Action research

European cooperation on the sustainable return and reintegration of asylum seekers

Final report

HIT Foundation
April 2010
# Executive Summary

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 Guiding questions and focus  
   1.2 Scope and methodology  
   1.3 Guide for the reader  

2. **Return and reintegration: current policies and activities**
   2.1 Motivation for reintegration programmes  
   2.2 Approaches to reintegration programmes  
   2.3 Major actors in reintegration programmes  
   2.4 Cooperation between EU member states  
   2.5 Involving governments in the countries of origin  

3. **Cooperation with regard to reintegration: benefits, preconditions and options**
   3.1 Potential benefits of cooperation between EU member states  
   3.2 Preconditions for cooperation between EU member states  
   3.3 Options regarding cooperation between EU member states  
   3.4 Preconditions for involving governments in the countries of origin  
   3.5 Options for involving governments in countries of origin in the future  
   3.6 Criteria for selecting countries of origin  

4. **Conclusion**

5. **Advice for next steps**

6. **Annexes Country reports on EU member states**
   1. Country reports on countries of origin  
   2. EU report  
   3. Complete Contact list (names, organisations, countries)  
   4. Link-list for internet sources
Background of the study

In 2009, HIT Foundation carried out an Action Research on European cooperation concerning the sustainable return and reintegration of asylum seekers on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The objective of the research is to develop models of cooperation between EU Member States and formulate recommendations about the possible involvement of governments in the countries of origin. In this respect the research team has:
- analyzed current reintegration activities for failed asylum-seekers in seven EU Member States: The Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom;
- analyzed current reintegration activities for returnees in three countries of return: Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia and Iraq/Kurdistan;
- assessed the potential for increasing EU cooperation in this area.

The current situation: a paradox

Wishes
The European Commission promotes cooperation in organizing reintegration activities for returnees. All individual Member States wish to cooperate more closely, while the three countries of origin are keen to be more closely involved with implementing reintegration projects. All parties believe that increased cooperation could result in more efficient and effective reintegration programmes.

Realities
Joint reintegration activities financed by the EU or the individual Member States are virtually non-existent. When cooperation takes place, it is on an ad-hoc basis and by means of ‘pragmatic alliances’. Programmes are often duplicated. Governments of the countries of origin are scarcely involved in the planning and implementation of reintegration programmes and leave this to the executing parties.

Causes
Why is it that although all actors voice a willingness to cooperate, this scarcely ever actually occurs? Joint efforts are made through the European Union, whereby the vast majority of funding is channelled through the Return Fund. 93% of the Return Fund is then transferred back into national programmes to allow Member States to prioritize the implementation of projects that are beneficial to their national interests above cooperation projects with other Member States that are harder to organize. Only the remaining 7% is spent directly by the European Commission. Furthermore, Member States lack a shared understanding and vision of the purpose of organizing reintegration activities and the European Commission’s investment in reintegration is not (yet) structural. Motivation oscillates between the need to ‘regulate’ unwanted migrants from the justice perspective and the aim of adding ‘development’ to the agenda. Countries of origin are only interested in becoming involved when additional incentives are available for a wider range of returnees than failed asylum seekers from Europe. Most reintegration activities are executed by a limited number of large service providers who are more likely to compete with each other for programmes, than explore ways in which they can cooperate.
Opportunities for the future: efficiency

**EU member states**
Cooperation between EU Member States could be more efficient when:
- common and agreed upon goals and indicators are formulated;
- common definitions of the most essential terms such as ‘sustainability’, ‘reintegration’ and ‘voluntary return’ are formulated;
- each country appoints one leading agency that is responsible for representing the various governmental actors involved in activities to promote return;
- consortia are not too large and focus on quality of cooperation.

**Countries of origin**
More involvement from the governments of the countries of origin can lead to more efficiency, on condition that the target group of beneficiaries is extended. In addition to failed asylum seekers from the EU, undocumented migrants returning from the EU, returnees from neighbouring countries and Internally Displaced Persons should also be included.

Opportunities for the future: effectiveness

**EU Member States**
More efficient programmes do not automatically lead to increased effectiveness. Many EU member states consider their current approach and programmes generally successful. The general view seems to be: “Yes, cooperation could lead to more effectiveness, provided that others do what we are already doing”. There is no data on effectiveness because of the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the programmes currently on offer. It is therefore crucial to establish a comparative monitoring and evaluation system. This is even more important if the current trend of adding “development” to return programmes is to be continued. While the argument for a more developmental approach is valid as a theoretical assumption, it needs facts and figures to underline it. Only this would make it possible to distinguish ‘best practises’ from ‘worst practises’.

**Countries of origin**
Whether or not involving countries of origin will lead to more effective reintegration activities depends on the perspective. From a ‘justice perspective’ a bare minimum of involvement is necessary, given that governments have to accept the return of failed asylum seekers. Stronger involvement has little added value. From a development perspective, however, effectiveness could be improved by embedding return activities in other policy fields such as labour and education. Making return assistance available to a large number of beneficiaries is likely to create local spin-off.

The way forward

- Member States should take the lead.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation systems through evidence based learning
- Create a one-stop-shop model in one selected country of origin
- Participation of a number of Member States is required
- Extend beneficiaries of reintegration programmes
- Involve the government of the country of origin by creating shared responsibility
- Use opportunities to speed up processes such as Mobility Partnerships
1. Introduction

The European Union tries to foster cooperation and collaboration regarding migration policy between its member states and with countries of return. In recent years, many member states have experimented with reintegration programmes for failed asylum seekers. The following report describes and discusses the intentions with which such programmes are organised, how and by whom such programmes are implemented and the extent to which it is possible to harmonise these programmes. The report endeavours to give practical recommendations on how to organise reintegration activities for failed asylum seekers residing in the EU more effectively and efficiently in the future.

For the purpose of this report, the authors gathered information from a multitude of stakeholders that included representatives from governments, international organisations, national NGOs, academics, politicians and members of the target group: returnees and their social network. We would like to thank all of the persons and institutions who assisted us.

1.1 Guiding questions and focus

Five research questions were developed and formulated and agreed on with the sponsor of this report. These questions are:

1. To what extent do EU member states strive to achieve the sustainable reintegration of returning (former) asylum seekers?

2. Which programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin are implemented/financed by EU member states?

3. Which benefits can be obtained by setting up programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin at a European level and in cooperation with the countries of origin?

4. To what extent is it possible to set up reintegration support programmes in the countries of origin at a European level and together with the countries of origin?
   a. To what extent is there political support for cooperation?
      i. From European institutions?
      ii. From national member states?
      iii. From civil society?
      iv. From parties in the countries of origin.
   b. Which preconditions make European cooperation practically feasible?

5. To what extent is it advisable to bring local reintegration support programmes under umbrella programmes led by governments in the countries of origin?

Additional questions were added throughout the course of the research activities. Both the research team and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acknowledged the necessity of examining the role and position of the countries of origin with regard to organising reintegration activities in more detail. This need was partially felt because of the important and rapidly evolving policy instrument of mobility partnerships. The authors questioned to what extent countries of origin might, could and/or should be involved with reintegration programmes. The additional questions are:

6. What role do the governments of countries of return/origin currently play in reintegration programmes; what is their attitude towards the issue and what role might they play in the future?

7. Which kind of criteria could be used to initiate comprehensive reintegration programmes in countries of return/origin?

8. Which reintegration programme models are feasible for countries of return/origin?
1.2 Scope and methodology

Before discussing the methods applied in our research, we would first like to make two remarks regarding the scope of the project.

Firstly, it is important to mention that this report focuses primarily on reintegration programmes that are designed for failed asylumseekers returning to their country of origin voluntarily, or ‘independently’. The report, however, also describes programmes that provide assistance to other returnees, such as undocumented migrants from Europe who have never applied for asylum, refugees from nonEU countries or internally displaced persons (DP’s), particularly with regard to the countries of return.

Secondly, it is essential to note that the report does not describe all reintegration programmes for failed asylum seekers worldwide. The authors had to limit the scope of their research within the framework of this oneyear project. We decided to limit the project as follows:

1.) The report focuses on reintegration programmes implemented on behalf of seven (7) EU member states. In agreement with the sponsor, the following countries were studied: The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, The United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark. The main reason for selecting these countries was because we anticipate that these are the countries that are most likely to harmonise their activities in the future.

