

**Expert Roundtable on**  
**Cross-Border Mobility and Visa Facilitation in the OSCE region**  
 Launch of ODIHR Baseline Study on Cross-Border Mobility in the OSCE Region

15-16 May 2014

*Hofburg, Vienna*

## ANNOTATED AGENDA

Time	Day	Location
	<b>DAY 1: Thursday 15 May 2014</b>	
14:30-15:00	• <b>Registration of Participants</b>	
15:00-15:15	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>Welcoming Remarks</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director, ODIHR</b></li> <li>• <b>Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Chairmanship in Office</b></li> </ul>	Hofburg (Segmentgalerie I)
15:15-17:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>First Session:</b></u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cross-Border Mobility in the OSCE Region - presentation of the ODIHR Baseline Study</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Coffee break from 17:00 to 17:30)</i></p>	Hofburg (Segmentgalerie I)
<p>At this session ODIHR will present the Baseline Study on Cross-Border Mobility in the OSCE Region which focuses on the volume and patterns of cross-border travel within the OSCE region, highlighting effects of visa requirements on travel in the OSCE region. The session will seek to explore how OSCE participating States may cooperate in creating circumstances which would further promote cross-border human contacts and could eventually allow for liberalization of visa regimes.</p> <p>Introducer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mr. Zoran Đoković</b>, Migration/Freedom of Movement Adviser, ODIHR</li> </ul> <p><u>Followed by discussions</u></p> <p>Moderator: - <b>Ms. Nathalie Tagwerker</b>, Deputy Head, Democratization Department, ODIHR</p>		

Time	DAY 2: Friday 16 May 2014	Location
10:00-12:00	<b><u>Second Session:</u></b> <b>Visa facilitation – good practices in making visas more accessible to travelers</b>	Hofburg (Segmentgalerie I)
<p>Political dialogue between OSCE participating States aimed at visa facilitation and its implementation has proven to be an effective mechanism to increase cross border travel freedoms of OSCE participating states' citizens and the promotion of contacts between them. This session will highlight measures that could be taken to make visas more accessible to travelers. To that end, the session will explore, inter alia, mechanisms for the facilitation of visa application supporting documentation, the facilitation of the submission of visa applications including of supporting documentation and the creation of circumstances that could allow the extension of visa validity periods allowing for multiple entries.</p> <p>Introducer:   - <b>Ambassador Anvar Azimov</b>, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation</p> <p>                  - <b>Dr. Dirk Glaesser</b>, Acting Director; Sustainable Development of Tourism; World Tourism Organization UNWTO</p> <p>                  - <b>Mr. Diederik Paalman</b>, Deputy Head of Visa Unit, Directorate General Home Affairs, European Commission</p> <p><u>Followed by discussions</u></p> <p>Moderator:   - <b>Ms. Alexandra Stiglmyer</b>, Senior Analyst, European Stability Initiative</p>		
12:00-13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30-15:30	<b><u>Third Session:</u></b> <b>Visa facilitation - good practices in making visas more accessible to travelers (continued)</b>	Hofburg (Segmentgalerie I)
<p>This session will continue discussions on facilitating access to visa by travelers and will among other issues address the use of Internet tools for distributing information on visa and entry regulations and as a tool for submission of visa applications and supporting documentation where applicable. The session will also explore the value of collecting biometric information in the process of visa issuance and the innovative instruments for establishing the trustworthiness of foreign travelers such as registered travelers programs and systems for recording exit and entry by foreigners.</p> <p>Introducer: - <b>Mr. Yasin Temizkan</b>, Acting Head of Department, Directorate for Information Technologies; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey (TBC)</p> <p>                  - <b>Ms. Mathilde Heegaard Bausager</b>; Ramboll, Denmark</p> <p><u>Followed by discussions</u></p> <p>Moderator: - <b>Mr. Zoran Đoković</b>, Migration/Freedom of Movement Adviser, ODIHR</p>		

## Roundtable rationale and objectives

OSCE participating States used the Helsinki process to encourage mutually beneficial steps towards clarifying rules and simplifying procedures aimed at allowing persons to temporarily enter or leave their own territories. Commitments on human contacts that OSCE participating States made in Helsinki in 1975 and subsequently in Madrid in 1983, Vienna in 1989 aimed to facilitate, inter alia, travel for personal and professional reasons. In Ljubljana in 2005 the participating States agreed to "*...promote co-operation between their border services, customs authorities, agencies issuing travel documents and visas, and law enforcement and migration agencies, as well as other competent national structures, with a view to ...*", inter alia, "*...promote free and secure movement of persons, goods, services and investments across borders, in conformity with relevant legal frameworks, international law and OSCE commitments, inter alia, through enhancing the security of travel documents and encouraging, as appropriate, circumstances that could allow liberalization of visa regimes...*". Participating States also highlighted the value of the OSCE's contribution in providing "*technical assistance and expert advice on exit and entry procedures, including on simplification of visa procedures, as appropriate;*"

Since then, OSCE participating States have concluded both multilateral and bilateral agreements and made unilateral decisions that have resulted in a certain degree of liberalization of cross-border travel. At the same time, in those instances where visa requirements for travel between OSCE participating States remain, challenges exist in relation to the facilitation of visas for bona fide travellers.

In 2013 the Office on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) conducted OSCE wide research on cross border mobility in the OSCE region and the effects of visa regimes on cross border travel within it. The results of this research are compiled and presented in the *OSCE/ODIHR Baseline Study on Cross-Border Mobility in the OSCE Region*. The study aims to promote the OSCE's commitments on freedom of movement and human contacts, and to provide baseline information to assist OSCE participating States in the implementation of these commitments. The study presents the situation of cross-border mobility in the form of baseline data with the aim of raising awareness of OSCE participating States of the current situation in relation to freedom of movement and human contacts in the OSCE region. Data relating to the level of cross-border mobility in the OSCE region is presented, including how it is affected by visa requirements maintained by OSCE participating States. The study focuses in particular on visa application mechanisms in those instances where visa regimes exist, their characteristics and their impact on cross-border mobility. It also focuses on best practices in operating visa regimes which successfully counter illegal immigration but which at the same time facilitate cross-border travel for legitimate purposes.

The Roundtable will mark the launch of OSCE/ODIHR's Baseline Study on Cross Border Mobility and will offer a platform for discussion on the findings and recommendations contained therein. As part of dedicated working sessions, the roundtable will further seek to identify best practices on national and regional policies in relation to visa facilitation and innovative approaches that can be taken in establishing trustworthiness of travelers including the use of certain information technology solutions that could result in increased visa facilitation.

Invitations to participate at the roundtable will be extended to OSCE participating States consular officials, representatives of the Delegations of participating States to the OSCE, representatives of civil society and think tank organizations.