



POLICY REPORT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN LATVIA

REFERENCE YEAR 2016

Riga, April 2017

Pursuant to Council Decision 2008/381/EC of 14 May 2008, the European Migration Network was established, its objective shall be to meet the information needs of European Union institutions and of Member States' authorities and institutions, by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policymaking in the European Union in these areas. The European Migration Network also serves to provide the general public with information on these subjects.

The Network is composed by the European Commission and the contact points designated by the Member States. Each contact point establishes a national migration network.

The contact point of each state prepares studies, whose topics have been set in the respective annual programme of activities. The topics of studies are related to the area of migration of third-country nationals.

The Latvian Contact Point of the European Migration Network is the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

Contact information:

Čiekurkalna 1.līnija 1, k-3,

Rīga, Latvia, LV-1026

Phone: + 371 67219492

E-mail: emn@pmlp.gov.lv

Website: www.emn.lv

Author of the report:

Ilze Siliņa-Osmāne, Expert of the European Migration Network Latvian contact point

Reviewed by:

Ilona Ceļmalniece, Head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs Development and International Cooperation Department's European Affairs and International Cooperation Division

Ilze Briede, Head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs Migration Division

Līga Vijupe, Head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs Asylum Affairs Division

Solvita Steļmaka, Chief Inspector of the State Border Guard Central Board Service Organization Board Return and Asylum Seeker Affairs Division

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information included therein.



Co-funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

CONTENTS

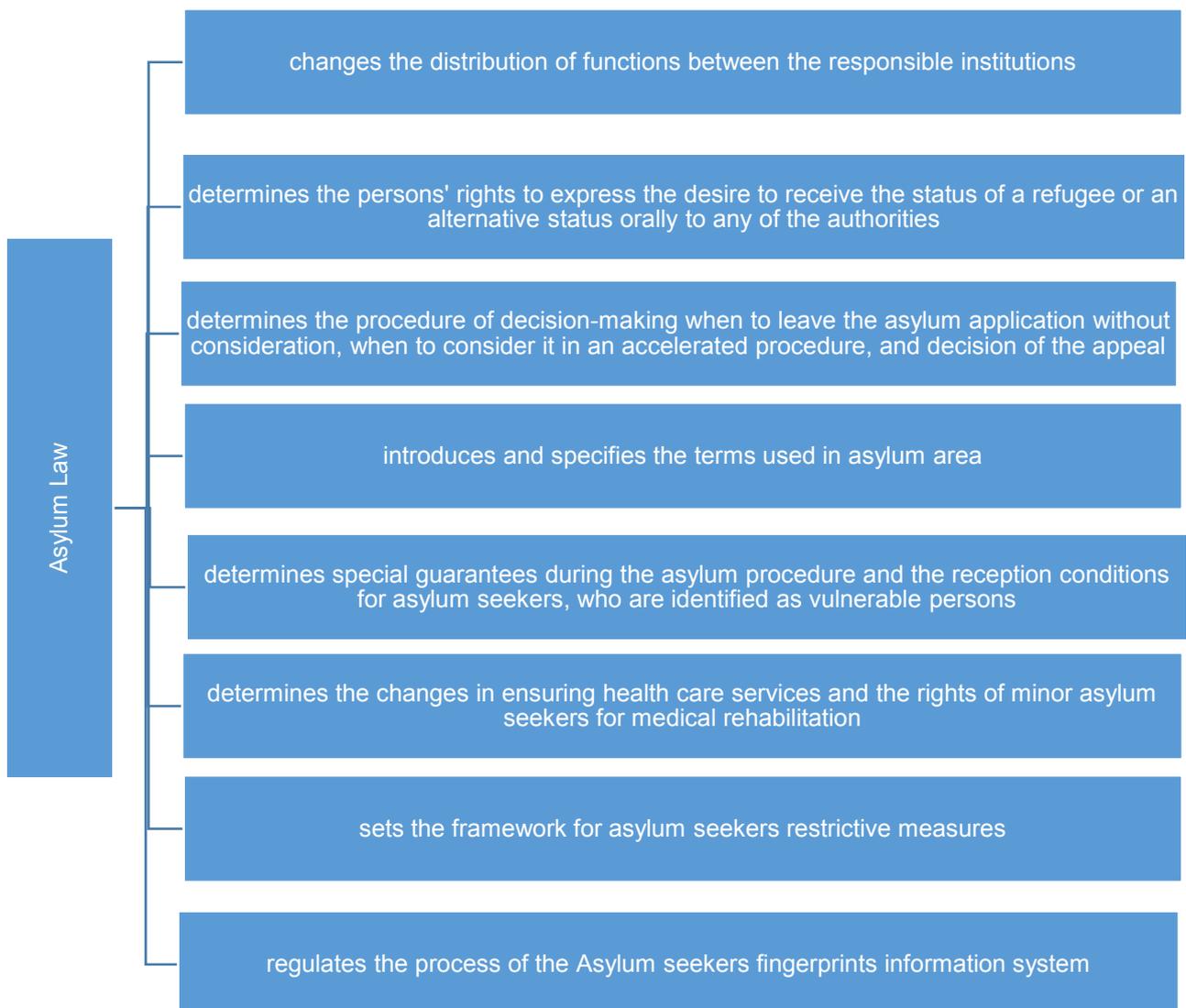
SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. OVERVIEW OF CHANGES IN THE ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY	9
2.1. General Changes in the Area of Migration and Asylum	9
3. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY	12
3.1. Economic Migration	12
3.2. Family Reunification	14
3.3. Students and Scientists	15
3.4. Citizenship and Naturalization	15
3.5. Migration and Mobility Management	16
3.5. 1. Visa Policy and Schengen Governance	16
3.6. Border Control	16
3.6.1. Cooperation with FRONTEX	17
4. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND ASYLUM	17
4.1. International Protection Procedures	19
4.2. Acceptance of Applicants for International Protection	20
4.3. Resettlement and Relocation	21
4.4. Measures for the Implementation of the Common European Asylum System	22
5. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS	22
5.1. Unaccompanied Minors	22
6. INTEGRATION	23
6.1. Promoting Integration through Socio-economic Participation	23
6.2. Promoting Integration by Providing Access to Rights and Responsibilities	25
6.3. Promoting the Integration of Specific Groups	26

7 RETURN	28
7.1. Voluntary Return	28
7.2. Forced Return	28
8. IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING SMUGGLING	30
8.1. Measures to Reduce Irregular Migration	30
8.2. Cooperation between Competent Authorities	31
8.3. Monitoring Activities of Smugglers	32
9. COUNTERING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS	32
10. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY	34
Annex 1 Introduction of Laws of the European Union	36
Annex 2 List of Sources and Literature	38
Annex 3 Definitions of Terms Used in the Work	41

SUMMARY

The annual policy report on the migration and asylum situation in Latvia provides an overview of the most important and significant changes in the migration and asylum policies, changes in the regulations introducing the requirements of laws of the European Union (hereinafter the EU) as well as reflects the discussions in the Parliament and the public on certain issues of the area of migration and asylum during the period from **1 January 2016 until 31 December 2016 and in early 2017**.

In Latvia the area of migration and asylum is determined by the Asylum Law and the Immigration Law. In the beginning of 2016 new **Asylum Law**¹ came into force, which defined the following changes in the asylum field in Latvia:



In 2016 new **Cabinet of Ministers Regulations** on asylum policy have been adopted and the current ones have been amended. The changes have affected **health care** of the asylum seekers, **the amount of allowance** has increased for asylum seekers, as well as there has been a revision of **nutritional standards** in the detained foreigners accommodation centre. The changes have also been made in payouts of **benefits** for refugees and persons with alternative status. The procedure has been defined for **educational** attainment of minor asylum seekers and for covering

¹Asylum Law. - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 2, 05.01.2016– [came into force on 19.01.2016]

expenses for municipalities that have occurred for unaccompanied minors **accommodation**. Regulations have been adopted regarding the asylum seekers **fingerprint** information system and the asylum seekers **personal documents** and their issuance.

In 2016 and in the beginning of 2017, the second most essential law in Latvia in the field of migration also was amended - **the Immigration Law**².



Statistics in the field of migration in 2016 does not differ drastically from previous years. The number of **temporary residence permits issued for the first time** has slightly decreased, however, it remains within the limits of six thousand. Of those, 2109 temporary residence permits issued for the first time were issued in connection with family reunification, 1736 - to third-country nationals in connection with employment.

The number of **asylum seekers** keep sustainable growth, reaching 350 persons. Latvia has admitted 163 persons that have been relocated within the EU relocation program from Greece and Italy. During 2016, 33³ **unaccompanied minors** entered Latvia and were detained for stay in Latvia without valid travel documents. Of which 3⁴ requested asylum in Latvia.

The officials of State Border Guard and Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs attended the EASO missions, providing support to Greece and Italy.

²Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 123, 29.06.2016 – [came into force on 01.07.2016]
Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

³ Data source: State Border Guard.

⁴ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

The State Border Guard participated in three joint operations arranged by **FRONTEX** that provided support to the EU Member States and third countries - Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Moldova, Albania and Serbia.

In 2016 national and non-governmental organizations carried out several projects for developing Latvian language skills of the migrants. The societies "Red Cross" and Shelter "Safe House" provided **support** to 463 as a whole. In Riga and regional⁵ contact points in Latgale, Vidzeme and Zemgale **The Information Centre for Immigrants** started working, which provides free advice on social and legal issues, as well as interpreter services for communication with service providers.

Thanks to Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund financing the number of persons who used the **voluntary return programme** has increased up to 75 persons (34 in 2015).⁶ There has been a slight decrease in removed persons, reaching 336 (340 in 2015⁷). The largest number of forcibly expelled nationals from a third-country were from Vietnam. The number of return decisions⁸ issued to third - country nationals continued to decrease in 2016- 1027⁹ (1225 in 2015)¹⁰. Mostly they were issued to citizens of Russia, Vietnam and Ukraine.

With mediation of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs an effective **mechanism** of practical application of the agreement between European Union and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan regarding the readmission of persons residing without authorisation had been created, which allowed to prepare travel documents quickly and efficiently, coordinate removal and remove 8 Pakistani nationals to Pakistan.¹¹

The cases of use of illegal migration paths continue to be timely in Latvia. The number of **illegal** "green" border crossing persons remain relatively high – in 2016 there were 369 third-country nationals apprehended (463 in 2015). The main groups of detainees were citizens of Vietnam, Russia, Afghanistan, India and Nepal. The largest number of people apprehended for illegal "green" border crossing was on the Latvian-Russian border.

The number of detected infringements relating to **abuse** of the legitimate types of entry has increased, when third - country nationals, upon receipt of the Schengen visa, are providing untrue information about the purpose of entry into Latvia or another country in the Schengen zone. In 2016 the number of citizens from Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan), who abused a Schengen visa to enter the EU with the aim to stay and work illegally, increased.¹²

In 2016 the number of **refusals of entry** on the border decreased - the entry was refused to 797 third - country nationals.

Within the criminal proceedings initiated regarding organisation of **human trafficking** 3 persons have been detained and the status of suspect has been determined to them.¹³ In 2016 the

⁵ In *Daugavpils, Jelgava, Cēsis and Liepāja*.

⁶ Data source: The IOM Riga Office.

⁷Third-country nationals who have left the territory by type of return and citizenship. - Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

⁸ Return decision - an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return. Source: EMN Glossary v3. - Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/docs/emn-glossary-en-version.pdf.

⁹ Data were later clarified.

¹⁰ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

¹¹ Source: State Border Guard.

¹² Source: State Border Guard.

¹³ Data source: Ministry of the Interior.

project of the society Shelter “Safe House” was implemented "Preventing human trafficking and marriage of convenience: multidisciplinary solutions" (HESTIA).

To contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of United Nations in developing countries, in particular in the priority partner countries set by Latvia in 2016- in EU Eastern partnership (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) region - the **Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines of Latvia for 2016- 2020** were adopted in 2016, that highlight the meaning of the instruments of development cooperation policy in addressing the root causes of migration.

1. INTRODUCTION

The policy report on the migration and asylum in Latvia in 2016 and early 2017 (hereinafter- the policy report) provides an overview of the most important changes in the migration and asylum policies, changes in the regulations upon introduction of requirements of laws of the EU, reflects the discussions in the Parliament and the public on certain issues of migration and asylum.

The policy report has been made on the basis of the specification developed by the European Commission and approved by the European Migration Network (hereinafter-the EMN) national contact points, which allow summarising uniform and comparable information about all Member States. A synthesis report on the migration and asylum situation in the EU in 2016, when developed, will be available on the EMN website www.emn.lv.

The information required for the development of the policy report was obtained by sending the requests for information and by compiling the answers from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, the State Border Guard, the International Migration Organisation (hereinafter the IOM) Riga Office. Experts from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs were involved in the development of the work.

