

G20 Denial of Entry Experts Network Inaugural Meeting

**October 14, 2015
Paris, France**

Chairman's Summary

The inaugural meeting of the G20 Denial of Entry Experts Network was held October 14 at the headquarters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris. Representatives with backgrounds in anticorruption policy, consular affairs, and immigration from fifteen G20 countries participated in the meeting in order to share experiences, explore areas of collaboration, and determine next steps for the network. This meeting advanced the G20 Anticorruption Working Group's (ACWG) efforts to ensure that corrupt officials are unable to travel abroad and enjoy the proceeds of their crimes with impunity, and sought to further operationalize the G20 Common Principles for Action: Denial of Safe Haven adopted in 2012 under Mexico's presidency.

The meeting began with each delegation providing an overview of the unilateral action its country can take in order to deny entry to corrupt officials. This included the type of conduct that can trigger denial of entry, the type of information considered as part of the determination, and the ability of a country to extend the denial entry to family members and close associates. The group also deliberated on questions concerning how to deal with officials who do not require a visa, for example in cases of reciprocal visa agreements, and the frequency with which they use denial of entry mechanisms.

During the discussion, it became clear that while countries support the G20 Common Principles adopted by G20 Leaders, in practice a wide variety of denial of entry frameworks exist among the G20 countries, each with varying requirements needed to deny entry to corrupt officials. Some countries have legal provisions specifically focusing on corruption, others focus on crime more generally, and a number focus on public order or national security or similar concepts. In the area of information that can substantiate a determination, some countries require a conviction of corruption or another crime; others can draw upon any credible information. Few if any countries make the determination public; many offer an appeal or other legal recourse, although some do not.

In addition to unilateral actions, the group discussed the ability of their country to cooperate in some way on denial of entry cases. Delegates used this as an opportunity to present on their country's ability to share information relevant to potential denial of entry determinations by another country, or vice versa. The group determined that in a majority of countries privacy laws

prevented the sharing of information related to visa cases; however, the underlying information on corrupt officials can be shared through other channels, for example, through law enforcement channels and diplomatic contacts. The delegates agreed that in many cases those officials who are allowed to share information that would be actionable in determinations by visa officials do not have such information, and those who have it often cannot share it with their bilateral counterparts.

The meeting concluded with the group discussing takeaways and next steps. Everyone agreed that it was helpful to convene both anticorruption policy experts and visa denial practitioners as each brought unique knowledge and expertise to the discussion. It was also agreed that while each country has some ability to deny entry to corrupt officials, significant constraints exist limiting the ability of countries to cooperate and share information.

While there was overall agreement that this meeting was successful, there were divergent opinions whether to continue with annual meetings. The group agreed the ability of member countries to send relevant experts must be considered. Several participants expressed concerns that a number of countries did not send denial of entry experts, and others noted the cost and inconvenience of attending a one-day meeting. Alternative suggestions included virtual meetings, and opinions varied as to whether attendance exclusively by immigration/consular officials, or in addition to them by anticorruption experts as well, would be the ideal mix. Regardless, the consensus emerged that in order for these meetings to be warranted, countries need to commit to sending relevant experts to participate. The group also agreed it needs to determine what lines of work would be most useful to the network moving forward.

The group ultimately agreed that next steps should be discussed at the ACWG meeting in Beijing scheduled for January. This would allow the network to determine what type of future work would be most useful, what type of experts should participate in the meetings, and if the member countries can commit to sending appropriate participants.