2.) The report focuses on reintegration activities in three (3) countries of origin. The following countries were selected in agreement with the sponsor: Iraq (Kurdistan), Congo and Georgia. These countries allow us to cover:

a.) countries of origin from different regions, namely the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe;

b.) countries with different migrant populations. Iraq and Congo are both confronted with a huge influx of returnees from neighbouring countries. Apart from that, a significant number of failed asylum seekers return from Europe. Georgia receives relatively fewer failed asylum seekers.

c.) countries with three different governmental administrations. In Iraq we discussed the matter with representatives of the semiindependent region of Kurdistan, a new administration. Congo comes closest to being a failed state with a central government that only can govern to a limited extent. Georgia has a relatively stable government, good diplomatic relations with many EU members and is engaged in the EU Mobility Partnerships.

d.) countries with varying numbers of returning asylum seekers from Europe. Where we projected that Georgia and Congo receive only a limited number, we thought Iraq/Kurdistan to receive a relatively large number.

3.) The report only focuses on government funded reintegration programmes. This means that privately funded projects by, for example, religious agencies have not been taken into account.
This report is the final product of a multiphase process. The first phase consisted of desk research to establish the return and reintegration programmes being implemented in the seven selected EU member states. We did this by scrutinising official and semiofficial documents and media reports. This was followed by a second phase of indepth interviews with government officials, opinionleaders, researchers, practitioners and politicians in the field in these seven countries. 1 In total, 80 persons were interviewed in the seven EU member states. The third phase consisted of desk research and interviews with 102 persons either individually or in group sessions in the three selected countries of return. In the final phase, we received and processed feedback from experts and stakeholders on the draft versions of country reports and this current final report.

The reports about EU countries were mainly written by single authors, but have been reviewed by two or three other members of the research team, while the reports about countries of origin were written by a team of two researchers. While this final report was written by one researcher, the analysis has been discussed within the project team and approved by the project leader. It therefore represents the condensed and summarised findings of all researchers involved in the entire process.

This project is described as an “action research”, which means that the authors engaged in a reflective process of progressive problem solving. By presenting a snapshot of the current state of affairs, and discussing and reflecting upon the matter with practitioners and experts, we aim to present possible solutions for the near future. We do not claim that this report presents a full insight into the plethora of reintegration programmes being implemented throughout the European Union. Even within the selected countries, we may have overlooked a number of initiatives especially those on a local level. In some countries, such as Germany, even officials involved in this matter were reluctant to claim knowledge about the whole range of projects in their country. This report should therefore be seen as an overview that attempts to discern major developments and use them to chart future requirements and opportunities, without taking every possible detail into consideration.

1 All interviews have been conducted under the promise of confidentiality. Therefore, no direct citation of the interviews will be made in this report.
1.3 Guide for the reader

Chapter 2 describes the reintegration programmes currently available to failed asylum seekers in the seven selected EU member states and the three selected countries of origin. It discusses why member states choose to finance and/or implement reintegration programmes, how these countries approach the issue of return and the main (implementing) actors regarding the matter in these countries. The chapter also considers how these actors perceive potential cooperation among EU member states. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the extent to which governments in the countries of origin are currently involved in organising reintegration activities.

In chapter 3 we broadened the horizon to describe the possibilities regarding the creation of a framework for future return and reintegration programmes. It discusses the preconditions necessary for cooperation and potentially viable models for cooperation between EU member states. This is followed by a similar analysis of the role that could be played by governments in the countries of origin. The chapter concludes with an exploration of criteria for setting up pilots.

Chapter 4 formulates answers to the eight research questions.

Chapter 5 provides a road map for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when taking the first steps towards increased cooperation.

In addition to this final report, there are also separate reports for each of the seven selected EU member states and the three countries of return. These can be found in the annex of this report. Whereas the country reports provide more detailed, factual information, this final report summarises the findings without indulging in too many details and presents an analysis of the findings contained in the country reports.

2. Return and reintegration: current policies and activities

This chapter explores why EU member states engage in reintegration activities for returning failed asylum seekers and how these countries approach the issue of return. It also describes the main (implementing) actors in these countries and discusses the perceptions of potential cooperation between EU member states. This chapter also explores the extent to which governments in the countries of origin are currently involved with organising reintegration activities.

2.1 Motivating reasons behind reintegration programmes

Reintegration and return policies are mainly motivated by the policy goals of the host country. These goals may or may not be in line with the wishes of the returnee. This paragraph describes why the selected EU member states finance or implement reintegration programmes. It turns out that each country has shaped its return and reintegration policy from its own perspective.

Return or sustainable return?

Many member states have not clearly formulated their expectations of the results of their reintegration activities. During our desk research we noticed that the terminology on reintegration is both ill-defined and inconsistent in many countries. This is especially the case with the concepts of reintegration and sustainability. The Dutch “Migration & Development” policy paper is the only policy paper we found in all the EU member states we visited, that included the term “sustainable” before going on to mention reintegration. All of these countries, however, finance projects and programmes that mention sustainability in their goalstructure either directly or indirectly. This demonstrates that the link between official policy and actual practice is sometimes tenuous. Although “sustainability” not “official policy” in nearly every country, it nevertheless seems to be a goal in practice if we understand it as it is “documented in papers and guidelines”. To add to this confusion, the definition of what interview partners understand as “sustainable reintegration” varies greatly. This is hardly surprising, as EU directives on return do also not elaborate on its meaning. Therefore, interpretation varies. Here
are some examples of what our respondents thought that sustainable reintegration might mean. ‘Sustainability’ means that returnees:

- ... go and never come back to the individual member state.
- ... go and never come back to any other member state of the European Union.
- ... leave voluntarily and are ready to start a new life.
- ... establish a new livelihood in their country and can sustain their family.
- ... can make a meaningful contribution to the community they are returning to and are therefore accepted when they return.
- ... contribute to economic and social development of the country of return.
- ... decide to use legal and official means of migration in the future.

This small overview demonstrates that there is a tremendous variety of perceptions regarding the purpose of reintegration programmes. There is no clear terminology in common use, which makes it more difficult to compare different programmes. Sustainable return for the one actor may not be regarded as such by another.

Justice or development?

A second difference in perspective between the member states is that they struggle with the question of whether reintegrating failed asylum seekers should be (predominantly) perceived as a matter of “justice”, or as a matter of “development”. The above observations show that the motivation for starting return and reintegration programmes oscillates between “regulating unwanted immigrants” and “enhancing the resources of the returnee for personal development and the development of the country of return.”

Where the main desire is justice, the programmes have the following attributes. These programmes:

- focus on the immediate outcome (migrant leaves hostcountry and returns).
- focus on fast results.
- do not take circumstances of the country of return into consideration (beyond the mere classification of a country as safe or not).
- focus on the individual returnee.
- try to persuade, not convince.

Programmes and projects geared more towards development are based on slightly different and sometimes even contradicting criteria, at least in theory. These programmes:

- focus on the midterm outcome and longterm impact (what happens with the returnee and how do they fare in their country?)
- focus on sustainable results.
- take the specific circumstances of the country of return into consideration (e. g. economic background, specific postcrisis circumstances)
- focus on both individual returnees and the social network they are returning to
- try to convince the returnee by offering a real perspective for the future

In general terms, the projects and programmes currently available can be roughly divided into three categories:

1. Activities based primarily on “regulating” the return of individual returnees

Such programmes (e.g. the Dutch HRT, German REAG, and Belgian REAB Reintegration Fund programmes) focus on giving financial payments to returnees and facilitating travel. Sometimes they cater for specific needs that might be an impediment for return (e. g. medical assistance, additional baggage allowance etc.). They do normally not include any activity or monitoring after return and the programme ends when the returnee has left the country.
2. Activities based primarily on “regulating” the return of individual returnees, but with micro “development” in mind

Such programmes (e.g. the activities of the German NGO “Heimatgarten”, the Dutch “Maatwerk” project, the Swedish IOM project in Afghanistan, the British IOM VARRP programme, French retour en dignite programmes run by OFI) do not only focus on providing financial incentives and facilitating travel, but also offer support after return on an individual basis (mostly through counselling, sometimes by providing additional services e.g. in setting up a business or offering individual vocational training). These programmes still focus on the individual returnee, but offer the returnee more assistance in the long run in comparison with the first category. In some instances such programmes monitor the whereabouts of individual migrants.

