



NEWS FROM UKRAINE

Revised EU visa facilitation accord with Ukraine comes into effect

Ordinary Ukrainian citizens will now face fewer hurdles to travel to the EU under an amended EU-Ukraine visa facilitation agreement. It simplifies requirements for documents demonstrating the purpose of the journey for a wider category of applicants, including, but not limited to, representatives of civil society organizations, journalists and their technical crews, and members of professions participating in international exhibitions, conferences and seminars.

The aim is to facilitate the issuance of short-stay visas for visits of up to a total of 90 days, calculated over a period of 180 days. It also abolishes a EUR 70 visa fee for the same categories of individuals, clarifies provisions on the duration of multiple-entry visas and includes an exemption from the visa requirement for short stays for Ukrainian officials who hold biometric service passports.

Read more: European Neighbourhood Info Centre, 1 July 2013

http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=33714&lang_id=450

Ukraine's refugee asylum system needs further improvement, says UN report

Despite significant progress in recent years, Ukraine's asylum system still requires fundamental improvements to increase fairness and protect people against forced return to threatening situations, the United Nations Refugee Agency said in its report.

"Ukraine needs to offer better protection against refoulement [the forced return of a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened] and to improve the fairness and efficiency of the hearings process," Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Melissa Fleming, told reporters in Geneva.

"As a result of these concerns, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is advising other States not to return asylum-seekers to Ukraine at this time."

The report covers access to the country's asylum system, refugee status determination and the treatment of unaccompanied minors, and how people of concern are received, housed or detained in Ukraine.

The report makes specific recommendations on how to strengthen Ukraine's relatively new asylum system, and UNHCR said it remains ready to work with the Government to implement them.

Ukraine has declared its intention to synchronize its asylum policy and laws with international practices as well as in the context of its negotiations with the European Union on visa liberalization. The UNHCR review of Ukraine's asylum system is a part of a series of studies of asylum systems in Europe, including those in Hungary and Serbia.

Read more: United Nations News Centre, 26 July 2013

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45502&Cr=asylum&Cr1=#.UfVuNKxprXQ>



Ukraine, Panama decide to cancel visas, says Foreign Ministry

The Government of Ukraine has approved an agreement with Panama on the cancellation of visa travel and an agreement with Qatar on the cancellation of visa travel for holders of diplomatic and special passports, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara told an Interfax-Ukraine reporter.

According to the Minister, the Government approved both documents at a meeting on 11 July 2013.

The Government of Ukraine also approved draft agreements with the governments of Oman, Algeria, and Senegal on the cancellation of visa travel for citizens with diplomatic and service passports.

Read more: Interfax-Ukraine, 11 July 2013

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/160334.html>

Protection of Ukrainian labour migrants named priority

First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Ruslan Demchenko took part in parliamentary hearings “Ukrainian labour migration: state, problems and their solutions”, the Foreign Ministry press service informs. Mr. Demchenko stated that protection of the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens abroad, including migrant workers, is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Ukraine. In this context, the participants of hearings were informed of the measures implemented by the MFA and its overseas offices in key areas – expanding bilateral and multilateral legal frameworks, cooperating with Ukrainians abroad and migrant workers, and providing consular protection to Ukrainian labour migrants abroad.

Read more: ForUm, 4 July 2013

<http://en.for-ua.com/news/2013/07/04/093515.html>

Ukrainians abroad find themselves in the situation of irregular migrants due to absence of passports

For over half a year, Ukrainians working abroad have not been able to receive their national passports, representatives of associations of Ukrainians in the European countries stated at a press conference in Kyiv on 3 July 2013. “The issue of Ukrainian passports and the impossibility to prolong the term of their validity abroad, at Ukrainian consulates, is a great problem. Those people became restricted to travel abroad,” President of the European Congress of Ukrainians (Hungary) Jaroslawa Hortiani has said.

According to the President of the Association of Ukrainians in Portugal Pavlo Sadokha, the situation with passports is currently the biggest problem for Ukrainian labour migrants. “In Portugal, 500 Ukrainian citizens could neither return to Ukraine nor draw up permits to reside in Portugal, because they do not have the main document that proves their citizenship. Their own country has made them irregular migrants,” Mr. Sadokha noted.

Head of the Association of Ukrainians in Transnistria Leonid Tkachuk noted that this issue has caused problems for Ukrainians who reside in Transnistria and wish to enter higher educational establishments of Ukraine (from several hundreds to 1,000 persons annually). “In other words, their constitutional rights to study in Ukraine will be violated,” Leonid Tkachuk said.

Read more: The National News Agency of Ukraine, 4 July 2013

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukrainians_abroad_find_themselves_in_situation_of_irregular_migrants_due_to_absence_of_passports_305912



Citizens in need of treatment abroad to get foreign passports first

First Vice Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov instructed the State Migration Service of Ukraine to issue foreign passports first and foremost to those citizens who are in need of urgent medical treatment abroad.

In addition, Mr. Arbuzov instructed the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine to create a reserve supply of 50,000 passport templates in case of seasonal or artificial fluctuations in demand. The official also instructed the relevant agencies to reduce the cost of passports.

