

Fostering political participation and policy involvement of immigrants in 9 Central and Eastern EU countries

Migrants' associations

Legal background

Pursuant to the article 29 par. 1 of the Slovak Constitution¹ (*Ústava Slovenskej republiky*, "the Constitution"), the right to freely associate in unions, societies or other associations shall be guaranteed to anyone in Slovakia, including foreigners. The exercise of above right may only be restricted in cases provided by law for purpose of national security, protection of public order, prevention of a crime and protection of rights and freedoms of others.

Third country nationals in Slovakia may therefore create **associations**, such as clubs, societies, chambers, civic associations, groups, trade unions, etc., according to the Act no. 83/1990 Coll. on Association of Citizens as amended ("Act on the Association of Citizens"), as amended. The civic association is established on the day of registration by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter only as "the Ministry"). The Ministry has to register every civic organization that meets the statutory prerequisites. Thus, the Ministry does not have the right to decide arbitrary whether or not to register the association. In order to create an association, it is necessary that at least three persons (a preparatory committee), of which at least one is 18 years old, decided to establish an association, prepared a statute and submitted the application for registration of the association to the Ministry.

When it comes to existing trade unions, generally foreigners can become their members however, we were not able to find any further information from practice, or any existing cooperation between migrant communities and unions.

Formal conditions for a registration of Churches and Religious Societies were changed several years ago and in practice it became far more difficult to establish the religious based organization. Establishment of **Churches and religious communities** is regulated by Act no. 308/1991 Coll. on the Status of Churches and religious societies as amended. According to this Law, registration of the Church by the Ministry of Interior will only be approved if 20,000 followers (members) signed declarations of honor and attached to the application. In practice it means, that the new church must have at least 20,000 adult members who are not only Slovak citizens but have also permanent residence in Slovakia. Taking into account small numbers of foreigners in Slovakia, it is hard to imagine any new religion would be able to register the church nowadays.

Foundations can also be established according the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations and on amendment to the Civil Code as amended. This Law regulates legal status and environment of foundations and creation of endowment funds.

Statistics

Foreigners (EU/EEA nationals and third country nationals) in Slovakia represent approximately 1.4 % of the total population². There were 29,171 third country nationals living in Slovakia and 47,544 EU nationals in the end of 2014. Around 80% of all foreigners are already granted permanent residence.

¹ Act no. 460/1992 Coll., the Constitution of the Slovak Republic

² Population of Slovakia according to Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic as at 31.12.2014 was 5,421,034.

In the *Register of Associations* led by the Ministry of the Interior³ there are more than 200 various unions, information centres, chambers of commerce and cultural associations of immigrants (or somehow engaging immigrants). However, there is no research or statistical data available on how many of foreigners lawfully residing on the territory are actually active in official associations of foreigners.

Associations are generally established by all groups of foreigners, citizens with migration background or supporters of Slovak origin and with various aims. Some of them are active in the area of integration of their members, for instance Ukrainian, Afghani, African, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Islamic, Latin, Cuban community and “Internationals Bratislava”. Since 2005 above communities were invited to discuss topics related to integration of foreigners in the expert meetings held by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter only as “Ministry of Labor”), IOM International Organization for Migration (“IOM”) or non-governmental organizations.

According to MIPEX⁴, comparative research, though immigrant associations helped design the previous *Concept of the Foreigner Integration in the Slovak Republic (Konceptia integrácie cudzincov v Slovenskej Republike, 2009)*⁵, they are not structurally funded or consulted regularly to share immigrants’ experiences. New *Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic (Integračná politika Slovenskej republiky, 2014)*⁶ was recently adopted without participation of migrant communities.

Research

The research focused on five major migrant communities in Slovakia. We have also undertook interviews with 8 representatives of these communities, or individuals active in the work of communities.

1. **Ukrainian Community**

Description of a community, statistical data

According to the IOM Atlas of Communities connection of Ukrainians and Slovaks has its deep roots in the 15 and 16th centuries, when the east of Slovakia was colonized by Ukrainians.⁷ In the 20th century Ukrainians were arriving in three major waves, after World War I, World War 2, and after regime changes in 1989.⁸ Large number of Ukrainians also arrived within a resettlement program of the Slovak Government, as so called “reoptants” - repatriated people (1993-1999) and resettled Ukrainians from Chernobyl (1991).

