



EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project

支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项目

Preliminary Assessment -  
Development of Good Practice Guidelines on Pre-Departure Orientation  
for Workers Going Abroad

VISIT TO RECRUITMENT AGENCY in Qingdao

15 March 2017

Summary Report

Following the Workshop on Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) for Workers Going to Europe & Abroad, held in mid-June 2016, IOM organized a preliminary assessment visit to Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd, in Shandong Province. Conducted in close coordination with the China International Contractors Association (CHINCA) of the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), the objective of this visit was to better understand the context and challenges of local Chinese recruitment agencies as well as gathering comprehensive information of the curriculum/materials used for training of Chinese workers going abroad. The visit also provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives and ideas on the scope of the Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) guidelines for Chinese overseas migrant workers.

The delegation included officials from the Embassy of Poland and Embassy of Italy as well as Deputy Director WANG Yiwu, Overseas Employment Service Department, CHINCA ; Deputy Director BAI Yu and Mr DOU Changheng of Trade Service Division, Bureau of Commerce of Qingdao. IOM China also joined the visit.



During the discussions, Deputy Director WANG Yiwu presented the current situation of Chinese overseas labour cooperation. President CHEN Yuliang of Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd introduced the training activities organized at the Overseas Vocational School of Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd. This Overseas Vocational School is a subsidiary of Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd.

Deputy Director BAI Yu warmly welcomed the delegation and provided an overview of the labour situation in Qingdao.

The Overseas Vocational School of Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd. has trained over 5,000 Chinese workers going abroad to more than 60 countries.



## EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project

## 支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项目



The visit provided an excellent overview on overseas labour cooperation in general and on Chinese workers to Europe in particular, the training activities and materials provided to Chinese overseas workers, as well as challenges of Chinese overseas labour cooperation.

Qingdao covers an administrative area of 11,282 square kilometers.<sup>1</sup> In 2016, the value of import and export of Qingdao reached to one hundred billion US Dollars. Its foreign investment was USD 6 billion and the investment in foreign countries was USD 56 billion. Qingdao's contracted projects in other countries achieved to USD 36 billion. In 2016, Qingdao dispatched 17,800 migrant workers abroad to nearly 50 countries, comprising of seaman and staff of overseas contracted projects. In 2016, 250 Chinese migrant workers from Qingdao went to Russia and Europe (including Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Italy and Malta).

### Key findings of the field assessment

#### 1. Overseas Labor Cooperation of China

- There are three main channels in which Chinese labour migrants can go to work overseas: 1) direct contact between labour migrant and foreign employers; 2) use of recruitment agencies or intermediaries that match Chinese workers with overseas employers which is also known as “international labour cooperation” and 3) employment with a Chinese company that has work contracts or projects overseas, which is most often referred to as “Overseas Contracting Engineering Project”.
- The Regulations on the Administration of Contracting for Overseas Projects, which guides the undertakings of overseas contracting projects, adopted at the 8th Executive Meeting of the State Council on May 7, 2008, took effect as of September 1, 2008. The Regulations on the Administration of Overseas Labor Cooperation, which guide the relevant undertakings of international labour cooperation in China, took effect as of August 1, 2012.
- By the end of 2016, there were around 960,000 Chinese migrant workers abroad, with around 29,000 in Europe. The main industries attracting Chinese labour migrants are: agriculture and forestry; manufacturing; construction; transportation; hospitality as well as health care. There are over 5,000 Chinese workers in Germany, 700 in Italy and about 520 in Poland. For Europe, the main categories of workers are chefs and seafarers.
- In 2014, the Ministry of Commerce entrusted the China International Contractors Association to compile Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) Materials for Overseas Migrant Workers, and to revise and improve PDO materials regularly. Based on these PDO Materials, the Chinese enterprises or companies can compile their own PDO materials according to the actual situation and requirements of foreign employers. The local Commerce Bureaus or Departments also provide video lecture CDs and carry-on cards of PDO materials to migrant workers, if needed. PDO Materials consists of 24 volumes, 12 video lecture CDs (1,200 minutes), and carry-on card. Four comprehensive volumes include the contents related to general knowledge, Pre-dispatch Safety Education Guidelines, Travel and Vocational Health Guidelines and a Concise Handbook. In addition, 11 country and region volumes provide information on national and regional laws and regulations, customs and taboos, national consultation, working and living, immigration and safety etc.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.qdofcom.gov.cn/n32207979/n32207985/n32208004/17011819441175707.html>



EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project

支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项目

Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd.

Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd was set up in January 1999 as an overseas labor service cooperation with legitimate labor dispatching qualification authorized by Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. Over the past decades, Qingdao Syndicate has established long-term stable cooperative relationship with agencies, companies, and associations from more than 60 countries and regions, such as Singapore, Japan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Canada, the United States, Australia, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand, Nigeria, Angola, Hong Kong SAR, and Macau SAR. Qingdao Syndicate has successfully dispatched around 15,000 engineers, technicians, hotel management staffs, service staffs, Chinese massage practitioners, nurses, seafarers and over 3,000 Chinese chefs abroad. In recent years, due to global trends, the company has tailored its business targeting Australia and EU countries.

