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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
(IOM)
THE CZECH REPUBLIC

PORTFOLIO OF IOM PRAGUE

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

□ ABOUT THE IOM

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951. It is an intergovernmental organisation with its main seat in Geneva, which currently associates 71 member-states plus 46 observers. IOM has been using its status of a legal entity and as a subject under the international law, it is vested with all privileges and immunities in pursuance of Article 1 (Paragraph 2 Letter j) of the Accord about the Privileges and Immunities of Specialist Organisations.

□ IOM ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR GLOBAL EVENTS

1956-57

In consequence to the developments in Hungary, IOM has assumed the responsibility for the migration of 180,000 Hungarian refugees from Austria and Yugoslavia.

1964

IOM has designed its 'growth through migration' programmes to promote economic and social progress in the developing countries in South America when technological skills are promoted through migration of trained people.

1968

IOM is organising resettlement of 40,000 Czechoslovak refugees from Austria.

1972

IOM assistance in the evacuation of Asians from Uganda and their new re-settlement.

1973

A special immigration programme helped over 31,000 people from Chile to leave for 50 host countries.

1974

IOM has launched its 'talents repatriation' (RQAN) programme within the framework of which Latin American professionals who were educated or gained work experience in

Europe were repatriated and reintegrated in their countries of origin.

1975

IOM has initiated a programme of resettlement of Indo-Chinese refugees and exiles which has been gradually extended to include the whole Southeast Asia.

1983

In Santiago de Chile, IOM founded its Centre of Information about Migration (CIMAL)

1990

Within the framework of the 'African talents repatriation' programme (RQAN), the existing programme was extended to include repatriation of African State nationals living in Europe and North America and their subsequent reintegration in their countries of origin.

1990

In consequence to the Iranian invasion of Kuwait, the UN charges the IOM to organise repatriation of stranded migrants in the Persian Gulf and 165,000 people were repatriated over four and a half months under the auspices of IOM.

1992

IOM has been charged with the organisation, logistics and medical aid in the former Yugoslavia.

1993

After the piece agreement was made in Mozambique, IOM was charged with organisation of and assistance in the repatriation of people driven away by the civil war.

1995

After the outbreak of the armed conflict in Chechnya, the IOM started evacuation of people at risk to the neighbouring safe countries.

1996

After the signing of the Dayton peace agreement, IOM was charged to co-ordinate all operations and logistics in the voluntary repatriations of refugees from Bosnia living outside the former Yugoslavia.

1997

IOM supports the implementation of the Guatemala Peace Agreement through its demobilisation and reintegration projects.

1999

IOM is in charge of the organisational, logistic and medical assistance within the framework of the humanitarian aid to Kosovo.

□ *MISSION AND FUNCTION OF THE IOM*

As an inter-governmental organisation, IOM has been collaborating with its partners from the international community in such a way, so that its helping hand is available in any place where migration caused some need of active assistance. As set forth in its Statute, IOM priorities are mainly as follows:

- putting in place the conditions for organised transfer of migrants for whom the existing options are not sufficient or of those who are unable to move without help, to countries suitable for this type of migration.
- managing organised transfer of refugees, exiles and other individuals in need of international migration services on behalf of whom IOM is in the position to enter into the
- necessary agreements with the countries in question including those which are to receive the migrants.
- upon request and in keeping with existing agreements between the IOM and the different countries, to render migration services such as recruitment, selection, medical examinations, placement, activities facilitating reception and integration, advisory services and other assistance falling under the competence of the IOM.
- upon request by the individual states, to render the desired migration services also in collaboration with other international organisations with the aim of assisting in the process of voluntary transfer of migrants including voluntary repatriation.
- to provide individual states, international and other organisations the optimum conditions for sharing views and experience and for mutual co-ordination of their efforts in addressing the problem of international migration.

In accomplishing its mission, IOM has collaborated with international organisations involved in issues of migration, both government and extra-government. In doing so, IOM has promoted mutual co-ordination of the relevant international activities. Such collaboration is done in mutual respect and with regard to the powers of the respective organisations.

□ *IOM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC*

On 15th October 1997, the Agreement about the co-operation between the Czech Republic and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was signed in Prague. The Parliament of the Czech Republic has voiced its approval of the Agreement and the President of the Republic ratified it. The Agreement came into force on 1st November 1998 and it was published under item No. 308/1998 of the Coll.

IOM Prague aims to implement preferentially those migration programs which are of current interest for the Czech Republic, such as:

- repatriation programs of migrants
 - information programs focused on different aspects of migration
 - advisory programs and technical co-operation programs in the field of migration
 - programs in the area of aid to migrating refugees, exiles, homeless people and other individuals in need, both in their native country and the country of their stay.
1. In 1999, IOM Prague have participated in the Return of Qualified Nationals to Africa (RQAN) program, created specifically for African nationals who studied or worked in Europe and desired to return and use their expertise and skills in Africa.
 2. Jointly with the Refugee Facilities Administration and the Department for Refugees of the Ministry of the Interior, and in collaboration with the Czech Red Cross, UNHCR, and other entities, IOM Prague has organised voluntary repatriation in pursuance of the General Programme of Repatriation from Central European Countries.
 3. In pursuance of a request by the US Administration, IOM Prague implemented one-year project on 'Information Campaign on the Prevention of Trafficking in Women'.
 4. In relation with the situation in Kosovo, IOM Prague has participated on the Medevac program, jointly with other partners, in the evacuation and repatriation of Kosovo citizens. Besides these projects and program activities, IOM Prague staff dealt with the issue of the so-called stranded migrants within the scope of its humanitarian activities.
 5. In pursuance of a request by the European Commission and the governments of The Netherlands, Finland and Belgium, IOM implements currently its one year regional project on assisted return of denied asylum seekers from The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania currently residing in The Netherlands, Belgium and Finland.
 6. IOM Prague prepared a national General Voluntary Return Project on the request of the Czech Ministry of Interior, which would facilitate a voluntary return of denied or withdrawn asylum applicants from the Indian Sub-continent.
 7. IOM Prague focused closely on the humanitarian project on Stranded Migrants.

