



Danube Transnational Programme **YOUMIG**

National policy recommendations for
improved cooperation on youth migration

National policy recommendations

WP6
Activity 6.2

June 2019

SERBIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Serbia has been affected by emigration for decades, and youth emigration presents a particular challenge. Young Serbians are more likely to migrate or express an intention to migrate compared to the rest of the population. The main drivers of youth migration are high levels of unemployment and the aspiration for a better quality of life. The negative economic and social effects of youth emigration on local authority areas across Serbia direct the need for policies that address youth emigration, leading to positive outcomes in this regard.

In order to improve the monitoring and management of youth migration, modalities of data and knowledge exchange and cooperation between national administrative bodies, statistical offices, research institutions and local municipalities were tested within the framework of the YOUMIG project. These modalities are intended to improve the measurement, evaluation and management of youth migration in terms of its causes, patterns and impacts, resulting in improved multi-level governance cooperation.

This document is focused on providing policy recommendations for national level institutions that deal with the monitoring and management of youth migration. Moreover, the recommendations are directed at those institutions that improve the monitoring and management of migration to ameliorate its negative effects and help to develop its full potential. The purpose of this document is to assist the local administrations in improving the collection and utilisation of data through the identification of necessary future actions, leading to improvements in the monitoring and management of youth migration at local level.

The national policy recommendations envisage further interventions:

1. Enhancement of the legal framework and ratification of necessary interinstitutional cooperation agreements to improve the management of youth migration

To address the challenges of migration adequately and effectively, the improvement of action plans and strategies, through consultation with local authorities, is necessary. By this means, the allocation of sufficient human and material resources for the cited legal acts could be assured and the full potential of youth migration exploited to create win-win situations that enable migrant youth associations to be supported and, through consultative dialogue, involved in the process of social mainstreaming. The creation of interinstitutional agreements should cover the entire policy making cycle at different governance levels allowing the legislative process flows to be clearly traced.

2. Presentation of the conducted small-scale survey to interested municipalities as an example of good practice and support for its implementation at the local level

In order to achieve a sustainable solution and provide necessary data for the municipalities that strategically addresses youth migration issues, the institutionalisation of a small-scale survey elaborated within the YOUMIG project is necessary. It is possible to implement the survey in cooperation with the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government (MSALSG) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS), beginning with the initiatives of the municipalities themselves (those that are interested in creating local strategies for youth). In the process of institutionalising the local survey, SORS would provide the methodology and instruments for conducting the local survey. All these elements form the basis for the development of the legal framework (including the elaboration of solutions) and the engagement of the institutions necessary for institutionalisation of the survey, opening up possibilities for the development of local strategic documents in line with the adopted national strategies.

3. The development of local government capacities for utilising specialised databases

Strategic decisions at the local level need to be based on reliable and realistic statistical data, which must be easily accessible and clear to decision-makers. One of the results of the YOUMIG project is the Data Toolkit, on which SORS plans to regularly update the relevant data (SORS supports the use of Devinfo databases that it uses for local self-government training). This activity could form part of the action plan for the implementation of a strategic document at the local level in which the SORS would have a coordinative role.

4. Qualitative enhancement of existing databases and the establishment of new ones in the statistical system with SORS as coordinator

SORS initiated the amendment to the Law on Official Statistics to provide an adequate legal framework for the development of an efficient, independent, professional and sustainable statistical system. The main aim is to change SORS's status, to strengthen its coordinating role among the other relevant official statistics stakeholders and providers, to strengthen its position in terms of the use of administrative sources, as well as to assure that mandatory consultations are made with SORS to establish new administrative sources, or change the existing ones. Thus, the local level data on migration would be more reliable.

5. Establishment of an online platform for local governments, where they can exchange experiences in the field of migration management

The establishment of a platform including different national level stakeholders at the level of local government would facilitate evidence-based decision making in the field of migration.