Number of legally residing Ukrainians was 8033 in the end of 2014, which makes them biggest of all migrant communities - nowadays they are recognized as a national minority. Among newcomers from Ukraine, the majority was granted temporary residence for purpose of employment, business, study or family reunion (4,955). In the end of 2014, 3040 Ukrainians were granted permanent residence, and tolerated stay has been granted to 39. Numbers of naturalized Ukrainians vary due to

³ Registry of Associations available at: www.ives.sk/registre/hladatoz.do

⁴ www.mipex.eu

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_12636_716907546.pdf

⁶ www.employment.gov.sk/en/integration-foreigners-slovakia/documents/

⁷ <http://mic.iom.sk/atlas/ukrajinska-komunita/>

⁸ www.integruj.sk/relac/29-ukrajinska-komunita-na-slovensku

various sources; however, in 2011 census 7430 individuals identified themselves as Ukrainians. According to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, they are mostly women⁹.

Community is formally organized in various formal and informal organizations. Perhaps the most numerous is Association of Ruthenians and Ukrainians of the Slovak Republic (*Zväz Rusínov a Ukrajincov v SR, SRUSR*). SRUSR has about 4,000 members. Older, settled immigrants and naturalized Ukrainians are associated in Slovak Ukrainian Society of Friendship (*Slovensko Ukrajinská spoločnosť priateľstva* or *Slovak Ukrainian Society*), while some communities of new coming immigrants are not formally institutionalized yet. In the Registry of Associations of the Ministry of the Interior, there are various cultural, commercial and educational associations for instance Association of Ukrainian Writers (*Spolok ukrajinských spisovateľov*), Theater ensemble of Taras Shevchenko (*Divadelný súbor Tarasa Ševčenko*), Ukrainian Diaspora, Slovak Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Slovak Ukrainian Development Association. Youngsters' association is Union of Ukrainian and Ruthenian Youth in Slovakia. Information about their activities is not publically available, but according to interviews, activities of some diaspora associations are at the moment oriented at humanitarian help to Ukrainians suffering in the military conflict (*Ukraine Slovakia SOS, Good Heart Foundation*). In the past also Coordination Committee of Reoptants (*Koordináčny výbor pre reoptantov*) or Slovak Ukrainian Society (*Slovensko Ukrajinská spoločnosť*) actively fought for the rights of Ukrainians resettled to Slovakia, mainly economic and social.¹⁰

Migrant association as a self-sustainable player in migration and integration related activities

Slovak Ukrainian Society has a certain experience in consultancy activities related to integration of Ukrainians. From our experience it is more based on a work of several active individuals, who cooperate with NGOs or with the IOM as cultural mediators, and who on behalf of Ukrainian associations represented Ukrainians for several years in various expert meetings of the Ministry of Labour and NGOs but also individually constituted a links between majority of formal and informal Ukrainian associations in Slovakia and NGOs.

Links (networks) with other NGOs: migrant organisation

Ukrainians cooperate with various NGOs working with migrants and IOM - both in integration related projects, as researchers¹¹, or as community workers, at least from 2008-2009. Cooperation is mainly informal since very rarely communities succeed as official partners of the projects or main applicants.

Ability (potential) to act independently, without supervision of other NGOs

As other interviewed migrant leaders said, the situation of associations is difficult due to the lack of funding and lack of expertise in project management. Despite the fact that the interviewed community members already shared their experience with public institutions many times, it still appears to them "the doors are closed" and full participation impossible.

All interviewed communities face basically the same barriers to their activities, but they would absolutely welcome the opportunity to contribute to the country by their own skills or expertise, and

⁹ http://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/wcm/connect/d5079b5f-1b23-4262-88a7-e4438dd944f4/Zahranicne_stahovanie_a_cudzinci_v_Slovenskej_republike_v_roku_2012.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=d5079b5f-1b23-4262-88a7-e4438dd944f4

¹⁰ www.rusyn.sk/reoptantom-a-cernobylcanom-prehodnotia-dochodky

¹¹ Mrs. Galina Korolevych.

by their participation in advisory bodies on a national or local level. Mainly it is a lack of funding, lack of possibilities to speak up or employ their members, which hinders their activities on a daily basis.