3. Activities mixing “regulating” return and “development” beyond the individual level

Such programmes (e.g. the activities of the German AGAEF in Afghanistan, the Danish Refugee Council in Kosovo or, outside the immediate focus of our research, the “structural aid” provided within the Swiss “migration partnerships”) are not only focused on the returnee, but endeavour to include members of the receiving community. They usually entail more extensive vocational training or job placement programmes (with a limited choice of professions), and are sometimes connected to microfinance facilities that are also open to other beneficiaries. These activities come closest to “traditional” development cooperation, as they try to impact positively both on the returnee and their community. Programmes implemented outside the EU – such as the “structural aid” given by Switzerland in connection with “migration partnerships” – also fall within this category.

A graph can help us to locate the position of the seven EU member states in the study along the two axes mentioned. The graph below depicts whether countries engage in a variety of activities related to reintegration assistance (high diversity), or if they only offer a limited number of reintegration assistance options (low diversity). The graphic also depicts the position of the programmes along the justice/development axis.²

Reintegration programmes in relation to justice and development and diversity of approach

Politically sensitive issue or not?

² Please note that some countries have very few executive agencies (e.g. only one actor in France) while others have many (e.g. Germany). Therefore approaches may vary greatly.
In some of the selected EU countries the return of failed asylum seekers is a politically sensitive issue. In the Netherlands, for example, the state secretary of Justice is under intense pressure to make sure that failed asylum seekers return to their country or origin, either voluntarily or by force. In other member states, such political pressure is less common. Respondents in Sweden for example, voiced the opinion that reintegration whether sustainable, voluntary or even forced is a dated discussion because the major cause for the “asylum problem” may disappear in Sweden in the foreseeable future. The introduction of new labour legislation in May 2009 allows foreign migrants to enter the country freely if they can prove they have employment, and even if they lose their job, they have a liberal timeframe to find a new one. After five years, they may apply for permanent residence. Swedish respondents were convinced that the “abuse” of the asylum procedure by economic migrants is likely to disappear in the future, because there is now a legal alternative for labour migration. Without abuse of the asylum system, issues concerning the reintegration of failed asylum seekers, and even undocumented migration, will cease to be an issue worthy of large scale investment. Some respondents in other countries tentatively supported the Swedish argument.

Respondents in Denmark also regarded the reintegration debate as futile and outdated — but for totally different reasons. They claimed that forced return is very easy and convenient now as a number of return countries are really safe and that any considerations about voluntary reintegration are merely a waste of time and effort. According to these respondents, the improved “quality” of forced return means that there will be less need in the future for any kind of assisted voluntary return.3

Another aspect of political decision making has been hinted at several times, also in the Netherlands. This argument is that reintegration programmes for voluntary return are designed specifically to cater for the desire to give migration policy a human face in order to generate “a positive feeling” for executors of reintegration and return programmes.

2.2 Approaches to reintegration programmes

During the interviews, the research team generated four “scenarios” on reintegration activities with the respondents. Their purpose was to enable the team to discover if and in how far respondents would follow a given line of thought and how the actors involved would classify their current activities within these four alternatives. The goal was also to use the scenarios as practical examples to start a discussion on potential future activities and harmonisation activities. The following scenarios were presented:

• Scenario 1: Allowance: If a migrant is willing to return to their country of origin, they are offered X euro pocket money. The returnee is free to spend the money as they choose.

• Scenario 2: Predeparture counselling and allowance. This includes the activities from Scenario 1, plus: Counsellors visit asylum seekers who have not yet indicated that they want to return, in order to inform them of their options. Migrants who want to obtain more information about return can plan their return process with the counsellors. The counsellor will assess individual migrants, who can draw up a return plan (where will I live, how can I find work, how do I arrange documents etc.) together with the counsellor;

• Scenario 3: “Predeparture counselling, allowance and local reintegration assistance”. This includes the activities of Scenario 2, plus: Upon arrival, migrants are brought into contact with a local counsellor who is very well integrated in the country of origin and has an extensive network. Together with this counsellor, migrants make a reintegration plan, based on the personal desires and possibilities. The counsellor has a budget of X euro for schooling, setting up a small business or any other activity that improves the chance of reintegration.

• Scenario 4: “Predeparture counselling, predeparture assistance, allowance and local reintegration assistance”. This includes the activities of Scenario 3, plus: the counsellor may offer migrants a place in a two month schooling programme of the migrant’s choice in the host country to improve their chances of reintegration.

Of course, using this general approach might conceal the diversity within a given country. Germany

3 During a recent study visit to Nigeria in order to implement reintegration activities by three German federal states, researchers from the Integplan project (www.integplan.de) questioned some embassies in the country about EU cooperation. In this report a representative from the Dutch embassy clearly made an identical statement as the Danish respondent in this research. It demonstrates that this sentiment does not seem to be restricted to Denmark.
for example, with its mixed federal and national ties, has a multitude of projects and programmes which cover nearly all four scenarios. Other countries like Sweden and Denmark have tested aspects of different scenarios on pilot projects with varying degrees of success. This makes it difficult to identify which structural approach is being followed. Hence, the following continuum gives only a general impression of where the countries under consideration can be placed. The further to the right along the arrow, the more “comprehensive” the programmes currently on offer.

**Currently offered reintegration programmes with regard to comprehensiveness**

| Scenario 1 | Scenario 4 |
| Simple, allowance based programme | Comprehensive, activities based programme |
| SW, DK, F | B, NL, UK, G |

Diverse answers were given to the questions about trends regarding reintegration activities in the future. In some countries, the general observation was that reintegration activities are becoming less important, therefore it’s possible that there will be no new developments in this area in the future (such as Denmark and Sweden, but from very different perspectives). Others, such as the respondents in Belgium thought that the reintegration system was “settled” with regard to the challenges ahead, in the wake of recent reforms. They had no desire or need to change the general approach. In Germany, no clear perspective could be perceived because of the multitude of actors in the field. Current projects designed and executed by the states indicate that increased sophistication is the general tendency. Countries that had only started quite recently such as France – claimed that they did not yet have enough experience to be able to discern how this would develop in the future. The Dutch government demonstrated a sincere willingness to take steps towards more comprehensive reintegration packages. The United Kingdom also planned to offer more comprehensive programmes that assist in kind. Although the “vision” of interviewees in the seven countries can only be described as diverse, our conversations lead to the following tentative conclusion with regard to future perspectives:

**Future perspectives on the comprehensiveness of reintegration programmes**

| Scenario 1 | Scenario 4 |
| Simple, allowance based programme | Comprehensive, activities based programme |
| SW, DK, F, G, B | NL, UK |

2.3 **Major actors in reintegration programmes**

EU member states contract a limited number of executing parties who play a significant role in most reintegration activities. The number of important actors in the field is limited; the same organisations resurface in different contexts and different countries again and again. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) plays an important role in almost all countries in this research. The most notable exception is France, where IOM has only recently become engaged in implementing return and reintegration programmes. Big international welfare organisations – especially Caritas and the Red Cross – are also in charge of a considerable number of reintegration programmes. Finally, smaller,
specialised international service providers, such as AGEF, play an important role in selected countries, especially in postcrisis situations. Some countries such as Sweden or, to a lesser extent, France (but also e.g. the Czech Republic) engage “homegrown” international service providers.

Although many of the selected countries use the same implementation parties to a large extent, return and reintegration policy is still organised in many different ways. This is mainly because of the difference in political setups. Some countries are organised federally, while others are organised along more centralised lines. Having said this, the situation among the seven countries can be described with the following table:

### Major actors in reintegration programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional setup</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Major actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly centralised, only government executed</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII)⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly centralised, execution both by government agencies as well as a limited number of INGOs and NGOs</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Swedish Migration Board, IOM ⁵, Swedish Red Cross, Göteborgs Initiativet, UNHCR, municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>FEDASIL, IOM, Caritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Netherlands ⁶</td>
<td>DT&amp;V, IOM, Maatwerk, Cordaid, COA, Samah, Dutch Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralised policy development, execution by a limited number of INGOs or NGOs</td>
<td>Denmark ⁷</td>
<td>IOM, Danish Red Cross, Care4you, Danish Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both centralised and regional policy development, implementation by a vast number of INGOs and NGOs as well as government institutions on regional and municipal level</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>IOM, local NGOs, municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>IOM, Caritas, Heimatgarten, AGEF, AWO, Solwodi, VIA, several state projects, municipal offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some countries, these “major actors” are almost permanently engaged in reintegration activities. The names and focus of different temporary projects may differ, but governments continue to finance the same organisations. Cash incentives in particular are usually of a more permanent nature. Even when programmes change and new projects are initiated, the implementing organisations are usually selected from the “usual crop”. Some countries, such as Denmark implement return programmes on a countryspecific and timebound basis, therefore actors can change when the one programme is ended and a new project is started.