2. PROJECTS

□ INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

Project Category:	Other Migration Activities
Project Sub-Category:	Migration Information Campaign
Executing Agency:	International Organisation for Migration
Geographical Coverage:	The Czech Republic
Project Management Site:	IOM Prague
Duration:	Twelve months (April 1999 – March 2000)
Donor:	State Department of the Government of the United States of America (PRM)

Background and history

In May 1995, IOM issued a report called "Trafficking and Prostitution: The Growing Exploitation of Migrant Women from Central and Eastern Europe". This report found that trafficking in women from Central and Eastern European Countries to Western Europe was increasing at an alarming rate. As one of many possible examples, in 1994, in the Netherlands alone, nearly 70 per cent of trafficked women were from CEE countries. The La Strada anti-trafficking programme's latest report, published in 1999, confirmed that the majority of their clients in the Netherlands still come from the CEE countries, with the Czech Republic being the single most important source country for victims of trafficking.

The IOM reports listed a number of recommendations that could be implemented by all concerned countries. Nevertheless, the most effective measures were seen to be those taken in the country of origin. These included setting up information campaigns which would warn about the nature of trafficking, targeting young women and the general public, and offering them the basis for a realistic migration decision.

IOM has conducted a number of studies in recent years, which suggest that a high proportion of the women trafficked for sexual exploitation from the CEE region originate from the Czech Republic. See for example our latest report on the situation in Germany: "Trafficking in Women from Central and Eastern Europe: Focus on Germany", in "Migration in Central Eastern Europe: 1999 Review", IOM-ICMPD, 1999 (See also "Trafficking in Women for Sexual Exploitation in Austria", IOM, 1996).

This form of trafficking also involves the recruitment of women from Eastern European countries especially from Ukraine and Bulgaria to the Czech Republic. Thus countries the Czech

Republic is both a sending and destination country for trafficked women. And the Czech Republic, like other Central European countries is also being increasingly used as a transit route for traffickers bringing women from developing countries to Western Europe.

IOM's studies reports have assessed a number of recommendations that could be implemented by all concerned countries. Among these the most effective measures are likely to be prevention measures taken in the country of origin. One of such measures is information campaign warning about the issue and the nature of trafficking, targeting young women, general public and respective authorities. IOM has presented its comprehensive and concrete approach to trafficking. IOM initiatives in this respect included technical co-operation and capacity building, research, return and reintegration assistance and information campaigns.

As one of the objectives of the last European Commission Communication for "Further Actions in the Fight Against Trafficking in Women", *the message to the candidate countries, in the context of the accession process, of the necessity to take the national measures and to co-operate with the EU already now on the issue*, has been transformed into a close co-operation with local authorities in the Czech Republic.

The Czech Authorities co-operated closely with IOM in its anti-trafficking efforts most notably through their participation in the European Conference on "Trafficking in Women" organised by IOM in co-operation with the European Commission and in several IOM studies on this subject. The Czech Republic is also strengthening its efforts for the attainment of EU standards particularly in the field of Justice and Home Affairs.

Scope of the project

The main aim of the Czech Information Campaign was to increase understanding of the dangers and consequences of trafficking among Czech women who might consider finding a job abroad. Another focus of the campaign was directed at the respective local authorities in an effort to discourage and prevent trafficking in women from and through the Czech Republic.

Duration of the project

The project started in April 1, 1999 and its dissemination phase was extended until June 30, 2000.

Partners

IOM Prague selected a group of close partners for the implementation process, such as the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic (Crime Prevention Dept. and Unit for Combating Organised Crime of the Police CR); the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic; La Strada o.p.s. CR, a non-governmental organisation. Many other partners from media (Czech Television, Radio stations, daily newspapers and magazines...) also played a substantial role in the dissemination process.

Brief description

The project consisted of the research and preparatory stage, and the stage of dissemination that was to provide objective and credible information to selected target groups throughout a number of mass and informal media.

Apart from raised awareness in both of the general and professional public, it was expected that an overall mechanism among Czech governmental officials, consular officers and Czech non-governmental organisations would be established in order to increase their awareness of the issue, strengthen their institutional capacity to counter trafficking and promote the sustainability of the project's activities.

Achievements

Among the main achievements of the campaign we shall include the following outputs:

- ❑ Excellent co-operation established with Czech governmental and non governmental institutions, local autonomies and also with partners from Czech media throughout the implementation of the Project has allowed to IOM Prague to extend its activities beyond those originally proposed. The Project has been officially finished at March 2000. However even until June 2000 will maintained the Information Campaign as started in mass media.
- ❑ Of crucial importance to the campaign goals were the research, surveys and media analysis: based on their results and proposed recommendations, and based on the on-going consultations / evaluation with and by the implementing partners detailed strategy, action plan and campaign materials were developed and repeatedly tested to ensure their impact on the target groups.
- ❑ The campaign pattern has a great potential to serve IOM as a regional module that could be used in other countries provided that the surveys results would speak for its full usage / implementation. The Czech campaign pattern is currently being used in Bulgarian anti-trafficking campaign and its usage is considered for currently prepared anti-trafficking campaign in Slovakia. The experiences from the Czech Campaign were also applied to campaign strategy planning in Hungary and are currently being used in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the same purpose. Thanks to the identical visuals of the anti-trafficking campaigns high synergy effect can be expected regionally.
- ❑ Press advertisements prepared in co-operation with advertising agency *Fabrika* was nominated for the Czech prestigious prize of the advertising agencies, *Louskáček*, awarded annually by Art Directors Club.
- ❑ All the monitored Czech media (newspapers, magazines, journals, four TV channels, and main radio stations – both on national and regional level) covered the issue of trafficking. Profound change could be noted in scale, quantity and quality of the coverage: short articles describing in brief individual cases without any context were replaced by analytical articles covering cases in depth, reflecting related legal aspects as well as providing practical information regarding prevention. Articles on the trafficking issue were by far more numerous than any time before the campaign was launched.