2. *Vietnamese community*

Description of a community, statistical data

The first immigrants from Vietnam began arriving in Czechoslovakia in the 50s of the 20th century as students under the bilateral international *Agreement on Mutual Economic Assistance*. The aim was educational and professional exchanges between the two socialist countries. Many of them never returned to Vietnam, but settled down and integrated to society. Community started growing in 70-80's. After the social and economic changes in 1989 they started establishing business companies and opened trade licences. Their number increased in 2006-2007, and then decreased slightly after the onset of the economic crisis in 2008. Slovak citizenship from 1993 to present was granted to approximately 1500 Vietnamese who arrived to Czechoslovakia until 1993¹².

The number of Vietnamese nationals legally residing in Slovakia at the end of 2014 amounted to 2,180 persons, while according to the Statistical Office of predominantly male¹³. 528 Vietnamese live in Slovakia with temporary residence and 1611 are settled permanently, 41 Vietnamese had a tolerated stay as a temporary solution to their legal situation (numbers of residences valid as at 31.12.2014).

From its beginnings, the community was characterized by self-sufficient and closed behavior and high solidarity among its members. Nowadays Vietnamese do not perceive themselves as *closed*. One of the representatives of Vietnamese entrepreneurs in an interview said: "*Vietnam has long been under the French domination, its residents came into contact with Europeans and European civilization, we have European blood in our culture.*"¹⁴

The community became the 4th largest community of immigrants in the Slovak Republic. Formally it is organized in 4 main institutions, established on ethnic basis:

- 1) The Vietnamese Community in Slovakia (*Komunita Vietnamcov na Slovensku*)
- 2) The Vietnam Women's Union (*Únia vietnamských žien na Slovensku*)
- 3) The Association of Vietnamese Enterprises in Slovakia (*Združenie vietnamských podnikateľov na Slovensku*)
- 4) Slovak Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce (*Slovensko – vietnamská obchodná komora, SVCC*)¹⁵

The involvement of the second generation of Vietnamese, who are Slovak citizens in the work of community, is seen as a rather marginal.¹⁶

¹² Number differs from number of 5000 naturalized Vietnamese indicated by the IOM Atlas of communities:

<http://mic.iom.sk/atlas/vietnamska-komunita/>

¹³ Oficiálna stránka Štatistického úradu SR: http://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/wcm/connect/d5079b5f-1b23-4262-88a7-e4438dd944f4/Zahranicne_stahovanie_a_cudzinci_v_Slovenskej_republike_v_roku_2012.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=d5079b5f-1b23-4262-88a7-e4438dd944f4

¹⁴ Interview with „Samo“ Cuong, director of the Slovak - Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, February 5, 2015.

¹⁵ Official website: www.svcc.sk/en

¹⁶ Article about second generation of Vietnamese: <http://zurnal.pravda.sk/spolocnost/clanok/332962-vietnamci-2-0-made-in-slovakia>

According to media statements of the Vietnamese community, on the basis of long-term relations between Slovakia and Vietnam, members of the Vietnamese community have an attempt obtain the status of a recognized national minority in the future.¹⁷

Community cooperates with the official foreign associations, such as the Association of Vietnamese Enterprises in the Czech Republic, and similar associations in Poland, Romania and elsewhere in the world, and also with the European Network of Vietnamese, which currently publishes articles in Vietnamese language. On the content of the network also a second generation of young Vietnamese in Slovakia participates.

Migrant association as self-sustainable player in migration and integration related activities

At present community is represented by various smaller and bigger associations, some of them are active in the area of migrant integration and intercultural dialogue. Moreover, they would welcome invitation to any advisory bodies of the Government or on a local level, for instance in the Bratislava New Town city area, where there is a large migrant population (approximately 8%).¹⁸ Community gatherings are organised more than 3 times a year (parties, coordination meetings). Members can get professional legal advice and counselling related to entrepreneurship. Chamber of Commerce has 8 representatives permanently seated in other regions of Slovakia.

In the past the community have been invited to participate in professional workshops on a national level and consulted by the political parties and government. Although the opinions of two representatives of community on political participation were different, director of the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce stated that they would like to be included in a decision-making processes: "*We cannot separate politics and economics*" – *we would like to participate and to share our views.*!

Links (networks) with other NGOs: migrant organisation

Vietnamese community and Union of Vietnamese women participated in the past on the projects related to integration of foreigners such as language trainings or research, however, they would welcome deeper support from the NGOs working with migrants for instance when it comes to project development or a project management.

In recent years, they received a grant through the Office of the Government financing the Vietnamese language course for children¹⁹ - later it was partly funded by the Bratislava - New Town City Area. The Union of Vietnamese women sought to apply for finance from the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EIF), but they were rejected due to "insufficient human capacity".