#### 2.4 Cooperation among EU member states

**Current activities**

Joint efforts to come to more cooperation are made through the European Union, of which the vast majority of funding is channelled through the Return Fund. Out of the Return Fund 93% is then transferred back into national programmes, with the opportunity for Member States to prioritize running projects that are beneficial to their national interests over cooperation projects with other Member States that are harder to organize. Only the remaining 7% is spent directly by the European Commission. Cooperation between European member states is currently very limited. It takes place at three levels. Firstly, by means of exchanging information and practices at the level of technocrats and

---

⁴ Negotiations between the OFII and IOM have started in regard to possible cooperation, but at the time of this research, no apparent agreement had been reached.
⁵ At the time of this research, no agreement had been signed between the Swedish Migration Board, but contract negotiations were underway.
⁶ In 2009 the government agency COA actively implemented reintegration programmes. The organisation is currently in the process of reformulating its policy towards return reintegration.
⁷ There is no permanent Assisted Voluntary Return Programme in Denmark, projects have been implemented in countrystpecific manner with time restrictions
ministerial staff, e. g. heads of the migration departments of responsible ministries and/or directors of responsible agencies. Such information is shared in meetings held at more or less regular intervals (normally quarterly). Secondly, cooperation exists in “pragmatic alliances” between member states that share a common interest, especially with regard to forced migration. This cooperation includes matters such as organising joint flights to countries of origin and streamlining existing policies. New, common reintegration activities for voluntary returning asylum seekers are rarely set up. Thirdly, large service providers in the field, such as IOM and CORDAID, also have internal transnational information exchange mechanisms. Such major players transfer information about existing programmes within the EU to the different member states indirectly.

Willingness to increase cooperation

In nearly all EU member states covered by the research, the asylum debate is much calmer now than it was in the tumultuous 1990’s. There are still varying degrees of intensity, but in general, the effects of harmonising EU asylum policy are clearly visible, especially regarding the rule of “country of first entry” and other measures blocking asylum seekers from entering the EU. The purpose of this report is not to assess whether these measures are positive or negative in a normative sense. They have led to a shift in asylum policy and with it, reintegration policy – from a purely political debate to a “technical” discussion in many countries. This is made clear by the fact that in many countries, asylum policy is no longer an issue that can arouse voters’ interest during election campaigns. Within the framework of this report, this can be regarded as a positive development: the more “technical” the approach to the subject, the wider the window of opportunity for achieving cooperation and collaboration.

The fact that the EU Commission set up a Thematic Programme for Migration and Development, which also includes the issue of return and reintegration, indicates that the EU believes that cooperation in this field is nonexistent, inconsistent, or inadequate. The text of the Thematic Programme clearly encourages cooperation. The EU Commission is not alone in this. Many of the government officials interviewed expressed a general interest in (more) European cooperation. It is therefore intriguing to note that these officials were unable to clearly indicate fields in which cooperation might be feasible. Many answers came with the reservation that “our programmes are already very successful on their own”, indicating a certain doubt in the potential added value of cooperation. In summary, the general view seems to be: “Yes, cooperation is important, provided that others do what we are already doing”.

2.5 Involving governments in the countries of origin

Current activities

In general, governments in countries of origin play no meaningful role in reintegration and return policies for asylum seekers returning from Europe. In the Republic of Georgia, the government is not involved with reception and care for failed asylum seekers from Europe, with the exception of a government-sponsored programme for victims of human trafficking, which sometimes also helps failed asylum seekers. Another exception to this is an employment programme for highly educated returnees. In the Kurdish region of Iraq, the government is not involved with reception and care for returning asylum seekers from Europe. Currently, only (I)NGO’s manage such activities. The government of the Democratic Government of Congo (DRC) is partially involved in a counselling programme for returnees in Kinshasa, but this is the government’s sole involvement with managing reception and reintegration for returnees.

Governments in the countries of origin are usually excluded from reintegration activities for returnees from the EU. There is a variety for reasons for this lack of involvement in the three studied countries:

- Apart from general repatriation agreements, return and reintegration activities are not usually based on international treaties between governments, as they are either implemented by local NGOs directly funded from EU countries or accredited INGOs. Therefore, the exact content, strategy, scope and goal of reintegration activities are often unknown to the government or responsible ministries.

- All three countries – and this is surely the case for all postcrisis countries where reintegration is taking place – are preoccupied with other issues in regard to (return) migration, which have a higher
political and quantitative impact than returning former asylumseekers from Europe. These more pressing issues are normally:

- Dealing with “Internally Displaced Persons” (IDPs), which is the case in all three case studies.
- Dealing with return migration from immediately neighbouring countries (which is predominantly the case for Georgia and Iraq/Kurdistan, to a lesser extent for Congo).
- Managing the aftereffects of return migration (e.g., preventing returnees from settling in major urban areas like Kinshasa, i.e., establishing something like an internal migration regime)

The sample for this research did not include countries of return that cannot be classified as postcrisis countries. However, information gathered during this research indicates that in general, there seems to be little difference. Currently most countries of origin do not participate in organising reintegration schemes for returnees from Europe, primarily because they are poor countries that have other, and from their perspective, more ‘pressing’ issues to deal with.

Willingness to be more closely involved

Although the governments are currently not involved in reception and reintegration activities, most government representatives indicated a strong willingness to become more closely involved. In particular, the new government of Georgia has voiced a keen interest in closer involvement in this matter. Representatives of the government of Kurdistan and Congo have reacted similarly, but with more reservations. These reservations usually concerned the limited target group that is able to benefit from current reintegration schemes funded by EU member states.

### 3 Cooperation with regard to reintegration: benefits, preconditions and options

This chapter will discuss the potential benefits of cooperation between EU member states and closer involvement of the governments in countries of origin concerning the organisation of reintegration activities. It lists preconditions and presents options.

#### 3.1 Potential benefits of cooperation between EU member states

In our research we witnessed the following problems that are related to the current organisation of reintegration activities for failed asylum seekers:

- Reintegration programmes are working alongside each other with different setups, regulations and procedures, even when they are managed by only one or two agencies in the country of return.
- Return projects are focused on very specific target groups, parallel structures are set up and financed by different EU member states, and information exchange is either nonexistent or undesired.
- The scope and quantity of return activities vary considerably: returnees from one EU country are often not eligible for access services provided by reintegration programmes by another EU country, irrespective of individual needs.
- EU commission representatives on the spot are usually not asked to coordinate return activities, and the commission is not always used as a focal point for information exchange.
- If cooperation with governments of countries of return exists at all, it is mostly bilateral and reiterative, even if the issue is more or less the same for all the different EU host countries.
Cooperation is not encouraged by local and international NGOs, as many privately recognise the fact that noncooperation increases the overall availability of funds and, therefore, the NGO’s chances of “staying in business”.

Migrationrelated programmes in countries of return contradict each other with regard to goals, implementation and political leverage. This diminishes effectiveness and efficiency.

The above points demonstrate that more coordination and preferably more cooperation is needed. It could potentially make the programmes currently on offer more effective and efficient, so that a greater number of returnees can receive better assistance.

It has proven extremely difficult to map how many service providers were somehow active in the countries of origin. The numbers we have can be regarded as a minimum. Since there is practically no monitoring and evaluation, it was hard to establish how many failed asylum seekers from the EU were assisted. Many organisations do not register such information, or do not differentiate between the various categories of returnees. The estimation of the number of returnees below should therefore be considered as a minimum. Nonetheless, the figures demonstrate the importance of improving cooperation in this field. A great many service providers assist just a few returning asylum seekers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of service providers</th>
<th>Number of failed asylum seekers from EU returning assisted in a year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>250-350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdistan/Iraq</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Preconditions for cooperation among EU member states

We have foreseen a number of necessary preconditions if EU countries really wish to cooperate more on the return and reintegration of failed asylum seekers. European member states will need to take a number of steps to make serious cooperation feasible.

Precondition 1: Define a spokesperson

EU calls for proposals require long routes in centralised institutions since many executing actors have little or no understanding of EU tender procedures and consortiumbuilding. In some EU member states, more than one ministry or agency may be responsible for reintegration efforts. Evidence shows that even within one country, cooperation between executive agencies or even coordinating return and reintegration activities can be a challenge. It is obvious that international cooperation is even more difficult. It will be necessary – and this is where Germany in particular springs to mind – for each country to define one leading responsible agency, a “spokesperson” as it were, that can represent the country and is competent enough to discuss and organise EU-wide cooperation.