6. Facilitating youth employment

Local governments should provide information on programmes to facilitate employment, available to all residents of the given municipality. Measures that facilitate youth employment would require the cooperation of local government units within the Ministry of Education, the National Employment Service, the Department of Economy and Local Economic Development, private employment agencies and business entities. Moreover, local governments facilitate people's search for employment (voluntary registering on databases and updating data).

YOUMIG at a glance

Full name: YOUMIG – Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

A project of the **Danube Transnational Programme**

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Budget: 2,718,853 EUR (ERDF Contribution: 2,055,179 EUR, IPA Contribution: 255,846 EUR)

Call number: Call 1

Priority: 4. (Well-governed Danube region)

Specific objective: 4.1. (Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges)

Project partners:

Lead partner: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HU)

Work package leaders: University of Vienna (AT), Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (DE), Maribor Development Agency (SI), INFOSTAT - Institute of Informatics and Statistics (SK)

ERDF partners: Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

IPA partners: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (RS), Institute of Social Sciences (RS), Municipality of Kanjiža (RS)

Associated Strategic Partners: Statistics Austria (AT), City of Karlsruhe (DE), Federal Institute for Population Research (DE)

YOUMIG, in which 19 partners from 8 countries work together, wishes to support local governments in capitalising on the developmental potential of youth migration, leading to a better governed and more competitive Danube region. The project aims to boost their institutional capacities through enhancing the scarce local evidence on youth migration, contributing to improved policymaking with a focus on human capital. Statistical offices and academic organizations are teaming up with local governments in a complex and customised multi-level transnational cooperation to create local developmental strategies based on improved youth-migration impact indicators and introduce transnationally tested tools for managing local challenges. As a result, institutions and stakeholders can obtain increased capacities through intensified cooperation.

YOUMIG's work is structured in six work packages (WPs). Besides management (WP1) and communication (WP2) issues, the thematic work is distributed as follows. In line with the present document, the Conceptual Framework, all partners contribute to the development of improved evidence on youth migration and its developmental impacts at the EU, national and local level by elaborating local status quo analyses for the local partners (WP3). Through a comprehensive evaluation of the locally available indicators on youth migration, the project identifies shortfalls related to measuring local challenges and elaborates and tests new or improved youth migration indicators (WP4). At the local level, the project improves capacities to manage related processes by jointly testing and introducing good practices and institutional units, tailored to local needs (WP5). The project concludes with the provision of transnationally tested tools for all governance levels contributing to better strategies, policies and services related to the issue of youth migration (WP6).

YOUMIG's outputs can be viewed at <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/outputs>

Map of the Danube region and location of the YOUMIG partners



Cartography: **Ádám Németh**

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Short introduction on youth migration

The mobility of young people throughout the world has increased and taken diverse forms in recent decades. Countries in the Danube region are no exceptions in this regard, facing both outflow and inflow challenges related to youth migration. Apart from the traditional causes of this phenomenon, new drivers have emerged that make migration patterns more complex. The emigration of young people may cause a severe loss of labour and human capital, coupled with untraced incoming transfers (such as social and financial remittances), while immigration, if not properly managed, may result in the marginalisation and underuse of human resources. Youth migration and its consequences require improved governance at all levels of administration to make its

management easier at the local level, and to harness its full potential for local development.

1.2. Short introduction on youth migration in Serbia

During and after the wars in the Western Balkans in the 1990s, Serbia witnessed the large-scale emigration (mostly) of its youth. Despite the political stabilisation of the region in the 2000s, the emigration process continued owing to slow economic recovery. By contrast, migration inflows to Serbia mainly consisted of Serbian nationals, i.e. former *guest workers* who had retired, while foreigners (of which non-EU citizens are most numerous) still represented the minority. In sum, Serbia's migration varied between ca. 10,000 and 15,000 persons per year during the 2001-2011 period: a consequence of unfavourable demographic processes (a shrinking and aging population induced by a prolonged below-replacement level of fertility). In recent years, the indications are that net emigration has become even more pronounced, but this cannot be confirmed due to the lack of statistics or a representative survey on emigration flows.

