



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY  
**CENTRE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

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Project “Facing the demographic challenges experienced by the South-East European Cooperation Process /SEECP/ participants”

**RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE TRANSNATIONAL DEMOGRAPHY EXPERT NETWORK WITHIN THE  
SOUTH-EAST EUROPE COOPERATION PROCESS**

In pursuance of clause 15 (d) of the Joint Declaration by Ministers in charge of labour and social policies of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) countries at the International Conference on “Facing the demographic challenges experienced by the SEECP participants”, held on 12 and 13 March 2016 in Sofia, Bulgaria within the programme of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP 2015 – 2016, setting the guidelines for future coordinated action towards positive changes to the demographic processes in the region,

taking into account that main demographic challenges for most SEECP countries are associated with long-term trends of decreasing and ageing of their over 145 million population and workforce, which affect many areas of economic and social life and will have increasingly significant impact on the condition of public finances and the proper functioning of social systems, including the labour market, the social security system, the social assistance and long-term care systems, healthcare and education,

focusing on the management of demographic processes through implementation of policies and measures that improve the quality of human capital, encourage workforce mobility, support youth employment, encourage active ageing and solidarity between generations, facilitate territorial and cross-border cooperation for establishing and maintaining regions for sustainable development and inclusive growth,

these Rules of Procedure of the Transnational Demography Experts Network within the South-East European Cooperation Process, set up with Protocol Decision of 17 November 2017, has been hereby adopted as a tool for joint action to address the demographic changes and challenges to the benefit of the societies of the SEECP countries.

**I. SETUP OF THE NETWORK**

1. The name of the network shall be “Transnational Demography Experts Network” (TDEN).

2. TDEN is a network for cooperation in the field of demographic policy, set up by high-level representatives of the labour and social policy ministries of the SEECP countries.

3. The seat of the network shall be: Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives (CHRDRI) to the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, address and contact information: Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia, POB 1849, Kremikovtsi District, Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives, telephone:+359 2/994 70 18, e-mail: [chrdri@chrdri.net](mailto:chrdri@chrdri.net), URL: [www.chrdri.net](http://www.chrdri.net).

4. TDEN is a self-governed informal structure, open to the participation of all institutions, departments and organisations, as well as independent experts who join efforts to achieve the network’s strategic and operational objectives.

5. International structures and organisations operating in the field of population and workforce development such as the UN Population Fund, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the International Labour Organisation, research and scientific institutes, etc., which contribute to the attainment of network’s strategic and operational objectives, may participate in TDEN as partners.

6. The duration of TDEN shall be indefinite.

## **II. OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE NETWORK**

7. TDEN shall be guided in its work by the following principles:

- Transparency – all network members shall contribute to the promotion of its objectives and achievements among the general public in their countries;

- High professionalism and expertise – all network members shall develop and maintain high professional standards and competence in the field of management of demographic processes;

- Equality – all network members shall be equal and shall retain their independence and the autonomy of the institutions, departments and organisations they represent;

- Equal rights and responsibilities – all network members shall have equal rights and responsibilities in decision-making;

- Independence – all network members shall be independent in their work, including in the raising, spending and reporting of funds;

- Cooperation – the network members may cooperate with one another and with representatives of authoritative international organisations and may associate for the

implementation of joint projects and programmes the terms and conditions whereof shall be additionally agreed.

### **III. STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK**

**8.** TDEN has the following structure:

- network members;
- technical secretariat.

**9.** Network membership is open to governmental institutions and departments, non-governmental and international organisations, as well as independent experts working or having proven experience in the field of demographic matters of SEECP countries.

**10.** Authorised representatives of the ministers in charge of labour and social policy of the SEECP countries shall be network members by right. The names of the representatives shall be specified by the respective ministers in the official correspondence addressed to the minister of labour and social policy of the Republic of Bulgaria with a copy to the technical secretariat of the network. A representative shall be changed in accordance with the same procedure.

**11.** On a proposal from a network member under clause 10, other persons and organisations may be elected network members by consensus of the participants in the network meetings, provided that they meet the requirements under clause 9.

**12.** The technical secretariat of the network comprises one representative of the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, with functions and competences in the field of demographic policy; two representatives of the Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives to the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; and one representative each of the SEECP Troika – the countries of the previous, present and future Chairmanship-in-Office of SEECP. The members of the technical secretariat shall be designated by name by the respective head of institution in official correspondence to the Bulgarian Minister of Labour and Social Policy. A member shall be replaced according to the same procedure.

**13.** The Secretariat of TDEN shall:

- provide information, analytical, administrative and technical support for the operation of the network;
- act as a coordinating structure in connection with the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the network activities;
- create and maintain registers required for the operation of the network;

- ensure the operational cooperation of the network with other state and administrative structures in the SEECP countries;
- organise the preparation and holding of the network meetings;
- take the minutes of the network meetings;
- keep account of the opinions and decisions made at network meetings;
- organise and coordinate the implementation of the decisions taken at network meetings and the necessary information exchange between the interested parties;
- keep the network documentation;
- prepare an annual report on the network activities and disseminate it among the network members.

**14. The Centre for Human Resource Development and Regional Initiatives** shall make their material resources and organisational capacity available to TDEN to the operation of the technical secretariat.