Precondition 2: Come to terms

There is currently no mutual understanding of the basic goals of reintegration and basic definitions used in the field. Before states can cooperate, they have to make an effort to literally “come to terms with terms”. Member states should agree on the basic goals of such an endeavour in order to avoid misunderstandings or false expectations. Before any type of cooperation can take place, member states must formulate common, agreedupon definitions of the most essential terms such as “sustainability”, “reintegration” and “voluntary return”. They should furthermore agree on the level of sophistication of the programmes. The four scenarios presented in this research may offer a start for the discussion.

8 Many of these service providers do not exclusively provide reintegration assistance for rejected asylum seekers from Europe. In most cases they also take care of other vulnerable (migrant) groups, such as IDPs or returnees from neighbouring countries.
Precondition 3: Monitor, evaluate and disseminate

We have already mentioned that many EU member states consider that their approach and programmes are generally successful. Consequently, they state that if cooperation with other EU member states is to take place, it is best to adopt their approach. While we would like to stress that it has not been the task of this research to evaluate individual organisations and their performance, it has been inevitable that during the interviews, the researchers were confronted more than once in each country with the fact that there is a gap between claimed performance and actual performance in many areas. A general observation throughout the research has been that reintegration activities are not being monitored and evaluated. While "official" processes and strategies are always explained and documented, the research team has encountered a number of instances whereby follow-up data on outcome and impact were either not available or unconvincing. Many of the results presented to the research team were based on activities, less often on output, and practically never on outcome (or the lessons learnt from challenges and obstacles).

Experiences in achieving or failing to achieve sustainability are not fed back regularly and consistently to help formulate policy papers and guidelines. While the programming of activities and identification of possible areas of intervention are supposed to be a consequence of the evaluation of activities implemented in the past, this sort of project cycle seems to be broken, weak or nonexistent in most countries the research team visited. New activities are sometimes implemented without taking the results of old activities into consideration, either because impact monitoring or evaluation has not taken place; the number of actors is quite limited, or because reintegration activities are implemented according to political needs and considerations, rather than to feasibility. There are only a limited number of cases where the research team had the impression that some kind of evaluation had led to new considerations concerning the methods or organisations employed 9. Such results however, are hardly shared. The executive organisations compete with each other for funding; consequently they are not very keen on sharing their experiences. It is even more striking that the supervising ministries are generally not interested in disseminating evaluation results.

The establishment of a comparative monitoring and evaluation system seems to be imperative. This is even more important if the current trend of adding “development” to return programmes is set forth. While the argument for a more developmental approach is valid as a theoretical assumption, it needs facts and figures to underline it. It is necessary to have a learning environment which allows reconsideration and adjustments if methods prove to be ineffective. Only then would it be possible to distinguish ‘best practices’ from ‘worst practices’.

Cooperation may facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive M&E system, especially if it includes setting common quality standards. As there are standards available in the area of development cooperation (through the Development Assistance Committee), and as reintegration programmes will have the tendency to include more developmental aspects into their activities, these standards can be adopted, modified or improved where necessary, before being used as common European standards. This would make it easier to compare results and learn from them.

3.3 Options regarding cooperation among EU member states

After reviewing existing reintegration activities, the research team sees various options for cooperation. This report does not necessarily ask for harmonisation in the sense that all countries should apply the same kind of activities, strategies and approaches to the matter. Different target groups and different countries of return require different programmes, adapted to the conditions available. Even if some activities are common in nature, it will be necessary to adapt them to the framework within the recipient country. Cooperation is more important than harmonisation, as it leaves individual strengths and desires intact, but primarily aims to pool resources with regard to specific tasks, and avoid a multitude of parallel, similar activities. It would be a good idea to agree upon some general issues of an organisational and content-oriented nature within all EU member states, but leave the execution of cooperative activities to those countries most concerned with a specific problem.

In general, this report does not envisage EU cooperation as cooperation between all EU member states.

---

9 This is especially important as the target group – the returnee-community – is actually quite good at evaluation. If an organisation fails in one country, information spreads informally like wildfire. Therefore, prospective returnees sometimes react quicker to information from their informal network about problems regarding certain services than the parties paying for these services.
on all issues. We have seen that if cooperation exists on any level, it concerns pragmatic alliances. We therefore advocate following a pragmatic approach as well. Below we describe three options that we consider both feasible and practical.

Option 1: Speak the same language

One option is to set a meeting of responsible staff in charge of writing tenders in the area of reintegration with the aim of adjusting and comparing basic needs and imperatives for new programmes, including the requirement for M&E and discussing comparable reporting and transparency rules. This would trigger EU member states to “speak the same language” regarding return and reintegration of asylum seekers. This option is truly the “light” version of cooperation. It would be a first step towards more comprehensive options, such as 2 and 3.

Option 2: Division of labour

EU member states could consider specialising with regard to certain activities to develop a certain “division of labour”: If one target group is dominant in country X, EU member states could assign that country the task of designing and leading reintegration services for that specific target group in the country of origin on behalf of everyone else. This would avoid duplication of efforts and parallel programmes; give rise to a leading agency responsible for coordination and disbursement of funds, and lead to the development of a clear structure and strategy. If not oriented towards a specific target group, specialisation is also conceivable with regard to certain strengths and best practices. If an EU member state has excelled in projects related to designing programmes for vocational training in countries of origin, cooperation can lead to the adoption of these best practices as a benchmark in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes or less successful approaches. In particular, the role of embassies in controlling and steering needs to be tested in practice.

Option 3: Create a onestopshop

The most comprehensive and pragmatic viable option for cooperation between EU member states is to experiment with setting up “onestopshops” in countries of origin, jointly funded by several EU member states. Currently, many EU countries set up their own services through bilateral agreements with specific service providers. These providers can only offer a specific service to specific returnees from that one EU country. Not all returnees from EU member states can access the same services. EU cooperation and the creation of a “onestopshop” for all returnees from the EU would ensure that all services are equally available to everyone, as resources are bundled and service providers would be available to all returnees. This would also lead to the abolishment of parallel structures and more efficient and effective use of financial resources. Furthermore, it would facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

The general idea is that returnees would access the “onestopshop” as a point of first entry. Their needs and wishes would be assessed and a file opened. If predeparture counselling took place in the host country and a file already exists, a chain management system with those counsellors would help to avoid duplicating efforts. The counsellor in the “onestopshop” would develop a programme for the returnee based on their needs and align it with the programmes available through the service providers. After agreeing on the programme, s/he would then send the returnee to the relevant organisations and inform them of the agreedupon activities and available budget. The reintegration process would then begin, monitored by the counsellor from the lead agency. We emphasise the importance of establishing of a fullyfunctioning feedback loop and an operational working project cycle management in order to make sure that problems will be used as an opportunity to learn and improve and that activities do not stagnate once the programme has started. All EU member states engaged in the project would receive the monitoring and evaluation results.
The establishment of the system could work along the following lines:

- Pool resources from EU member states for returnees to a specific country
- Make a feasibility study in the country of return to discern the activities needed for successful reintegration.
- Make a stakeholder analysis in the country of return and map agencies, NGOs and INGOs capable of providing necessary services
- Select one organisation as a “lead agency” in charge of coordination, distribution of funding and monitoring
- Create an office or “onestopshop” easily accessible for failed asylum seekers from the EU member states involved.
- Link the identified service providers to the lead agency and establish a line of communication between the EU member states, the agency managing the “onestopshop”, the service providers and a feedback loop to the EU member states.

The abovementioned model would only be feasible if significant figures on return are available. If, in some smaller countries, quantity still remains minimal, even after combining returnees from all over the EU, a different approach will be more costeffective. Instead of establishing any kind of structure in the country of return, freelance “reintegration advisers”, properly trained, as feeandcasebased contact points might be a better solution. These contactpoints do not need an institutional background, but just the necessary qualifications, some experience of life and conditions in Europe and a network in their own country.

3.4 Preconditions for involving governments in the countries of origin

As we mentioned earlier, governments play a limited role in the reintegration process. Even where countries have established contractual agreements, such as Switzerland’s “migration partnerships” or the EU’s “mobility partnerships”, the individual returnee is usually left to his own devices or is dependant on the support of EUfunded NGOs or INGOs. In this paragraph we will describe if and how governments should have a more significant role in this respect.

