

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**Baltic Inter-ministerial Round Table:**

**Migrant Education Policy Partnership**

has taken place in Riga, Secondary School no. 15, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2014. It was a joint initiative by the Sirius Baltic partnership team of three national partners: Praxis Center for Policy Studies (Tallinn/Tartu, Estonia); Public Policy and Management Institute (Vilnius, Lithuania) and think & do tank “Global Development Institute” (Riga, Latvia).

The regional partnership event was organized with the aim to bring together policy makers from Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to identify topics and formats for a systematic cooperation and strategic partnership to develop migrant education policy.

Participants included representatives from various ministries in the three Baltic States, such as ministry of the interior, ministry of education and research, ministry of education and science, ministry of culture. In addition, Lithuanian Education Development Centre and Tartu Miina Härma Gymnasium representatives were among 12 participants in the Baltic States.

As the Baltic countries have relatively similar migration challenges, the first session about the current status, policy and concerns sparked a lively debate about various topics and countries’ experience on migrant education policy. The discussion was followed by presentation “Migrant education policy – the Baltic comparative perspective” based on the draft version of the policy brief on the same topic co-authored by Eve Mägi (Praxis) and Hanna Siarova (PPMI) which will be finalized by September 2014. The strengths and challenges of migrant education policy in the Baltics were discussed during that session along with identification of challenges that the Baltic countries can tackle together. The third and final session focused on concrete steps to be taken in the Baltic collaboration.

As concluded by Ona Čepulienė from the Ministry of Education and Science in Lithuania: “The First Baltic Inter-Ministerial Round Table on Migrant Education Policy Partnership was undoubtedly success”. Participants highlighted the productive and mutually beneficial exchange which was facilitated by skilful moderators, and above all, the end result to follow up on with a narrowed focus in fall 2014. As it is hoped that the circle of policy makers and ministries will expand by including for example social affairs and foreign affairs, the specific topic may concentrate on re-emigration policy and returnees. This would enable to explore in greater detail the Lithuanian re-emigration policy “Global Lithuania” along with Estonian encouraging language immersion programme and newly elaborated welcoming strategy. All participants confirmed continuous interest and need for joint efforts in exploring the educational counselling system and its potential implementation in the Baltics, which would help to tackle one of the current problems in all the states – uneven level of preparedness among schools to educate migrant students, while addressing diversity and individual needs.

Thus, the next steps are to follow shortly as the planning for another regional event in Vilnius or Tallinn in October this year has already started by the Sirius Baltic partnership team.

The First Baltic Inter-Ministerial Round Table on Migrant Education Policy Partnership is financially supported by Friedrich - Ebert - Stiftung (Germany, Latvia)