

## Transnational governmental and nongovernmental cooperation to inform Moldovan seasonal workers in German agriculture

Germany

GENERAL INFORMATION	
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Member State	Germany
Name of the organisation and address	<p>Arbeit und Leben DGB/VHS Berlin-Brandenburg</p> <p>Lorenzweg 5, 12099 Berlin</p> <p><a href="https://www.berlin.arbeitundleben.de/">https://www.berlin.arbeitundleben.de/</a></p>
Type of body/organisation	Civil society organisation
GOOD PRACTICE - GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title of the good practice	Transnational governmental and non-governmental cooperation to inform Moldovan seasonal workers in German agriculture
Geographical focus	Cross-country (Germany and Moldova)
Duration	November 2021 – December 2022 <sup>1</sup>
Summary of the good practice	Governmental and non-governmental partners from Moldova and Germany started an initiative to effectively inform Moldovan seasonal workers active in the agriculture sector in Germany. The stakeholders involved signed a cooperation agreement to provide workers with practical information on labour rights and conditions in Germany prior to their departure. The project included online trainings on German labour and social law in seasonal work for stakeholders in Moldova; advice and

<sup>1</sup> If the Memorandum of Understanding between the German Federal Employment Agency and the National Employment Agency Moldova is renewed the project is likely to continue.

	<p>labour law counselling for Moldovan workers; the preparation of an information brochure; and the establishment of communication channels for workers to stay in touch and allow efficient communication with stakeholders in Germany.</p>
<b>OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Background/context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The German NGO Arbeit und Leben DGB (AL) has more than 10 years of experience in counselling migrant workers, including seasonal workers, on the enforcement of their labour rights in Germany.</li> <li>▶ AL is aware of the special needs of seasonal workers and practical challenges that make them particularly vulnerable. These can include limited/lack of knowledge of German language, no prior work experience in the country and low levels of education.</li> <li>▶ In 2014 the <a href="#">EU Directive 2014/36/EU on the 'entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers'</a> was signed. The Directive enables third-country nationals to start seasonal work without additional visa processes.</li> <li>▶ Based on Directive 2014/36/EU, the German Federal Employment Agency and the National Employment Agency Moldova (NEA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in July 2021. The MoU enables up to 500 Moldovan citizens to commence seasonal work without further visa processes. Subsequently, the Moldovan authorities approached their German counterparts to ensure that all workers are well informed prior to their departure to Germany.</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>General Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To prevent labour exploitation and human trafficking in the context of seasonal work in Germany by providing Moldovan seasonal workers</li> </ul>

	<p>with practical information.</p> <p><b>Specific Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To provide (potential) Moldovan seasonal workers with easily accessible information on labour rights and conditions in Germany as well as low-threshold communication channels, prior to their departure and during the stay;</li> <li>▶ To provide confidential and free-of-charge advice and labour law counselling as well as support in the case of labour rights infringements to seasonal workers in their native language;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Main activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ One condition for the cooperation between Germany and Moldova regarding visa-free seasonal work of Moldovan citizens was that they had to be exclusively recruited by NEA and receive all relevant information prior to their departure. Thus, AL established a close working relationship with NEA to ensure a smooth information flow.</li> <li>▶ The governmental and non-governmental stakeholders decided to sign a cooperation agreement in December 2021 to formalise the relationship and establish a framework for upcoming activities.</li> <li>▶ Together AL, the International Organization for Migration Moldova (IOM) and NEA developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Online training programmes for NEA staff on German labour and social law in seasonal work to create a network of well-informed multipliers;</li> <li>■ Information brochures on working conditions and labour rights in Germany, distributed by the IOM to workers in Moldova before departure;</li> <li>■ Messenger groups on Viber for seasonal workers to stay connected during their stay in</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>Germany, allowing AL to answer enquiries on labour law and to provide continuous advice and support to the workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Where necessary, AL also referred seasonal workers to the closest regional advisory service of the network <a href="#">Initiative Fair Seasonal Work</a>.</li> <li>▶ Thanks to the close cooperation with NEA, it was possible to track the seasonal workers' employers and monitor trends concerning, for example, working conditions and the compliance with labour rights.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevance</b>	<p>The objectives of this activity include the provision of information on labour rights and working conditions for seasonal workers in Germany. The project focused on third-country nationals and contributed to better cross-country cooperation.</p>
<b>Funding/organisational resources</b>	<p>On the side of the authorities and AL, the project could be realised with the existing resources (financial and personnel); additionally the International Organization for Migration Moldova (IOM) provided small funding and established covering some support activities, such as translating and printing flyers.</p>
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	
<b>Stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work and Life (<i>Arbeit und Leben</i>) DGB/VHS Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany – AL</li> <li>▶ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova (<i>Ministerul Muncii Şi Protecţiei Sociale</i>) - MoL</li> <li>▶ National Employment Agency (<i>Moldova Agenția Națională pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă</i>) – NEA</li> <li>▶ International Organization for Migration Moldova – IOM</li> </ul>
<b>Target groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Officials working for the MoL and NEA in Moldova;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Moldovan citizens considering working as seasonal workers in the agricultural sector in Germany.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Final beneficiaries</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Around 80 officials working for the MoL and recruiters working for NEA received targeted online training on particularities of seasonal work regulations in Germany (e.g. the option for short-term employment (<i>Kurzfristige Beschäftigung</i>) which allows workers to be exempted from social security payments)</li> <li>▶ Approximately 400 Moldovan seasonal workers recruited by NEA to start working in Germany under the MoU between the German and Moldovan National Employment Agencies that received detailed information on labour rights and working conditions in Germany prior to their departure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACHIEVEMENTS &amp; RECOGNITION</b></p>	
<p><b>Results and outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The project reached all the seasonal workers being sent to Germany as part of the MoU (around 400) who benefited from the Moldovan Employment Agency's (NEA) proactivity and the expertise of a specialised NGO.</li> <li>▶ All 50 recruiters at the NEA received online training focusing on German labour law and peculiarities concerning seasonal work. As multipliers, they shared high-quality information with interested Moldovan workers.</li> <li>▶ More than 10 online trainings for seasonal workers with about 200 participants were organised. Through consultations via an instant messaging service, AL reached workers in 50 different chat groups (i.e. each group including 3-15 people) depending on the workers' start date and employers.</li> <li>▶ The stakeholders cooperated on the development of two flyers with additional practical information which were shared with the workers before their</li> </ul>