We foresee that stronger government involvement in reintegration programmes might have real
benefits, especially since it could create a common basis concerning further cooperation. However, several experts interviewed in the course of the research warned that apart from sincere motives to give the best care for returning asylum seekers from Europe, there are also other more political reasons why these governments are demonstrating a willingness to become involved. These are for example:

- collecting additional funding (Congo),
- showing “good behaviour” in order to reach different goals (Georgia in the context of the mobility partnership and its desire to be accepted as a “European” country),
- gaining access to capacity building (Iraq/Kurdistan)

Most NGOs or INGOs declared with varying degrees of urgency, that the involvement of governments in the countries of origin in return and reintegration activities would, in the most cases, be more disruptive than beneficial. Countries with very weak institutions, high levels of corruption and widespread instability might not be feasible. In many countries, reintegration programmes as they include funding, the distribution of posts, salaries and responsibilities might become part of informal clientelistic systems that could have a negative impact on both efficiency and effectiveness.

If EU member states notwithstanding the potential drawbacks mentioned above – still wish governments in countries of origin to be more involved with reintegrating failed asylum seekers, we foresee a number of preconditions that must be met.

Precondition 1: Extend the target group

It is evident that many countries of origin, especially in a postcrisis situation, have more pressing issues in regard to migration than the relatively limited number of returning asylum seekers from Europe. In all three countries of return, government officials and some experts from (I)NGOs consider the distinction between returning “former asylum seekers”, “refugees”, “undocumented migrants” and “IDPs” as an obstacle to building an inclusive reintegration system. “Once they are back, they are citizens like everyone else”, has been said several times. From the perspective of government, it is inexplicable that returnees from Europe can make use of different reintegration packages than other citizens with similar needs. Representatives of the government of Kurdistan have clearly stated that they are only interested in becoming more involved in reintegration activities, if they also cater for the needs of returnees from neighbouring countries instead of being restricted to returnees from the EU.

Therefore, despite the fact that the distinction is necessary, depending on the donormechanism, a really comprehensive and effective reintegration programme that involves the government of the country of origin has to consider widening its scope beyond rejected asylum seekers. The research team is quite aware of the fact that it might be difficult to follow up this recommendation. Differentiating between failed asylum seekers and other returnees may be logical for EU member states, but not for the countries of return. 10

Precondition 2: Create an anticorruption policy

In all three countries of origin it was difficult to appoint which ministry would be potentially responsible for reintegration activities. This is especially the case in postconflict countries, where governments are still in the process of defining responsibilities. We highlighted above that in many return countries, clientelistic systems might negatively affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes. The three countries we studied all have bad rankings on the 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International. Out of a total of 180 countries, Georgia ranks 66, Congo 162, and Iraq 172. 11

Other potentially important countries of return like Afghanistan, Angola, Sudan and Somalia also have bad rankings. Before engaging any government organisations in reintegration activities, it is therefore advisable to work out a sound anticorruption policy.

---

10 In this regard it is interesting to note that the European Union has a very broad target group definition of return policy. It speaks of “third-country nationals”, meaning “any person who is not a citizen of the Union within the meaning of Article 17(1) of the Treaty and who is not a person enjoying the Community right of free movement, as defined in Article 2(3) of the Schengen Borders Code”.

At present, funding from EU member states is distributed directly to (I)NGO's that execute specific programmes with little interference from the government of the country of origin. We consider that there are two viable options for involving governments in countries of origin more closely with return and reintegration activities for returning asylum seekers from EU member states. Each option has advantages and disadvantages.

Option 1: Full responsibility for government

Give funding for reintegration programmes directly to the government of the return country so that it can implement its own services.

Potential advantages: Government is “forced” to deal with the issue of returnees directly; may develop ownership for the problem; becomes involved in the management of migration from both sides; gains experience in taking care of the problem; is a direct communication partner for the EU also in regard to funding issues; this may eventually attract local government funding to the programme.

Potential disadvantages: Local NGOs might not be willing to cooperate with government for various reasons; government expenditure might be less efficient and effective; the state structure might be too slow and unresponsive; returnees might be apprehensive in dealing with state agencies directly; funding could be used for internal clientelistic systems instead of its intended purpose; tendency to build up structures “forever”, less thinking in timebound programmes.

Option 2: Shared responsibility for government and donor

Give funding and implementation to a nongovernmental lead agency or local nonstate structures, while involving the government in monitoring and steering at a higher level. This model would avoid the pitfalls of bad governance and inadequate state structures, especially in regard to the quality of implementation. If well managed, it would create a forum for common learning, creating commitment and making successes visible.
Potential advantages: Government is included in the activity and develops both responsibility and ownership; NGOs are ready to cooperate as they receive their funding directly from the EU; returnees do not have to fall back on state structures; difficult cases can be discussed in a steering institution for problem solving; government is included in both the practical and political discussion.

Potential disadvantages: As it is not responsible for implementation, dedication to dealing with specific issues might not be consistent and political and practical issues might be conflicting. With time, involvement of lower ranking government officials might increase, claims of success might be contradictory between the executing non-state actors and the state. Therefore “ownership” might become an issue of dispute, making it difficult to define roles and responsibilities in the process.

3.6 Criteria for selecting countries of origin

The aim of this paragraph is to map out possible criteria that may be used to select a suitable country of origin for comprehensive EU-funded reintegration programmes. In order to implement a comprehensive reintegration programme, possible selection criteria are:

Criterion 1: Stability

A certain degree of stability and economic wellbeing in the country of origin is necessary for the successful implementation of any reintegration programme. In highly unstable countries, the return investment on the implementation of a comprehensive reintegration programme is low. A certain degree of governanceability on the side of the country of return, including the general willingness to accept returnees and give them a special treatment is necessary.

Of the three countries considered in this report, Congo would be the most unlikely to benefit from a reintegration programme from this perspective. The current economic and political situation in Congo is characterised by weak state structures, high levels of violence in certain regions and limited economic activity which is mainly restricted to exploiting the country’s mineral wealth. There are very limited means of survival in such a country. In this respect Kurdistan – with its relative social, political and economic – stability could already be considered more attractive, while Georgia would be the most suitable of the three studied countries of origin in which to start a pilot.
Criterion 2: Sufficient numbers of prospective returnees

Cooperation between EU member states is most likely to succeed if all member states feel that they can benefit. The various EU member states have different interests when it comes to selecting a country of origin. While many countries focused on regions in the former Yugoslavia in the past, we expect this to change in the coming years. Based on the current number of asylum seekers, currently existing special reintegration schemes, and interviews with policy makers and experts we expect the following countries of origin to be the most relevant from the perspective of the respective EU member states. 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU member state</th>
<th>Top 3 relevant countries of return for the near future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>DRC, Russian Federation, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Iraq, Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Iraq, Somalia, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Somalia, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>DRC, Russian Federation, Iran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that most of the selected EU countries have an interest in organising reintegration schemes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Serbia and the Russian Federation. A limited number is interested in DRC and only a few countries are seriously interested in organising such activities in Georgia, given the limited number of asylum seekers from this country.

Criterion 3: Number of service providers

The potential increase in effectiveness and efficiency is highest in countries where we currently witness a considerable overlap in reintegration activities. In this regard, Georgia and Congo seem to be the best options as both have 16 service providers that are actively engaged in offering reintegration activities for returnees from the EU.

Criterion 4: Existing partnerships

Reintegration programmes, especially those that envisage the involvement of the government of the country of origin, are most likely to succeed when partnerships already exist either in the field of development, specifically with regard to migration. Of the selected countries, Congo is the least attractive in this respect, since very few EU member states have such partnerships. Kurdistan is a more appropriate candidate, especially since many EU member states are active in the field of development. Georgia, with its mobility partnership, seems the most suitable in this respect.

To summarise: choosing a country in which to start a pilot is by no means easy, especially with so many contradictory or paradoxical criteria. For example, the more assistance that a country of origin needs with reintegration schemes, the lower the chances of successful reintegration because of that country’s instability (e.g. Congo). The number of returnees to a certain country of origin is in inverse proportion to its stability in that country (e.g. Georgia). Finally, fewer potential returning asylum seekers means more service providers engaged in reintegration activities (e.g. Georgia).

---

12 Many countries also seem to be interested in working on reintegration programmes in China because of the difficulties they face in effecting forced return.
4 Conclusion

Below we present a summative answer to the eight initial research questions:

1. To what extent do EU member states strive to achieve the sustainable reintegration of returning (former) asylum seekers?

Many member states have not clearly formulated expectations of their reintegration activities. Reasons for organising reintegration programmes oscillate between the need to “regulate” undesired migrants from a justice perspective and the aim of adding “development” to the agenda. The concept of “sustainability” is consequently illdefined and open to interpretation.