According to the population census – the only national source of data on Serbian citizens residing abroad – the size of emigrant stock fell from 414,839 in 2002 to 313,411 in 2011. However, the statistics of the most popular destination countries suggest that the number of Serbian emigrants is most probably double the size of those represented by the census. Emigrants from Serbia are typically younger than the population in the country. Those working in traditional European destinations are mostly of a low level of education, while 'brain drain' is considered to be an important part of the emigration flow to overseas countries – a flow that has revived since the 1990s.

During the 1990s, 712 refugees came to the municipality of Kanjiža of which 90% came from Croatia. This municipality is an emigration area in which the 2011 census registered a significantly higher proportion of emigrants (3.4%) than was the case in 1991 (1.9%). The main destinations of those leaving were Hungary and Germany. The municipality has been struggling with a new wave of emigration since 2011 when the Hungarian ethnic community in Serbia received dual citizenship along with the opportunity to get an EU passport. This had a profound effect on municipalities like Kanjiža, where the population is mostly of Hungarian ethnicity. In addition, Kanjiža belongs to the region with the highest probability of 'brain drain' in Serbia, with a three times greater likelihood of emigration among persons of high education compared to those with lower education levels. The internal migration balance during the period 2011-2017 was negligibly positive, except for the year 2012 (-63). However, in the age group 15-34 years (particularly in the group 15-24), net internal migration was negative, except in 2017.

In Serbia, the main challenges and opportunities lie in the area of emigration and the encouragement of return migration, in addition to the creation of an applicable legal framework for attracting immigrants, which could contribute to the development of society. Policy actions that lead to improved cooperation between the relevant institutions in charge of monitoring and managing migration at all levels of governance can facilitate the implementation of relevant strategies and policy actions aimed at improving the overall economic and institutional stability of the republic.

1.3. Short introduction to the MLG concept

Multi-level governance (MLG), as defined by the EU Committee of the Regions, refers to coordinated action by the EU, its Member States and local and sub-national governments, based on partnership and involving operational and institutional cooperation in all phases of the policy cycle, from drafting to implementing policies. These actions require the coordination and distribution of competencies from the national to sub-national levels, with priority given to the EU transnational level, especially in view of the growing importance of MLG in migration and integration policy. Therefore, MLG refers to the dispersion of central government authority, both vertically to actors located at different territorial and administrative levels, and horizontally, to actors and domains at the same level of government.

Regional (NUTS2) competencies on migration policies are not broad. However, local governments have competence in providing public services for migrants. Therefore, the basis for MLG cooperation should be further strengthened, and localities should be considered partners in the national-level policy dialogues on migration and integration objectives and indicators.

1.4. Short introduction to activity 6.2 Building multi-level governance cooperation schemes

This document is the outcome of YOUMIG's efforts to facilitate cooperation between different levels of governance, and to provide a testing ground for knowledge exchange mechanisms. The activities tested the modalities of cooperation between national administrative bodies, statistical offices, research institutions and local municipalities in terms of the improved measurement, evaluation and management of the causes, patterns and impacts of youth migration, resulting in improved multi-level governance cooperation. Based on previous project outcomes (Local Status Quo Analyses, Set of new or improved indicators and One-stop-shops), several channels of institutional cooperation at different government levels were used.

The recommendations listed here are derived from these project activities, as well as from a series of workshops held on the subject in the project countries. In 2018-2019, two types of workshops were organised at the national level in each country. The Ambition Setting Workshop served to map existing knowledge and competences, to evaluate the current cooperation practices and define the needs and possibilities for improved multi-level governance cooperation based on the MLG concept. The Vision Development Workshop served as a means of discussing the national level policy recommendations for improved institutional cooperation regarding youth migration, which present the main activity output.

NATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MLG COOPERATION

The national level policy recommendations are aimed at the improved monitoring and management of youth migration. The policy recommendations include guidelines on how to deepen cooperation and foster knowledge and data exchange between statistical offices, academic institutions and local governments, as well as national institutions at the local level. In focus are two areas of national policy intervention: new or improved indicators and policy issues on youth migration.

*2.1. **Area of intervention No 1: key recommendations/key actions. Further actions needed to improve the availability and quality of indicators on youth migration in SERBIA.***

Summary of the main findings of relevant YOUMIG deliverables and outputs

Evaluation report on youth migration indicators including the identification of shortfalls

Today, youth is one of the most dynamic and mobile migrant groups demanding the development of various means and models to consider its diversity and mobility. The collection of indicators as a condition for the management of youth migration should be linked to pertinent domains, including demography, the labour market, economic development, health, and education. Here, the intention is to evaluate indicators as a precondition for further planning and project implementation at the local level; followed by the development of new indicators and an evaluation of the effects of youth mobility on local development. During the first part of the project, a list of relevant indicators was compiled, based on existing ones and those important for managing and measuring the impacts of youth migration on the local community. Their availability regarding methodological and conceptual accuracy and potential effectiveness was assessed, followed by the identification of shortfalls. In addition, a needs evaluation enabling the recognition of priority areas for the most relevant policy making implementation was conducted.

Transnational testing of new/improved indicators (Serbia)

Since the focus of the YOUMIG project is youth intra-country migration within the Danube region, the project covers a heterogeneous group of countries and demonstrates the large differences between their labour markets and levels of economic and social development, as well as the volume and composition of the incoming and out-going migration flows. Therefore, the creation of new or improved indicators is necessary – indicators that are able to measure the developmental balance of youth migration, tailored to the specific needs of local governments. The report overviews all the steps undertaken in the process of testing the indicators as a part of a *small-scale-survey* with country-specific target groups and data

collection from all relevant data sources, and describes the challenges met during the final dataset creation. The indicators' accuracy, relevance, accessibility, interpretability, coherence and timeliness were assessed based on their capacity to support national and local level strategic planning and policy introduction with regard to the enhancement of youth migration management. In addition, the possible transnational adaption of indicators that serve as an input for the pilot activities is described.

Area of intervention

1. Enhancing the legal framework and ratifying the necessary interinstitutional cooperation agreements to improve youth migration management

The contemporary management of migration flows is dependent on the existence of a well-ordered national system that clearly defines national level migration policy, presented through a precisely formulated strategy for migration management, including the development of the legal and institutional framework and definitions needed for its implementation. Further, a mechanism for the effective coordination of all relevant actors central to migration policy implementation is presented.

Therefore, it was vital to provide a coherent legal framework in harmony with the EU regulations that facilitates communication flow among the producers of migration statistics. By adopting the Law on Migration Management in 2012, (*"Official Gazette of RS", number 107/12*) a basic definition of migration was defined and a national coordinated system for migration management was established with all the relevant institutions listed, essential for the monitoring and management of migration flows.

Improvements to the legal framework that enable a more qualitative approach to migration management, consider, on the one hand, the revision and harmonisation of relevant international human rights standards, in terms of labour rights and the prevention of discrimination on any grounds as a means of ensuring that the legal framework is *rights-based* and *socially, age- and gender-sensitive*. On the other hand, it is necessary, in consultation with the local authorities and local governments, to develop and implement specific national and local migration policy frameworks (legislation, action plans, strategies and institutional structures) that adequately and effectively address the challenges and conditions related to migration management, as well as the needs of migrants, especially young ones (aged 18-34). By this means, the allocation of sufficient human and material resources for the cited legal acts would be assured, allowing the full potential of youth migration to be exploited as a means of creating *win-win* situations that facilitate the

support of migrant youth associations – and through consultative dialogue, involve them in social mainstreaming.

