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Introduction to the Advance Passenger Information (API) System in Turkmenistan

Ashgabat, 16-17 August, International Organization for Migration (IOM) – the UN Migration Agency, Mission to Turkmenistan and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has jointly organized a national workshop on establishing an Advance Passenger Information (API) systems in Turkmenistan.

API is an electronic system through which biographical data from a traveler's passport and flight details are collected by airlines and transmitted to the relevant national authorities at the border before the departure or arrival of a specific flight. API is a standard obligation required from all states by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) starting from 2017 with the approval of ICAO's Amendment 26 to ICAO Annex 9. Turkmenistan is a full member of ICAO from 1993.

Current workshop brought together representatives from all national agencies involved in passenger processing, including national police and intelligence service, national customs administration and data protection experts, migration service and airport security officers, as well as international technical experts and IT specialists from the USA, Hungary, Austria, Spain and the Netherlands who shared with their experience in implementing and using API systems. The workshop was also attended by commercial service providers from Russia, the UK, Germany, Belarus and Montenegro.

The objective of the event was to provide attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the features, functions and benefits of API, and practical insights about the administrative, technological and operational procedures related to implementing and operating an API system. "Implementation of the API system would be a good step in enhancing the border management and facilitating the processing of passenger data" – stressed the representative from the Migration Service of Turkmenistan. "Additionally, API will enhance coordination and cooperation among all government agencies and the state will be able to manage immigration and security at borders to prevent Illegal migration and monitor movements of suspicious passengers"- said Christopher Hornek, Passenger Data Exchange Expert, ICAO/IOM Consultant.

This workshop is one of the series of events related to API system organized by IOM. Early this year IOM has conducted comprehensive review of Turkmenistan's regulatory framework relating to introduction of API and provided the recommendations on necessary revisions. IOM is committed to continue working with the Government of Turkmenistan on introduction of the API in the country and plans to organize the series of activities aimed at increasing the capacity of national authorities in technological and operational procedures for implementing a passenger data program.

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