To reflect main public opinions and to review the discussions in the political environment, articles, opinions and assessments published on various news and public policy sites as well as the information available on websites of other governmental institutions were used in the work. All units of sources and literature used in the work are included in the list of used sources and literature.

The data summarised by the national data providers and the European Union Statistics Office Eurostat were used in the work. Data have been coordinated with the experts of the migration and asylum areas.

All terms used in this work correspond to the definitions specified in the Asylum and Migration Glossary¹⁴.

¹⁴ Available at www.emn.lv

2. OVERVIEW OF CHANGES IN THE ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY

2.1. General Changes in the Area of Migration and Asylum

In January 19, 2016, in the context of the new Asylum Law¹⁵, changes have been made in the distribution of functions between the institutions involved in the asylum procedure in Latvia. Conducting personal interviews in order to assess compliance of the application with the criteria for granting the refugee or alternative status has been taken over from the State Border Guard by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. Interviews in order to assess compliance of the application with the criteria for granting the refugee or alternative status, according to the EU Directive 2013/32/EU, is an obligation of the authority responsible for making the decision about granting the status of refugee, granting alternative status or refusing to grant it. Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs is responsible for the conduct of the interview to obtain the information needed to make the decision on granting refugee or alternative status or refusal to grant it. The State Border Guard carries out the primary interview with the asylum seeker to obtain the information necessary for the application of Regulation No. 604/2013, as well as to make the decision to accept the application for a review or to leave it without consideration, as well as basic information about the motives of applying for international protection.¹⁶

In the reporting period, substantial changes have occurred also in the field of legal migration regulation - Immigration Law and the underlying regulations of the Cabinet to take over the two EU directives¹⁷. Both directives are linked to economic migration.

Discussions in the Area of Asylum

In 2016 there have been discussions in Latvia - in the media, the Parliament and the public most frequently about the question of reception of asylum seekers and the integration of the beneficiaries of the international protection.

During the Justice and Home Affairs Council of Ministers in Luxembourg, October 2016, Minister for the Interior Rihards Kozlovskis pointed out that the participation of Member States in the frame of movement should be voluntary, taking into account the capacity of individual reception of each Member State.¹⁸

There have been information in media, that in the beginning of 2017 only five persons have remained in Latvia, from all relocated asylum seekers (163), who were granted international protection status.¹⁹ This trend is explained by the fact that the persons who have received international protection have major problems with public negative attitude towards the different, reduced benefits for refugees and the poor Latvian language skills, which hinders the integration both in society and in the labour market.²⁰ The persons who have received international protection status, who left the country, continue to receive benefits from Latvia, to which members of the

¹⁵Asylum Law. - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 2, 05.01.2016– [came into force on 19.01.2016]

¹⁶The draft law "Asylum Law" annotation. - Available at: <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/sakums/tiesibu-akti/tiesibu-aktu-projekti/2014/07/28/groz%C4%ABjumi-patv%C4%93ruma-likum%C4%81/>.

¹⁷Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers;

Directive 2014/66/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.

¹⁸Home Affairs Ministers discuss the latest events in the areas of asylum and migration policy. - Available at: http://www.iem.gov.lv/lat/aktualitates/informacija_medijiem/?doc=32261.

¹⁹Of all the refugees relocated to Latvia, only five have stayed here. - Available at: <http://nra.lv/latvija/201577-no-visiem-uz-latviju-parvietotajiem-begliem-seit-palikusi-tikai-5.htm>.

²⁰Implementers of the refugee reception plan: Integration of asylum seekers in Latvia has failed. - Available at: <http://www.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/beglu-uznemsanas-plana-istenotaji-patveruma-mekletaju-integracija-latvija-cietusi-neveiksmi.a204034/>.

Parliament oppose. Members of the Parliament want to amend the law, defining that the benefits can be obtained by registering monthly in the State Employment Agency.²¹

The responsible officers of the Ministry of the Interior estimate that in the areas of responsibility of the Ministry written in the Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection it has succeeded by more than 90%²². Meanwhile the Ministry of Economics plans to offer to the Government to decide once more on solutions to improve the chances of finding a residence to the persons that have received international protection, as the biggest problem in the field of integration for these persons is the ability to find residence.²³

To address the challenges of integration of third-country nationals, in the beginning of 2017 Centre for Public Policy "Providus" has engaged in the project for evaluation and improvement of integration of the persons that have received international protection, which aims to create a system for the evaluation of integration²⁴.

Discussions on integration in society and challenges of persons who have received international protection are regularly held in meetings of the Parliamentary Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee. Representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, that are involved in integration events, participate in these meetings.

Aldis Austers, researcher of The Latvian Institute of International Affairs, expressed his opinion on the integration of refugees in Latvia, pointing out that *the fleeing refugees have placed Latvia in a rather unflattering situation. This is an indication of that solidarity in admitting asylum seekers cannot be a mere formality, but instead we must seriously think of ways of organizing refugee integration in society of Latvia, by reducing social prejudice and allocating sufficient funds for the refugees to be able to sustain themselves until they find permanent means of livelihood. The government must think of how to promote the employment of asylum seekers and how to provide more information about the culture and traditions of Arabs and Muslims of other ethnicities.*²⁵

Results of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Latvia acquired the status of the presiding state of the Council of the European Union on January 1, 2015. Latvian Presidency of the EU Council achieved considerable progress in the priorities put forward: *Competitive Europe, Digital Europe and Involved Europe*, while being able to provide immediate and quality response to challenges to the internal security of the EU and the EU migration and asylum policy.

Following the results²⁶ Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union achieved in the area of migration and asylum, such development was observed in 2016:

²¹ Wants to prevent the refugees who abandoned Latvia from receiving benefits. - Available at: http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/latvija/622518-velas_pec_iespejas_atrak_liegt_iespeju_latviju_pametusiem_begliem_sanemt_pabalstu.

²² Order No. 759 of the Cabinet of Ministers on December 2, 2015, "Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection" - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 238., 04.12.2015 - [came into force on 02.12.2015]

²³ MoI believes that the refugee hosting plan has succeeded by 90%. - Available at: <http://www.diena.lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/iem-uzskata-ka-beglu-uznemsanas-planu-izdevies-istenot-par-90-14165405>.

²⁴ The evaluation and improvement of integration of persons who have received international protection. - Available at: <http://providus.lv/article/starptautiskas-aizsardzibas-sanemeju-integracijas-izvertesana-un-uzlabosana>.

²⁵ Foreign and Security Policy of Latvia. Yearbook 2017. Immigration and Refugees in the European Union and Latvia. – Available at: http://www.liia.lv/en/publications/latvian-foreign-and-security-policy-yearbook-2017-577?get_file=2.

²⁶ Results of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. - Available at: https://eu2015.lv/images/news/EU2015LV_rezultati_lv.pdf.

A triologue with the European Parliament was launched regarding the draft Student/Scholar Directive: the first informal meeting took place, technical meetings took place nearly every week since February 2015, as well as 3 political trialogues.

In the first half of the year 2016, the Student/Scholar Directive was approved. It was published in the Official Journal of the EU on May 21, 2016.

Agreement was reached on the Schengen Consultation Network (VISION) termination: in accordance with the time schedule approved during the Latvian Presidency.

In accordance with the time schedule approved during the Latvian Presidency for termination of VISION, in March 21, 2016 VISION ceased to exist and was replaced by the VIS Mail II consultation mechanism.

During the Latvian Presidency the first compromise proposals for amendments to the Visa Code were developed, which were discussed in the March-June visa working group meetings.

The Council of the EU on April 13, 2016 (*Coreper II*) approved the mandate of the Council for initiating the triologue with the European Parliament on the amendments of the Visa Code.

On Coreper II, June 12, 2015, and on the Council, June 15, the draft Declaration for the Mobility Partnership with Belarus was approved.

In October 13, 2016 a Mobility partnership between the EU and Belarus was signed in Luxembourg.

3. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

The total number of temporary residence permits issued for the first time has decreased in 2016, in comparison with the previous year - 6002 (6293 in 2015)²⁷. It is related to the decrease of interest in the investor program because of introduction of more restrictive conditions for its use.

3.1. Economic Migration

In 2016, the number of residence permits issued to third - country nationals for the first time for the purpose of employment has grown a little - 1736, compared to 2015 (1639). In 2016, the total number of granted employment rights to third-country nationals has grown - 6007 (4808 in 2015), most of whom are employed in land transportation and pipeline transportation sector (2765), software programming and consulting sector (528), production of other means of transport sector (310), repair and installation of machinery and equipment sector (265) and catering services sector (230).²⁸

Table 3-1
The total number and the number of employment-related,
initially issued residence permits, 2011-2016²⁹

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Employment - related	519	597	737	971	1,639	1736
Total	3,982	4,579	6,609	3,218	4,808	6007

On July 1, 2016 the Amendments to the Immigration law came into force, that has conditions imposed to limit the issue of temporary residence permits, stating that

The Cabinet of Ministers, assessing the impact on national security or national economic development in relation to the quantity of third-country nationals in the country and the concentration in a specific national territory, is entitled to issue regulations stating for which third - country nationals and for what period of time the issue of temporary residence permits is stopped³⁰.

On March 2, 2017 Amendments to the Immigration Law³¹ came into force, in which, to address labour shortages, entry conditions for highly qualified third-country nationals are facilitated in professions, that have significant labour shortages forecasted. The Law provides the opportunity to receive the EU Blue Card also to persons, who have not acquired a proper education in a certain field, but who have at least five years appropriate professional experience in the field of expected employment. The right to employment is granted to all the family members of the employees.

The Law³² provides to shorten the time limit for the examination of documents for a person who requests the EU Blue Card. Documents must be examined within 10 working days.

²⁷ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

²⁸ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

²⁹ Data source: 2011- 2012- Eurostat, 2013-2016- Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

³⁰Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 123, 29.06.2016 – [came into force on 01.07.2016]

³¹Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

³²Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

The Law³³ has a new purpose of residence embedded, that is related with the Start-up Activity Support Law³⁴. It is stated in the Immigration Law, that a third-country national may be granted temporary residence permit to a period not exceeding three years if the third-country national plans to create or develop innovative products in Latvia.³⁵ Such enterprises will not be subjects to requirement that requests for a minimum period of one year before the member of the board is entitled to claim for the temporary residence permit, as well as the minimum tax payment amount to be paid is not set, so that the board member- a third-country national – could continue to reside in Latvia with the temporary residence permit. It is expected that these amendments will facilitate the establishment of enterprises in Latvia that create innovative products.³⁶

At the same time, the Law³⁷ determines additional requirements for the representation of merchants of third countries, whose representatives require temporary residence permit. Hereafter this third country company must be registered for at least five years, it must employ at least 50 employees and the annual turnover must exceed 10 million EUR. Such framework is included to ensure that only perspective companies and forms of cooperation enter the Latvian market. Currently, most of the temporary residence permits are refused to representatives of third-country representations of merchants, since it is found that the majority of such representations actually do not work and do not provide economic benefit for Latvia.³⁸

In addition, Amendments to the Immigration Law³⁹ determines the entry conditions for the intra-corporate transferees and seasonal workers. The Amendments take over the legal framework defined in *Directive 2014/66/EU⁴⁰ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer*. Part of the conditions of entry are taken over in the Regulation No 470 of the Cabinet of Ministers on July 15, 2016 "Amendments of June 21, 2010 Regulation No 564 "Regulations Regarding Residence Permits ""⁴¹, that had corresponding changes made in 2016.

The Law⁴² defines the concept of intra-corporate transferees and it is intended that such persons do not require certification regarding the right to employment with a specific employer, if they enter within the short term mobility, and the duration of the temporary residence permit will be determined depending on the type of employment.

³³ Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

³⁴ Start-up Activity Support Law.- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 241, 10.12.2016 – [came into force on 01.01.2017]

³⁵If, after the temporary residence permit is issued, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs recognizes following conditions are met: a) within three months after adoption of the decision on granting the temporary residence permit, a third-country national is registered as a member of the board of the company registered in the commercial register no longer than a year ago, in which he intends to create or develop innovative products, b) the total amount of investments in share capital of the company by qualified risk capital investors during the six months period after granting the first temporary residence permit for the same activity have reached at least 30 000 EUR and during 18 months period after granting temporary residence permit- at least EUR 60 000, c) in connection with activities related to creation or development of the same innovative product in Latvia, no more than five nationals of third countries stay with temporary residence permit. If all of third-country nationals do not apply simultaneously for the temporary residence permit in connection with activities related to creation or development of the same innovative product in Latvia , temporary residence permit is granted for a period not exceeding the period for which it was granted the first of the third-country nationals who has the temporary residence permit for the implementation of this activity, d) the third country national to whom the temporary residence permit is issued in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph, is not employed by any other employer or is not an official of another company registered in the Commercial register.

³⁶ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

³⁷Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

³⁸ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

³⁹Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

⁴⁰Directive 2014/66/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.- Official Journal of the European Union, L 157, 27.05.2014.