- The four types of Chinese professions that are in high demand in other countries are namely Chinese chefs, doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Mandarin teachers and martial arts instructors. There are several thousands of Chinese restaurants in Europe with Germany, United Kingdom and The Netherlands hosting the larger proportion of Chinese restaurants. Since 2002, this company sent around 1,200 Chinese workers to work in over 23 European countries, mainly as chefs, waiters or waitresses or managers of Chinese restaurants or as massage practitioners, welders, etc. The average net income of Chinese workers in UK or The Netherlands is around CNY 10,000 with the highest wage is approximately CNY 25,000. This includes free board and accommodation (with a slight variation between countries depending on the national salary level). The company places recruitment advertisements in Chinese-based newspapers in Europe to promote its service of dispatching qualified Chinese workers to Europe.
- Although the company doesn't have specific materials for Chinese workers to Europe, it provides comprehensive information on destination countries for potential Chinese migrants during their consultation process. The consultancy process focuses on workers' rights based approach. The introduced information covers areas of law and regulations of destination countries, proposed labour contract or employment agreement, local conditions and customs, safety and security, orientation information, exit and entry information, etc.
- The company developed a specific guideline for Chinese migrant workers to Australia, which covers details of the visa application process, welfare system, entry inspection procedures, etc.
- The Chinese workers are examined on their skills and knowledge of the destination country. Both the recruitment Company and foreign employers conduct the skill test for Chinese migrant workers. The local Bureau of Commerce often organises the knowledge assessment of the destination country based on library resources of China. After passing these examinations, the Chinese worker obtains the certificates of qualification.
- While the online PDO material is available for free, the prospective workers finance their own stay at the Vocational Training School of Qingdao.
- With the foreseen opportunities of the intercontinental infrastructure and trade "One Belt, One Road" strategy, the company has decided to pay more attention to the European market.



## EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project

### 支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项目

- However, some challenges or obstacles prevent it from sending optimal numbers of Chinese workers to fill the existing gaps in European market for Chinese labour migrants. The challenges include restrictions of European countries in hiring third-country nationals, language limitations of Chinese workers with regard to national languages spoken in European destinations, and integration into the local society of the destination country. Further, another hindering factor in some European countries is the cumbersome and strict visa procedures which do not facilitate for Chinese workers. Different EU countries having different rules in terms of work permits and the period of stay for a worker from third country nationals is also a challenge for some Chinese workers. However, some EU countries permit students to stay following their completion of studies to seek employment, and the trend to take up this option is becoming increasingly popular amongst Chinese. In addition, some European countries had different policies and recognition of qualifications of foreign chefs that made dispatching Chinese migrants more difficult.

#### Visit to the Vocational Training School of Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd

Qingdao Syndicate Overseas Vocational School has been operational for over ten years. In recent years, the school developed the curriculum to impart prospective migrant workers with skills as the core training and language as complementary training. It specializes in dispatching skilled chef and undergraduates. The skill training includes standard chef training, improving culinary skills, among others. During the tour of the facilities, the delegation had the opportunity to pop-into a session of an English class, which entails 5 hours per day during a period of 6 months, as well as visit the dormitories (16 bedrooms with 8 people per room) which the delegation found to be in a very good condition. Qingdao Syndicate has dispatched over 3,000 chefs to more than 60 countries and regions, including over 30 countries in continental Europe, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Norway, Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Iceland, Cyprus, Slovakia, Russia, etc.

#### **Conclusion**

- This preliminary assessment created an excellent opportunity for European officials and Chinese participants to strengthen the communication and exchange on respective labour systems. Through the discussions during the on-site visits, the European participants gained further understanding on overseas labor mechanism in China and its situation in Qingdao, in particular, training activities and materials targeting Chinese workers going abroad.
- This visit helped explore and identify the challenges and difficulties faced by Chinese migrant workers seeking opportunities in Europe. This will facilitate and strengthen existing cooperation and dialogue between EU and China in the field of labour cooperation.
- China International Contractors Association showed great interest in cooperating with IOM and jointly producing PDO guidelines for Chinese workers going abroad. Information of destination countries that Qingdao Syndicate International Economic & Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd used provided an important input for further developing standardized guidelines for all categories of Chinese workers going abroad.
- The visit also raised the need for a centrally managed (CHINCA) PDO training material, with specific details on labour and immigration laws, culture, dispute settlement, risks of irregular migration, among other areas. While the Vocational Training Center provides specific training books/manuals for workers going to Australia, Singapore and Japan, no such material was provided to workers going to European destinations. For European countries, the company gathers material, mainly based on Internet resources and tailors this information for training the prospective migrant workers.