2. Which programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin are implemented/financed by EU member states?

Given the extensive answer this question needs, we would like to refer the reader to the country reports that elaborately discuss the available reintegration programmes in the selected countries.

3. Which benefits can be obtained by setting up programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin at a European level and in cooperation with the countries of origin?

More cooperation could lead to a more effective and efficient use of funding. It could also increase the quality of monitoring and evaluation and it improve the quality of reintegration services for returnees. It would invite member states to come to a common understanding of basic terms and definitions.

4. To what extent is it possible to set up reintegration support programmes in the countries of origin at a European level and together with the countries of origin?

The European Commission, all selected member states and all selected countries of origin have demonstrated their willingness to cooperate more closely on reintegration activities for failed asylum seekers. Given this positive attitude, any actor that actively promotes cooperation by setting up a pilot project, is likely to receive positive feedback and ‘bring aboard’ other interested parties. Larger, nongovernment related implementing parties are hesitant about closer cooperation. They are unlikely to call for more cooperation without any incentives. Active promotion by governments or the European Commission may be necessary.

5. To what extent is it advisable to bring local reintegration support programmes under umbrella programmes led by the governments in the countries of origin?

We recommend involving governments in the countries of origin in return activities. This would create ownership in assisting their returning nationals and lead to the reintegration of returnees from Europe becoming more embedded in already existing return programmes for IDPs and returnees stemming from the region.

6. What role do governments of countries of return/of origin currently play in reintegration programmes, what is their attitude towards the issue and what role might they play in the future?

Currently, governments play scarcely any active role in reintegration programmes for returnees from the EU. They generally demonstrate a willingness to participate more actively. Governments can either have full responsibility for a project, share responsibility with a donor. In both instances it is crucial that roles and responsibilities in the process are clearly defined.

7. What kind of criteria could be used to initiate comprehensive reintegration programmes in countries of return/of origin?

Countries of origin that may become involved in comprehensive reintegration programmes, should be selected on the basis of the following criteria. The should be: relatively stable (economically,
socially and with regard to security); potentially receive many returnees; currently have a large number of service providers in the field of reintegration assistance, and have an existing partnership with the EU or individual EU member states.

8. What possible models of reintegration programmes in countries of return/of origin are feasible?

A first model is to develop a “division of labour” and have separate member states specialise in certain activities that other member states can make use of. A second model is to experiment with setting up “onestopshops” for all returnees from the EU.

5. Advice for next steps

The above paragraphs have presented various alternatives for achieving closer cooperation regarding the reintegration of failed asylum seekers. Based on the insights gathered during the research period, the research team would like to take this opportunity to suggest concrete steps that will lead to improved cooperation, efficiency and effectiveness.

5.1 Step 1: Increase efficiency by setting up a pilot project

The roadmap below provides suggestions on how to initiate a pilot project in one or more selected countries of origin.

The envisaged pilot project would be to set up a “OneStopShop” that allocates a monitoring and steering role to the government of the country of origin. The research team considers this the most viable option for starting any activities that would have the potential to grow into some sort of a “national returnee centre”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1:</th>
<th>Network among 7 EU member states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td>Set the cooperation goals in a workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ground plan cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3:</td>
<td>Make the joint liaison with the countries of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4:</td>
<td>Agree on cooperation and define key outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Return Fund Proposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following table contains details for the road map.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>1st actions</th>
<th>Who to involve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Network in EU</td>
<td>Intention to start a pilot by setting up a “One Stop Shop”</td>
<td>a) Approach potentially interested EU member states to engage in such a pilot</td>
<td>All seven selected EU member states: Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, UK, Belgium, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Set the cooperation goals</td>
<td>Organise a dialogue with representatives of interested member states</td>
<td>b) Formulate common definitions, define the target group and formulate the desired outcomes of such a pilot; c) Establish a sound monitoring and evaluation procedure d) Select a relatively stable country of origin with the following indicators: potential for receiving many returnees; currently a large number of service providers; all member states have at least some returnees; existing partnerships with the EU as such, or individual EU member states. e) Make a wish list for the major steps to be taken and the accompanying budget f) Send a project idea to the European Commission DG JLS – ERF contact person</td>
<td>Organise a workshop with the technical staff of the involved Ministries (for possible coalitions; see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Liaison with Countries of Origin</td>
<td>Contact and inform the government of the selected country of origin</td>
<td>g) Contact potential countries of origin in order to find out if they want to become a stakeholder in the pilot by means of monitoring and steering</td>
<td>According to the research team, good options are Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia, Turkey and Georgia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Make a joint plan</td>
<td>Establish a pilot of the onestop shop in the selected country</td>
<td>h) Write a project proposal for the EU Return Fund</td>
<td>The consortium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research team has received various “hints” from involved ministries and service providers on possibilities for cooperation between countries. The table below can be seen as a reflection of these signals. In the case of cooperation, partners joining a consortium involving member states may have a natural preference for partners among the countries of origin. This is indicated in the matrix below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Points of attention</th>
<th>Potentially interested in setting up pilots in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>The Dutch authorities demonstrate a sincere interest in increased cooperation. In recent years, it has consistently experimented with a variety of reintegration schemes focused on sustainable return. Mobility Partnership with Georgia.</td>
<td>Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Cooperation is not necessarily seen as an added value, sometimes even as a burden. Therefore cooperation goals need to show where the return on investment is for Sweden. It is important to involve the embassies as an antenna and for support on the ground. Count with long decision making procedures.</td>
<td>Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia, Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Reintegration and return activities are scattered and often take place on a decentralised level. It is necessary to define a representative before cooperation activities can commence.</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Iraq, Russian Federation, Turkey, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Home Office has much experience in funding reintegration activities, also with a focus on sustainability.</td>
<td>Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Demonstrates a sincere interest in increased cooperation. Currently provides reintegration packages for nonasylum seekers.</td>
<td>DRC, Russian Federation, Iran, Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Has opted out of the EU funds and therefore Danish negotiators will have to find national alternative funding that might include long internal decisionmaking processes and political interference.</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Is inexperienced in cooperation in this field. The need for cooperation is however highly felt. It currently executes several comprehensive reintegration programmes.</td>
<td>DRC, Russian Federation, Turkey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 STEP 2: INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS BY SETTING UP A JOINT M&E SYSTEM

Coming to a more efficient distribution of activities and funding does not necessarily lead to more effective projects. Many EU member states consider their current approach and programmes quite successful, and consequently state that “cooperation could lead to more effectiveness, provided that others do what we are already doing”. Yet, sound data on the effectiveness of past and current programmes is often lacking. Data are not available or not reliable and comparing data is impossible given the variety in project-goals, target groups and definitions used. It is therefore crucial to establish a comparative monitoring and evaluation system. We would advice member states to invite professionals and academics to work out a thorough M&E system and use this system in a large number of return projects. Only this would make it possible to distinguish ‘best’ from ‘worse’ practices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Country reports on EU member states</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Belgium**

1 Introduction 32

2 General overview 32

3 Procedures and structure of programmes 33

3.1 Arriving in Belgium: 33

3.2 Pre-departure counselling: 33

3.3 Return 33

3.4 Forced return 33

3.5 Voluntary Return 34

3.5.2 Coordination Cell: 35

3.5.3 The Reintegration Fund 35

3.6 Challenges 36

4 Vision of the future 37

Annex: Organigram 38

**Denmark**

1 Introduction 39

2 General overview 39

3 Procedures and structure of programmes 40

3.1 Arriving in Denmark 40

3.2 Pre-departure counselling 41

3.3 Return 41

3.4 Forced return 41

3.5 Voluntary Return 41

3.5.1 IOM 42

3.5.2 Danish Refugee Council 42

3.6 Challenges 43

4 Vision of the future 44

Annex: Organigram 45

**France**

1 Introduction 46

2 General overview 46

3 Procedures and structure of programmes 46

3.1 Arriving in France 46

3.2 Pre-departure counselling 47

3.3 Forced return 47

3.4 Voluntary Return 47

3.4.1 OFII- Programme d’ aide au retour volontaire: 47

3.4.2 OFII- Programmes d’aide a la réinstallation: 48

3.5 Challenges 49

4 Vision of the future 50

Annex: Organigram 51
GERMANY
1 Introduction 52
2 General overview 52
3 Procedure and structure of programme 54
   3.1 Arriving in Germany 54
   3.2 Pre-departure/return counselling 55
   3.3 Return 56
      3.3.1 Forced Return 56
      3.3.2 Voluntary Return 56
   3.4 Challenges 59
4 Vision for the future 60
Annex: organigram 61