⁴¹ July 15, 2016 Regulation No 470 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments of June 21, 2010 Regulations No 564 "Regulations Regarding Residence Permits "".- Latvijas Vēstnesis No.138, 20.07.2016– [came into force on 21.07.2016]

⁴²Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

In 2016 changes have been made in the Regulation No 552 of the Cabinet of Ministers on June 21, 2010 " Procedures for Approval of Invitations and Drawing up of Written Requests "⁴³ and the Regulation No 676 of the Cabinet of Ministers on August 30, 2011 "Visa Regulations"⁴⁴take over the legal framework defined in the *Directive 2014/36/EU*⁴⁵ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers. The Law includes a definition of seasonal workers and the conditions of stay in Latvia.

3.2. Family Reunification

In 2016 the number of first issued residence permits for third-country nationals in connection with family reunification has slightly decreased - 2109 (2553 in 2015).⁴⁶ The reduction is related to the decrease of foreign investors, which require the first-time temporary residence permits related with investments in the economy of Latvia.⁴⁷

The Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law,"⁴⁸ according to the *Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification* provides granting a right to employment and commercial activities to family members of third-country nationals, who have a permit to work in Latvia. This Law provides granting the right to family reunification to adult age children of third - country nationals, who received the first temporary residence permit in Latvia, while being minors.

Use of the EMN results

The EMN national contact point in Latvia developed a focussed study "*Family reunification of third-country nationals in the European Union: experience of Latvia*"⁴⁹, whose objective is to describe the policy of Latvia in the area of family reunification of third-country nationals as well as to inform about current events and national policy in this area.

The focussed study covers the field of legal immigration, which governs the right to family reunification of third-country nationals.

Conclusions of the study:

- In Latvia, equal conditions for issue of the residence permit are applied to third-country nationals both in the event of family reunification and establishment of a new family. However, persons that have acquired international protection can get reunited with the family members only if such family had already existed in the country of origin and family members are located abroad.
- There are no large numbers of third-country nationals arriving in Latvia and no significant obstacles or encumbrances have been established for implementing the right of family reunification of third-country nationals.

⁴³August 2, 2016 Regulation No 500 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to Regulation No. 552 of the Cabinet of Ministers on December 21, 2010 " Procedures for Approval of Invitations and Drawing up of Written Requests ""- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 149, 04.08.2016 [came into force on 05.08.2016]

⁴⁴ August 9, 2016 Regulations No. 524 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to Regulation No 676 of the Cabinet of Ministers on August 30, 2011 "Visa Regulations"- Latvijas Vēstnesis No. 154, 11.08.2016– [came into force on 12.08.2016]

⁴⁵ Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers.- Official Journal, L 94, 28.03.2014.

⁴⁶ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁴⁷ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁴⁸ Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

⁴⁹ www.emn.lv

- In Latvia, any third-country national, who has received a temporary residence permit or a permanent residence permit, can be the inviter (*sponsor*) of his/her family member.
- Free access to the labour market is available only for third-country nationals who reside in Latvia with permanent residence permit and for family members of employed third-country nationals.
- Access to state social benefits and services is restricted as well. Third-country nationals legally working in Latvia may receive benefits that are related to the payment of social security contributions, but cannot receive benefits that are paid to citizens of Latvia regardless of the paid social security contributions.

3.3. Students and Scientists

In 2016 in relation with education there were 1314 residence permits issued for the first time (1117 in 2015).⁵⁰

During 2016, the number of foreign students in Latvia has increased by 26 percent. There were 8137 foreign students in Latvia in academic year 2016/2017 (6465 in 2015/2016)⁵¹, of which third - country nationals were - 2817.

"Amendments to the Immigration Law"⁵² entered into force on July 1, 2016, which state that third-country nationals, who have received temporary residence permit due to full time studies in educational institution accredited in Latvia, have:

- 1) the right to employment without restrictions of up to 20 hours a week at any employer;
- 2) right to employment without restrictions in the last two semesters of study period⁵³ when studying full time master's or doctoral programs, if there is no study break during that time.

The Amendments to the Immigration Law defines that a third-country national has the right to request for a temporary residence permit in Latvia (with intention to search for a job) for a period not exceeding six months, if the third-country national has completed a full-time master's or doctoral program in university, has obtained a diploma of higher-education that is nationally recognized and has requested the residence permit not later than three months after obtaining this diploma.

The Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law"⁵⁴, complements the regulation, defining that students, who have received a long-term visa due to the student exchange, also have the right to employment for up to 20 hours per week.

On October 17, 2016 the Government of Latvia and the Government of Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement of cooperation in the field of education and science.⁵⁵

3.4. Citizenship and Naturalization

In 2016 there were 987 persons accepted to the citizenship of Latvia via naturalisation procedure, thus slightly exceeding the indicator of 2015 (971).⁵⁶ Similarly to 2016, the greatest proportion of individuals that have acquired citizenship consists of non-citizens of Latvia - 89%. Compared to year 2015 (79), in 2016 the number of third-country nationals, who received citizenship of Latvia via naturalisation procedure, slightly increased - 106.⁵⁷

Use of the EMN results

⁵⁰ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁵¹ Data source: Ministry of Education and Science.

⁵² Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 123, 29.06.2016 – [came into force on 01.07.2016]

⁵³ If the duration of the master's programme is one year, - during this study programme.

⁵⁴ Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

⁵⁵ The Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Kyrgyzstan Republic on cooperation in the field of education and science. - Available at: http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/starpvaldibu_ligumi/L%C4%ABgums_LV.pdf.

⁵⁶ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁵⁷ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

On April 15, 2016, in Luxembourg a Conference on Statelessness was held, organized by the Luxembourg national contact point of the European Migration Network, the Conference was attended by representatives from the European Union institutions, international organisations, academia and public administrations. The representative of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs presented the regulatory framework in the area of statelessness in Latvia. In the conclusions of the Conference it was stated that other countries, which have not yet established a regulatory framework in the area of stateless persons, could learn from the experience of Latvia and Estonia.⁵⁸

3.5. Migration and Mobility Management

3.5.1. Visa Policy and Schengen Governance

In 2016 the total number of issued visas has increased, reaching 169,758 (165,133 in 2015). Of those, 165,613 were Schengen visas and 4,145 were long-term (D) visas.⁵⁹

Table 3-2

Total number of issued visas by type, 2015-2016.⁶⁰

	2015	2016
Schengen visas	162,110	165,613
Long-term (D) visas	3,023	4,145
Total	165,133	169,758

In 2016 all of the short-term entry visas (165,613) were issued with the biometric identifiers.⁶¹

In 2016 no new visa representation agreements have been concluded. Acceptance of visa applications has begun through outsourcing company "VF Worldwide Holding Ltd" in Azerbaijan, Georgia, China, India, Great Britain and Turkey, as well as through outsourcing company "Pony Express" in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In China on October 27, 2016, in addition to the already existing four visa centers in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu, eleven visa centers launched their work in the following cities: Changsha, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Fuzhou, Jinan, Kunming, Shenyang, Nanjing, Shenzhen, Wuhan, and Xi'an. The acceptance of visa applications is already done in 15 centres in China and their delivery to the Embassy is provided by the company "VF worldwide Holding Ltd". The opening of visa centres facilitates submission of visa applications for third - country nationals for travelling to Latvia, as an opportunity is given for residents of China's provinces and cities to submit documents for a visa nearer their place of residence.

The State Border Guard actively participates in the process of the EU Member States' Schengen evaluation process. Nine State Border Guard experts were included in the Schengen evaluation commissions. Participation in the Schengen evaluation commissions has enabled State Border Guard experts to get acquainted with the practices of other Member States in carrying out *the Schengen acquis*, to adopt the best practices, as well as to take into account their negative examples, which are focused on the work of the commissions. This is particularly important, when preparing for the current assessment of Latvia in 2018.

⁵⁸ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁵⁹ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁶⁰ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁶¹ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

3.6. Border Control

In November 2016 in the airport "Riga" a new passenger terminal was put in operation, which, according to the requirements of the State Border Guard, has inspection booths, as well as other offices for carrying out basic tasks.

In addition, in 2016 within the Internal security fund – (borders/visas) advanced document test equipment was purchased (comparators, microscopes and the necessary cameras and lighting for ensuring their functions). These devices are installed at border crossing points with the highest intensity of crossing the state border, as well as in places where previously installed equipment is technically obsolete.

National external border crossing checkpoints were equipped with various technical devices, use of which prevents illegal migration and illegal trafficking of persons across the border.

In general, the modernisation of the infrastructure of these border crossing points is an essential instrument to ensure maximum permeability of the border crossing flow, while ensuring high quality of border checks. Whereas the installation of advanced document test equipment will allow to discover counterfeits of travel and other documents granting other rights efficient and faster.⁶²

In 2016 the local video-surveillance system was modernized in four EU external border control points.⁶³

To modernise and optimise the activities of the officials of competent authorities, within the modernisation of the border crossing point "*Vientuļi*" sub-module of RAIS- 2009 has been designed "Automated border crossing point course control system" (further- ABCPCCS), which will facilitate and strengthen the transparency and control of the border crossing process, as well as it will improve the organization of cross-border movements of the border crossing point. On January 2, 2017 the ABCPCCS pilot project has been launched in the border crossing point "*Vientuļi*".⁶⁴

3.6.1. Cooperation with FRONTEX

During the reporting period the State Border Guard participated in three joint operations arranged by FRONTEX that provided support to the EU Member States and third countries- Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Moldova, Albania and Serbia.

- The joint operation Flexible Operational Activities 2016 Land (host countries - Bulgaria/Croatia). There were 83 State Border Guard representatives involved in the joint operation;
- The joint operation Coordination points 2016 (host countries-Moldova/Albania/Serbia). There were 3 State Border Guard representatives involved in the joint operation;
- The joint operation POSEIDON 2015 with extension/ POSEIDON 2016/ RAPID Intervention Escort/ TRITON 2015 with extension /TRITON 2016/ INDALO 2016 (host countries - Greece/Italy). There were 154 State Border Guard representatives involved in the joint operations.

In addition, four State Border Guard representatives participated in four air border control operations organised by FRONTEX in Bulgaria, Italy, Finland and Lithuania.

⁶² Source: State Border Guard.

⁶³ Border control points in *Silene, Pāternieki, Terehova* and *Zilupe*.

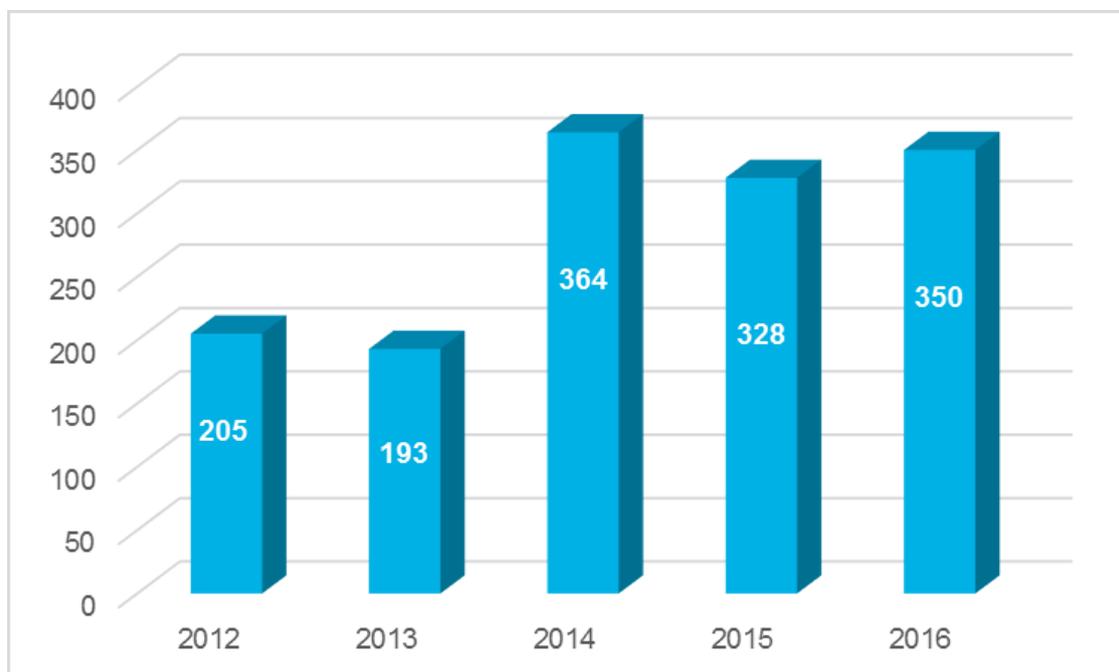
⁶⁴ Source: State Border Guard.