- One of the most important outputs of the Project is its assured sustainability. Thanks to the established co-operation with the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the issue of trafficking will become a part of school curriculum. The Czech Ministry of Interior (MOI), namely the Crime Prevention Department established a regular "Round table" meetings at which the representatives from different governmental and non-governmental bodies will seek a systematic solution to the problems associated with prostitution and respective issues. MOI expressed the interest in continuing with the established co-operation with IOM Prague and invited its representative to contribute with their knowledge and experience in migration and trafficking issues.
- Full assessment of the impact of the info campaign will only be possible on a long-term basis when all the information disseminated by the program will have a sufficient time to act and modify common perceptions of trafficking. Such an assessment will need to gather and analyse a number of migration indicators such as number of young women assisted by NGOs and other assistance structures abroad, numbers of apprehended trafficked women, etc. This assessment would need to be carried out with the support of Interior Ministry officials and NGOs in countries of destination, Government officials in the Czech Republic and representatives (embassies) of countries of destination in the Czech Republic. Ideally, such an assessment should be undertaken 6-12 months after the completion of the campaign, with further financial support from donors."
- Based on the existing evaluation results, IOM Prague and its implementing partners came to the conclusion that the information campaign as a main prevention tool in combating efforts should have further continuity. The campaign revealed a necessity of follow-up projects aiming especially at the training of professionals, such as educators, teachers, police, or journalists and in building up a scheme for further assistance to the victims of trafficking.

Reporting

The following reports were conducted:

1. Research Reports (TCC- Vienna: Profile of the victims of trafficking from the Czech Republic, STEM, IVVM: background studies for the Information Campaign and evaluation research of the immediate impact)
2. Monthly Reports of Media Monitoring
3. Midterm Report for the Donor
4. Final Report for the Donor
5. Two press releases (launching and evaluation event)

- *RETURN AND COUNCELLING TO DENIED ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA AND ROMANIA CURRENTLY RESIDING IN THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND FINLAND*

Project Category:	Assisted Returns
Project Sub-Category:	Return of Migrants
Executing Agency:	International Organisation for Migration
Geographical Coverage:	The Czech Republic, Belgium, Finland, Hungary, The Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia
Project Management Site:	IOM Regional Office for Northern and Western Europe and the Baltic States
Target Groups:	780 Czech, Romanian and Slovakian Asylum seekers currently living in Belgium, Finland and The Netherlands
Duration:	Twelve months (2000)
Donor:	European Commission with the contribution of the Governments of Finland, Belgium and The Netherlands

Background and history

The above project, initiated by the European Commission and the three named EU countries began in January 2000. The background to the project is the high numbers of asylum seekers from former Eastern Europe arriving to the EU seeking asylum. Whilst all effort is being made to process their applications and to reach a satisfactory decision about asylum status for those who have a clear claim, there are large numbers of asylum seekers, namely of Roma origin, who may not qualify for asylum and are thus left in a position to either return back to country of origin or stay illegally. The project enables them to return voluntarily back to countries of origin with assistance from IOM in both of the host country and the country of origin. The project addresses one of the key questions of European-wide migration at present, and attempts to map out the complex question of migratory patterns from the countries of former Eastern Europe prior to accession and enlargement. The project draws on IOM's expertise with humanitarian help offered to migrants, and on its status as a neutral inter-governmental organisation.

Scope of the project

The scope of the project is to cover three EU host countries, Belgium, Finland and The Netherlands, and three countries of origin, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. The total number of persons who will benefit from the programme is 780.

Duration of the project

The project started in January 2000 for the duration of one year, with the first preparatory phase, from January to April, the second phase of returns and survey, from May to August, and the third phase, monitoring training and capacity building from September to December. Some of the phases clearly overlap or run concurrently.

Donors

The donors are the European Commission (61% of the funding) and the three named EU countries (39% of the funding). It is expected that the countries of origin will contribute in kind.

Partners in the Czech Republic

The partners to the project are represented by:

Governmental:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry of Education, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, Inter-ministerial Commission for Roma Community Affairs
Non-Governmental:	Czech Helsinki Committee, Prague, Helsinki Citizen Assembly – Roma Section, Brno, European Roma Right Centrum, Prague, Trialog, Brno, Drom – Roma Centre, Brno, Association of Moravian Roma, Gremium of Regional Roma Association, Foundation for Support to Local Authorities, Olomouc

Brief Description

The project offers assistance and counselling to those asylum seekers from the three named countries of origin who wish to return back there voluntarily. The condition is that they have been in the host country for minimum of three months and are not illegal migrants. IOM staff in host countries in immigration centres distributes information about the programme. Upon making a decision to return, the asylum seeker will be asked to fill a questionnaire stating their decision to return, the preferred date of return, their destination and basic information about their needs and expected assistance needed from IOM staff in countries of origin. The questionnaires also contain a signed section that the returnee agrees to be visited within three months of arrival back to their home country by IOM monitoring staff.

IOM in the host country equips the returnee with IOM bag and information about being met at the airport upon arrival. The basic information from the questionnaires is transmitted to IOM staff in countries of origin. Upon arrival, the returnee is met by IOM staff and assisted with travel to their home destination, usually the place of last permanent residence. The IOM staff assists with any problems arising from travel, baggage or passport control.

Key emphasis of such returns is put to the aspect of voluntariness and the fact that such arranged returns are at the cost of the donor, will provide the migrant with dignity of the return, in contrary to the expulsion or extradition procedures.

