ICMPD is facilitating regional cooperation for law enforcement agencies on irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, in brief RELEC. This cooperation among Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey started in October 2015. Its aim is to establish a better transnational response against criminal networks involved in migration related crimes. At national level in Pakistan, RELEC supports the establishment of a framework for statistical information exchange and analysis of migration trends in order to strengthen national capacities for international cooperation. At regional level, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) exchange knowledge and experience with the RELEC countries to improve international cooperation in the area of irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

Pakistan and Migration: opportunities and challenges

Since the early 1970s over ten million emigrants have left Pakistan to pursue job opportunities abroad. This has resulted in Pakistanis becoming one of the largest diaspora populations spread across the world. Pakistan ranks within the top ten labour exporting countries worldwide.

- The bulk of unskilled workers migrates to the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC).
- In 2018, Pakistan was ranked 7th amongst the top ten recipients of remittances globally receiving $20.9 billion.
- As these remittances contribute significantly to the country’s economy, labour migration in Pakistan is strongly linked to long-term development goals.
- Irregular migration remains a major concern for Pakistan.

Migrant Resource Centres in Islamabad and Lahore

The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD), Labour Department Punjab and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) operate two Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Islamabad and Lahore.

The MRCs’ fundamental goal: to help people make informed decisions about migration.

The MRCs raise awareness on the benefits of safe and regular migration and the dangers and consequences of irregular migration.

Within the first three years of their existence, the MRCs have served over 150,000 outgoing and potential migrants.

More outreach is needed at district level and the extension of the MRC in Pakistan network is ongoing.

MRCs inform the public and youth about study, work and living conditions abroad, recruitment processes, rights and obligations, migration laws and policies, legal and cultural practices in destination countries, and risks and dangers associated with irregular migration.

Law Enforcement Cooperation in the region

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How can Pakistan’s migrant workers be protected?

**MIGRA.P**

- Aims to enhance labor migration through promoting best working terms and conditions for Pakistani migrant workers and capacitating Community Welfare Attachés to enforce standard employment contracts and negotiate bilateral labor and social security agreements.
- Will further develop capacities in the pre-decision-making phase and expanding the pre-departure system and orientation for departing migrant workers.

**The “Silk Routes project”**

All described activities are conducted under the project “Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes” whose main objective is to improve migration governance in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The project strengthens the regional dialogue on migration under the Budapest Process which was initiated in 1993. The project hosts the Silk Routes Facility, MIGRA.P and RELEC; in collaboration with its partner countries it also operates Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs).

**Our contacts**

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