In 2016, 226 State Border Guard officials and 20 State police officials participated in the joint FRONTEX operations.⁶⁵

4. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND ASYLUM

Compared to 2015, the number of asylum seekers in 2016 has increased to 350⁶⁶ persons (328 in 2015)⁶⁷. From the total number of asylum seekers 163 are relocated from Greece and Italy and six persons are resettled from refugee camps in Turkey.⁶⁸ In 2016, compared to the previous years, there has been increase in the number of asylum seekers from Syria - 149 (6 in 2015), Russia- 26 (12 in 2015) and India- 20 (0 in 2015) while it has decreased from Iraq – 3 (86 in 2015) and Vietnam - 4 (82 in 2015).⁶⁹

Schedule 4-1
Number of asylum seekers, 2012-2016



Cooperation with third countries

In the beginning of 2016, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs in collaboration with the State Border Guard launched the project "Strengthen Kosovo Institutions in Effective Management of Migration". Within the project five officials of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and one State Border Guard official participated in two seminars of experts in Kosovo on "Assessing existing migration and asylum legislation and proposing legislative changes to ensure that this legislation meets the requirements of the EU legislation". At the end of October, 2016, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs within this project hosted the delegation of Kosovo, and

⁶⁵ Source: State Border Guard.

⁶⁶ This number does not include the six resettled persons.

⁶⁷ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁶⁸ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁶⁹ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

among other things shared the experience of the application of Latvian asylum procedure and asylum seekers' accommodation.⁷⁰

On October 27 and 28, 2016 the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as the Contact point in Latvia of the Eastern Partnership Migration and Asylum Panel for the first time hosted a meeting of experts within the framework of this format. The theme of the event was the use of information and communication technologies in the management of migration (including asylum), and this meeting brought together about 60 participants from all the 6 countries of the Eastern partnership, 8 EU Member States, EU institutions, international organisations, civil society, the United States, as well as from the academic and the private sector. During the expert meetings, participants discussed the use of information and communication technologies in the management of migration and asylum and exchanged good practice in dealing with these topics.

On November 9, 2016 the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, within the BOMCA 9 project, hosted representatives from the Kazakhstan Border Guard Service and delegation of the Immigration Police, and shared the experience of the reception of asylum seekers and their accommodation.⁷¹

On December 21, 2016 the Joint Latvian-Russian working group meeting was held regarding the fight against illegal migration, in which the involved parties shared the current events in areas of illegal and legal migration. The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and the State Border Guard officials briefed the Russian side on the changes in the legislation of Latvia, concerning acceptance of application for asylum and its examination.⁷²

4.1. International Protection Procedures

On May 17, 2016 Regulation No. 296 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations of the Asylum Seekers Fingerprint Information System"⁷³ were adopted, which defines Asylum Seekers Fingerprint Information System's⁷⁴ included amount of information, procedure for inclusion, conditions of use and storage maturities, institutions to be granted access to the information in the system, as well as institutions which are entitled to request a fingerprint comparison with *Eurodac* central database and procedure of such comparison requests. The system ensures the establishment of the fingerprint comparison system Eurodac according to Regulation (EU) No. 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 for effective application of the Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, which foresees the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, and for comparison requests with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1077/2011, establishing the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice⁷⁵.

⁷⁰ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁷¹ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁷² Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁷³ May 17, 2016 Regulation No.296 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations of the Asylum Seekers Fingerprint Information System".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No.96, 19.05.2016- [came into force on 20.05.2016]

⁷⁴ The system is a component of the Biometric data processing system. The administrator and the carrier of the system is the Information centre of the Ministry of the Interior.

⁷⁵ Regulation (EU) No.603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 for effective application of the Regulation (EU) No.604/2013, which foresees the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, and for comparison requests with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1077/2011, establishing the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice.- Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.

On June 28, 2016 Regulation No.409 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations for the State Guaranteed Legal Assistance Application by the Asylum Seeker, a Refugee or a Person with Alternative Status"⁷⁶ was adopted, which determines the sample application forms for the state guaranteed legal assistance which is submitted by the asylum seeker, a refugee and a person with alternative status. The sample forms of the application for the state guaranteed legal assistance are developed to facilitate prompt and effective opportunity for the asylum seeker, refugee or person with alternative status to claim the state legal assistance⁷⁷.

On July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 456 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations of the Register of Asylum Seekers"⁷⁸ was adopted, defining the included amount of information, conditions of information use, as well as the institutions which should be granted access to the information stored in the Register of Asylum Seekers.⁷⁹

The draft law "Amendments to the Asylum Law"⁸⁰, prepared by The Ministry of the Interior, provides that a person receives a temporary travel document if needed, so it would be possible to enter Latvia within the resettlement mechanism⁸¹. Within the relocation and resettlement mechanism a person is considered as an asylum seeker from the day, when he/she is admitted in Latvia and has submitted an application for refugee or alternative status, until the administrative process for his/hers application is completed.⁸²

4.2. Acceptance of Applicants for International Protection

On July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 458 of the Cabinet of Ministers " Regulations Regarding Personal Document of Asylum Seekers and Procedures for the Issuance Thereof"⁸³ was adopted, which determines the form of asylum seeker's persons document and the procedure of its issuing.⁸⁴ The document is issued by the State Border Guard.⁸⁵

On July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 499 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the Amount of Expenditure and the Procedure of Coverage for Asylum Seekers' Subsistence and Daily Allowance"⁸⁶ was adopted, which increases the allowances for asylum seekers. Allowance to asylum seekers⁸⁷ has increased from EUR 2.15 to EUR 3.00 per day.

On July 26, 2016 Regulation No. 489 of the Cabinet of Ministers was adopted "Internal Rules of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers"⁸⁸, that define internal rules of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs' accommodation centre for asylum seekers. In comparison with the previous Cabinet's regulations, the new regulations adjusts arrivals and staying in the centre of social

⁷⁶Regulation No.409 of the Cabinet of Ministers on 28 June, 2016 "Regulations for the State Guaranteed Legal Assistance Application by the Asylum Seeker, a Refugee or a Person with Alternative Status."- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No.124, 30.06.2016.-[came into force on 01.07.2016]

⁷⁷Draft of the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations for the State Guaranteed Legal Assistance Sample Application Forms by the Asylum Seeker, a Refugee or a Person with Alternative Status" annotation.- Available at: http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2016_06/IEMAnot_230516_juridiskapalid.1161.doc.

⁷⁸July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 456 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations of the Register of Asylum Seekers".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 137, 19.07.2016- [came into force on 20.07.2016]

⁷⁹The regulations were adopted in the context of the new Asylum Law, which entered into force on January 19, 2016.

⁸⁰Draft law "Amendments to the Asylum Law" was adopted in the second reading of the Parliament on March 2, 2017.

⁸¹Entry document may be used one time when entering Latvia.

⁸²Law "Amendments to the Asylum Law" table of proposals. - Available at: <http://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS12/saeimalivs12.nsf/0/A88333B323C248EEC22580D0003DBA33?OpenDocument>.

⁸³July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 458 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding Personal Document of Asylum Seekers and Procedures for the Issuance Thereof".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 137, 19.07.2016.-[came into force on 20.07.2016]

⁸⁴The regulations were adopted in the context of the new Asylum Law, which entered into force on January 19, 2016.

⁸⁵The regulations were adopted in the context of the new Asylum Law, which entered into force on January 19, 2016.

⁸⁶July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 449 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the Amount of Expenditure and the Procedure of Coverage of Asylum Seekers' Subsistence and Daily Allowance". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 134, 14.07.2016.- [came into force on 15.07.2016]

⁸⁷The asylum seekers, who are temporarily housed in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs' accommodation centre for asylum seekers "Mucenieki" receive the above mentioned allowance. The allowance is intended for food, hygiene goods and basic necessities.

⁸⁸July 26, 2016 Regulation No. 489 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Internal Rules of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 143, 27.07.2016- [came into force on 28.07.2016]

support and assistance providers, as well as the press or other mass media representatives, providing that such activities require the prior approval of the Asylum seeker accommodation centre head or the authorized official of the Head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. A condition is introduced that the accommodation centre for asylum seekers employees should assess, whether the asylum seeker has special admission requirements and, if found, necessary measures must be taken, so that these needs are taken into account during the asylum procedure, as well as the first-time health check must be ensured, if it has not been done before. It is also provided that underage asylum seekers can engage in leisure activities, games and recreational activities. According to the Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection asylum seekers have the right to participate in events to help gain or maintain job skills that are organized in the accommodation centre for asylum seekers and are ongoing in the territory of the centre.⁸⁹

To facilitate the socialisation of the asylum seekers, maintaining job skills and to give the opportunity to supplement financial resources for daily needs, in the law "Amendments to the Immigration Law"⁹⁰ the specified period has been reduced from nine months to six months, after which, if the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs has not made a decision on the application for refugee or alternative status and this has not happened due to the fault of the asylum seeker, the asylum seeker is granted the right to engage in unlimited employment activities.

On September 20, 2016 Regulation No. 620 of the Cabinet of Ministers was adopted "Procedure for Carrying Out the Health Check of the Detained Asylum Seeker and Sanitary Handling, and Recording the Results"⁹¹, that defines the procedure for carrying out the health check of the asylum seeker and sanitary handling, and recording the results for detained asylum seeker, when placing him/her into accommodation premises. The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers have been adopted on the basis of the new Asylum Law⁹². Previous Asylum Law did not include requirements for the health check and sanitary handling of the detained asylum seekers.

In 2016 the current asylum seeker accommodation centre was expanded. It can accommodate 250 asylum seekers simultaneously (previously 110).

In 2016 additional building for the accommodation of asylum seekers was renewed and it was opened by the Ministry of Interior and *Ropaži* Municipality on March 17, 2017. There is also a multifunctional centre in the renovated building for citizens of *Mucenieki*.⁹³ Currently 450 asylum seekers can be placed in the asylum seeker accommodation centre "*Mucenieki*".⁹⁴

4.3. Resettlement and Relocation

Up to the end of the year 2016, 155 persons from Greece and eight persons from Italy, in need of international protection, have been transferred to Latvia. In the first three months of 2017, 107 more persons have been moved to Latvia from Greece and Italy.⁹⁵ Latvia has admitted almost half of the required number of relocated persons in accordance with the European Union relocation programme.

⁸⁹Draft regulation of Cabinet of Ministers "Internal Rules of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers" annotation. - Available at: http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2016_07/IEMAnot_040716_PMIC%20ieks_kart.1473.doc.

⁹⁰ Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]

⁹¹September 20, 2016 Regulation No. 620 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Procedure for Carrying out the Health Check of the Detained Asylum Seeker and Sanitary Handling, and Recording the Results".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 184, 22.09.2016.-[came into force on 23.09.2016]

⁹²Asylum Law. - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 2, 05.01.2016– [came into force on 19.01.2016]

⁹³Opening of the restored building of the Asylum seeker centre and multifunctional centre for citizens of Mucenieki. -Available at: http://www.iem.gov.lv/lat/aktualitates/informacija_medijiem/?doc=33924.

⁹⁴ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁹⁵ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

Up to the end of the year 2016, six persons have been resettled to Latvia from Turkey's refugee camps.⁹⁶ In the beginning of 2017, additional four persons have been resettled to Latvia from Turkey. Overall, Latvia has resettled 20% from required amount of resettled persons.

Use of the EMN results

The EMN Latvian national contact point developed a focussed study "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes Latvian Experience"⁹⁷, whose aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges and current solutions in connection with the resettlement scheme for asylum seekers and humanitarian admission programme.

Latvia currently has not created any national resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes.

Experts have identified the following challenges and difficulties in the implementation of the resettlement.

Challenges:

- Developing solutions for carrying out resettlement of persons in need of international protection, according to the Latvian legislation. Adaption of the resettlement programme to the legislation of Latvia (Latvia's competent authorities currently do not recognise travel documents issued in Turkey).
- The political situation of the third country, participation in the process of resettlement.
- Limited or inadequate knowledge on how to build a resettlement programme, as well as lack of practical experience in matters relating to resettlement of persons in need of international protection.

Obstacles and difficulties:

- The lack of valid travel document for persons, who are planned to be resettled.
- Latvia has limited resources for the admission of persons and the integration of the resettled persons.
- Narrow range of participating service providers creates high costs of resettlement process. Currently each EU Member State agree on the costs of services individually, although it could be regulated at EU level.⁹⁸

4.4. Measures for the Implementation of the Common European Asylum System

Seven officials of the State Border Guard attended the activities supported by the European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter EASO) in Italy, and one State Border Guard official participated in EASO mission in Greece. One official of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs participated in the EASO supported activities in Greece. In the beginning of 2017, one official of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and one official of the State Border Guard participated in the EASO supported activities in Italy.⁹⁹

Training

Overall, eight officials of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs participated in training activities of EASO, acquiring EASO modules "Interviewing a vulnerable person", "Reception", "Information about country of origin", "Interviewing children" and "Fundamental rights and international protection".

⁹⁶ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

⁹⁷ www.emn.lv

⁹⁸ According to the information provided by the officials of the Ministry of Interior.

