Migration was the issue that defined 2015. In today’s world millions of people are on the move. But in 2015, we also saw a rapid movement of migrants and refugees fleeing war and poverty and seeking a safe refuge in Europe. Over a million migrants, including families with children, managed to reach Europe pleading for help. Over 3,370 died crossing the Mediterranean. While a number of people in the continent expressed their solidarity and offered help, we also saw a rise in anti-migrant resentments in many European countries.

To help challenge negative perception of migrants we launched a social media “I’m a migrant” campaign where migrants share their stories of life in a new country. The campaign is run by IOM across the world and it aims to promote a positive image of migrants and challenge anti-migration stereotypes.

Throughout the year, we also continued to focus on capacity building and supporting better migrants’ integration through a number of information activities, trainings, workshops, and other events to reach and engage a wide range of stakeholders.

To help Polish local administration institutions with reception and integration of repatriate families, we launched ABC of Repatriation - an online application tool with practical guidance and explanation of repatriation-related procedures.

To reach businesses seeking information on employing migrants, we developed an online application for employers, which has so far generated over 40 thousand views.

And to honor those who contribute to supporting integration of migrants in Poland and building best practice in migration management, we held the third edition of our annual Zlote Wachlarze contest.

In 2015 we also celebrated ten years of the implementation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme in Poland. During these ten years, we helped over 11 thousand migrants to return to their home countries in safety and dignity.

I would like to thank all our donors and partners for their support and cooperation in the past year and I’m looking forward to our new activities in 2016.
Promoting migrants’ rights and obligations

Migrants’ awareness of their rights and obligations in the country of arrival is one of the important aspects of integration.

Throughout the year, IOM continued with the implementation of a multi-language info-line, briefings, information website as well as social media activities - all of which provide migrants with a reliable source of information on their rights and obligations in Poland and help facilitate migrants’ integration.

In 2015, IOM provided over 20 thousand consultations. Another thousand migrants benefitted from information briefings.

To help businesses seeking advice on the legal aspects of employing migrant workers, in May 2015 IOM launched an online application for employers, available at http://www.aplikacja.migrant.info.pl/. Since its launch, the application generated over 40,000 views.

The initiative funded by European Integration Fund, Ministry of Interior, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and implemented in the partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Administration and National Labour Inspectorate.

Supporting integration of repatriates in Poland

In 2015, IOM developed “ABC of Repatriation” - an online tool intended to support integration of repatriates in Poland. It is aimed at Polish local administration institutions and municipalities to help them with reception and integration of repatriate families. The application, available at http://abc.iom.pl/, contains explanation of repatriation-related procedures as well as a practical guidance on reception and integration of repatriates in local communities.

Since its launch in June 2015, it has been viewed approximately 5000 times by over 1600 users.

Additionally, over 60 repatriates and their family members took part in cultural orientation briefing and training sessions organized by IOM various locations in Kazakhstan. Also, some 60 teachers of Polish as a second language, preparing to work with repatriates, benefitted from the training on teaching methods and intercultural competences. They were also provided with teaching materials for various age groups.

Activities were part of the project “Supporting the Integration of Repatriates” co-funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and implemented in the partnership with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Poland.

Labour migration from Georgia – pilot project

In 2015, IOM launched a pilot project concerning labor migration of Georgian workers to Poland and Estonia. The project will include a range of activities to ensure matching workers with employment opportunities and, as a result, build a basis for long-standing bilateral cooperation for temporary and circular migration schemes from Georgia to Poland and Estonia.

The project is funded by IOM Development Fund, which is a unique global resource supporting eligible Member States by providing essential seed funding for innovative initiatives and empowering Member States to develop migration management capacities.
Capacity building and awareness raising

Effective migration management requires a holistic approach and involvement of wide and diverse groups of stakeholders influencing the settlement and integration process. Under the project “Increasing the effectiveness of migration management in Poland”, we aim to strengthen migration management in Poland through competence building on migration & diversity management, advance understanding of migration-related issues, and support migrants’ integration. 2015 was the third year of the project, which targets public institutions, NGOs, migrant associations, and the private sector.

Institutions: competence building on migration and diversity management
To improve stakeholders’ skills to provide adequate assistance to migrants, IOM organized a number of trainings for representatives of institutions and organizations working with migrants including central and local administration, schools, and NGOs.

In 2015, we held 14 trainings and workshops on diversity and migration management for some 240 participants. To meet the growing demand, trainings will be continued in 2016.

Migrants: cultural orientation trainings
Cultural orientation trainings provide migrants with the essential knowledge and practical tips about life in Poland. Trainings, conducted by IOM trainers, support migrants’ adaptation skills in new environment and help them prepare for the differences, challenges, and opportunities in their new host country.

In 2015, IOM trained over a hundred migrants from 27 countries. As in the year before, the trainings met with huge interest and will be continued in 2016.

Building broad partnerships: National Platform of Cooperation for Integration
National Platform of Cooperation for Integration is a unique nation-wide opinion exchange and discussion forum on the issue of migrants’ integration in Poland. Established in 2010, by IOM in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, it now consists of over 120 members representing migrant communities, public institutions, NGOs and the business sector.

In 2015 the activities within the Platform included:

- **National conference** on 17-18 December 2015. The objective of the conference was to exchange expertise on activities supporting migrants’ integration in various cities of Poland and to discuss current challenges. The conference created an excellent opportunity to present the 2015 World Migration Report - Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility. The event gathered over a hundred participants from across the country including representatives of the central government and local governments, public institutions, NGOs, and migrant communities.