The returnee, if requested, receives information about their right to claim social benefits, about where to turn for advice and assistance when placing their children back to school or when seeking work. It appears that housing is the key area of concern and often a source of genuine problems. IOM can assist by providing information about temporary accommodation and give the returnee list of further contacts (state and non-state institutions and organisations) in the returnee's place of domicile.

Within this period of time, the project also includes an independent survey of the migratory conditions and migratory potential in the countries of origin, as well as of the socio-economic profile of the potential migrant. The survey acts as a basis for developing further strategies for strengthening of local communication and networking which may be helpful for reintegration of the migrants as well as for long-term social cohesion.

After approximately three months since the arrival of the returnees, the IOM staff will visit them in their homes and conduct a brief survey of the conditions that the returnees have met after their arrival, the success of the assistance they have received, and the success or shortcomings of the reintegration strategies available in their locality.

The final stage of the project, running concurrently with the monitoring and networking, is running a series of training sessions, seminars, workshops, focus groups, etc, that would involve the local community in partnership activities in order to strengthen communication networks, communication channels and contribute towards greater local cohesiveness. It is expected that more long-term strategies for integration and local as well as national capacity building will be one of the results of the project.

The project will culminate in the final report, evaluating the activities which the project involved itself in, and will present the results of the various stages of the entire programme.

Achievements

The outcomes and outputs of the project are:

- ☐ survey of the migratory potential in countries of origin, socio-economic situation of the regions with greatest migratory potential and the socio-economic profile of the potential migrant;
- ☐ documentation about the returns and problems encountered during the assistance;
- ☐ documentation about migratory experiences of the returnees;
- ☐ follow up information about the successes or failures of reintegration of the returnees;
- ☐ training sessions, networking, partnerships on the local and national level;
- ☐ training materials and manuals;
- ☐ data base of national and local governmental and non-governmental organisations involved with migrants;

- ❑ data base of specifically Roma NGO's, civic associations and local initiatives;
- ❑ brochures and information sheets/ information bulletins including practical guides to networking, partnership building as well as to claiming one's civic rights and one's social rights;
- ❑ innovative approaches to social tension, social cohesion and social integration;
- ❑ Contribution to building more tolerant civil society.
- ❑ The project objectives have been slightly modified during the first period of the project. The project is a significant pilot study indicating the ways of how best to approach current issues of migration that lies outside of the traditional migratory patterns up to now. The project opens way of investigating how realistic is the attempt to curb migration and/or prevent irregular migration. The project has great potential and innovative value in contributing to further policy planning at the EU level.

Reporting

The project has four mid-term Progress reports and one Final Report. A significant part of the project's reporting are series of meetings with a steering committee – an advisory body composed of the representatives of the EU host countries (usually ambassadors) and representatives of the relevant ministries in countries of origin (usually deputy ministers). There was, so far, one press release by IOM Prague, three contributions at international conferences mentioning the project (Budapest, Prague, and London), and radio reporting, currently under preparation.

❑ OUT OF KOSOVO REGISTRATION PROJECT

On October 20, 1999, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which IOM accepted the responsibility for the registration of Kosovars residing outside of Kosovo for the upcoming municipal elections.

The IOM project Out-of-Kosovo Registration (OKR) is dealing exclusively with the voter registration of habitual residents of Kosovo who left Kosovo on or after 01.01.1998, and are currently residing outside of Kosovo. The registration period started on April 26, 2000 and concludes on July 15, 2000. All voter registration forms must be received during this time period. In order to coordinate registration activities (organize, coordinate and supervise the mail-in and mail-out of registration material to and from voters, receive the complete applications, organize the transfer of all collected data to the Joint Registration Task Force composed of UNMIK and OSCE in Pristine) in the various countries where Kosovars currently reside, and in our regional offices, an IOM Coordination Office has been set up in Vienna. IOM/OKR is distributing

registration forms and instructions to host governments and Kosovar organization throughout countries, which host Kosovars.

IOM Prague interacts with and assists IOM/OKR Vienna in the continuing search and selection of the governmental and non- governmental organizations necessary for the strategic distribution of voter registration forms and the various supporting documents that accompany them. IOM Prague follows through by keeping ourselves available to answer the numerous questions regarding the Out-of-Kosovo Registration, looks after keeping organizations informed. IOM Prague also distributes and disseminates OKR printed materials, in addition to maintain a constant search for new contacts that will enable it to reach more potential voters.

Existing distributors:

- Administration of Refugee facilities
- Ministry of Interior, dept. of refugees
- UNHCR
- Foreign Police, dept. Foreigner and Border police, possibility of dissemination is in preparatory stage
- OPU/Organization for Aid to Refugees/
- Czech Catholic Charity, Brno
- SOZE Brno, NGO
- Person in Need, NGO
- Kosovar journalist working for "Koha Ditore" and "Zeri" in CZ,
- Kosovar's Center
- The Central Office of Muslim Religions
- Private persons

□ *GENERAL VOLUNTARY PROGRAM FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC*

Project Category:	Humanitarian Migration
Project Sub-Category:	Return of Migrants
Executing Agency:	International Organisation for Migration
Geographical Coverage:	The Czech Republic
Project Management Site:	IOM Prague
Target Groups:	600 of irregular migrants in the Czech Republic who wish for voluntary return to their countries of origin
Duration:	Twelve months (2000-2001)
Donor:	Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic

Background and history

The project aims to assist the Government of the Czech Republic in return of irregular migrants from the Czech to their countries of origin. At the same time the projects shall provide the Czech government with cheaper, more effective, complex and faster solution for repatriation but also a more humane alternative for possible cases of expulsion.