⁹⁹ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

One official of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs participated in practical training of EASO about the Country of origin information portal.¹⁰⁰

5. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

5.1. Unaccompanied minors

In 2016, 33¹⁰¹ unaccompanied minors entered Latvia, who were detained for stay in Latvia without valid travel documents. Of which three¹⁰² requested asylum in Latvia. The largest number of unaccompanied minors from a third country were from Vietnam.

On January 19, 2016, the Asylum Law¹⁰³ came into force, which provides that unaccompanied minor may be either placed in a foster family, in addition to the accommodation in the asylum seeker accommodation centre and childcare institution. Decision, concerning accommodation of an unaccompanied minor in the asylum seeker accommodation centre, childcare institution or placing him/her in the foster family, is made by the Orphan's court in cooperation with the social service, clarifying the opinion of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. Unaccompanied minor is housed in the asylum seeker accommodation centre or a childcare institution, until he or she is provided appropriate care by the guardian or foster family. If the designation of the guardian or the foster family is not necessary for the unaccompanied minor, the asylum seeker stays in the asylum seeker accommodation centre or childcare institution unaccompanied.

The Ministry of Welfare developed Regulation No. 370 of the Cabinet of Ministers "The Order in which Municipality Expenses for Accommodating Minor Asylum Seekers are funded from the State Budget"¹⁰⁴, which determines the order in which the state shall cover the expenses incurred to the municipality in accommodating the unaccompanied minor in the childcare institution or a foster family.

In 2016 series of events, devoted to the question of unaccompanied minors, took place. The meetings were organised by the Ombudsman's Office, as well as the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights. In 2017, the events in this area will continue to establish an effective and transparent mechanism for cooperation between the institutions involved, in cases where the unaccompanied foreigner is found.¹⁰⁵

6. INTEGRATION

6.1. Promoting Integration through Socio-economic Participation

Considering the importance of the Latvian language in the labour market, changes are made to the Latvian language learning programmes without an intermediate of the State Employment Agency, dividing every level of the language in sublevels (A, B, and C language skill levels divided into sublevels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) and thus providing more time for learning each level of the language gradually. Until the end of 2016, seven persons with the refugee or alternative status have started learning Latvian language at sublevel A1 and four people waiting for the start of the course. As after the changes in the programme no person has yet taken the exam in the National

¹⁰⁰ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

¹⁰¹ Data source: State Border Guard.

¹⁰² Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

¹⁰³ Asylum Law. - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 2, 05.01.2016– [came into force on 19.01.2016]

¹⁰⁴ June 14, 2016 The Regulation No. 370 of the Cabinet of Ministers "The Procedure in which Municipality Expenses for Accommodating Minor Asylum Seekers are funded from the State Budget".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 116, 16.06.2016- [came into force on 01.07.2016]

¹⁰⁵ Source: State Border Guard.

Centre for Education for state language proficiency certificate acquisition, it is not possible to make conclusions about the impact of the changes to the learning of the national language.

In 2016 there were projects implemented or initiated for improvement of the Latvian language skills of migrants:

- Within the Arab Cultural Centre and the Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Riga City Councils' Programme of the Society integration, migrants were able to acquire Latvian conversational language in the funded project "Collaboration Bridge".¹⁰⁶
- At the end of 2016 within the Asylum and Migration Fund for the Integration the society "Education Development Centre", Latvian Language Agency and Daugavpils University began implementing the Latvian language training courses to third-country nationals with a variety of background levels of Latvian language. The length of the course is at least 120 academic hours, and it is planned to train 1040 representatives of the target groups until December 2018.¹⁰⁷

The Ministry of the Interior has developed draft law "Amendments to the Asylum Law"¹⁰⁸, which provides splitting the current allowance of the refugee or a person with alternate status in two benefits- a one-time financial support and a benefit to cover the accommodation costs (hereinafter-benefit) for 10 or 7 months, depending on the status granted, by linking benefit for the working-age person with registration in the State Employment Agency or employment for the first 3 months. The Law defines that individuals with disability groups I or II and persons, who are studying full time in general, professional, higher or special education institutions in Latvia do not have to register with the State Employment Agency in order to receive benefits.

To promote the provision of social support, according to the informational report of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development "Report about the impact of the reception and socio-economic inclusion of the refugees and persons with alternative status on the budgets of the local authorities", with the protocol resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on September 20, 2016 (Protocol No. 46, article 40) it was established, that the actual expenditure on reception and activities of socio-economic inclusion of the refugees and persons with alternative status in the period of two years after the determination of the status should be compensated to the municipalities from the programme of the state budget "The Funds for Contingencies" for expenditures that have occurred from January 1, 2016 while providing social services, social assistance and support, that are defined in the Social Services and Social assistance Law, Children's Rights Protection Law and other laws and the binding regulations of the respective municipality.

The Adult education governance model implementation plan 2016-2020, that was approved with the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 287¹⁰⁹ on May 5, 2016, in which the refugees and persons with alternative status are included as one of the priority target groups, intend to establish permanent and sustainable system of adult education, which will prevent the fragmentation of adult education, the individual action of the institutions and the lack of information for adult education planning and impact assessment. The functioning of the model is intended for management of any source of funding, including the state budget management. The model has been developed, considering the competence and the part in the adult education of different institutions according to legislative delegation.

¹⁰⁶Free Latvian conversational language lessons for foreigners in Latvia. - Available at: http://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9919%3ABezmaksas-latviesu-sarunvalodas-nodarbibas-arzemniekiem-Latvija&catid=14%3AJaunumi&Itemid=186&lang=lv.

¹⁰⁷ Source. Ministry of Culture.

¹⁰⁸Law "Amendments to the Asylum Law."- Available at: <http://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS12/saeimalivs12.nsf/0/A88333B323C248EEC22580D0003DBA33?OpenDocument>.

¹⁰⁹The Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 287 on May 5, 2016 "Regarding the Adult Education Governance Model Implementation Plan 2016-2020".-Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 89, 01.05.2016.

The specialists of the State Employment Agency project "Integration of refugees and persons with alternative status in the labour market of Latvia" have created an informative booklet for refugees and persons with alternative status "First steps on the way to work" in Latvian, English and Arabic. The booklet presents the services and support for job search by the State Employment Agency, as well as gives a brief information about the education, housing and social support issues.¹¹⁰

In March, 2017, society Shelter "Safe house" updated the informational material issued in 2015 for asylum seekers "Latvia- country by the Baltic Sea ". The booklet is prepared in Latvian, Arabic, Dari, English and French. The informative material in Latvian is mainly intended for local professionals in different industries. There are a total of 22 topics in the booklet: General information about Latvia; The rights, duties and responsibilities of the Latvia's inhabitants, History of Latvia; Health care; the social assistance system in Latvia; Housing; Education; Employment and other topics important for the target group.¹¹¹

Use of the EMN results

On March 17-18, 2016 the national contact point of Latvia of the European Migration Network held a workshop for experts "Good practices in Integration of Migrants in line with OSCE Commitment and International Legal standards". In the expert seminar there were discussions held about language learning and civil integration capabilities and requirements faced by different categories of third-country nationals in other countries. The expert seminar was attended by representatives of the Baltic States and integration experts from other EU countries, who shared their valuable experience. The actuality of the workshop was based on the current preparation of amendments to the Latvian Immigration Law, which will be updated in the integration section, as well as based on the need to implement the "Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection".¹¹²

6.2. Promoting Integration by Providing Access to Rights and Responsibilities

On July 26, 2016 Regulation No. 488 of the Cabinet of Ministers was adopted "Procedures for the Provision of a Minor Asylum Seeker with Opportunities for Acquiring Education"¹¹³, which determines the order, in which a minor asylum seeker is provided educational opportunities in national language in state or local education authority. Regulations include rules arising from the Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Regulations include requirement from "Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection" stating, that the acquisition of general education has to be provided in educational institutions that implement the education program in national language.

The Ministry of Culture has submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers the draft plan of the implementation plan for 2017-2018 of the National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines 2012-2018. The plan includes a series of events aimed for integration of third-country nationals. The plan also includes events for involving nationals of third countries into Latvia's public life.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰An informative booklet has been created for refugees and persons with alternative status "First steps on the way to work". - Available at: <http://www.nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=2&mid=2&txt=4570&from=0>.

¹¹¹Updated informative material "Latvia- country by the Baltic Sea". - Available at: [aktualizets-informativais-materials-latvija-valsts-pie-baltijas-juras](#).

¹¹²Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

¹¹³July 26, 2016 Regulation No. 488 of the Cabinet of Minister " Procedures for the Provision of a Minor Asylum Seeker with Opportunities for Acquiring Education".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 143, 27.07.2016-[came into force on 28.07.2016]

¹¹⁴ Source: Ministry of Culture.

In June, 2016, **Information Centre for Immigrants** has started working, whose activities are provided by the society Shelter "Safe house" within the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund project. Within the Information Centre for Immigrants in Riga and regional¹¹⁵ contact points in Latgale, Vidzeme and Zemgale free advice on social and legal issues, as well as interpreter services for communication with service providers, including medical personnel, were provided. Information Centre for Immigrants office in Riga acted as the main coordinating centre in Latvia, which not only addressed the particular situations of clients, but also provided support to the regional information centres for immigrants in the provision of services, provided professional support to services in all municipalities of Latvia, coordinated the identification and availability of services for different groups of immigrants.¹¹⁶ During 2016 in the Information Centres for Immigrants contact points in Riga, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Liepāja and Cēsis customer consultants provided 940 consultations in total on legal and social issues to the third-country nationals. The most urgent topics: migration, learning Latvian language, employment, family issues and health care.¹¹⁷

In 2016, the Information Centres for Immigrants organized three two-day training seminars for groups of professionals that were attended by 61 specialist from 16 regions. The objective of the seminars was to improve professional competence of the various specialists in intercultural communication and knowledge about third-country nationals, including reception and integration in regions of Latvia of refugees, persons with alternative status and asylum seekers, providing an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional team formation and development.¹¹⁸

In order to ensure training courses and informative events customized to the individuals with international protection, to promote their integration into Latvian society, in July 1, 2016 society Shelter "Safe house" launched the project "Support measures for persons with international protection".¹¹⁹ To ensure asylum seekers, refugees and persons with alternative status with knowledge useful to living in Latvia, within the socio-economic inclusion training programme, lessons were held about how different systems work in Latvia- employment, education, housing market, the system of help for the refugees and others. In addition to teaching courses, trainees went on educational visits¹²⁰, during which they had the opportunity to get to know the possibilities of adult education and employment at certain educators and employers, thus expanding future opportunities to choose the direction of appropriate employment to the profession already obtained, as well as gaining the desire to get a new profession. The project is planned to provide support to 530 individuals, including adults, children and asylum seekers without writing and reading skills. Through the training time high-quality communication is provided by knowers of Arabic, Tigrinja, Kurdish and Dari languages.¹²¹

A section "Reduction and Prevention of Discrimination" is included in the Implementation plan for 2017-2018 of the National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines for 2012-2018. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the plan. Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Justice, the State Chancellery, the Society Integration Fund and the National Electronic Mass Media Council are involved in the

¹¹⁵ In Daugavpils, Jelgava, Cēsis and Liepāja.

¹¹⁶ In Riga and in four regions of Latvia Information Centre for Immigrants has started working. - Available at: <http://www.integration.lv/lv/Inform%C4%81cijas%20centrs%20imigrantiem/553>.

¹¹⁷ For support of immigrants, informative and educational events took place. - Available at: <http://www.integration.lv/lv/imigrantu-atbalstam-latvija-istenoti-informesanas-un-izglitosanas-pasakumi>.

¹¹⁸ For support of immigrants, informative and educational events took place. - Available at: <http://www.integration.lv/lv/imigrantu-atbalstam-latvija-istenoti-informesanas-un-izglitosanas-pasakumi>.

¹¹⁹ Support measures for persons with international protection. - Available at: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/atbalsta-pasakumi-starptautiskas-aizsardzibas-personam>.

¹²⁰ To introduce asylum seekers with opportunities to acquire new education, undergo retraining, a special training visit to the training centre "BUTS" was organized.

¹²¹ 56 persons with international protection have participated in the Socio-economic inclusion programme. - Available at: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/atbalsta-pasakumi-starptautiskas-aizsardzibas-personam>.

implementation of the plan. Plan provides intercultural dialogue events, as well as events to promote inclusion of socially excluded groups into the society and prevent discrimination.

6.3. Promoting the Integration of Specific Groups

On July 12, 2016 Regulations No. 457 of the Cabinet of Ministers were adopted "Regulations Regarding Allowances for a Refugee and a Person who has been Granted Alternative Status"¹²² that determine the amount of allowance and the procedure of allocation of it for a person with a refugee or alternative status. The regulation was adopted in the context of the new Asylum Law, because the previous regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers¹²³ expired.