Besides the process of updating the legal framework and ensuring its efficient implementation, it is vital to provide stronger intra-institutional integration focused on the establishment of an official operative network for data exchange at every level, whereby data accessibility and interpretability as well as the quality of reporting would increase. A network establishment would be defined by law, as well under interinstitutional bilateral agreements by means of which the legal base would be enhanced and made more transparent, making it more receptive to stakeholders' inputs and easier to follow. The agreements should be designed through a process of institutional consensus facilitating fast and effective cooperation among institutions, in addition to effective data usage and exchange with the intention of reducing administrative costs.

In general, the creation of interinstitutional agreements should cover the whole cycle of policymaking: design and policy preparation, adoption and implementation, application, evaluation and revision over time with a joint database on legislative files establishment, allowing the clear traceability of the legislative process flows.

It is worth mentioning that at the beginning of 2019, the coordination team for monitoring Serbian economic migration trends was established by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Apart from the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Veteran and Social Affairs, the team includes representatives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry without portfolio (a cabinet responsible for demography and population policy), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, a group of experts formed by representatives from various universities, scientific institutes, trade unions, municipality associations and government bodies and institutions was established. (The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia was also involved in this area.) This group intends to propose new solutions concerning the enhancement of legislation in the domain of economics-related migration. The coordination team is expected to create and adopt a strategy regarding economic migration management in Serbia. It is essential to achieve a constancy of outcome that responds to the social needs of young migrants in this regard.

2. The YOUMIG project survey: examples of good practice that support its implementation at the local level

In the WP4 activities, a list of indicators for monitoring youth migration was determined (and the context in which these indicators were implemented in the Danube region countries). Thus, 16 *basic* indicators, and an additional 5 *new* indicators suitable for

development were selected. Accordingly, in Kanjiža municipality a survey for data testing and production in compliance with the adopted list of indicators was carried out. The quality analysis of the data obtained from this survey confirmed the fact that the proposed method was acceptable for collecting data as regards youth (aged 18–34) and their households, however, the method lacked reliability in terms of collecting data on employment indicators provided by economic subjects.

In order to achieve a sustainable solution while ensuring that the data needed by municipalities maintains a strategic approach to the issue of youth migration and its management, institutionalisation of the survey was necessary. Regarding the authorities' responsibilities and capacities required for the implementation of this survey, the conclusions of the workshop *Towards youth migration management through upgraded administrative cooperation from the local to the national level (ASW)* indicated its possible implementation through cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, and the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The implementation of local government initiatives focusing on youth management strategies was also considered.

The workshop: *Towards formulating national recommendations for upgraded administrative cooperation aimed at youth migration management (VDW)* presented a novel approach to collecting inaccessible data within the system of official statistics. Assessment of this approach on the part of the participants was positive and it was decided that its implementation should be proposed to the coordination team – the organiser of the activity. Before the survey can be implemented, it is necessary to map the municipalities expected to adopt this method for the purposes of creating their own local strategies. In this respect, it is important to recognise the role of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia, which has supported the development of Serbian municipalities for many years (taking a coordinative role in the mapping of specific municipalities, the creation of local strategic documents, on-going training, and support for the survey's implementation etc.). The coordination team, set up by the Government of the Republic of Serbia to monitor Serbian trends in economic migration is to be introduced, drawing on the experience of the YOUMIG project concerning the local survey's implementation. It is expected that this method of data collection will be recommended for implementation through an action plan on economic migration management in the Republic of Serbia. Coordination team members are expected to take an active part in the survey's implementation at the local level, with their individual assignments being stipulated by supplementary MoUs.

In the process of institutionalising the local survey on youth migration, and in accordance with the envisaged coordinative role defined by the Official Statistics Law, SORS will assume responsibility in promoting this survey, ensuring that the proper methodology and

appropriate tools for local surveys (within preliminary activities directed at their implementation) is maintained. An example of good practice in this respect concerns the experience gained in Kanjiža municipality within the YOUMIG project.