	<p>departure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ AL provided feedback in around 40 cases on labour contracts, contributed to the detection of infringements and provided further counselling</li> <li>▶ The stakeholders evaluated the project internally by preparing questionnaires and evaluation forms which were distributed to the training participants. Overall, the project received positive feedback from the beneficiaries and achieved its objectives. An evaluation meeting in September bringing together 40 representatives of the project reiterated this positive feedback.<sup>i</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Recognition – national or regional level</b>	As of now the practice has not received explicit recognition at national or regional level.
<b>Recognition – outside your MS</b>	The practice has not received recognition at EU or international level yet.
<b>Cost effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The practice was cost-effective as it used existing resources, such as the language skills, consultation and training experiences of AL and existing human resources from each stakeholder;</li> <li>▶ Costs could also be kept low by using digital tools (zoom, MS Teams, Viber) at all stages of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Transferability</b>	<p>The practice established in the project can easily be transferred to other sending countries and to other sectors. Key success factor of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bringing together stakeholders from the governmental and non-governmental sides;</li> <li>▶ Offering practical field expertise to seasonal workers coming from well-established NGOs;</li> <li>▶ Establishing low-threshold communication channels between advisors and seasonal workers, e.g. through Viber;</li> <li>▶ Ensuring a strong commitment from the authorities</li> </ul>

	<p>in the sending country to ensure fair and safe working conditions for seasonal workers going abroad and support them throughout the process.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<p>The project is sustainable in the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The expertise provided by AL was documented by IOM in form of an FAQ. It will be used by IOM and the NEA for future recruitment and information activities;</li> <li>▶ The institutional networks established between Germany and Moldova will be further used for cooperation in other sectors and other fields after project has finished;</li> <li>▶ The insights gained and the problems identified in the project are of great importance to political improvements: the MoL uses the experience for further negotiation und implementation of the Cooperation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Innovativeness</b></p>	<p>Innovative aspects of the practice were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Information was shared at an early stage, prior to the workers' departure from Moldova;</li> <li>▶ The seasonal workers could access the counselling services, prior, during and after their stay in Germany ensuring continuous support;</li> <li>▶ The close cooperation between governmental authorities in form of employment agencies and specialised nongovernmental organisations resulted in a low-threshold approach to address seasonal workers' needs;</li> <li>▶ Setting up a formal agreement between the stakeholder and having a common base for the project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digitalisation</b></p>	<p>Using Viber as a direct communication tool between AL and the workers has contributed significantly to the project's success by simplifying communication flows, lowering the barriers to contact counselling centres and</p>

keeping the project's costs low.

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<sup>i</sup> Philipp Schwertmann, Arbeit und Leben Berlin