On April 1, 2016 Regulation No. 574 of the Cabinet of Ministers came into force "Amendments to Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1529 on December 17, 2013 "Procedure of Health Care Organisation and Financing"¹²⁴. Amendments provide clarifications regarding the health care provided to the asylum seekers, as well as the payments of the health care services. Doctors, who provide health care services to asylum seekers, have the right to send a person to the state-funded health services or prescribe outpatient treatment medications intended to discharge from national budget resources and medical devices. According to the amendments the asylum seekers are exempt from the patients' fee.

On February 24, 2017, Regulation No. 92 of the Cabinet of Ministers came into force "Amendments to the Regulation No. 133 of the Cabinet of Ministers on February 21, 2012 "Regulations Regarding the State Fee for the Issuance of Personal Identification Documents"¹²⁵. The regulations determines that a refugee or person granted alternate status, does not have to pay the state fee, when the identity document is issued for the first time. Exemption from payment of the state fee provides an opportunity for such persons to start an independent life and the integration in Latvia sooner.

In order to address issues related to the impact on municipal budgets of admission and events of socio-economical inclusion of refugees and persons who have been granted alternative status, in accordance with the foreseen in the protocol No. 46 of meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on September 20, 2016, municipalities should be compensated actual expenditures incurred in providing financial and material assistance to refugees and persons who have been granted alternative status and providing admission and socio-economic inclusion events at least once a year from the state budget programme "The Funds for Contingencies" for the period from January 1, 2016.

According to the "Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection", asylum seekers, refugees and persons with alternative status are provided with service of social worker and social mentor. Social worker compiles the individual socio-economic integration plan, which identifies needs of an individual and further steps to encourage the socio-economic integration. Simultaneously, the living conditions of Latvia are explained thoroughly, as well as participation obligations, to reduce the possible inappropriate persons' expectations. A social mentor provides support on the implementation of the socio-economic inclusion plan and, when necessary, ensures coordination and communication with other institutions involved in the implementation of the Action plan. Support in practical life situations is also provided – helping to

¹²² July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 457 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations regarding the benefit for a refugee and a person that has been granted alternative status".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 137, 19.07.2016.- [came into force on 20.07.2016]

¹²³ July 22, 2014 Regulation No. 210 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations regarding the benefit for a refugee and a person that has been granted alternative status".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 80, 24.04.2014- [came into force on 25.04.2014]

¹²⁴ 30 August, 2016 Regulation No. 574 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1529 on December 17, 2013 "Procedure of Health Care Organization and Financing"¹²⁴. - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No.168, 31.08.2016. – [came into force 01.09.2016.]

¹²⁵ 21 February, 2017 Regulation No. 92 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to the Regulation No. 133 of the Cabinet of Ministers on February 21, 2012 "Regulations Regarding the State Fee for the Issuance of Personal Identification Documents"¹²⁵. - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No 41, 23.02.2017.- [came into force 24.02.2017.]

arrange the identity documents, finding home, placing children in educational establishments, etc. Social worker and mentor services are provided for the person up to 15 months (3 months until the international protection status is granted and 12 months after gaining the status). In the period from April to November, 2016, society "The Latvian Red Cross" provided support to 319¹²⁶ people in total. From December 1, 2016, support from a social worker and mentor has been provided for 144¹²⁷ persons in society "Shelter "Safe House"".

Society " Shelter "Safe House"" developed informative material about Latvia for children in Arabic, Dari, French and Latvian languages. Thanks to this material, minors are now able to receive information in their native language, as well as to learn about Latvia in a creative way and learn Latvian language.¹²⁸

7. RETURN

7.1. Voluntary Return¹²⁹

In 2016 the number of return decisions, issued to third country nationals, decreased - 1027 (1225 in 2015)¹³⁰. Mostly they were issued to citizens of Russia, Vietnam and Ukraine.

In 2016 the number of third - country nationals, who used the voluntary return programme, increased - 75 (34 in 2015).¹³¹ The increase is explained by the fact that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office in Riga in February, 2016 started the implementation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund project "Voluntary return and reintegration assistance in Latvia, 2016-2018"¹³² In 2015 the project "Voluntary return and reintegration assistance in Latvia, 2014-2015" ended already in June, and no funding was available to ensure the voluntary return assistance.

The IOM will ensure realization of sustainable voluntary return and the reintegration management system and implementation of the relevant policy in Latvia. It is intended to provide voluntary return assistance for around 250 persons within the project. It is intended to provide reintegration assistance for around 90 persons within the project.

In addition to that, the project will provide temporary residence, food and essential goods to third-country nationals, who are not located in the asylum seeker or migrant residence centre and who do not have sufficient financial resources for maintenance of themselves and their families until the voluntary return. It is planned to provide assistance to nine persons.¹³³

7.2. Forced Return

In 2016 there has been a slight decrease in expelled persons, reaching 336 (340- 2015¹³⁴). The largest number of forcibly expelled nationals from a third-country were from Vietnam.

In 2016 amendments were made to the Immigration Law¹³⁵ and the Law on the Procedures for Holding the Detained Persons¹³⁶ that set places for accommodation of persons, for whom the

¹²⁶58 families and 64 individuals, including 69 women, 121 men and 129 children.

¹²⁷Among the persons, who received services, there is 31 family with minor children – total of 131 persons, as well as 13 individual clients.

¹²⁸An informative material about Latvia has been made for children in Arabic, Dari, French and Latvian.-available: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/izstradats-informativs-materials-par-latviju-berniem-arabu-dari-francu-un-latviesu-valodas/810>.

¹²⁹ Voluntary return- a supported or independent return to the country of origin, transit or third country, based on the free will of the returnee. Source: EMN Glossary v3. - Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/docs/emn-glossary-en-version.pdf.

¹³⁰ Data source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

¹³¹ Data source: The IOM Riga Office.

¹³²The project is implemented during the period from February 11, 2016 to December 31, 2018.

¹³³Voluntary return and reintegration assistance in Latvia, 2016-2018-available: <http://iom.lv/lv/projekts-p>.

¹³⁴Third-country nationals who have left the territory by type of return and citizenship. - Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

¹³⁵Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 123, 29.06.2016 – [came into force on 01.07.2016]

¹³⁶Law "Amendments to the Law on the Procedures for Holding the Detained Persons".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 91, 12.05.2016 – [came into force on 26.05.2016]

return procedure is to be applied. The objective of the amendments was to define that temporary and in specific cases, if it is not possible or economical to hold third-country nationals¹³⁷ accommodated in a unit of the State Border Guard, as well as in the case, where a person poses a threat to state security and public security and order, they can be put in the temporary detention sites of the State Police. The amendments provide that vulnerable persons are not placed in the temporarily detention places of the State Police¹³⁸.

In 2016 Regulation No. 556 of the Cabinet of Ministers on August 16, 2016 "Regulations Regarding the Subsistence Norms, as well as the Amount of Hygienic and Basic Necessities for an Asylum Seeker Accommodated in the State Border Guard Accommodation Premises for Asylum Seekers and for the Foreigner who has been Placed in the Accommodation Centre of the State Border Guard"¹³⁹ was developed.

With mediation of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs an effective mechanism of practical application of the agreement between European Union and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan regarding the readmission of persons residing without authorisation was created, which allowed to prepare travel documents quickly and efficiently, coordinate expulsion and expel 8 Pakistani nationals to Pakistan.¹⁴⁰

Between the representatives of the competent authorities of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia a close cooperation has been established in the field of expulsion of foreigners, which enables rapid and efficient exchange of information and to giving/getting advice. For example, in December 2, 2016 in Estonia there was a State border Guard of Latvia and Police and Border Guard Board of Estonia expert meeting organized, during which the issues of irregular migration in transit through the territory of both countries further to the EU Member States were discussed, as well as agreement was reached on the quick and efficient application of the cooperation procedure for detection and readmission of third-country nationals, using "The agreement of July 1, 1995 between the Government of the Republic of Latvia, The Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the readmission of persons residing in the national territory without authorisation."¹⁴¹

Use of the EMN results

The EMN Latvian national contact point developed a focussed study " Returning Rejected Asylum-Seekers: challenges and good practices in Latvia "¹⁴², the aim of which is to gather the national law and practice of the involved institutions, to provide a comprehensive overview of persons who have been refused granting international protection. This includes information about:

- the existing legal framework regarding persons, who have been refused granting international protection;
- discussions and debates on the proposed changes in this area at the national level;
- the rights and obligations of these persons;
- statistical data related to expulsion of these persons;

¹³⁷Persons, who are detained in the order defined in the Immigration Law.

¹³⁸ In accordance with the Article 59 of the Immigration law- vulnerable persons- a person at age, who has the age pension assigned, pregnant woman, not a full family (only a father or a mother) with minor children and persons, who have suffered from severe psychological, physical or sexual violence.

¹³⁹August 16, 2016 Regulation No. 556 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the Subsistence Norms, as well as the Amount of Hygienic and Basic Necessities for an Asylum Seeker Accommodated in the State Border Guard Accommodation Premises for Asylum Seekers and for the Foreigner who has been Placed in the Accommodation Centre of the State Border Guard".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 159, 18.08.2016- [came into force on 19.08.2016]

¹⁴⁰ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁴¹ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁴² www.emn.lv

- competence of the different institutions involved;
- connection between the return policy and asylum procedures;
- persons who may not be immediately expelled;
- the existing legal framework regarding persons, who have been refused granting international protection.

Conclusions of the research work:

- In Latvia, policy of return of a person, who have been refused granting international protection, is built on the basis of the expulsion of third-country nationals, who are staying irregularly in the country.
- Irregular immigrants forms the largest part of all expelled persons, compared to persons who have been refused granting international protection. When the definitive decision has been made on the refusal to grant international protection to a person and the person has no other legal basis to stay in Latvia- the person becomes an irregular immigrant. He has the same rights as the third-country national, who is staying in Latvia irregularly. The only difference between the two groups of persons is such, that one has "past of an asylum procedure", and the other has not. This difference does not affect the type of expulsion procedure (voluntary or forced), because each case is assessed individually.
- The representative of the International Organization for Migration believes that the best practice for the expulsion is voluntary return and assistance in reintegration. This is validated by cases when forcibly expelled persons never go back to their homes, because they are afraid to meet with people, who have lent them large amounts of money for the irregular migration. In such cases, forcibly expelled are forced to look for any solutions for repaying debt, and soon meets with the circle of people smugglers and criminal organizations.
- If the asylum seeker has provided any false information in the asylum procedure, hid his identity or tried to run away from Latvia, then the application of a forced expulsion may be considered.
- When carrying out a forced expulsion, the readmission agreements with third countries can be recognized as effective instruments for return.
- If the evaluation of the case has concluded that the asylum seeker has left the origin country for economic reasons, the reintegration assistance will promote the return to the country of origin.

8. IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING SMUGGLING

There were 369 third - country nationals detained in 2016 for illegal crossing of the "green" border (463 in 2015). The main groups of detainees were citizens of Vietnam (250), Russia (43), Afghanistan (29), India (20) and Nepal (7). The largest number of people apprehended for illegal "green" border crossing was on the Latvian-Russian border, but it decreased on the Latvian-Belarusian border. In 2016 the State Border Guard representatives observed a new trend—simultaneous crossing the Latvian-Russian border in several large groups.¹⁴³

Compared to 2015 (869¹⁴⁴), in 2016 there was a drop in the number of refusals of entry on the border - entry was refused to 797 third - country nationals. Most often the entry was refused to citizens of Russia (240), Belarus (170) and Tajikistan (75).¹⁴⁵

The number of detected infringements relating to abuse of the legitimate types of entry when third - country nationals, upon receipt of the Schengen visa, are providing untrue information about the purpose of entry into Latvia or another country in the Schengen zone has increased in 2016 -

¹⁴³ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁴⁴ Data source: State Border Guard.

¹⁴⁵ Data source: State Border Guard.

279 (including 60 Uzbekistan citizens, 49 citizens of Belarus, 43 citizens of Tajikistan). There were 109 cases of visa annulment in 2015.¹⁴⁶ In 2016 increased the number of citizens from Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan), who abused a Schengen visa to enter the EU with the aim to stay and work illegally.¹⁴⁷

8.1. Measures to reduce irregular migration

To promote detection of fake travel documents of persons, the Embassy in Belarus, in cooperation with the liaison officer of the State Border Guard organized a training for document forgery recognition, as well as in the identification of persons.

In 2016 the State Border Guard has launched 82 criminal proceedings for the forgery of document, seal and stamp and the realization and use of forged document, seal and stamp.

In 2016 the officials of the Criminal Investigation Unit of the State Border Guard repeatedly implemented joint activities with the officials of the Lithuanian and Polish Border Guard Services to prevent and detect illegal migration/smuggling of human beings over the state border.

Likewise as in 2015, the State Border Guard has recognized that in 2016 the transporters, organizing illegal transfer of persons across the state border, carry out both - movement of large number of persons as well as simultaneous illegal movement of 2-5 persons at the same time.