3. The development of local governments' capacities with regard to specialised databases usage (and training provision)

Strategic decisions made at the local level need to be based on reliable and realistic statistical data, which must be easily accessible and clear/understandable to decision-makers. In this regard, SORS provides a large number of data within its jurisdiction on its official website, in addition to detailed methodological information in the SDMX format on its database, and other formats, e.g. the DevInfo database.

DevInfo databases are intended to monitor development, planning and reporting within the adopted national strategies. This system has been developed in the Republic of Serbia since 2004, and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia is responsible for the development of its database, working closely with other state institutions, local level partners and international organizations. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia developed the DevInfo database to monitor the state of local development; it contains a review of the state and development of the municipalities and 180 indicators at the level of municipalities for the period 2010-2018 (status: updated at least twice a year). Further, the database contains 12 different manufacturers and topics/areas: demography, social participation, construction, economy, health indices, information and communication, culture, education, agriculture, judiciary, natural environment, traffic and social protection. The DevInfo format provides a simple overview of the database and its visualisation: the preparation of reports, tables, charts and maps, and is directed at decision makers. Moreover, these data can be exported with ease to other formats (e.g., the YOUMIG Data Toolkit), thus increasing the content display of relevant data, and the ability of the local level to respond to the challenges it faces. As part of its regular long-term activity, SORS offers support in the use of DevInfo databases through training, where all interested users (local self-governments) can apply via the institute's address. It is also possible to use capacities engaged in DevInfo training to provide knowledge exchange on migration statistics for all local self-governments.

Strategic documents of national importance that emphasise the importance of the local level can be the basis for expanding the existing municipal base; such documents can facilitate the creation of new databases that provide data on monitoring the effectiveness of adopted strategies.

Bearing in mind that one of the outcomes of the YOUMIG project is the Data Toolkit: a resource where all data from the adopted list of indicators (16 core and 5 additional

indicators) are stored; the role of SORS would be to help the municipalities in the regular updating of this data and provide advice on how to download and update the database on the Data Toolkit, as well as provide other necessary methodological explanations related to the indicators and/or their analysis. This activity could be part of the action plan for the implementation of a strategic document at the local level in which the SORS would assume a role.

4. The qualitative enhancement of existing databases and the establishment of new ones through the coordinative role of the SORS in the statistical system

To achieve the basic strategic goals defined in the Statistical Development Strategy 2016-2020, a greater use of administrative resources is recommended to reduce costs and the burden on reporting units. In the previous period, SORS increased the use of administrative resources for the production of statistical data in different domains, but the need for even greater use of administrative data remains.

SORS initiated the amendment to the Law on Official Statistics in order to provide an adequate legal framework for developing an efficient, professional, independent and sustainable statistical system. The main aim is to change the status and strengthen the coordinative role of SORS among other relevant official statistics stakeholders and providers, to strengthen the position of SORS in terms of the use of administrative sources, as well as to assure mandatory consultations with SORS to establish new administrative sources or update the existing ones. It is necessary to improve cooperation with other producers of official statistics as well as adapt administrative data sources to the needs of the methodology applied. The quality of registers needs to be assessed: each potential source of data must be analysed and checked in terms of its contents, definitions, availability and completeness. If the quality is not satisfactory, the noted deficiencies will be relayed to a register holder who is then expected to undertake activities to improve its content.

Besides the fact that amending the Law on Official Statistics should strengthen the SORS coordinative role, an organisational adjustment to the coordinative requirements of the statistical system will be made for the purposes of establishing the organisational unit for coordination in the official statistical system.

Improvements in national legislation and harmonisation with international regulations, as well as the planned activities concerning the establishment of the statistical survey on international migration are essential for an improved understanding of youth migration and its management at both the national and local level. In the following period, activities on the establishment of statistics on international migration (immigration, emigration, acquisition and loss of citizenship) will continue through joint work with the Ministry of Interior on

defining the necessary methodological and organisational instruments needed to carry out the research.