**15.** Working meetings with required attendance of the network members shall be held at least once a year.

**16.** The preliminary dates and draft agenda of the TDEN meetings shall be determined at the previous network meeting. As an exception, a meeting may be called at the initiative of 2/3 of SEECP countries.

**17.** Mission expenses for travel, accommodation and meals of network members shall be for account of the institutions, departments and organisations that have nominated them or of the network members themselves where the first option is not feasible.

#### **IV. STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK**

**18.** The strategic objective of TDEN is to promote long-term cooperation, mutual exchange and good practices of addressing demographic challenges, to encourage labour market development and management of labour migration / workforce mobility with a view to ensuring sustainable development and growth in SEECP countries.

**19.** The operational objectives of the network include:

- synchronise and improve statistical and other information and data about the regional effects of demographic change and population development;
- maintain and improve the capacity of public administrations to manage demographic changes;
- promote and disseminate best practice, knowledge and effective practices in the field of demographic policy among SEECP countries.

- develop joint initiatives and activities contributing to an enhanced effect of demographic policies, programmes and measures, with a view to creating conditions for sustainable development of the regions and for reducing interregional differences.

## **V. ACTIVITIES OF THE NETWORK**

**20.** TDEN shall carry out the following major activities:

- collect, systematise and disseminate, on electronic and paper carrier, information, analytical and other materials on demographic changes and migration and on their potential effects on human capital and the sustainable development of the regions;

- build and maintain an Internet-based Platform for information, communication and sharing of knowledge about the situation and movement of the workforce in SEECP countries, with up-to-date statistical and other data and information about the demographic development of the countries;

- conduct research and prepare analyses towards development of long-term vision for balanced demographic development in SEECP countries;

- develop cooperation in the field of demographic change management with international institutions and organisations like the European Commission, the UN Population Fund, the International Labour Organisation, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, etc.;

- design and organise events and initiatives for sharing of experience and good practices, such as conferences, round tables, study visits, workshops, qualification programmes, etc., with a view to maintaining and enhancing the capacity of public administrations to manage demographic changes, engaging authoritative speakers and practitioners from the different countries through the Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives to the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;

- design and implement a Communication Plan with measures for exchange, dissemination and transfer of knowledge and good management practices among the SEECP countries.

- participate in the preparation of joint transnational and cross-border projects which will directly or indirectly mitigate the negative effects of demographic changes on the economy and social systems of the countries; lead to territorial and cultural cohesion; improved quality of life, welfare, promotion of quality employment/decent work, social fulfilment and satisfaction, access to rights, benefits, goods and services of the population.

- carry out such other activities as may be of interest to SEECP countries, in the field of demographic policies, programmes and measures and the related mutual collaboration and cooperation to address the demographic challenges.

## **VI. APPLICABLE LAW**

**21.** In pursuance of the main strategic objective and the operational objectives, TDEN members shall be guided by:

- the acting international and domestic legislation applicable in the SEECP countries;
- all documents adopted and all events organised in the SEECP format within the previous 20 years;
- the official analytical and statistical information of the state statistical services of the SEECP countries; Eurostat, the United Nations, the UN Population Fund, the UN Economic Commission for Europe; the International Labour Organisation;
- the results of the representative national and international sociological and interdisciplinary studies in the field of demographic development, improvement of the quality of human resources and workforce mobility, including through education, acquiring new knowledge, skills and qualification, maintaining good health status, quality of life and standard of living of the population, etc.
- a system of general and specific indicators for tracking down demographic changes and reporting the achievements of the countries, including birth rate, mortality rate, natural population growth, migration – external and internal immigration, average age of the population, age dependency, demographic replacement, employment and unemployment by age group, development of the quality of human resources, etc.

## **VII. JOINT PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS**

**22.** TDEN shall support the joint participation of its members in projects, subject to the following principles:

- The participation of network members in feasibility studies, as well as in the technical preparation of joint transnational and cross-border projects shall be voluntary and shall not be paid for;
- Network members may participate in the implementation team of a joint transnational and cross-border project approved for funding and such participation may be paid for according to the activities carried out under the budget items of the project;

- Network members shall inform and cooperate for the obtaining of support or co-financing from the official institutions of the respective SEECP countries for any joint project prepared for financing;

- Joint transnational and cross-border projects shall be formalised by means of partnership agreements signed between organisations and structures which are independent legal entities, that can be ministries, state agencies, companies, civil associations and independent experts from the SEECP countries;

- The partnership work on transnational and cross-border projects shall be governed by the specific conditions, rules and tender procedures of the financing organisations.

### **VIII. FINANCING OF THE NETWORK AND ITS ACTIVITIES**

**23.** The establishment of TDEN and the material, technical and organisational resources for the functioning of the technical secretariat shall be financed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy through the Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives.

**24.** At its regular meetings, TDEN shall draw up a plan with initiatives for the next year, financed with the resources of all SEECP countries.

**25.** The sustainable development of the activities of TDEN may be secured on the basis of the project principle and/or from external donors.

### **IX. ENTRY INTO FORCE**

**26.** These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force from the day of their adoption and, depending on the experience and knowledge gained and the results achieved, as well as in accordance with the demographic developments, the objectives and the networking rules may be amended, supplemented and extended by mutual consent of the SEECP countries.

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**Adopted on 17th November 2017 in Sofia by the authorised representatives of the SEECP countries, at their constitution meeting on demographic challenges and policies held in the Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives at the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.**