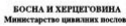
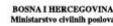


PREPOZNAJMO POTENCIJAL RADNIH
MIGRACIJA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI:
DOKAZI I NAREDNI KORACI

UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL FOR LABOUR
MIGRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:
**DISCUSSION ON EVIDENCE
AND WAYS FORWARD**

SARAJEVO - SWISSÔTEL · 10:00 - 13:30
26. SEPTEMBAR 2023. / 26 SEPTEMBER 2023



CONFERENCE NOTES

The "Unleashing the Potential for Labour Migration in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Discussion on Evidence and Ways Forward" conference, was held on 26 September 2023 in Sarajevo. This conference was one of the first of its kind in the migration field and was jointly hosted by the government, academia, private sector organizations and the UN. It brought together over 60 participants from relevant sectors, marking the beginning of a multisectoral work on long-term policies and programs in the area of labour migration in Bosnia and Herzegovina and providing a platform to exchange information, share ideas and experience and promote effective practices related to labour migration management. The conference was an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to explore critical issues, share innovative ideas, and foster connections that will undoubtedly shape the future.

Presentation of the "Employers' Perspectives on the Labour Market Integration of Migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina" Study was an opener for the conference. The study is a joint endeavor of the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology and IOM, and was conducted in period from January to March 2023, collecting responses from 60 companies from three targeted sectors: construction, tourism/ services, and agriculture. The study aimed at exploring the need for migrant workers and willingness to accommodate specific needs and demands of migrant workers within companies from selected sectors. This is the first study of its kind covering particular topic and delivering evidence of private sector organizations' needs in relation to migrant workers creating space for future policy initiatives on this matter.

The study presentation was followed by two enlightening panel discussions:

Panel discussion 1: The Role of Migration in Fostering Economic Growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The panel discussion brought together a diverse group of experts, including government officials, the IOM, diplomats, and representatives of the private sector who, through their work, jointly play a key role in shaping the economic landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The panelists shared their experiences, insights and strategies related to the impact of migration on economic growth in the country, but also about the impact of Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to the European Union on migration flows (inward and outward migration). The insights shared and the potential solutions discussed emphasize the importance of harnessing the benefits of migration while addressing its challenges.

Panel discussion 2: Ways Forward - What are the future scenarios? The panel invited various actors involved in shaping the future of the labour market in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including government officials, representatives of the private sector, international development agencies and the academic community. Panel provided a platform to discuss a number of critical topics, including the strategies of the government institutions to address the issue of labour force shortages in the country, views and possible solutions offered

by private sector organizations, as well as the international experiences in addressing this phenomenon, exploring how collaboration between government, the private sector and academia can foster innovation, resilience and inclusiveness in our global society.

The key takeaways from the conference are as follows:

1. There is consensus that Bosnia and Herzegovina need to structure the labour migration policies as one of the measures to fill increasing labour gaps; Structured labour migration policies are valuable tool in addressing labour shortages. Development of tailored and well-defined policies that balance the needs of private sector with government regulations can facilitate the regular pathways for international labour force to fill specific job vacancies. Such policies can help attract and deploy migrants with the needed skills and expertise and ensure the protection of their rights. It is of the utmost importance for the country to ensure adequate collaboration amongst stakeholders, including government, private sector, academia, civil society and international organizations to develop comprehensive and effective labour migration policies that benefit both the country and foreign workers.
2. Partnership and consensus are needed to move this process forward, it is a multi-stakeholder process; Strengthening coordination and partnerships amongst key stakeholders is crucial for success, helping streamline various efforts, creation of synergies and support to achieving common goals more effectively. Continuing a wider stakeholder dialogue is seen as a tool to help this process and support identification of clear objectives and communication channels to foster collaboration.
3. Employment procedures for integration of international labour force in the labour market in the country are too lengthy; There was recognition that existing legislation may not align with the evolving needs of the labour market, and reform might be necessary. In addition, a strong need to address the lengthy and complex employment procedures that international labour migrants often face in an integrated manner, hindering their mobility and various opportunities for them and host society, has been expressed. Multiple stakeholders identified a need not only to adjust current policies guiding integration of migrants into labour market but also a need to develop immigration strategy and labour migration specific policies as well to address this complex issue.
4. Data is incredibly relevant and crucial for sustaining labor migration policies effectively; Data-driven decision-making is essential for designing, implementing, and monitoring labour migration policies that effectively address labor shortages while ensuring the well-being of both the host country and migrant workers. Data is required for policy purposes – it can help stakeholders identify specific industries or regions facing labor shortages, allow for the evaluation of existing labour migration policies, assist in targeting recruitment efforts in countries of destination but also can help identify cases of worker exploitation or abuse, ensuring that foreign workers are protected and treated fairly.
5. Measures to accompany the inclusion and access to rights and obligations of migrant workers matters; Integration of labor migrants into society is an issue very often overlooked and highlighted during the conference as a significant aspect requiring further attention and support from stakeholders at national and local levels. Language skills acquisition, access to education, and social inclusion are just some of the priority areas identified and which are to be addressed as part of this process. The governments and communities have been invited to partner with other stakeholders in developing policies and programs that facilitate the integration process to ensure the well-being of the migrants and their contribution to society.

In the end, it was stated that the discussions and connections made at the conference were not the end but the beginning of a process toward positive change. The insights gained, ideas generated, and partnerships formed during this event will serve as the foundation for the work that lies ahead of multiple stakeholders, and we need to continue to collaborate, innovate, and drive change in our respective fields and areas of expertise or responsibility.