3. Islamic community

Description of a community, statistical data

As stated in the Slovak *Atlas of communities* published by the IOM International Organization for Migration, a group of Muslim migrants in Slovakia comprises of around 2,000 people. The most represented are foreigners from Libya, Afghanistan and Egypt. The exact number of members of this community is, however, difficult to determine. This community includes individuals, groups and

¹⁷ Source: <http://mic.iom.sk/atlas/vietnamska-komunita>, www.sme.sk/c/6661508/vietnamci-chcu-byt-mensinou.html

¹⁸ Own calculation of the author based on publicly available statistics of the Ministry of Interior and City of Bratislava.

¹⁹ <http://bratislava.sme.sk/c/6363704/vo-vietnamskej-trie-de-slovenske-deti-dlho-nevydrzali.html>

families - from Eastern Europe (Albania), Asia (Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Indonesia), North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia) and other African countries (Libya, Somalia). Differences in cultural, social and economic background of individuals forming the community can be very significant, but in Slovakia and in their host country a religion has become the unifying element.²⁰

Representation of women in this community is allegedly low - women make up only a little over 20%, though, in terms of activities and communication with the public, the feminine part of the Islamic community is very active in the integration of foreign women and their inclusion²¹.

As in the other major migrant communities, the Islamic community has been also gradually built by migrants who arrived in Slovakia before 1989 as foreign students. Those who remained in Slovakia are integrated well, in various professions such as medical professionals, specialists in the technical professions, etc. Some of them are registered interpreters and translators from Arabic and other languages.²² New coming members of the community are foreign students, asylum seekers, persons receiving subsidiary protection or asylum.

Currently there are two active associations of Muslim migrants. Both organizations operate in Bratislava. Their aim is to support its members from a social, maintaining Islamic customs, but even the convergence of cultures, public awareness and promoting intercultural dialogue, respectively. Their desire is to avoid cultural and religious misunderstandings. There are other associations in the community but they are not oriented to assist migrants, they focus on culture (literature and history) or operate on campus²³ (e.g. *Union of Palestinian Students in Slovakia, Palestinian Club in Slovakia, General Union of Palestinian Students, Organization for cultural relations with Arabic world – Opus arabicum Slovakia, Muslim Community in Slovakia, Association of Muslims in Slovakia, Islamic mosque in Slovakia, Slovak Islamic Movement, Union of Islamic Cultural Centres in Slovakia*).

Migrant association as self-sustainable player in migration and integration related activities

Activities of Islamic Foundation²⁴ are financed mainly from own resources of the community. In the past they only had one successful project funded by the European Integration Fund. However, they regularly cooperate on various multicultural events (*Fjúžn* festival) or provide social or legal services to refugees and migrant families. Leaders of the foundation believe that their community could contribute to the society by their unique language skills or professional experience. Foundation in the past tried to discuss with the city of Bratislava establishment of the “Islamic cultural centre”, but did not succeed.²⁵ Their communication with the city officials was mainly related to cultural activities, but participation on Integration Forum of the Ministry of Labour

Links (networks) with other NGOs: migrant organisation

Community actively cooperates with many NGOs working with migrants, such as the Human Rights League, Milan Šimečka Foundation, or the IOM International Organization for Migration. They also cooperate with various international organisations abroad such as Islamic Relief and Humanic Relief, or Islamic foundations in Czech Republic (Brno, Prague), Austria and Hungary.

²⁰ <http://mic.iom.sk/atlas/>

²¹ Interview with Mrs. Zuzana Hasna, Islamic foundation.

²² <http://mic.iom.sk/atlas/>

²³ www.islamonline.sk/

²⁴ www.islamweb.sk

²⁵ Interview with Zuzana Hasna, Islamic foundation.

4. African community

Description of a community, statistical data

When it comes to “African community” in Slovakia, it is composed by individuals and groups of foreigners from more than 40 African countries. At the end of 2014 more than 1040 Africans were granted residence permit in Slovakia for various purposes. The total number of naturalized individuals with “African background” is unknown.