Because of organised pressure of illegal immigration on the Latvian state border and recognizing that the preventive responsibility means set in the Criminal Law to reduce illegal immigration are not enough, in the beginning of 2016 State Border Guard suggested amendments in the Criminal Law, which entered into force on April 7, 2016.¹⁴⁸ With the adopted law, the Article 285 of the Criminal Law- illegal transfer of persons across the state border- has been supplemented - the second part, determining penalties for public officials or a group of people for movement of persons across the state border, as well as the second, third and fourth part of the Article 285, significantly increasing the predetermined sanctions for illegal movement of persons. The Article 285.¹ of the Criminal Law has also been supplemented - with increased penalties for providing possibility to stay illegally in the Republic of Latvia.

Considering the mentioned amendments in the criminal framework for criminal offences, that are qualified by Article 285 and Article 285.¹ of the Criminal Law, the penalties that have been imposed in 2016 have also been increased.

8.2. Cooperation between Competent Authorities

On September 27, 2016 a quadripartite agreement was signed "Agreement between the State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, the National Police Department under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia and the State Police of the Republic of Latvia on joint patrols". The aim of the agreement is to establish a common order for organising and carrying out patrols, that is focused on prevention of illegal migration, criminal offence and other offences. In 2016 joint patrols of the State Border Guard and the State Border Guard Service of the Republic of Lithuania were practically organized, which confirmed the effectiveness of this form of cooperation and necessity of it.¹⁴⁹

Cooperation with third countries

In 2016, for improvement of the cooperation mechanisms of the Latvian state border monitoring, in accordance with the Latvian State Border Guard initiative for cooperation with the

¹⁴⁶ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁴⁷ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁴⁸ Law "Amendments to the Criminal Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 59, 24.03.2016– [came into force on 07.04.2016]

¹⁴⁹ Source: State Border Guard.

Belarus Committee of Borders, regulations were developed "The methodology of joint investigation of border incidents, in conjunction with the violation of the Belarus - Latvia border regime", which were coordinated and signed by the heads of the border of Latvia and Belarus authorities during the current meeting on September 29, 2016. The regulations define the procedure of gathering and evaluation of evidence of state border regime violation.¹⁵⁰

In 2016 a Dog handling project was implemented in Georgia and Moldova, which was proposed by The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), which is supported by The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), The Internal Security Fund, (ISF-police and ISF-Border and Visa).

Two basic activities were included in the project: (A) theoretical training (two seminars) for dog handlers of Georgia and Moldova. Purchase of six new service dogs between the age of three months to ten months and dog training equipment (purchase was organized and carried out by the State Border Guard College) and the transfer of them to the State Border Guard Service of Moldova (two dogs), the Georgian Border Police (two dogs), Patrol Police of Georgia (two dogs). It is planned to train overall twenty dog handlers in Moldova and Georgia, as well as to provide them with six new service dogs.

Six cynology instructors from Moldova and Georgia were trained in the Cynology Centre of the State Border Guard within the professional development courses for instructors from border guard institutions of Moldova and Georgia.

The project will have a positive impact on qualitative development of cynology field in border guard institutions of Georgia and Moldova, as well as on bringing it closer to the level of EU border structure cynology services. As the result the Georgia and Moldova border authorities will gain intangible benefits from the project (the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of work in the field of cynology), as well as the service dog gene pool will get supplemented.¹⁵¹

Within the BOMCA 9 project¹⁵² on 8-10 November, 2016 in the State Border Guard a training visit was organized for the delegation of Border Guards Service of Kazakhstan and Immigration police on immigration control and readmission matters. During the visit, the delegation of Kazakhstan was given the experience of the EU and the State Border Guard in provision of immigration control, implementation of EU directives in legislation of Latvia, fulfilment of readmission agreements based on the practical examples of the implementation.¹⁵³

8.3. Monitoring Activities of Smugglers

In 2016, 51 persons were arrested on the illegal trafficking of persons across state borders. 48 were detained for illegal trafficking of Vietnamese citizens across state borders.

The Latvian State Border Guard officials, in cooperation with the Polish Border Guards and the Lithuanian Border Guard Service at the Ministry of the Interior, have stopped activities of international organized crime group that organized and carried out illegal trafficking of persons from Vietnam via Russia and the Baltic states to Poland. Vietnamese have been repeatedly illegally trafficked across the state border in groups of persons (8-15) in transit through Latvia. Within the cooperation, Russian citizens of Chechen origin and a Polish citizen have been detained, as well as 84 irregular immigrants in total (multiple episodes) from Vietnam (the Latvian border guards detained 38 Vietnamese, as well as ten Russian citizens of Chechen origin - traffickers (smugglers)). Joint cooperation activities were implemented in five months (May- September).

¹⁵⁰ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁵¹ Source: State Border Guard.

¹⁵² Border management programme in Central Asia, stage 9.

¹⁵³ Source: State Border Guard.

Successful joint cooperation in fight against the illegal trafficking of persons across the state border is also carried out with the border guard units of Belarus. In the summer of 2016 organisation of illegal trafficking of persons was interrupted (2 India nationals and 1 Afghan national) from Belarus in transit through Latvia to Germany.

Still, mostly citizens of Vietnam are illegally trafficked across the state border, but the State Border Guard in this year has also delineated several cases of illegal border crossings carried out by mixed groups of third-country nationals, which are formed by citizens from India, Nepal, as well as Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and China.

Comparing persons illegally trafficked across the state border, citizens of the Vietnam mostly are moved by traffickers and are delivered up to Poland or any other country in Central Europe through the territory of Latvia. Mixed groups of third-country nationals mostly illegally crossed the state border unaccompanied and further movement of these persons in Latvia and to other EU Member States was carried out on their own terms. If the third-country nationals after the illegal trafficking across the State border, as well as being in the country illegally were not detained, they tried to move on to other EU Member States on their own, but if they were detained, these persons used the possibility to request asylum in Latvia.

9. COUNTERING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Not a single residence permit has been issued in 2016 in connection with the fact that a person has been recognised as a victim of human trafficking.¹⁵⁴ Within the criminal proceedings initiated regarding organisation of human trafficking three persons have been detained and the status of suspect has been determined to them.¹⁵⁵

There have been cases found in Latvia, when Latvian citizens have become victims of human trafficking. There were 17 victims of human trafficking identified in Latvia in 2016: 4 were identified by the State Police and 13 by the association Resource Centre for Women "Marta"¹⁵⁶. In 2016 State funded social rehabilitation services for victims of trafficking was provided and given to 14 clients-women. Five persons, who were recognized as victims in 2015, continued receiving services in 2016.¹⁵⁷

In December 2016, the Ministry of Welfare has concluded a tripartite agreement on provision of state-funded social rehabilitation services and the support services during criminal proceedings for victims of human trafficking in 2017-2018 with two social service providers – society "Resource Centre for women " Marta """, and society " Shelter "Safe House""".¹⁵⁸ The customer has the right to choose any of these two social service providers at its sole discretion.

Society " Shelter "Safe House"" within the project "Preventing Human Trafficking and Marriage of Convenience: a Multidisciplinary Solution "(HESTIA) organized five¹⁵⁹ educational two-day seminars in 2016, where professionals of different fields from all over Latvia explored the following topics: the concept and purpose of human trafficking; phenomenon of marriage of convenience; exploitative marriage of convenience as a form of human trafficking; recruitment mechanism; victim vulnerability; identification of a victim of human trafficking in a marriage of convenience; support system for victims of exploitive marriage of convenience; role of specialists in reducing the amount of marriage of convenience; preventive measures to reduce the marriage of convenience phenomenon.

¹⁵⁴ Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

¹⁵⁵ Data source: Ministry of the Interior.

¹⁵⁶ As of 11 April, 2017 new name – society "Centre MARTA".

¹⁵⁷ In the meeting of the working group the achievements of prevention of human trafficking in 2016 are compiled. Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/darba-grupas-sanaksme-apkopo-paveikto-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-noversanas-joma-2016gada/141>.

¹⁵⁸ Help and support to victims of trafficking in 2017- 2018. - Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/palidziba-un-atbalsts-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-upuriem-2017-2018-gada/148>.

¹⁵⁹ The seminars were held in *Sigulda, Rēzekne, Liepāja and Bauska*.

The purpose of the training was to prepare specialists in different areas-further education trainers- for updating the theme in professional collectives, as well as to encourage updating of the topic in society in general. The target group of the seminars was specialists from social service, orphan's court, state and municipal police, institutions for the children outside family care, associations, educational institutions and libraries.¹⁶⁰ In the autumn of 2016 within the project 187 specialists from different areas were trained. Prepared technicians-multipliers organised 168 events in their work or place of residence.¹⁶¹

To provide up-to-date information to the public about human trafficking theme, in the summer of 2016 visually and substantively improved website www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv began to work, which is a state information resource on the topic of reducing human trafficking and current events in Latvia. Homepage has a new design, improved functionality of the page, therefore the inserted information is now easier to be reviewed and friendlier to its visitors.¹⁶²

In summer of 2016 project STROM II "Strengthening the role of local authorities in the fight against the human trafficking" has begun.¹⁶³ STROM II is an international project, that aims to strengthen local capacity in the prevention of human trafficking and providing help to victims of human trafficking, by practically implementing the guidelines developed within the project STROM in two municipalities in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Russia's Northwest region.¹⁶⁴

10. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In 2016 Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines of Latvia for the 2016-2020¹⁶⁵ were adopted, stressing out the importance of the development cooperation instruments in solving the root causes of migration. It is planned to be done, by improving the skills of the citizens and employment, promoting the stability and development of the institutions, youth opportunities, strengthening education and civil society. Latvia, as far as possible, implements the objectives of the development cooperation policy coordinated with security, migration and trade policy objectives and promotes synergies between the different instruments of this policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within the development cooperation policy of 2016, supported the project "Improvement of the centre for child victims of the warfare and implementation of socially inclusive initiatives and educational projects". Aim of the project is to promote the social rehabilitation and integration into society of child war victims. Within the financing in Ukraine (Korosten), in the Centre for internally displaced persons a creative room was created to provide a platform for dialogue, for closer integration of internally displaced persons in society, as well as for the development of various creative and educational activities. Within the project it is intended to repair and equip the premises, as well as to organize events and meetings with industry experts.¹⁶⁶

In 2016, Latvia, in cooperation with other EU Member States and in leadership of the ICMPD, launched implementation of activities of the project "Support project for the implementation of mobility partnership with Azerbaijan". Within the project component "legal migration", where Latvia

¹⁶⁰In 17-18 October in *Sigulda* the closing seminar of the training cycle for multipliers will take place-available: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/17-18oktobri-sigulda-notiks-multiplikatoru-apmacibu-ciklu-nosledzosais-seminars/800>.

¹⁶¹ Source: Society " Shelter "Safe House".

¹⁶²A new website begins its work www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv.- Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/darbu-sak-jauna-majaslapa-wwwcilvektirdzniecibalv/122>.

¹⁶³The project lasts from May 2, 2016 until September 30, 2017. The project is co-financed by the Swedish Institute, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia.

¹⁶⁴The implementation of the STROM II project has been initiated, "Strengthening the role of local authorities in the fight against the human trafficking". – Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/projekts-stiprinot-pasvaldibu-lomu-darbam-cina-ar-cilveku-tirdzniecibu-baltijas-69>.

¹⁶⁵Order No. 523 of the Cabinet of Ministers on September 14, 2016 "On Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2016-2020".- *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, No. 180, 16.09.2016.

¹⁶⁶ Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

is one of the leading countries, experts from Latvia went on a research mission to Azerbaijan. During the visit they rated the national legislation on legal migration (migration of labour, mobility of students and visa policy). Also several meetings were held with the national authorities and representatives of private establishments, as well as with local experts. Based on the obtained information, the Latvian and Bulgarian experts worked together to prepare the evaluation report and develop the recommendations by offering possible future directions for action in the field of legal and labour migration. Also, within the project, the Azerbaijan delegation came to Latvia on a research visit to get acquainted with the Latvian practice in legal migration, citizenship and naturalization, labour market forecasting, integration and the diaspora issues.

1. Annex Introduction of Laws of the European Union

During the report year introduction of the requirements specified in the laws of the European Union into the laws of Latvia was continued. To display the course of transposition of current European Union laws in the field of migration and asylum into the laws of Latvia, they have been individually displayed in the table.

	Laws of the European Union	National laws, in which the requirements of the European Union have been introduced
1.	Directive 2014/36/EU ¹⁶⁷ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration Law. • Regulation No. 500 of the Cabinet of Ministers on August 2, 2016 "Amendments to the Regulation No. 552 of the Cabinet of Ministers on June 21, 2010 "Procedures for Approval of Invitations and Drawing up of Written Requests"". • Regulation No. 524 of the Cabinet of Ministers on August 9, 2016 "Amendments to the Regulation No. 676 of the Cabinet of Ministers on June 30, 2011"Visa Regulations".
2.	Directive 2014/66/EU ¹⁶⁸ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration Law. • Regulation No. 470 of the Cabinet of Ministers on July 15, 2016 "Amendments to the Regulation No. 564 of the Cabinet of Ministers on June 21, 2010 "Regulations Regarding Residence Permits"".
3.	Directive 2013/32/EU ¹⁶⁹ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum Law.

