

**Report
on the results of Migration Conference, April 29-30, 2008**

On April 29-30, in the Congress hotel, Yerevan, Eurasia Partnership Foundation in cooperation with Zinvori Mair NGO conducted a two-day International conference devoted to the issue of Labor Migration from Armenia to Russia.



Participation

The conference was attended by **more than 90 participants**, representing state and non governmental organizations, international and local organizations dealing with Migration issues.

- ***Ministries:*** Representatives of Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of RA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RA, Central Bank of RA, Ministry of Territorial Administration/ State Migration Agency of RA as well Representation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation on Migration took active part in the conference.
- ***International Organizations:*** Among the international organizations were: USAID, UNDP, International Labour Organization (ILO), British Council Armenia, UMCOR, OSCE and Jinishian Memorial Foundation
- ***Civil Society from RF:*** The representatives of Russian organizations “Uralskij Dom” NGO (Ekaterinburg), Foundation «Education to the Society» (Moscow), Institute of Economic Forecasting at the Russian Academy of Sciences, (Moscow) “Yerkramas” Newspaper, (Stavropol’), as well as New Eurasia Foundation (FNE) were presenting their activities in the field of migration
- ***Armenia Civil Society*** was presented by: EPF funded Migration Resource Return Centers (MRRCs) from 7 regions of Armenia, EPF funded Resource Centers for Community Development, Advanced Social Technologies, New Sociological Researches NGO, Armenian UN Association, The A.D. Sakharov Armenian Human Rights Protection Center, Young Lawyers Association and Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA).
- ***Academic Community:*** The conference was also well attended by academicians. About 20 representatives of Universities and CRRC fellows. It should be specifically mentioned that

announcement of the conference through CRRC mailing list resulted in high level of interest towards the issue among academic community and researchers.

- Media: The event was attended by the following media
 - Armenpress news agency
 - Novosti Armenia
 - Azg daily newspaper
 - Noyan Tapan News Agency
 - Noyan Tapan weekly highlights
 - Hayastani Hanrapetutyun daily newspaper
 - Radio Liberty
 - ARKA news agency
 - Armnews TV

The first session of the conference was devoted to issues, trends and problems in migration Processes.

Armenian government policy on regulation of migration as well as Russian legislation on foreign residency in the Russian Federation, legal administration and state policy was presented by heads of the departments of Migration agency of Armenia and the Head of Representation in Armenia of the Russian Federal Migration Service respectively. The results of two sociological researches were presented which included information on the trends and motivations of the migrants, geographic spread, socio-economic conditions of households having migrants versus the ones that does not have. *Results of sociological research on Migration in the outlying regions of Armenia (2007-2008)* that was presented for the first time to the public by Anush Dulgaryan showed the results of the research implemented by MRRCs funded by EPF in 7 regions of Armenia.



During second session the role of NGOs in the solution of migration issues was discussed by Russian and Armenian experts.

Different models of experience in solution of migration issues were presented and largely discussed by the conference participants. The issue of violations of the law by conscripts, related to legal migration were also specifically presented by “Zinvori Mair” NGO. Experience of all Migration Resource Centers funded by EPF were presented by one of the MRRCs, Martuni Women's Community Council NGO.

Highlights/action points from the Migration conference

1. To work with employers both in Armenia and Russia:

- In Armenia to link them with migrants/potential migrants/returnees
- In Russia to assure the legality of them inviting Armenian migrants
- To work with HR agencies both in Armenia and Russia on the same issues
- To become at least an informal licensing agency for the employers, i.e. migrants should know which employer to go to based on our advice
- To develop vacancies banks

2. Research

- To develop policy recommendations based on research results and their work.
- To have a clear dissemination and presentation strategy for the results of the Research project, to be disseminated in the regions of Armenia first of all
- To put more clear targeted recommendations in the research results presentations
- In the future researches the question regarding the (economic, cultural, etc) affecting factors to move should be examined

3. To involve legal and human rights organizations in migration issues

4. To promote integration of returnees:

- To work with returnees, providing them with trainings and consultations
- To work on creating placement opportunities for the returnees
- We should have hot lines for migrants and advertising for them

5. To do tolerance projects in Russia

- To promote migration bridges, the idea of sister-cities, replication of the model working at Uralski house between Russia and Kirgizstan
- As a follow-up of migration bridges- policy recommendations should be developed to Russian authorities, which further be lobbied through the civil society in Russia

6. To develop clear communication strategy

- To discuss the cases where justice was served (a migrant was saved from illegal situation, or offenders on ethnic grounds were prosecuted, etc)
- To facilitate the creation of a public-private working group on migration problems
- To accelerate our communication strategy and work with the media (the site etc)

7. To continue on events on **exchanging the national international experience (study tours etc)**

8. Migrants to Russia should become cultural ties providers rather than stay a problem in Armenian-Russian relations

9. To advocate to the state to help Armenian schools in Russia
10. **To develop a policy paper** that should be presented to Armenian Government to set a special program to assist potential migrants to be legalized in the countries of migration as well as to help repatriates integrate into the society. This may include support to start-up business here, special agreements between Armenia and Russia on registration of Armenian migrants, etc...
11. **To create an Internet-gateway** (following the example of www.backtoarmenia.com), to include information about Armenian legislation and other countries legislation in relation to the temporary stay in other countries. It should also provide information on the career centers and other job placement opportunities. All the forms and rules of the application and stay abroad (a least for Russia) should be included there.
12. The **work with the airport** should be improved, so that at the points of departure all the forms that should be completed by the migrants should be available, despite of the purpose of the departure
13. To perhaps **publish the materials of the conference**
14. To look into the ways of **making the work of MRRCs self-sustainable** via modest financially paid service provision (the Grishin model)

Evaluation/Feedback

There was also evaluation of the conference done by participants based on the two main criteria:

- The organizational part of the conference and
- The content

Despite the sheer volume of information provided within the conference, it was mentioned that all the topics presented special interest to the participants from different backgrounds. Specifically, the MRRC representatives mentioned that they have gained useful contacts for building linkages with Russian partners. The State Migration Commission head mentioned, that this conference gave them a good understanding of the most recent changes in Russian legislation and that Armenian government will take the challenge to make appropriate adjustments in the local legislation.