Most numerous migrant communities in the end of 2014 were Egyptian (220), Libyan (170), Tunisian (119), Nigerian (111) and South African (65). Among their community members, there are new coming, settled and naturalized individuals. The diversity of this community is influenced also by the fact that many people were granted international protection in Slovakia, or government scholarship. According to the IOM Atlas of communities, they are generally relatively young, dynamic and educated group with strong representation of male migrants (almost 80%). Almost half of migrants from Africa are 25-34 years old.²⁶

Some of the “African” communities are larger, and have their associations registered by the Ministry of the Interior²⁷. Among them mainly Associations: *Association of Angolan community*, and *Libyan Community*, *Association of Slovakia - Angolan friendship*, Information Centres, such as *African Cultural, information and Integration Centre* (AKIIC), *Centre Africa*, *African Centre in Slovakia*, *Slovakia-African and Arab Information Centre*, *Slovakian - Algerian Information Centre*. Societies, such as *Association of Africans and friends of Africa in Slovakia* (ZEBRA), *African – Slovak Arabic Society*, *Slovak – South African Society*, *Friends of Africa in Slovakia*, *Society for Slovakia-Egyptian cooperation*, *Libyan Society in Slovakia* etc. Various Chambers of Commerce, such as *African - Slovak - Arabic Chamber of Commerce*, *Slovak - Benin*, *Slovak - Congo*, or *Slovak - Nigerian Chamber*, *Slovak - Liberian Chamber*, *Slovak – Libyan Chamber*.

Migrant association as self-sustainable player in migration and integration related activities

One of the most active in the field of integration of foreigners and consultation process were in the past the 2 African communities known as Civic Association of Africans in Slovakia (OZAS, *Občianske združenie Afričanov na Slovensku*) and Association of Portuguese-speaking countries (*Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*, PLOP). Both associations are not active anymore; their activities were replaced by the African Cultural, information and Integration Centre (*Africké Kultúrne, Informačné a Integrované Centrum*, AKIIC)²⁸. Representatives of African communities in Slovakia, together with Afghani, Islamic, Ukrainian, or Vietnamese communities, were invited to take part at the expert meetings organized by the Ministry of Labour (from around 2006), non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations.

The lack of human resources, project management skills and a lack of finances to organize regular activities of the community represent the main challenge. Partially their activities very supported by the IOM with the help of an African “cultural mediator” who seeks to promote the work of African communities in Slovakia, by organizing various cultural, multicultural, informational or sport events.

Links (networks) with other NGOs: migrant organisation

²⁶ mic.iom.sk/atlas/africka-komunita/

²⁷ www.ives.sk/registre/hladatoz.do

²⁸ www.akiic.sk/news.html

African associations cooperate with other migrant communities, NGOs working with migrants and IOM. However, they would welcome NGOs support in integration activities or project management.

5. Afghani community

Description of a community, statistical data

The first immigrants from Afghanistan came during socialism; they were small numbers of students who after graduation remained in Czechoslovakia. Most of them have been granted citizenship. The second group of Afghans arriving after 1996 was refugees, whose numbers reached several thousand mainly during 2001-2002. Asylum was from 1993 to the end of 2014, 241 of them granted citizenship and 74 refugees.

The number of Afghans residing legally in Slovakia at the end of 2014 amounted to 222, and according to the Statistical Office they are mostly men.²⁹ This community is therefore rather small in comparison to other interviewed communities, but equally active and visible. 155 Afghans has been granted temporary residence, 63 were settled permanently, and 4 people were at the end of 2014 granted a tolerated stay as a temporary solution to their situation.

This community is however built on the Afghans who acquired citizenship of the Slovak Republic and are well integrated. One of the leaders of entrepreneurs in an interview with our research indicated that many of them later left to other EU countries and Canada.

Migrant association as self-sustainable player in migration and integration related activities

Afghan community is formally organized through the major association, Afghani Union in Slovakia, which brings together members of all ethnic groups from Afghanistan living in Slovakia and Slovaks interested in the Afghan culture. Afghani Union organizes various events such as celebration of the Afghan New Year Nawroz (their most popular event) and participate on various intercultural events (Multikultúrne Vianoce). Community members provide social assistance or counselling to others, organize social, cultural, sport events, and their information meetings are usually open also to citizens of the Slovak Republic.

The Community is formally organized in several cooperating institutions, established on ethnic basis:

- Afghani Union in Slovakia (*Zväz Afgancov na Slovensku*)³⁰
- HINDUKOSH - Association for development of Afghanistan (*Združenie pre rozvoj Afganistanu*)³¹
- Association of Friends of Afghanistan (*Združenie priateľov Afganistanu, AFAN*)³²
- Afghani community (*Afganská komunita*)
- Association of Afghans in Slovakia (*Zväz Afgancov na Slovensku*)³³ is the most active association of migrants and citizens with Afghani background,
- OPEN WORLD - Association for development of Afghanistan (*OTVORENÝ SVET – Združenie pre rozvoj Afganistanu*).