¹⁶⁷ Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers.- Official Journal, L 94/375, 28.03.2014.

¹⁶⁸Directive 2014/66/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.- Official Journal, L 157/1, 27.5.2014.

¹⁶⁹Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.- Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.

4.	<p>Directive 2013/33/EU¹⁷⁰ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum Law. • Regulation No. 449 of the Cabinet of Ministers on July 12, 2016 "Regulations Regarding the Amount of Expenditure and the Order of Coverage of Asylum Seekers' Subsistence and Daily Allowance". • Regulation No. 488 of the Cabinet of Ministers on July 26, 2016 "Procedures for the Provision of a Minor Asylum Seeker with Opportunities for Acquiring Education". • Regulation No. 489 of the Cabinet of Ministers on July 26, 2016 "Internal Rules of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers".
5.	<p>Regulation (EU) No. 603/2013¹⁷¹ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 for effective application of the Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, which foresees the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, and for comparison requests with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1077/2011, establishing the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation No. 296 of the Cabinet of Ministers on May 17, 2016 "Regulations of the Asylum Seekers Fingerprint Information System".

¹⁷⁰ Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (revised version). Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.

¹⁷¹ Regulation (EU) No. 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 for effective application of the Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, which foresees the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, and for comparison requests with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1077/2011, establishing the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice.- Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.

2. Annex. List of sources and literature

Sources

The legislation of Latvia

- Start-up Activity Support Law.- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 241,10.12.2016 – [came into force on 01.01.2017]
- Law "Amendments to the Law on the Procedures for Holding the Detained Persons ".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 91, 12.05.2016 – [came into force on 26.05.2016]
- Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 123, 29.06.2016 – [came into force on 01.07.2016]
- Law "Amendments to the Immigration Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 36, 16.02.2017 – [came into force on 02.03.2017]
- Law "Amendments to the Criminal Law". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 59, 24.03.2016– [came into force on 07.04.2016]
- Asylum Law.- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 2, 05.01.2016– [came into force on 19.01.2016]
- February 21, 2017 Regulation No. 92 of the Cabinet of Ministers came into force "Amendments to the Regulation No. 133 of the Cabinet of Ministers on February 21, 2012 “Regulations Regarding the State Fee for the Issuance of Personal Identification Documents””.- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No 41, 23.02.2017.- [came into force 24.02.2017.]
- May 17, 2016 Regulation No. 296 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations of the Asylum Seekers Fingerprint Information System".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 96, 19.05.2016- [came into force on 20.05.2016]
- June 14, 2016 The Regulation No. 370 of the Cabinet of Ministers “The Procedure in which Municipality Expenses for Accommodating Minor Asylum Seekers are Funded from the State Budget”.- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 116, 16.06.2016- [came into force on 01.07.2016]
- June 28, 2016 Regulation No. 409 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations for the State Guaranteed Legal Assistance Application by the Asylum Seeker, a Refugee or a Person with Alternative Status."- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 124, 30.06.2016-[came into force 01.07.2016]
- July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 449 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the Amount of Expenditure and the Procedure of Coverage of Asylum Seekers' Subsistence and Daily Allowance" - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 134, 14.07.2016- [came into force on 15.07.2016]
- July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 457 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the Benefit for a Refugee and a Person that has been Granted Alternative Status".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 137, 19.07.2016- [came into force on 20.07.2016]
- July 12, 2016. Regulation No. 456 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations of Register of Asylum Seekers”.- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 137, 19.07.2016- [came into force on 20.07.2016]
- July 12, 2016 Regulation No. 458 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding Personal Document of Asylum Seekers and Procedures for the Issuance Thereof” .- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 137, 19.07.2016- [came into force on 20.07.2016]
- July 15, 2016 Regulation No 470 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments of Regulations No. 564 on June 21, 2010 “Regulations Regarding Residence Permits ””.- Latvijas Vēstnesis No. 138, 20.07.2016– [came into force on 21.07.2016]
- July 26, 2016 Regulation No. 488 of the Cabinet of Ministers " Procedures for the Provision of a Minor Asylum Seeker with Opportunities for Acquiring Education ".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 143, 27.07.2016-[came into force on 28.07.2016]

- July 26, 2016. Regulation No. 489 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Internal Rules of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers" - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 143, 27.07.2016- [came into force on 28.07.2016]
- August 2, 2016 Regulation No 500 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to Regulation No 552 of the Cabinet of Ministers on December 21, 2010 "Procedures for Approval of Invitations and Drawing up of Written Requests""- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 149, 04.08.2016- [came into force on 05.08.2016]
- August 9, 2016 Regulation No 524 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to Regulation No 676 of the Cabinet of Ministers on August 30, 2011 "Visa Regulations""- Latvijas Vēstnesis No. 154, 11.08.2016– [came into force on 12.08.2016]
- August 16, 2016 Regulation No. 556 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the Subsistence Norms, as well as the Amount of Hygienic and Basic Necessities for an Asylum Seeker Accommodated in the State Border Guard Accommodation Premises for Asylum Seekers and for the Foreigner who has been Placed in the Accommodation Centre of the State Border Guard".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 159, 18.08.2016- [came into force on 19.08.2016]
- August 30, 2016 Regulation No. 574 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendments to Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1529 on December 17, 2013 "Procedure of Health Care Organization and Financing"" . - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No.168, 31.08.2016– [came into force 01.09.2016.]
- September 20, 2016 Regulation No. 620 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Procedure for Carrying out the Health Check of the Detained Asylum Seeker and Sanitary Handling, and Recording the Results".- Latvijas Vēstnesis, Nr. 184, 22.09.2016-[came into force on 23.09.2016]
- December 2, 2015 Order No. 759 of the Cabinet of Ministers," Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection "- Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 238, 04.12.2015 - [came into force on 02.12.2015.]
- May 5, 2016 the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 287 "Regarding the Adult Education Governance Model Implementation Plan 2016-2020". - Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 89, 01.05.2016.
- September 14, 2016 the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 523 "On Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2016-2020".-Latvijas Vēstnesis, No. 180, 16.09.2016.

Laws of the European Union

- Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.- Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.
- Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (revised version). Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.
- Regulation (EU) No. 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 for effective application of the Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, which foresees the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, and for comparison requests with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1077/2011, establishing the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice.- Official Journal, L 180, 29.06.2013.
- Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers.- Official Journal, L 94/375, 28.03.2014.

- Directive 2014/66/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.- Official Journal, L 157/1, 27.5.2014.

Literature

- Updated informative material "Latvia- country by the Baltic Sea". - Available at: aktualizets-informativais-materials-latvija-valsts-pie-baltijas-juras.
- Support measures for persons with international protection.- available: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/atbalsta-pasakumi-starptautiskas-aizsardzibas-personam>.
- Opening of the restored building of the Asylum seeker centre and multifunctional centre for citizens of Mucenieki. - Available at: http://www.iem.gov.lv/lat/aktualitates/informacija_medijiem/?doc=33924.
- Free Latvian conversational language lessons for foreigners in Latvia. - Available at: http://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9919%3ABezmaksas-latviesu-sarunvalodas-nodarbibas-arzemniekiem-Latvija&catid=14%3AJaunumi&Itemid=186&lang=lv.
- Implementers of the refugee reception plan: Integration of asylum seekers in Latvia has failed.- available on: <http://www.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/beglu-uznemsanas-plana-istenotaji-patveruma-mekletaju-integracija-latvija-cietusi-neveiksmi.a204034/>.
- Voluntary return- a supported or independent return to the country of origin, transit or third country, based on the free will of the returnee. Source: EMN Glossary v3. - Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/docs/emn-glossary-en-version.pdf.
- Voluntary return and reintegration assistance in Latvia, 2016-2018. – Available at: <http://iom.lv/lv/projekts-p>.
- The progress made in the field of prevention of human trafficking in 2016 has been summarized in the meeting of the working group.- Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/darba-grupas-sanaksme-apkopo-paveikto-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-noversanas-joma--2016gada/141>.
- A new website begins its work www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv.- Available: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/darbu-sak-jauna-majaslapa-wwwcilvektirdzniecibalv/122>.
- For support of immigrants, informative and educational events took place. - Available at: <http://www.integration.lv/lv/imigrantu-atbalstam-latvija-istenoti-informesanas-un-izglitosanas-pasakumi>.
- Home Affairs Ministers discuss the latest events in the areas of asylum and migration policy. - Available at: http://www.iem.gov.lv/lat/aktualitates/informacija_medijiem/?doc=32261.
- MoI believes that the refugee hosting plan has succeeded by 90%. - Available at: <http://www.diena.lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/iem-uzskata-ka-beglu-uznemsanas-planu-izdevies-istenot-par-90-14165405>.
- The implementation of the STROM II project has been initiated, "Strengthening the role of local authorities in the fight against the human trafficking". - Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/projekts-stiprinot-pasvaldibu-lomu-darbam-cina-ar-cilveku-tirdzniecibu-baltijas-69>.
- An informative material about Latvia has been made for children in Arabic, Dari, French and Latvian. - Available at: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/izstradats-informativs-materials-par-latviju-berniem-arabu-dari-francu-un-latviesu-valodas/810>.

- An informative booklet has been created for refugees and persons with alternative status "First steps on the way to work". - Available at: <http://www.nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=2&mid=2&txt=4570&from=0>.
- Foreign and Security Policy of Latvia. Yearbook 2017. Immigration and refugees in the European Union and Latvia. - Available at: <file:///C:/Users/ilzesi/Downloads/latvijas-areja-un-drosibas-politika-gadagramata-2017-lasit-latviski.pdf>.
- Results of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.- Available at: https://eu2015.lv/images/news/EU2015LV_rezultati_lv.pdf.
- The Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation in the field of education and science. - Available at: http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/starpvaldibu_ligumi/L%C4%ABgums_LV.pdf.
- Law "Amendments to the Asylum Law" table of proposals. - Available at: <http://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS12/saeimalivs12.nsf/0/A88333B323C248EEC22580D0003DBA33?OpenDocument>.
- Law "Amendments to the Asylum Law" annotation. - Available at: <http://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS12/saeimalivs12.nsf/0/A88333B323C248EEC22580D0003DBA33?OpenDocument>.
- The draft law "Asylum Law" annotation. - Available at: <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/sakums/tiesibu-akti/tiesibu-aktu-projekti/2014/07/28/groz%C4%ABjumi-patv%C4%93ruma-likum%C4%81/>.
- Of all the refugees moved to Latvia, only 5 have stayed here. - Available at: <http://nra.lv/latvija/201577-no-visiem-uz-latviju-parvietotajiem-begliem-seit-palikusi-tikai-5.htm>.
- Draft of the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations for the state guaranteed legal assistance sample application forms by the asylum seeker, a refugee or a person with alternative status" annotation. - Available at: http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2016_06/IEMANot_230516_juridiskapalid.1161.doc.
- Draft regulation of Cabinet of Ministers "Internal rules of the accommodation centre for asylum seekers" annotation. - Available at: http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2016_07/IEMANot_040716_PMIC%20ieks_kart.1473.doc.
- Help and support for victims of trafficking- 2017- 2018. - Available at: <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/lv/palidziba-un-atbalsts-cilveku-tirdzniecibas-upuriem-2017-2018-gada/148>.
- In Riga and in four regions of Latvia Information Centre for Immigrants has started working. - Available at: <http://www.integration.lv/lv/Inform%C4%81cijas%20centrs%20imigrantiem/553>.
- The evaluation and improvement of integration of persons who have received international protection. - Available at: <http://providus.lv/article/starptautiskas-aizsardzibas-sanemeju-integracijas-izvertesana-un-uzlabosana>.
- 56 persons with international protection have participated in the Socio-economic inclusion programme. - Available at: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/atbalsta-pasakumi-starptautiskas-aizsardzibas-personam>.
- Wants to prevent the refugees who abandoned Latvia from receiving benefits. - Available at: http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/latvija/622518-velas_pec_iespejas_atrak_liegt_iespeju_latviju_pamatusiem_begliem_sanemt_pabalstu.
- Third-country nationals who have left the territory by type of return and citizenship. - Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.
- In 17-18 October in *Sigulda* the closing seminar of the training cycle for multipliers will take place.- Available at: <http://www.patverums-dm.lv/lv/17-18oktobri-sigulda-notiks-multiplikatoru-apmacibu-ciklu-nosledzosais-seminars/800>.

Annex 3 Definitions of terms used in the work

Return decision¹⁷² - an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return.

Voluntary return- a supported or independent return to the country of origin, transit or third country, based on the free will of the returnee.

¹⁷² Source: EMN Glossary v3. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/docs/emn-glossary-en-version.pdf.