The project, a continuation of activities carried out exclusively by IOM in various countries, offers irregular migrants from Asia who are stranded in the Czech Republic, a means of returning home safely and with dignity. This project aims to continue providing assistance to some 600 migrants through an integrated approach of direct counselling, return transportation assistance and information campaigns. The project will seek to lessen the burden, which the presence of irregular migrants represents for countries of transit and destination, as well as reduce future flows of this nature and the potential irregular migration to Western European countries. The project will assist individuals and small groups, including victims of trafficking.

Irregular migrants in the Czech Republic as a target group for the purpose of this project could be defined as those who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin and were either

- denied the asylum status; or
- withdrawn from the asylum procedure;

IOM Prague proposes to carry out the General Voluntary Return Programme in the Czech Republic by providing the means for a dignified return to some 600 denied or withdrawn asylum seekers.

Scope of the Project

- ❑ To facilitate the assisted voluntary return of irregular migrants, denied or withdrawn asylum seekers, from certain countries in Indian Sub-continent, who can not afford, nor have other possibilities to organise their own return home.
- ❑ To provide such migrants with all necessary and relevant information regarding the Project

Partners:

The main partners in this project would be the donor, Ministry of Interior of The Czech Republic in general, and its relevant departments in particular, such as Refugee Facilities Administration and Department for Refugees.

Project Description

Over a period of twelve months, IOM will assist in the return of some 600 irregular migrants originating from Asia, in particular from Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh. The idea is to provide special service to the government to lessen its burden in the financial, organisational and logistical respect and in the same time to take the migrants interest into consideration as much as possible, based strictly on their voluntary wish.

Among the main activities of such project one must incorporate the following:

1. Transit assistance provided by IOM:

- arrangement of onward booking and ticketing,
- provision of transit assistance,
- visa procurement;
- booking of overnight lodging for transiting returnees;
- meeting at airport and escorting to accommodations carried out by IOM's offices;
- accompanying from accommodations to airport;
- payment of lodging invoices;
- departure assistance at airport;
- co-ordination with local authorities;
- co-ordination with sending Missions.

2. Reception activities

IOM Prague shall establish local mechanisms for reception with local IOM offices and other humanitarian organisations. Such mechanism could be offered to the counterpart upon request

3. Operational activities

- ❑ IOM will provide the Donor and Partners with technical and operational expertise in project administration, with co-ordination with involved Governments, Agencies and NGO's.
- ❑ Arrangements of possible cheapest airfare guaranteed by IOM special contracts with selected airlines companies or using advantages of IOM contractual partners from travel agents;
- ❑ Assistance in visa arrangements following by the request by the governmental authorities;
- ❑ Assistance in valid travel documents arrangements following by the request by the governmental authorities;
- ❑ Dissemination of information to the migrants on the availability of the return program in the refugee facilities, Foreign police stations, on border-crossings and any other possible recommended destinations agreed upon by both of the parties;
- ❑ Pre-departure counselling to set awareness of legal and social implications of irregular migration in situ in refugee facilities;
- ❑ Pre-departure, transit, upon arrival assistance at the airports as specified in paragraph 4, provided by IOM staff in particular destinations;
- ❑ Monitoring mechanism of return in transit and arrival destinations provided by IOM missions where possible and reporting such results to the Czech government;
- ❑ Setting up possible networking with local non-profit organisations in countries of origin to assist with reintegration upon arrival.

Achievements

The program aims to achieve the following:

- To build up an effective and economic system of returns to the long distance destination.
- To encourage irregular migrants to seek the opportunity of returning to their country of origin in a human and dignified manner.
- To establish control mechanism for monitoring return as successful return.

Reporting

IOM will provide progressive reports to the donor according to mutually agreed criteria and time tables. Besides the overall reporting, special focus on the measurements of the return as a successful return shall be provided.

□ *SITUATION OF STRANDED MIGRANTS: HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITY*

In connection with the existing Voluntary Returns Programme, IOM Prague office faced a massive wave of migrants from Eastern Europe, namely from the territory of the former Soviet Union who have approached IOM Prague in search of assistance in their repatriation.

These migrants are either those who have been denied asylum or those who have stopped the asylum procedure and failed to participate in the repatriation programme of the Ministry of the Interior or they belong to the group of the so-called stranded migrants or have been taken to the territory of the Czech Republic as victims of the trafficking. All these people express their desire to return to their country of origin. These people include also those who were originally heading further West or those who were returned within the framework of readmission agreements from the neighbouring countries.

DEFINITION OF PROBLEMS

The most elementary problems of migrants who have approached IOM Prague with a call for help in their return to their country of origin, include mainly:

- a) absence of valid travel documents,
- b) lack of money,
- c) low understanding of their legal status,
- d) language barriers and psychological traumas,
- e) absence of an embassy or consulate in the Czech Republic,
- f) Schengen visas,
- g) absence of a regular contact address,
- h) impossibility of legalisation of the individual,
- i) endangered groups and extreme situations such as high pregnancy, old age, disease, victims of organised crime, etc.

These people approach IOM Prague since they fail to hold valid travel documents and due to various technical reasons are unable to obtain them themselves. These technical problems often result from the fact that their embassy or consulate are located outside the Czech Republic and, is usually located in an EU country (Bonn, Vienna, and Paris) and in pursuance of the Schengen Agreement, these people are not able to visit their consular office.

Another technical problem in terms of their independent participation in obtaining the substitute document is the fact that these people have no permanent residential address where to direct their personal correspondence. They are in a situation where a legal solution is for them difficult to find. Some opt for the illegal solution, meaning that they stay in the country illegally, participate in crime against property or attempt to cross international border illegally or some seek the refugee status. That is an alarming situation for any country.

CONSULAR MATTERS

The IOM Prague acts as a intermediates in obtaining the substitute travel document only for those who fail to have their consular office on the territory of the Czech Republic. Under the usual consular offices procedure, a substitute travel document is issued which is of limited validity in time and, moreover, it is valid only for the return trip to the native country. Thus, jointly with other IOM missions abroad, IOM Prague arranges the issue of such substitute documents.

