people

As of 1 June, 2011, 830 people from 13 countries worldwide had refugee status in Belarus. Since 1997 when Belarus started granting refugee status, about 3,300 asylum seekers applied to migration services. The bulk of refugees come from the Non-Commonwealth of Independent States countries, mostly Afghanistan (588). The recognized refugees include citizens of Georgia (134), Tajikistan (32), Azerbaijan (29), Ethiopia (23), Palestine (9), Iran (8), India (2) and one from Armenia, Iraq, Cameroon, Liberia and Rwanda.

Source: Belta, 16 June, 2011 - <http://news.belta.by/en/print?id=637514>

Meeting of Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking held at United Nations headquarters

Further steps to strengthen coordination in combating human trafficking were discussed at a meeting of the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking. The meeting dedicated to the first anniversary of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which was adopted at the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly in July, 2010. The meeting participants expressed their commitment to continue work at the national, regional and international levels to protect victims of trafficking.

Source: Belta, 28 June, 2011 - <http://news.belta.by/en/print?id=640458>

Frontier guards of Belarus and European Union exchange experience in sphere of migration

On 20 June, 2011 in Minsk the frontier guards of Finland, Germany, Latvia, Slovakia and other countries discussed how to counteract irregular migration. During the cooperation of the state border committees of Belarus and European Union thousands of those who wanted to irregularly enter the territory of neighboring countries were arrested.

Source: Belteleradiocompany, 20 June, 2011 - <http://www.tvr.by/eng/society.asp?id=49998>