Mr. Arbuzov noted that he inspected the “Ukraina” Printing House. “The process of printing and transmission of passport templates is proceeding normally. I would note that the “Ukraina” Printing House and the Interior Ministry are carrying out the order of the President and the Government in a timely manner. Thus, only over the last week, the Printing House gave the State Migration Service about 40 thousand forms with the necessary 4-5 thousand forms a day,” the First Vice Prime Minister said.

Read more: ForUm, 24 July 2013

<http://en.for-ua.com/news/2013/07/24/105229.html>

Ukraine inches closer to biometric passport production

The production of biometric passports in Ukraine could begin as soon as this year, though some uncertainty on funding persists.

Reported in for-ua.com, the comments about the country’s biometric passports come from the head of the state migration service Mykola Kovalchuk. “Everything depends on funding,” Mr. Kovalchuk said.

The State Migration Service has previously announced plans to complete all the work required to issue biometric passports in the country by 2016 and the project – at the time – was estimated to cost USD 85-100 million.

The new passports will contain an electronic chip with information about the passport holder and fingerprint information can reportedly be added later. Passports will be produced in the form of cards and will be issued no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the submission of the relevant application.

Read more: BiometricUpdate, 3 July 2013

<http://www.biometricupdate.com/201307/ukraine-inches-closer-to-biometric-passport-production/>

Ukraine-Russia readmission agreement enters into force

On 9 July 2013, the agreement between Ukraine and Russia on readmission, providing for the return of persons, who irregularly crossed the interstate border, enters into force. Under the new rules, the states shall transmit to each other not only those persons, who are caught directly at the border, but also those, who are detained for violating the rules of stay on the territory of one of the countries.

The agreement on readmission was signed in October 2012 in the presence of Ukrainian and Russian presidents Viktor Yanukovich and Vladimir Putin. On 5 June 2013, the agreement was ratified by the Parliament of Ukraine.

Read more: ForUm, 9 July 2013

<http://en.for-ua.com/news/2013/07/09/112623.html>



Russia toughens rules for foreign workers

The State Duma of the Russian Federation has adopted a law introducing new fines in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Moscow and Leningrad oblasts for labour migrants violating the rules for staying and working in Russia. The law also toughens the rules of deportation of these foreigners from Russia, as well as the liability of employers for using labour of irregular migrants.

According to the new legislation, the fines in these four regions shall be increased for foreigners who have violated the rules of entry, staying in Russia or migration registration, or who have violated the indicated purposes of staying in Russia.

The obligatory deportation of a foreigner from Russia in any region is introduced if he or she has violated the rules of entry, staying, migration registration and the rules of transit passage. In particular, if a foreigner who entered the country on a tourist visa works, he or she will be first fined, and then deported in case of further violations.

Read more: Institute of Human Rights and Prevention of Extremism and Xenophobia, 8 July 2013

http://www.ihrpex.org/en/article/5551/russia_toughens_rules_for_ukrainian_workers

Lithuanian Presidency stresses role of cooperation with Eastern Partners for European security

Lithuania's Minister of National Defence Juozas Olekas has underlined the importance of the EU's cooperation with its neighbours for European security in his opening address at the high-level seminar on the Eastern Partnership, which marked the beginning of Lithuania's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

According to the Minister, Lithuania is a keen supporter of the Eastern Partnership initiative because of its deep historic links with this region, intensive economic relations, and the fact that EU's eastern border is also a Lithuanian external border.

"Building a secure neighbourhood is the strategic interest of Lithuania's security and defence policy," said Juozas Olekas.

During its term, Lithuania will seek to boost the EU cooperation with its eastern partners in the area of the common security and defence policy (CSDP). Lithuania will also advance a closer cooperation of partner countries in the CSDP area with a view of promoting security sector reforms in the partner countries and contributing to building a safer Eastern neighbourhood.

Read more: European Neighbourhood Info Centre, 3 July 2013

http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=33769&lang_id=450

EU and Eastern Partnership countries can mutually gain from labour migration, EU funded project concludes

Unleashing the potential for mutual gain from workers from Eastern Partnership countries in EU labour markets was one of the key topics discussed at the final seminar concluding the two-year EU-funded project "Costs and Benefits of Labour Mobility between the EU and the Eastern Partnership Countries", held on 25 June in Brussels. A press release said the event brought together government representatives from the EaP countries (Moldova,



Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Belarus), EU member states, civil society and academia.

The seminar participants stressed the need for increased institutional coordination and for incorporating migration issues into national strategies, and emphasized the need for the EU to implement the Single Permit initiative, “which would contribute to improving social security for labour migrants and stabilize host country pension systems.”

Participants shared the view that policies in the field of labour migration should not be narrowed down to few areas, such as border control, but “should rather constitute a comprehensive overview of the areas affected by migration.” Although a full liberalization is highly unlikely, they stressed, “a gradual liberalization would address many concerns.”

Read more: European Neighbourhood Info Centre, 3 July 2013

http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=33756&lang_id=450&utm_source=Oempro&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=Subscriber%234123&utm_campaign=EU%20and%20Eastern%20Partnership%20countries%20can%20mutually%20gain%20from%20labour%20migration%2C%20EU%20funded%20project%20concludes

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