The regular maintenance of the **DevInfo** databases on local development and municipality profiles and the proposed creation of the **Open data portal** (the exchange of all existing data in the official statistical system available for municipalities) will facilitate the municipalities' access to these digital resources.

The establishment of the Central Population Register (CPR) (the Government of Serbia adopted the Bill on the Central Register of Population in December 2018) will lead to the establishment of data and knowledge exchange between the relevant institutions. Based on common standards (including statistical needs) the CPR (in 2019) should be able to connect 11 administrative records. The CPR's establishment will ensure that data from the administrative records (e.g. records of citizenship, permanent residence, temporary residence, temporary stay abroad, records of foreigners) will be available at the local/municipality level.

The Government has established 'a coordinative body for the monitoring of economic migration flows in the Republic of Serbia' (established in January 2019), bringing together the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy, the Ministries of Finance and Economy, as well as representatives of employers, trade unions and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Area of intervention No 2: key recommendations/key actions. Further actions needed to tackle policy challenges on youth migration at different governance levels in SERBIA.

1. Data-based decision making at the level of local self-government units

The main challenge regarding data-based decision making at the local government level is the lack of accessible, up-to-date and comprehensive data on youth migration.

In order for local governments to formulate and implement adequate measures, it is necessary to obtain data on the following aspects of youth migration according to the indicators developed within YOUMIG:

- Number of immigrants and immigrant youth
- Demographic structure and educational attainment
- Economic activity of people leaving/returning
- Reasons for migration

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration aims to collect, publish and analyse migration data, as well as develop a single migration monitoring system. There are migration councils and trustee offices for refugees and migration in every municipality in the Republic of Serbia. Their task is, among other things, to assist migrants and refer them to the relevant authorities or civil society organisations that can assist them.

A person responsible for migrants in every municipality can be of vital importance in the process of providing information on migrants.

The training this person undergoes and the information provided to the public about his or her tasks and responsibilities is very important: without these elements, no significant positive effects can be expected.

Other data, collected regularly at the local level and useful for migration management should be available to the local government.

The establishment of an online platform for local governments is proposed. It will be coordinated by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, and established by the local self-governments. On this platform, experiences will be exchanged in the field of migration management, adapted to the needs of the respective local self-government. The local self-governments will provide the data for the database, and KIRS will collect, process and publish them.

In order to stimulate the return of persons currently living abroad, the establishment of a local centre is proposed (or the appointment of a person, within the existing local structure, responsible for providing assistance) for persons returning from abroad. The complete information on all aspects of migrant return should be provided, in cooperation with:

- Ministry of Interior (issues personal documents)
- Tax administration (payment of taxes)
- Health Insurance Fund (provides health insurance in Serbia for people living abroad who return for a shorter or longer period)
- Disability and Pension fund (years of service acquired abroad)
- Ministry of Education (simplifying the process of foreign diploma recognition)
- National Employment Service (provides up-to-date-information on job vacancies, and youth employment measures)

Since Serbia currently shows an increased tendency towards youth emigration, other measures are also necessary. Young people who are thinking of moving abroad usually have no contact with persons responsible for migrants in local governments. Therefore, local governments should develop special communication mechanisms with people who plan to emigrate.

Research results concerning the attitudes of youth in the municipality of Kanjiža show that the main reason for leaving is economic in nature: a lack of employment, low salaries and a lack of future prospects.

Therefore, the local government should regularly inform its citizens about municipal development plans, planned employment measures and other issues crucial for making decisions on migration. In addition to the traditional media, the Internet and social networks should be used so that the message can reach young people as effectively as possible.

To improve knowledge on youth's attitudes to migration, continuous communication is proposed. Local governments should regularly conduct online surveys (such as that created within the framework of YOUMIG) that are suitable for measuring most migration- and development-related trends. Therefore, the adaptation of this survey questionnaire is recommended for other Serbian municipalities, accompanied by workshops, debates, Internet forums and other modern methods of communication that can serve to determine the attitudes of youth on migration – their plans, and motives.

