

THE PRAGUE PROCESS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Discussion Paper for the Prague Process Senior Officials Meeting

Prague, 27–28 February 2013

Ministers gathered at the 2nd Ministerial Conference of the Prague Process (“Building Migration Partnerships in Action”) held in Poznan, Poland in November 2011 adopted the **Prague Process Action Plan for 2012–2016**, and agreed on its implementing structure. The further development of the Prague Process requires identification of its future strategy. To consolidate itself as a leading regional process on migration, the Prague Process needs the strengthened involvement of all relevant actors. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on a further facilitation of the exchange of views, experiences and information between all involved actors in order to deepen the dialogue between them and to respond to their needs.

Ministerial Conference

As agreed at the Poznan conference, Ministerial Conferences are organised to evaluate the results achieved in the implementation of the Action Plan and to decide on future policy orientations of the process. As the Prague Process Action Plan encompasses the years 2012–2016 and its implementation should be subject to a mid-term evaluation, the next Ministerial Conference should be organised in 2014.

In order to strengthen the involvement of all participating states in the process and to ensure the equal footing of their participation in the process at all its levels, the next Conference should take place outside the EU, especially considering that two previous Conferences were hosted by EU Member States. In order to allow for the proper preparation of the Conference, closer cooperation of the Core Group and the Secretariat with the partner state which would agree to host the Conference should be established.

Financial resources for organising Ministerial Conferences will need to be identified.

Senior Officials’ Meetings

The Prague Process Action Plan states that the Senior Officials’ Meeting shall be organised at least once a year for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan and preparing the ground for the next Ministerial Conference. Financial resources for the organisation of one SOM per year in 2013–2015 are provided within the Prague Process Targeted Initiative.

A lively discussion on current trends in migration that took place at the SOM held in April 2012 in Warsaw, Poland, clearly demonstrated that the Prague Process participating states are interested in discussing current issues of mutual interest, Poland proposes to place such issues on the agendas of future meetings on a regular basis. When monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan, the SOM should also look into actions not covered by the targeted initiatives.

Germany expressed willingness to host an additional SOM in 2014 to better prepare the next Ministerial Conference.

Core Group: Mode of Action

The first meeting of the Prague Process Core Group organised and hosted by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Poland in Warsaw on 20 November 2012 gathered representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo*, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden and ICMPD in its function of the Prague Process Secretariat. Moreover, Turkey and Switzerland, not represented during the meeting, sustained their willingness to participate in the further Core Group activities. The current size of the Core Group might raise concerns about its efficiency.

According to the Prague Process Action Plan, the Core Group is established to assist in coordinating activities and preparing for the Senior Officials' Meetings. Core Group meetings might also be used to identify possible issues of mutual concern to be discussed during SOMs. Therefore, during the meeting in Warsaw the Core Group proposed to meet officially 2–4 months before the SOMs in order to prepare its agenda and other relevant documents. Such an arrangement, however, raises the question of additional funds for the purpose of the meeting organisation, which are currently not available. Covering costs of travel and accommodation by participating states could be a partial solution in this respect. Decision to organise the Core Group meeting should be jointly taken by the country guiding the process and the country who will host the next Ministerial Conference.

To ensure efficiency of the work of the Core Group, priority should be given to electronic communication channels, while the relevant documents prepared for the meeting should be circulated amongst the Core Group members prior to the meeting in order to take account of their comments.

Communication Strategy

Recognising the importance of smooth and intense information exchange between the participating states for the development of the Prague Process, as well as of information-sharing with external stakeholders for enhancing the visibility of the process and building its credibility, it is proposed to define a Prague Process communication strategy.

The strategy shall be based on a greater commitment of the Prague Process National Contact Points which should be encouraged to inform the Prague Process Organisational Team (PP Targeted Initiative Project Support Team based in ICMPD) on a regular basis about activities related to the implementation of the Action Plan. The TI Organisational Team shall be then responsible for collecting and disseminating this information through three basic communication tools: the **Prague Process Website**, the **Newsletter** and the **Review**.

The Website, the Newsletter[†] and the Review[‡], available both in English and Russian, should play a fundamental role in providing up-to-date, coherent and comprehensive information on the process, as well as for the purposes of Senior Officials' Meetings and the meetings of the Core Group.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and in line with UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

† Prague Process Newsletter (published monthly, distributed among NCPs and interested individuals upon subscription on the website; in a form of an e-mail listing recent activities concerning the process, linked to more detailed descriptions published on the website).

‡ Prague Process Review (published quarterly, distributed among NCPs and interested individuals upon subscription on the website and available on the website for downloading; in PDF format; focused on a structured review of implementation of the Prague Process Action Plan).

Questions:

1. Do you share the opinion that the next Prague Process Ministerial Conference might take place outside the European Union and in 2014? What, in your opinion, apart from the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Prague Process Action Plan might be the purpose of the 2014 Prague Process Ministerial Conference?
2. What might be sources of financing of the next Prague Process Ministerial Conference and Core Group meetings?
3. Is proposed frequency of meetings of the Core Group – 2–4 months before the Senior Official Meeting – sufficient to meet expectations towards this body? Do you agree with the proposed mode of communication within the Core Group?