



Policy Dialogue: Leveraging Diasporas to Promote Innovation for Sustainable Development

In 2019, almost 272 million people - 3.5 percent of the world's population - were living outside their countries of birth, an increase of 9 percent over 2015 and of 23 percent over 2010.¹ About 45 million migrants around the world come from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, making this region the one with the largest diaspora in nominal value.² Roughly one third of all migrants have at least a tertiary education.³

While large-scale emigration of skilled people can reduce innovation and economic dynamism in countries of origin, the diaspora that arises from sustained migration may turn into assets. Emigrants and their descendants often acquire new skills, business connections, and capital. Systematically building on cultural and family ties to strengthen economic linkages between members of the diaspora and the home country carries substantial potential. Channelling and increasing trade, investment, and, perhaps most importantly, the entrepreneurship, linkages and knowledge spillovers is all essential for promoting and sustaining innovation for sustainable development.

The webinar brings together leading experts and policy makers from the UNECE region to discuss policies to use the potential of diasporas for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. The discussions will be guided by the following questions:

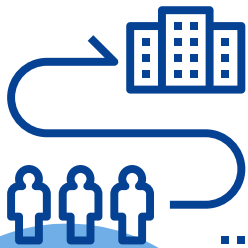
- What are the recent trends in migration and diaspora in the UNECE region? What are the skill profiles of migrants? What drives these trends?
- What is the impact of diasporas on innovation activity in the countries of origin in the UNECE region? What indicators can be used to measure this impact?
- What policies have been deployed in the UNECE region to improve the contribution of diasporas to innovative development? What policies have been deployed to facilitate positive innovation spillovers from the diaspora to the countries of origin? Which policies have been the most effective?
- What policies in particular can facilitate the diaspora's contribution to innovative solutions for sustainable development challenges?

The results of the webinar will be used to inform UNECE's policy advice on innovation for sustainable development.

¹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, International Migration, <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>.

² United Nations Population Division 2019.

³ McKinsey Global Institute (2016), People on the Move: Global Migration's Impact and Opportunity, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Industries/Public%20and%20Social%20Sector/Our%20Insights/Global%20migrations%20impact%20and%20opportunity/MGI-People-on-the-Move-Executive-summary-December-2016.pdf>.



WEBINAR

**Monday, 31 May 2021
10:00 – 12:00 CET**

To register, click [here](#)



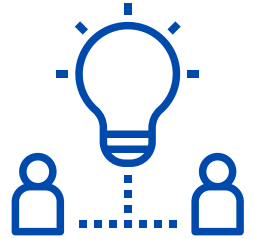
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COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, COMPETITIVENESS AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Programme

31 May 2021



10:00 – 10:10

Welcome and opening of the webinar

- **Mr Dmitry Mariyasin**, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE

10:10 – 11:30

Panel discussion

Moderator:

- **Ms Elisabeth Tuerk**, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE

Panellists:

- **Mr Michael Newson**, Senior Labour Mobility & Human Development Specialist, International Organization for Migration
- **Mr Oleksandr Romanishyn**, Deputy Minister for Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture, Ukraine
- **Mr Zareh Sinanyan**, High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, Republic of Armenia
- **Ms Violina Donu**, Deputy Head, National Diaspora Relations Bureau, Republic of Moldova
- **Mr Yehoyada Mandeel**, CEO, Israel Tech Challenge
- **Mr Selahattin Selsah Pasali**, Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- **Ms Maria Elo**, Professor, University of Southern Denmark

Discussant:

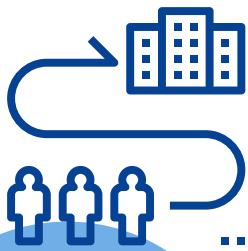
- **Mr Aleksandr V. Gevorkyan**, Associate Professor, St John's University

11:30 – 11:50

Q&A

11:50 – 12:00

Conclusions and final remarks



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The panellists



Mr Michael Newson

Michael Newson is the Senior Specialist for Labour Mobility and Human Development (LHD) for the South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia Region with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). He is responsible for providing technical support, policy expertise, and capacity building to governments, IOM officials, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the region.

Michael previously held the same position in the Middle East and North Africa Region working from the Regional Office in Cairo from 2012 to 2016. He has also worked with IOM in Bogota and Mauritius, where his work focused on the development and implementation of labour migration programmes. Michael holds a BA in Philosophy & English Literature from the University of British Columbia, an MA in Social & Political Philosophy from York University (Toronto), and an MBA from the Warwick Business School.