Social media and various local online platforms significantly improve communication with people who do not live in the territory of the local governments.

The key to success in this process is the creation of a database for young people and employers for which registration should be voluntary, based on the information campaign of the local governments.

Results on the attitudes, motives, and plans of young people in relation to migration can form the basis for defining various local government measures on migration management based on the available data.

2. Facilitating youth employment

Since the main reason for youth emigration from the Republic of Serbia is economic in nature, due to inadequate employment, difficulties in finding work and low salaries, local government measures aimed at facilitating employment are an important element in the process of managing youth migration.

Local governments have an intermediary role in the process of facilitating employment while the state, in contrast, plays a major role in its facilitation. Local governments should provide information about programmes that encourage and promote employment, available to all residents in the given municipality.

It is of utmost importance that a person can receive – in one place – all necessary information with regard to employment in the territory of the local government: job vacancies, employer requests, legislation and training courses etc. A branch office of the National Employment Service or a civil society organization could administer such a service.

There is, however, room for improvement concerning cooperation between the National Employment Service, its local branches and the local self-governments. A top down initiative is proposed to increase the capacities of employees of the National Employment Service; specifically, it is aimed at improving communication between the branches of the National Employment Service and the local self-governments in order to balance needs and opportunities at the local level. During the Vision Development Workshop, it became apparent that there are big discrepancies between the National Employment Service's employment rate data for Kanjiza, and the situation in the town. According to the National Employment Service, demand for work in the municipality is very low, with few people registered unemployed, while according to the Local Department for Economic Development, 200 positions in local enterprises remain vacant. The reason for this discrepancy is that neither job seekers nor employers have any confidence in the National Employment Service in terms of the assistance it might provide. For this to change, the National Employment Service, its local branches and the local self-governments need to engage in continuous communication and re-establish trust in the local communities.

In this process, it is necessary for the National Employment Service to establish and maintain an up-to-date database of job vacancies. Success depends on whether potential employers and potential candidates/employees are fully aware of significance of this action and voluntarily submit their data to the databases of the local governments.

To encourage young people who have studied abroad to return home, it is important that young migrants be provided with adequate assistance on the part of local governments. Such help could involve the provision of practical administration-related information, the recognition of higher education diplomas, the provision of summer internships during studies, the organization of intensive professional terminology courses, as well as an overview of legal regulations that can be a major influence on a migrant's decision to return. It is important that youth can get all the necessary information in one place (i.e. via modern online media). Developing a database with the input of young people studying abroad, reporting on local events and maintaining regular communication with youth can increase confidence in the activities of local governments.

The central government should also support the local self-governments in their attempts to stimulate the return of those who have studied abroad. Through shared efforts and the coordination of the local Departments for Economic Development, it could provide favourable loans for the purchase of property, assist with starting a private business, share information and provide assistance with transnational grants for young entrepreneurs. This type of support should be targeted at the settlements with the largest share of young people studying abroad.

Local governments should help to nurture entrepreneurs: young people who are considering establishing their own businesses. The establishment and development of business incubators and co-working spaces is essential for would-be business people. The success of young entrepreneurs largely depends on the professional assistance provided by the given institutions.

Measures that facilitate youth employment require the cooperation of local government units with the following institutions:

- Ministry of Education (diploma recognition)
- National Employment Service (current job vacancies)
- Private employment agencies (current job vacancies)
- Business entities (their business plans that affect the number and structure of necessary staff in future) – the Department of Economy and Local Economic Development
- People seeking employment (voluntary registering on the database and updating data)

It is hoped that the measures described can boost the confidence of young people, and help them redouble their entrepreneurial efforts. In turn, this can reduce youth emigration and encourage young people living abroad to return home.