Since these people are often without any money, the cost of the return trip is likely to be the main obstacle for them to return home. These costs include not only the fare but also the cost of the transit visas which are necessary in the case of substitute travel documents plus the traveller sureties required for safe passage through the transit countries plus the fee collected by the consular office for the issue of the substitute travel document and, last but not least, the fees payable for the exit visa from the Czech Republic.

THE IOM PROCEDURE

IOM Prague is able to deal with all consular matters over a fairly short period of time. After the registration of the migrant as an IOM client, which includes an analysis of the situation and advisory service, all conducted in Russian, the person in question immediately contacts his/her family in his/her native country, who will have dispatched him/her within twenty minutes through the Western Union bank the minimum money necessary for the travel document. Indeed, this applies only to those who are able to get hold of that money. Then, IOM Prague sends via e-mail to its colleagues in the respective mission its request for the document to be obtained by the mission in question or, IOM Prague sends a direct application by facsimile to the consular office. Later, the questionnaire in Russian is dispatched by IOM together with the photos and a copy of the identification documents. Over a couple of days, the substitute travel document is ready. At that moment, the migrant is assisted by us in the procurement of the transit visa across the Slovak territory and, when desirable, also in the logistics of his/her trip.

TEMPORARY ASYLUM

The vast majority of people who are waiting for their substitute travel documents have no accommodation, often, these people are on the run from various organised crime groups and have to stay in hiding. In addition to the accommodation problem, they tend to be hungry, are mentally weakened, confused and, actually, they fail to have any legal protection whatsoever. IOM Prague office initiated a round-table meeting with the representatives of the different charity organisations such as the UNHCR, Charita, Organisation for the Help to Refugees, Salvation Army, Czech Helsinki Committee, Czech Red Cross, City Centre of Social Services and Prevention, and SOZE, and a pattern of assistance to these people has been developed. All

partners have expressed their utmost support in dealing with the situation of stranded migrants and, within the framework of their respective activities, they offered the mandates of their organisations to be extended to include the ad hoc assistance to stranded people.

The main issues discussed within the framework of that co-operation include the availability of temporary asylum for those in the direst need, in pursuance of selection by the IOM Prague and for the shortest possible time, the disbursement of some allowance for food and providing the elementary hygiene standard. Besides, for example the Salvation Army offered their assistance also with respect to providing the food for the trip and in finding shelter and social advice after the return in the native country so that to make the return successful.

The fact that the temporary asylum with charities made available for the shortest necessary time can serve as the contact address is another benefit of the measure.

PROBLEMS IN LEAVING THE CZECH REPUBLIC

IOM Prague has been helping the migrants in legalising their status by mediating in the procurement of their valid travel document, allowing them thus to leave the Czech Republic in the legal way and, above all, to return to their native country. There is no doubt that for the migrants discussed here, obtaining the travel document solely on their own is an extremely difficult challenge. Likewise, there can be no doubt about the way in which they would deal with their hopeless situation if they had no travel document.

Both categories of migrants, whether those who were served the administration ruling about being banned from the Czech Republic and are obliged to leave the country or those who desire to return to their native country on their own and voluntarily, are facing further problems. At the moment they have all formalities at the territory of the Czech Republic settled, they face the problem of transit.

No such migrant is free to transit the Polish territory on the strength of the substitute travel document. No man desiring to transit Poland holding the substitute travel document is allowed to enter the Polish territory although s/he is holding a valid travel document, a valid exit visa free of any ruling about forced expulsion, the transit surety and a valid ticket as far as his/her native country, although the one and only official bus line between Prague and Kisinau is crossing Polish territory. The situation is explained by the fact that the Polish law stipulates that the repatriation is to be effected along the shortest possible route. According to the Polish officials, the shortest possible route is meant to be that across the Slovak territory.

The ban on travel over Poland and Slovakia applies also for those who, while holding a regular rather than the substitute passport, have the passport stamped indicating that they had been administratively expelled from the Czech Republic or had attempted to cross international border illegally.

It is in the above situations that a migrant having to or desiring to return to his country of origin by land becomes a migrant stranded on the territory of the Czech Republic. Under the existing laws, the air route appears to be the only feasible solution. As far as concerning clients of Moldavian nationality, who account for the majority in this group, IOM Prague sought all possible ways how to tackle the issue. Besides the above aid in arranging the consular matters,

IOM Prague presented the President of the Air Moldova State Air Company with a draft agreement about the reduction in the fare for the migrants from Moldova in humanitarian terms. The representatives of the Moldova Air company signed such exclusive agreement with IOM Prague on June 9th, 2000. This would enable the migrants to travel directly and at the lowest costs to their country of origin only with a document issued by the Czech Foreign police. This means that all the arrangements, counting from the travel documents from diplomatic missions up to the transit visa would not be necessary.

EVALUATION

IOM Prague has responded in a flexible and sound way to the situation of stranded migrants and the Organisation has been helping effectively where there is no other alternative solution at the moment. Within the framework of these activities, IOM Prague has designed a registration process, which is designed to eliminate abuse of the system by the migrants. The lessons learned have indicated mainly the following:

- a) the absence of consular offices at the territory of the Czech Republic, [in the case of states] with which the Czech Republic has imposed no visa duty, means a virtually unlimited number of refugees and subsequently stranded migrants,
- b) the impossibility of transit passage through Polish and/or Slovak territory, as outlined above,
- c) the travel ID card as issued by the Foreigner and Border Police of the Czech Republic (CPT) is not held to be an international travel document, and it is valid only for leaving the Czech Republic.
- d) criminal liability for thwarting the execution of an administration ruling about the ban on residence in the Czech Republic, without the migrants being allowed to leave and hence to observe the ruling in question.
- e) as for those who have been served the administrative expulsion ruling it is impossible to leave the country, it is highly probable that these people will either become criminal and are expelled under a court ruling or will seek asylum or attempt to cross the border illegally
- f) air route as the only solution

SOLUTION SCHEME

Considering that in the given situation the institutional pattern can be effective as a long-term solution only if given support from all parties involved, whether these are non-government charity organisations or local administration bodies. In the given situation, it is advisable to approach also public administration agencies and to initiate discussions at the supreme level, both within the Czech Republic and internationally.