²⁹ http://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/wcm/connect/d5079b5f-1b23-4262-88a7-e4438dd944f4/Zahranicne_stahovanie_a_cudzinci_v_Slovenskej_republike_v_roku_2012.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=d5079b5f-1b23-4262-88a7-e4438dd944f4

³⁰ www.zans.sk/index.html

³¹ <http://firmy.maxivyber.sk/42181241-hindukosh-zdruzenie-pre-rozvoj-afganistanu>

³² www.afan.sk

³³ www.zans.sk

Interviews with community representatives³⁴ indicated that their main source of funding comes mainly from their own activities, donations from the community (for instance membership fee of 5 EUR per month), 2% tax donations and sponsorships. In this sense, it seems that these organizations operate independently from both the financial resources available in the Slovak Republic for the activities of migrant of communities but also from the resources of an Afghani embassy.

Ability (potential) to act independently, without supervision of other NGOs

Also, the interview with leaders of the community showed that despite motivation and professionalism they would welcome some form of a support from NGOs working with migrants. In the past they have been invited to participate in professional workshops at national level and consulted by the political parties and government.

Links (networks) with other NGOs: migrant organisation VS other organisations

Associations officially cooperate with each other, although individuals, community members collaborate with other organizations in the topic of integration of foreigners, the IOM International Organization for Migration (with the help of a *cultural mediator*), the Human Rights League and Islamic foundation. Some members provide translation services to non-profit organizations that provide legal services to foreigners.

Links with similar organisations in other countries

Community cooperates with foreign associations, for example, Afghani Association of Professionals in Belgium, or Association of Afghani Doctors.

Links with governmental institutions and involvement in the decision making process

The community is in terms of the intercultural exchange, one of the most active migrant communities in Slovakia at all, despite the fact that official platform on integration or advisory body for immigrants does not exist in Slovakia. Interviewed members of the community expressed their will to take part in the future advisory bodies for migrants and to give their best for the benefit of our country.³⁵

Other communities

Internationals Bratislava is a group of „expats“ from various countries which aims at creating bridges between Slovaks and immigrants, to help introducing cultures (and having fun). Mainly they organize cultural events, but also take part in expert meetings, if they receive an official invitation. During one year they linked together people from more than 90 countries of the world.³⁶

Institute for Migration and Communication (*Inštitút pre migráciu a komunikáciu*) undertakes various integration and cultural activities and employs mainly migrants.

Recommendations to policy makers

³⁴ Interview with Mr. Jawid Nabizada and Mr. Azim Farhadi, Afghani community.

³⁵ Interview with Larysa Konovalova, Anna Schvachka and telephone interview with Galina Korolevych.

³⁶ <http://internationals.sk/> and www.facebook.com/InternationalsBratislava

Migrant communities would welcome help and support in many areas, but not always necessarily financial. There are many issues where they feel qualified to offer their expertise, or ideas for improvement (e.g. area of residence permits, family reunification, labour market shortages, particularly problems of foreigners with subsidiary protection or homelessness). They also provide the society their good contacts in countries of origin, language skills and knowledge of the foreign business environment, different vision of the world and high international mobility.

To let the communities fully participate and contribute to society, we recommend to consciously:

- Support Migrant Associations on a national, regional and local level
- To enhance capacity of Migrant Associations by providing them information, training, and regular access to funding
- To create favourable conditions for their work (remuneration for consultancy activities, Space for meetings, or Technical and logistical support) and sustainability
- To include Migrant Associations in all forms of dialogue with the state (advisory bodies on the national and local level)
- To facilitate access of Migrant Associations to public debate and public media

Recommendations to other stakeholders

- To support a participation of Trade Unions in the defence of migrants in the labour relations
- To strengthen cross sectional cooperation in order to include all key stakeholders in migrant representation processes (consultative bodies, working groups, expert meetings, etc.)

Recommendations to Migrant Associations

- Communities are very beneficial in addressing particular community needs
- To fully represent migrants rights in Slovakia, we recommend to create the umbrella organizations or network / coalition, or to become active part of existing networks / coalitions
- Networks with stakeholders, other NGOs, governmental institutions and experts in the field may help to improve the effectiveness of migrant associations

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