IOM Campaign – It’s Amazing What Migrants Bring!

In spite of their increasing presence, crucial and overwhelmingly positive role in modern society, migrants and their contributions to home and host societies remain largely unknown and misrepresented. Particularly in times of crisis, migrants are blamed for a broad range of social and economic ills. The present IOM campaign intends to help address these shortcomings.

The IOM Country Office (CO) for Belgium and Luxembourg is currently putting in place different activities: On 15 and 16 March IOM was represented at the “31st Festival of Migration, Culture and Citizenship” where over 400 associations and NGOs held info stands and approximately 20,000 visitors attended. An info stand sensitizing participants on IOM’s campaign and activities in Europe and worldwide. On Sunday 18 May an IOM team of 30 persons will also run in the 20 KM of Brussels’ Race, fully equipped with multicolored campaign T-shirts to raise awareness. An important visibility event will be held on 12 June 2014 involving government stakeholders, NGOs, migrant organizations, media representatives, cultural, political and social celebrities and representatives.

Visit the campaign website: www.migrantscontribute.com

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

Within the framework of the REAB (Return and Emigration of Asylum-Seekers ex-Belgium) programme, funded by the Government of Belgium, and managed by Fedasil, the IOM CO for Belgium and Luxembourg has assisted 493 persons to voluntarily return to 70 different countries since the beginning of 2014 (January-February included). The main country of return and reintegration remains the Russian Federation, and more particular the North-Caucasus region.
In addition, IOM is pursuing this year the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme from Luxembourg with the support of the Immigration Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In comparison with previous years, a higher number of migrants (52) have returned from Luxembourg to their country of origin since the beginning of 2014, most of them originated from UNSC 1244 Kosovo, amongst which 45 were entitled to reintegration assistance.

Migration and Development

The MEDMA2 project, financed by the Belgian Cooperation, is implemented since May 2012 by IOM Rabat in close collaboration with IOM Brussels. This project is conducted in cooperation with the Ministry in charge of Moroccans living abroad and Migration Affairs (MCMREAM) and the Hassan II-MRE Foundation (FHHI-MRE). The objective is to show how the Moroccan diaspora can play a positive role in economic and social development of the Northern and the Oriental regions of Morocco.

An intermediary evaluation meeting took place on 29 and 30 March in order to gather all the beneficiaries, the Moroccan partners and IOM’s representatives to discuss new developments and upcoming activities in the framework of the MEDMA2 project. Each beneficiary also had the opportunity to individually meet with the Moroccan delegation to highlight potential challenges in implementing an investment project in Morocco.

EUROPE ACT NOW!

IOM – through the Resettlement Saves Lives campaign - has officially endorsed the newly launched campaign from the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), called Europe Act Now. This pan-European campaign is petitioning European leaders to act now to ensure refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria can access protection in the EU.

To find out more information, consult http://syrianrefugees.eu/.

Click here to find out more information on IOM’s role in resettlement in the Syria crisis.
On 19 February, the IOM Country Office for Belgium and Luxembourg organized an expert discussion on improving integrity of international labour recruitment. The meeting focused on the current challenges in upholding integrity in the international recruitment of workers and possible solutions proposed and implemented by various stakeholders in Belgium and by the IOM worldwide. Ms. Lara WHITE, Senior Labour Migration Specialist at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva spoke on the innovative approaches in promoting fair and ethical international recruitment. In this regard, IOM has launched in March, in Geneva, the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS), a voluntary accreditation and monitoring process to increase the integrity and transparency of the international recruitment industry and maximize the gains of labour migration.

Resettlement to Belgium and Luxembourg

Belgium has committed itself to resettling 100 refugees in 2013 and 2014 in the frame of the Joint EU Resettlement Programme and has put in place a structured resettlement project to gradually increase the number to 250 refugees accepted on a yearly basis by 2019 and 2020. IOM supports the Government of Belgium with travel and other related services such as health assessments, cultural orientation and pre-departure training. The resettlement project in 2014, currently in its initial phase, will focus on 75 Syrian nationals from Jordan, Lebanon or Turkey and 25 Congolese refugees from the Great Lakes region in Africa.

The IOM Country Office for Belgium and Luxembourg is also supporting a resettlement project to Luxembourg this year. The Government of Luxembourg decided to welcome Syrian refugees currently residing in Jordan. A selection mission took place in February and 28 refugees were selected. They will arrive in Luxembourg on the 16 April. The IOM Country Office for Belgium and Luxembourg will be present to welcome them.

Movements: Family Reunification and Assistance in Transit

Family Reunification

During the first quarter of 2014, IOM CO for Belgium and Luxembourg has continued its activities in the framework of family reunification assistance. IOM Brussels is receiving more and more information requests regarding Syrian nationals in different countries and tries to collect the correct information in cooperation with the IOM missions in the countries of origin. IOM Brussels has assisted 6 persons so far in 2014 with their travel to Belgium; 1 family from Nairobi, 1 unaccompanied minor from Kinshasa and 1 unaccompanied minor from Eritrean origin from the Shagarab refugee camp in Sudan for which IOM cooperated with UNHCR. Further requests from Afghanistan, Tanzania, Turkey, Ivory Coast and Guinea are in process.

Assistance in Transit

IOM CO for Belgium and Luxembourg assisted more than 1000 persons in transit at Brussels National Airport during the first 3 months of 2014. The biggest group was formed by refugees travelling from Nepal to the United States in the framework of the United States Refugees Admissions Programme (USRAP).
Other activities, at a glance

Participation to an IOM Seminar in Beijing

On 16 and 17 January, IOM Beijing held a seminar on vulnerable migrants in irregular status to inform the implementation of China's new Exit and Entry Law, towards the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) (immigration). IOM Migrants Assistance Division (MAD), IOM CO for Belgium and Luxembourg and IOM Bangkok representatives presented on the screening of vulnerable migrants, Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMCs), and Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) while the MPS illustrated Chinese policy developments. Importantly, it has provided an opportunity to introduce the findings from a joint IOM-MPS assessment visit to Guangzhou, which took place in August 2013, on the applicability of AVRR. This seminar is part of an ongoing dialogue that IOM Beijing is having with the Chinese authorities on the implementation of the new law. IDC, UNHCR, Chinese academia have also attended.

UN Model Simulation

On 28 February, Mr. Reyntjens, Chief of Mission (CoM) of the IOM CO for Belgium and Luxembourg, participated in a simulation of the United Nations debate (Model United Nations) organized by Model International Delegate association, at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). UNHCR was also represented. This association's aim is to encourage students participation in the model United Nations simulations.

Mr. Reyntjens was invited to provide IOM insights in the Central African Republic and South Sudan crisis on the current situation, movements of population and emergency support. An analysis on how this situation affects the EU and Belgium was also made during the presentation.

Study Tour to Belgium – Belarusian delegation

From 24 to 28 March, the IOM CO for Belgium and Luxembourg organized the study visit of 6 Belarusian representatives (Ministries and NGO's) and 2 IOM Belarus staff, in order to increase their capacity and knowledge in the field of counter-trafficking. The delegation was given the opportunity to meet with key Belgian stakeholders such as: the Federal Public Service (FPS) Justice; the Federal Public Service Interior; the Belgian Immigration Office; the Federal Police; the Bureau of the Interdepartmental cell on trafficking in human beings; the Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities; the NGO's Pag-Asa and Payoke.

Participants to the IOM Seminar in Beijing

UN Model Simulation

Study Tour to Belgium – Belarusian delegation

Model United Nations at ULB-VUB

Belarusian Delegation in a meeting at FPS Justice