IOM Prague has identified the main obstacles for the successful return of the migrant and it has been permanently seeking new ways how to design an efficient mechanism for different alternatives of the voluntary return. These measures will assume the existence of a strong co-operation with the potential implementation partners.

Since the air-route seems to be of the least burden for the migrant himself and even for the particular countries (Czech Republic and transiting countries), represents the Agreement on co-operation between IOM and Air Moldova the greatest shift in helping the stranded migrants. Such Agreement allows IOM to facilitate the cheapest option for the returns itself, much cheaper

than ground transportation, adding extra benefits with luggage allowance. This Agreement together with the system of temporary accommodation provided by our partners from non-governmental side provides the migrant with a dignified and safe manner of his/her return.

SAMPLE OF CASES

1.

In March 2000, IOM Prague was approached by a Moldavian citizen with a valid regular passport plus a valid bus ticket Prague -Bratislava - Budapest – Kurtici. The migrant had his passport stamped forbidding him entry into the Federal Republic Germany (due to a failed attempt at illegal crossing of the border) and into the Polish Republic. Moreover, the migrant was banned from entering the Slovak Republic, expelled from the Czech Republic in the administrative procedure and was obliged to leave the country. The migrant was interested in the possibility of transiting to Moldavia by air via Bucharest, since the air ticket was cheaper by CZK 2,000. --. From the Romanian consul in the Czech Republic, IOM received information that to enter the Romanian territory, the man in question needs a letter of invitation plus the transit guaranty. Procuring the aforesaid proved beyond the capability of the migrant. In early April 2000, IOM Prague was contacted by a judge of one of the Prague District Courts who asked whether the migrant in question had ever been in charge of the IOM, as mentioned by him and the judge was advised about the migrant's situation. The telephone conversation ended by the judge observing that the migrant is likely to be declared free of criminal responsibility as he no longer stayed at the territory of the Czech Republic voluntarily and given the hopeless nature of his situation.

2.

In March 2000, a Moldavian citizen without any travel documents whatsoever approached the IOM Prague office. He held a confirmation from the Foreigner Police of the Czech Republic about a loss of the travel document plus the record from the Local Police Department concerning the theft of documents. The migrant arrived in the Czech Republic with a voucher as a tourist. Via Western Union, he arranged for USD 200 to be sent to him from home to cover the cost of his return trip. IOM Prague office mediated in the issue of the substitute document of the Foreigner Police, the exit visa and the transit visa to cross the Slovak Republic. He was purchased a train ticket from Prague to Kisinau and IOM office worker accompanied him to the railway station. Three days after he had left, the migrant returned to the IOM Prague office reporting that he has been returned from the Ukrainian border. The only travel document he was holding was the Czech travel ID document and hence was taken for a Czech national and as on such, the visa duty was applicable on him. Therefore, he asked his family for extra USD 300 and after a new exit visa was issued for him, he left to Moldavia by air.

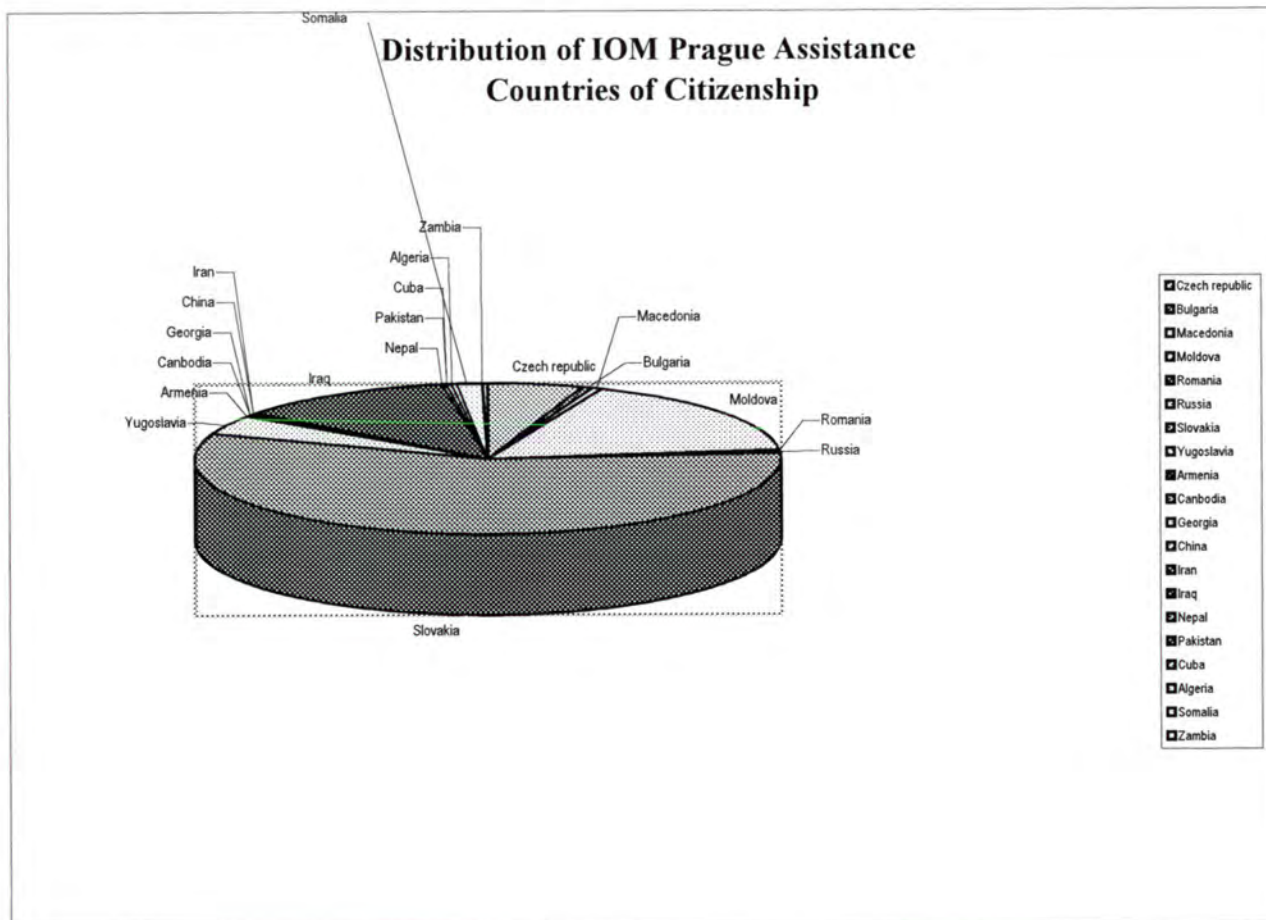
IOM PRAGUE OPERATIONAL
ACTIVITIES TILL JUNE 2000