Mr Oleksandr Romanishyn

Oleksandr Romanishyn is the Deputy Minister for the Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture at the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. He is coordinating the development of proposals and implementation of adopted decisions concerning the formulation and implementation of state policy in the field of intellectual property. He is also responsible for directing, coordinating and controlling the performance of the Department for Development of Intellectual Property, Protection of Domestic Manufacturers, Exporter Relations and Export Promotion, among others.

Before his appointment, Mr Romanishyn was an Advisor to the Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation and an expert and a member of the tender commission of the Ukrainian Startup Fund. He was also an Associate Director of Corporate Finance and the M&A Unit at Ernst and Young for 8 years.

Mr Romanishyn holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business and a Master of Finance from the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. He is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian and English.



Mr Zareh Sinanyan

Zareh Sinanyan is the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. Previously to this appointment, he served first as Council member and then as mayor of Glendale in the United States of America, which is home to the largest Armenian diaspora community in the world. He also served as Chairman of the Glendale Housing Authority, and he was the founding Chair of the Glendale Economic Development Corporation.

Mr Sinanyan served as Chair of Eco-Rapid Transit rail authority and President of Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority, the Metropolitan Water District Board and Southern California Association of Governments Board of Directors.

He holds a Bachelor degree in Political Science and History at the University of California, Los Angeles and a Juris Doctor from the law school at the University of Southern California.



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Ms Violina Donu

Violina Donu is the Deputy Head of the Diaspora Relations Bureau, State Chancellery of Republic of Moldova. She is working on: monitoring diaspora dynamics and establishing partnership relations with diaspora associations; cooperation with specialized national and institutions abroad to develop studies and analysis of the phenomenon of migration and human mobility; monitoring actions implemented by national and local public authorities in the field of diaspora state policy; coordinating the implementation of governmental diaspora programmes. She is experienced in international project coordination to develop diaspora entrepreneurship.

She holds a Master degree in Political Sciences and she is currently carrying a PhD on "Diaspora state policy of the Republic of Moldova".



Mr Yehoyada Mandeel

Yehoyada Mandeel is the CEO of ITC (Israel Tech Challenge), dedicated to unlocking human talent while tackling the shortage of qualified high tech engineers in Israel. Located in Tel-Aviv, ITC's mission is to train young professionals into Israel's most-needed high-tech positions such as Full Stack Development, Cyber security and Data Science. ITC provides intensive and elite training programs, in partnership with over 300 leading high-tech companies and since its foundation in 2016, ITC has trained over 1500 graduates, with 95% successful placement.



Ms Maria Elo

Maria Elo, associate professor at the University of Southern Denmark, professor at the Belt and Road Institute of International Business at Shanghai University, Senior Fellow, University of Turku, and adjunct professor at Åbo Akademi University works in the area of international business, entrepreneurship and migration with topics such as internationalization, human stickiness, resources of skilled migrants and returnees, migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship, transnational and family businesses, diaspora networks in international business, diaspora investment and remittances. She has published books and articles, for example, in Journal of International Management, Journal of International Business Policy, Industrial Marketing Management, Regional Studies, Journal of International Entrepreneurship and International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business.



Mr Selahattin Selsah Pasali

Selsah Pasali is an economist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) specializing on formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of entrepreneurship policies in developing countries and capacity-building for entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups especially migrants and refugees. Prior to UNCTAD, he worked at the UN regional commissions including UNESCAP and UNECA with a specialization on economic empowerment of women and women's entrepreneurship in Africa and Asia and the Pacific. He holds a PhD in Development Economics from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.



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The discussant



Mr Aleksandr Gevorkyan

Aleksandr V. Gevorkyan is Henry George Chair in Economics and Associate Professor of Economics at the Department of Economics and Finance of the Peter J. Tobin College of Business at St. John's University in New York City. Dr. Gevorkyan is a Senior Research Fellow at the Vincentian Centre for Church and Society and a Research Fellow at the Center for Global Business Stewardship. He is a Board Member at the Armenian Economic Association and a member of the Board of Trustees at the Henry George School of Social Science.

Dr. Gevorkyan's teaching and research experience covers themes in open economy macroeconomics, macroeconomic policy, economic development, international financial economics, labor migration, and post-socialist transition economics.

Among other publications, Dr. Gevorkyan is the author of *Transition Economies: Transformation, Development, and Society in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Routledge, 2018).