

LABOUR MOBILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION DIVISION



Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners and is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. IOM is an essential international actor in the field of human mobility, supporting migrant across the world, developing effective responses to the shifting dynamics of migration, and serving as a key source of advice on migration policy and practice.

The Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion (LMI) Division is responsible for overseeing the labour mobility, migrant inclusion and migrant training activities of the Organization. In South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEECA region), thematic priorities include facilitating labour mobility and enhancing government capacity to effectively manage labour mobility, strengthening links between migration and development, particularly through diaspora engagement in development initiatives, increasing financial inclusion of migrants and remittances recipients and supporting migrant inclusion and social cohesion in communities of destination.

The Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion Division works towards various objectives:



Enhancing government capacity to manage outgoing and incoming labour migration



Working with employers and private recruitment agencies in establishing standards on ethical recruitment (IRIS)



Establishing skills recognition systems, integration of employers' skills, and fair distribution of costs for skills development



Working with the private sector to protect migrant workers throughout the labour migration cycle.



Providing comprehensive information and orientations to empower and protect migrants.



Developing programmes and building government capacity to facilitate diaspora engagement.



Advising national and local governments to facilitate migrant inclusion and ensure social cohesion.



Delivering programmes to support socio-economic integration and address challenges of xenophobia.

Among the countries covered by IOM's Regional Office in Vienna are established countries of destination such as the Russian Federation, and emerging ones such as Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye, as well as countries of origin of labour migrants like Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova.

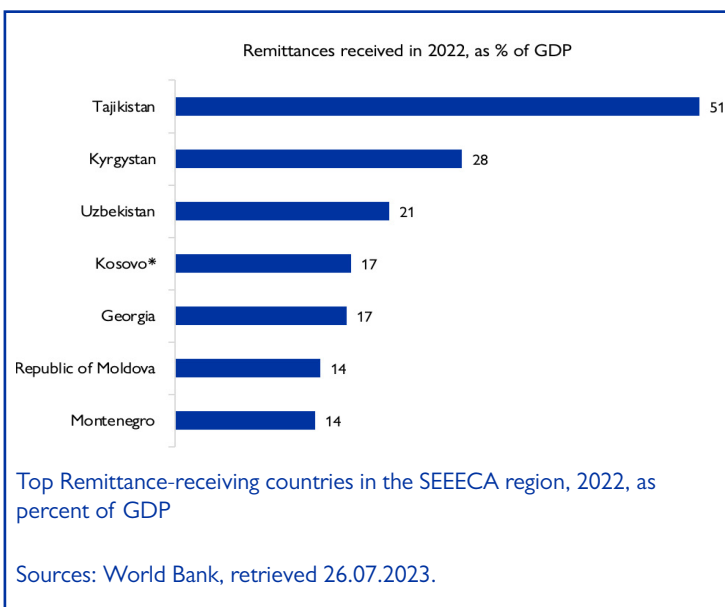
The SEECA region is comprised of a population of over 405 million people (DESA, 2022). Focusing on the origin and destination of international migrants, in 2020 the SEECA region was home to 11.7 per cent (33 million) of migrants worldwide, while 13.9 per cent are from the SEECA region (39 million). The main receiving countries of migrants from the SEECA region are the Russian Federation (11 million), Germany (5.3 million), Ukraine (4.4 million), Kazakhstan (3.3 million), the United States of America (1.6 million), Italy (1.2 million), Uzbekistan (1.07 million), Belarus (1.02 million), Greece (0.7 million), and France and Austria (0.6 million each). More than two thirds of migrants (68.4%), in the SEECA region are the result of intraregional migration.

These regional migration dynamics offer opportunities to leverage migration to support local and national development efforts. However, they also come with risks relating to migrant protection, social conflict and with significant implications for migrants' health and sustainability of livelihoods dependent on remittances and impacted by regional and global crises namely the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, the Earthquake in Türkiye and the COVID-19 pandemic. IOM's Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion (LMI) programmes seek to mitigate the risks and augment the opportunities of labour mobility.

International labour migration is playing a growing role in an increasingly interconnected global economy. Workers have become ever more mobile, engaging in temporary and circular migration, as well as onward and return migration. These dynamics are present throughout Central Asia and Eastern Europe in terms of migratory patterns, investment patterns, and remittance uses in countries of origin.

More recently, temporary and seasonal labour channels, as well as more permanent labour migration, have been established between European countries (Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, UK, etc.) and countries in the SEECA region (i.a. Moldova, Georgia, Central Asian countries, etc.). Longer term demographic and labour market trends, including the demand for labour force in Europe exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and emerging needs for workers in traditional labour migrant sending countries (e.g. in the Western Balkans), indicate that labour migration will play an increasingly important role in the entire SEECA region.

Estimations show that in 2022, migrants remitted over US\$ 647 billion to low- and middle-income countries. Within the SEECA region, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are among the most remittance-dependent countries globally, with remittances representing 28 % and 51 % of their GDP in 2022, respectively.



FACILITATING LABOUR MIGRATION

Well-managed labour migration and the establishment of legal migration corridors not only reduce pressures towards irregular migration but can also have significant positive impacts on economic growth in countries of destination. In the SEECA region, IOM supports governments and the private sector in various countries to develop and implement bilateral labour agreements to facilitate regular, safe and orderly labour mobility and thus build opportunities for workers and employers alike. In Central Asia for example IOM implements a regional programme that aims to contribute to enhancing labour migration governance to better respond to employer and labour market needs while ensuring protection of migrant workers. In Ukraine IOM is setting the ground for facilitating labour migration for its sustainable reconstruction.



INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

IOM recognizes integration as a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies that entails a set of joint responsibilities for migrants and communities. In the SEECA region IOM works with national and local governments to improve social and economic integration services for migrant communities and enhance social cohesion between migrant and host communities. IOM's offices in Türkiye are building capacities of authorities and creating social mixing programmes that allow meaningful interactions between migrant, refugee and host communities. IOM office in Pristina works to improve inter-ethnic relationships by creating language learning opportunities and building capacities of relevant institutions. In Kyrgyzstan IOM is contributing to combatting xenophobia through awareness raising campaign and social mixing programmes. In its work IOM relies on a wide set of tools, including a toolkit on design, implementing and evaluating the impact of social mixing programmes.



DIASPORA, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND INVESTMENTS

In the SEECA region, IOM has been at the forefront of innovative diaspora mapping techniques, applying big data and onomastic analysis to map and identify diaspora communities. In Armenia, these techniques have been used to identify and engage with Armenian medical professionals in the diaspora who have experience treating COVID-19 patients to support the Armenian Ministry of Health in their response to the pandemic. In Georgia, a global mapping of Georgian diaspora business owners and investors has contributed to enhance business networking and identifying opportunities for trade and partnerships. IOM is also working on research and interventions designed to improve the remittances market for the benefit of senders and recipients, providing safer and more efficient options, and linking remittances to greater financial inclusion and sustainable livelihoods. For example IOM has examined the role of digital remittances and behavioural barriers that may be limiting the uptake of digital financial services among migrants and remittance recipients in Central Asia.