Country of Citizenship	Consular matters concluded	Pending	Total consular matters	Movements - Repatriation	Pending	Total Repatriation	Concluded movments under MEDEVAC prgram	Pending	Total MEDEVAC	Concluded transit assistance	Pending	Total transit assistance	Total IOM Prague Assistance
Czech republic	6		6			0			0	29		29	35
Bulgaria	3		3			0			0			0	3
Macedonia	1		1	2		2			0			0	3
Moldova	97	3	100	9	1	10			0			0	110
Romania	3		3			0			0			0	3
Russia		2	2			0			0			0	2
Slovakia	1		1			0			0	354	14	368	369
Yugoslavia			0	16	1	17	4	6	10			0	27
Europe	111	5	116	27	2	29	4	6	10	383	14	397	552
Armenia			0		1	1						0	1
Canbodia			0	1		1						0	1
Georgia	1		1			0						0	1
China		1	1			0						0	1
Iran		1	1			0						0	1
Iraq			0			0				77		77	77
Nepal			0	2		2						0	2
Pakistan	1		1			0						0	1
Asia	2	2	4	3	1	4	0	0	0	77	0	77	85
Cuba	2		2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
America	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Algeria		1	1		-	0						0	1
Somalia			0		-	0				10		10	10
Zambia	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Africa	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	12
nationality					0								
stateless					0								
Total	115	9	124	30	3	33	4	6	10	470	14	484	651

IOM Prague Operational Activities
Distribution of Clients
by Countries of Citizenship

Till June 2000

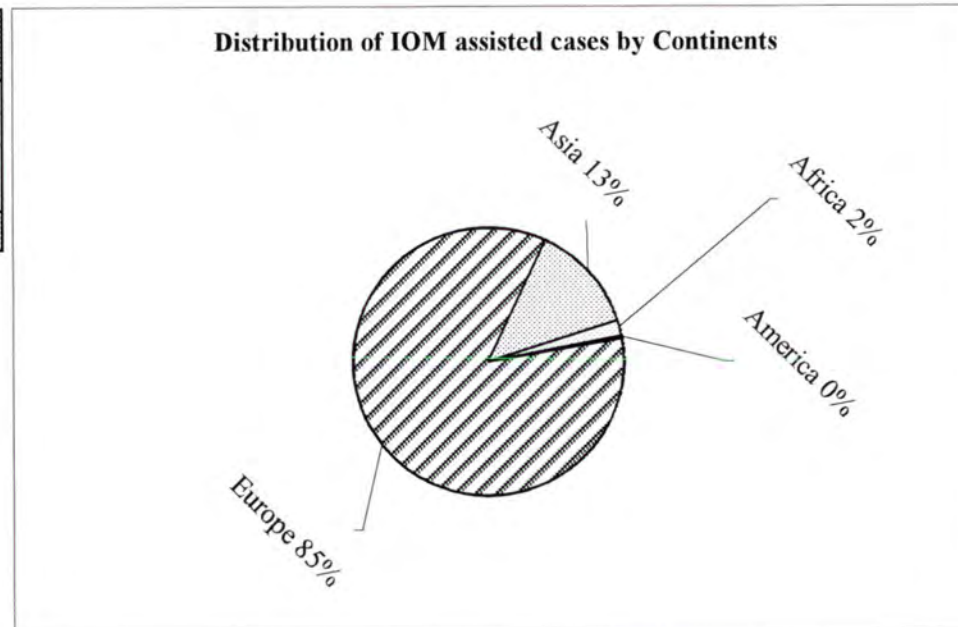
Country of Citizenship	New applications	%
Czech republic	35	5%
Bulgaria	3	0%
Macedonia	3	0%
Moldova	110	17%
Romania	3	0%
Russia	2	0%
Slovakia	369	57%
Yugoslavia	27	4%
Armenia	1	0%
Canbodia	1	0%
Georgia	1	0%
China	1	0%
Iran	1	0%
Iraq	77	12%
Nepal	2	0%
Pakistan	1	0%
Cuba	2	0%
Algeria	1	0%
Somalia	10	2%
Zambia	1	0%
Total	651	100%



IOM Prague Operational Activities
Distribution of Clients
by Countries of Citizenship

Till June 2000

Continent	Total assistance	%
Europe	552	85%
Asia	85	13%
Africa	12	2%
America	2	0%
Total	651	100%



Distribution by the type of provided assistance