- **Expert meetings, roundtable discussions, and workshops organized by the Platform member organizations.** The events were dedicated to a number of issues including: intercultural communication, local migration policies, recruitment of public administration officers who work with migrants, migrants’ access to protective vaccinations in Poland. In total, over 230 participants attended the meetings.

- **Networking and integration event** for the Platform members in July 2015, which gathered around a hundred participants.

- **Launch of the Platform website:** www.krajowaplatforma.pl.

Project “Increasing the effectiveness of migration management in Poland” is supported by a grant from Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union.
Polish society: awareness raising and promoting a positive image of migrants

Throughout the year, we continued our efforts to raise public awareness of migration-related issues and promote a positive image of migrants in Poland. It became particularly important in light of current global situation where anti-migrant resentment prevail in many countries.

To challenge stereotypes and anti-migrant sentiments, IOM Poland launched #I’m a migrant campaign in social media. The objective of the campaign is to promote a positive image of migrants and highlight their contribution to the Polish society, culture, and the economy. For short articles and films showing migrant stories please visit blog.iom.pl.

In 2015, we also held the third edition of our annual Złote Wachlarze contest. The contest aims to honour individuals and institutions that have made an outstanding contribution to support integration of migrants in Poland, facilitate social and economic development through migration or build best practice in migration management. The contest continues to gain high interest and support from migrant communities, NGOs, public administration, and other stakeholders involved in migration management.

The contest awards were announced at the Awards Gala on the International Migrants Day, 18 December 2015. The award went to:

- Myroslava Keryk – a Ukrainian migrant, chairwoman of Nasz Wybór (Our Choice) Foundation, awarded for her commitment and activities to support integration of Ukrainian migrants in Poland
- Centre for Migrants Support - a non-profit organization from Gdańsk, awarded for multidimensional approach to migrants’ integration at a local level

To engage the wider public, IOM also organized an online voting for the Public Award. The Public Award went to Angela Darbinian, an Armenian migrant and a teacher in one of schools in Warsaw for her support to integration of migrants in school environment.

For more about the contest please visit: www.zlotewachlarze.pl.

Migration policy and research: public attitude towards migrants in Poland

Public attitude towards migrants in Poland

In June 2015 IOM commissioned a survey on the attitudes towards migrants in Poland. The result of the survey were presented at press conference in July 2015.

The survey showed mixed attitudes towards migrants with regards to different aspects such as the job market, economy and culture, although on the whole positive attitudes prevailed.

In 2016 IOM plans to repeat a similar survey to see whether attitudes towards migrants have changed in light of the current migration situation.

Full survey results are available on www.iom.pl.

Project “Increasing the effectiveness of migration management in Poland is supported by a grant from Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union.
Towards better identification and support of human trafficking victims

In December 2015, IOM organized three training sessions for border guards on combatting trafficking in human beings. Training agenda included identification of human trafficking victims, forms of support for victims, and differentiation between forced labor and violation employees’ rights. The trainings were held within a project “Cooperation and competence as a key to efficiently combating trafficking in human beings” financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and Border Guard Headquarters.

Additionally, some thousand representatives of the border guards, police, and other relevant institutions, completed the e-learning training on the identification and support of victims of human trafficking produced in the frames of ERF-funded project “The increase of effectiveness in the field of voluntary return”.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR) is part of the complex approach to the management of migration.

In June 2015, IOM celebrated 10 year anniversary of the start of the AVRR Programme in Poland. In the course of the decade, IOM helped over 11 thousand beneficiaries to return to over 55 countries around the globe.

In December 2015, IOM and its AVRR partners were awarded a prize by the European Projects Implementation Centre and the Ministry of Interior in recognition of high quality, innovativeness and the impact of the AVRR projects implemented under the European Return Fund.

Throuhout the year, IOM continued the implementation of the AVRR programme by providing daily return counselling to migrants wishing to return to their home countries, facilitating pre-departure arrangements such as travel documentation, board and lodging, medical check-ups as well as providing transportation and reintegration assistance. From January until December 2015, IOM Warsaw assisted around one thousand individuals to return to their countries of origin.

Whenever possible, return was followed by reintegration component, which consisted of cash allowance as well as in-kind assistance provided through IOM offices in the countries of return. Beneficiaries who wished to set up their own businesses or were interested in vocational training could apply for business or education grants. On the other hand, those with special needs were eligible for grants for medical treatment, housing or any other substantial needs they might have had.

In 2015, over 70 business grants were provided to returnees who wished to set up their own business after return. Over a half of them were implemented in the Russian Federation. The businesses included animal farms, bars, shops, hairdressing and beauty salons.

Some 20 returnees received educational grants for courses including driving and foreign language classes. IOM also provided reintegration grants for vulnerable returnees, which were used mainly for medical treatment and basic housing needs.
In May 2015, representatives of IOM, Office for Foreigners, Border Guard Headquarters and European Projects Implementation Centre, attended a study visit to Armenia. A visit was organized to assess reintegration possibilities of returnees to Armenia through a careful examination of existing mechanisms. The visit also provided an opportunity to conduct monitoring of selected micro-businesses set up by returnees from Poland.

In 2015, the AVRR programme was financed by European Return Fund, Office for Foreigners and Border Guard Headquarters.