NETHERLANDS
1 Introduction 62
2 General overview 62
3 Procedures and structures of programmes 63
   3.1 Arriving in the Netherlands 63
   3.2 Pre-departure counselling 64
   3.3 Forced return 64
   3.4 Voluntary return 64
      3.4.1 IOM 64
      3.4.2 Cordaid 65
      3.4.3 SAMAH 66
   3.5 Challenges 66
4 Vision for the future 67
Annex: Organigram 68

UNITED KINGDOM
1 Introduction 69
2 General overview 69
3 Procedures and structures of programmes 70
   3.1 Arriving in the UK 70
   3.2 Pre-departure counselling 71
   3.3 Return 71
      3.3.1 Forced return 71
      3.3.2 Voluntary return 71
   3.4 Challenges 74
4 Vision of the future 75
Appendix: organigram 76

SWEDEN
1 Introduction 77
2 General overview 77
3 Procedures and structures of programmes 78
   3.1 Arriving in Sweden 78
   3.2 Pre-departure counselling 79
   3.3 Return 79
      3.3.1 Forced return 79
      3.3.2 Voluntary return (called Voluntary repatriation in Sweden) 79

29
3.3.3 Reintegration Assistance
3.3.4 Reintegration grant
3.4 Challenges
4 Vision of the future
Annex: Organigram

ANNEX B: Country reports on countries of origin

Action research in Iraq - July 5th – 10th 2009
1 Introduction
2 Methodology
3 Background information
  3.1 Political background
  3.2 Economic situation
  3.3 Migration patterns
4 Return and reintegration activities
  4.1 Quantitative assessment of return and return policies
  4.2 Type of assistance for reintegration and return
  4.3 Role of government and government agencies in return and re-integration
  4.4 The perspective of the returnees and of the future elite
5 Vision of future reintegration policies and programmes
  5.1 Implementing organizations proposals and ideas on cooperation
  5.2 Proposals and ideas of the government on sustainable return
6 Conclusions
  6.1 Positive potential for a reintegration programme
  6.2 Challenges for a reintegration programme

Action research in the Republic of Georgia - September 7th to 11th 2009
1 Introduction
2 Methodology
3 Background information
  3.1 Political background
  3.2 Economic background
  3.3 Migration patterns
4 Return and reintegration activities
  4.1 Quantitative assessment of return and return policies
  4.2 Type of assistance for reintegration and return
  4.3 Role of government and government agencies in return and re-integration
  4.4 The perspective of the returnees
5 Vision of future reintegration policies and programmes
  5.1 Proposals and ideas of executing organizations on cooperation
  5.2 Proposals and ideas of the government on sustainable return
6 Conclusions
  6.1 Positive potential for a reintegration programme
  6.2 Challenges for a reintegration programme
7 Next steps
ANNEX A : COUNTRY REPORTS ON EU MEMBER STATES

BELGIUM

1 INTRODUCTION

This document states the general findings of both the desk research and the interviews conducted in Belgium as part of the action research on “European corporation on sustainable return and integration”. The following persons were interviewed:

| Political Level         | Mr. Wathelet | Secretary of State for Asylum and Immigration |
|                        | Mr. Courard  | Secretary of State for Social Integration and fight against poverty |
| Policy Level           | Mr. Peter Neelen | Fedasil |
|                        | Mr. Bob Pleysier | Ex-Director of Fedasil |
|                        | Mr. Dirk Van Den Bulck | Director Commissariat for refugees and stateless people |
| Service Providers      | Mr. Reyntjens | Head of AVR IOM Brussels |
|                        | Mr. Pieter Degryse | Director Vluchtelingenwerk |
|                        | Ms. Dussart    | Responsible Return Caritas |
| Academic field         | Dr. Foblets    | Professor Migration law: Catholic university Leuven |

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this research and are therefore part of the annex of the final report. For comparison and recommendations, please see the final report.

2 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Belgium has quite a significant history in voluntary return and generally views it as a viable option, but one that is often challenging in practice. Voluntary return is not only preferable from a humanitarian point of view, but accompanied voluntary return is also more cost-effective 1.

Therefore, Belgium considers an effective return policy as an important aim. This often starts with voluntary return programmes. Since 1984, the Brussels Regional Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been implementing a programme of assisted voluntary return targeting different categories of migrants in Belgium (REAB) on the basis of an agreement with the Belgian Federal Public Service for Social Integration (See below for more information).

The Belgian government spends €5 million annually on voluntary return initiatives. FEDASIL, created in 2002 and the agency of the ministry of social integration is responsible by law for the budget, organisation and co-ordination of voluntary return schemes. Voluntary return projects are mainly carried out by IOM via the REAB programme, under the supervision of the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Applicants (FEDASIL). The reintegration programme is operationally implemented by IOM and Caritas on behalf of Fedasil. The REAB and the reintegration programmes are the only programmes currently on offer.

Belgium also receives €3 million from the European union on an annual basis to finance return initiatives within the country. This amount is divided between the Ministry of the Interior (50% for the Immigration Agency) and the Ministry of Social integration (50% for Fedasil).

In 2008, Belgium assisted 2669 returnees. This is a 3% increase compared to 2007. The 2669 returnees came from Brazil (697), Slovakia (390), the Russian Federation (260), Ukraine (217) and Armenia 5 (135), the top 5 countries of origin for returnees.

---

1 average per person; the difference between the two types of return increases principally in case of problematic identification and resistance of the person to be removed, because this person has to stay in the centre for a longer period of time and possibly an escort has to be called in.
Table 1: Voluntary Returns: January – December 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 2,669 returnees, 1,012 persons participated in the reintegration programme (Twice as many as in 2007). The top 5 of countries of origin within this reintegration programme were Slovakia, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Armenia.

As we can see in the table below, most of the returnees were irregular migrants (155).

Table 2: Voluntary Returns per REAB Category: January – December 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REAB Categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Request Stopped</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected Asylum Seeker</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant in Irregular situation</td>
<td>1553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Procedures and Structure of Programmes

3.1 Arriving in Belgium:

During this asylum period, benefits are provided both in kind and as financial contributions by Fedasil in cooperation with service providers. Fedasil provides accommodation during the asylum procedure. Some NGOs and local municipalities have a partnership with Fedasil for small housing projects.

3.2 Pre-departure Counselling:

Pre-departure counselling is mainly offered by REAB partners such as NGOs, social welfare centres in the Dutch and French speaking parts of the country and Brussels, local municipal councils and asylum centres. Fedasil, IOM, Caritas and Red Cross Belgium also offer pre-departure counselling. Interested persons can receive specific information regarding the country of origin (e.g. housing, education, employment, health care etc.) or practical assistance, such as finding housing etc.

3.3 Return

In Belgium, the division of competences in the field of return is clearly defined: the Minister of Social Integration organizes voluntary returns (mainly implemented by IOM) and created a unit to coordinate such activities on 1 May 2006 (please see below for more information); the Minister of the Interior is responsible for forced returns. Information about the possibilities to return voluntarily continues to be provided, even to persons who have been apprehended and put at the disposal of the authorities to await forced return.

3.4 Forced Return

Forced repatriations are carried out by the Immigration Office in cooperation with the Federal Police. In the case of forced removals, the entire procedure is based on the gradation principle (cascade): when

---

2 Source: www.fedasil.be/
3 Source: www.fedasil.be/
4 Source: www.belgium.iom.int/
5 All information was found on the following website: www.dofi.fgov.be/
non-nationals cannot be directly removed, which is usually because they do not have travel documents that will be accepted by the country of origin, they are generally held in a closed centre until they can be repatriated. Within the closed centre, they may still call on IOM for help with their return, but normally their departure is arranged in cooperation with the police services.

A precondition for organizing repatriation is confirmation of the nationality and identity of the person being repatriated. This confirmation requires the cooperation of the foreign authorities, particularly for the issuance of a Laissez Passer.

Once the necessary documents have been secured, the alien is asked to leave alone, without a policy escort. If they refuse, a police escort is provided and if, finally, all other attempts to repatriate the person have failed, a guarded flight is planned, possibly in cooperation with other EU Member States.

3.5 Voluntary Return

With regard to the provision of financial or reintegration assistance for voluntary return, Belgium drafted a law in 2006 which formalized asylum applicants' access to new voluntary return programmes and financial support. Voluntary repatriations are mainly carried out by IOM via the REAB programme, under the supervision of the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum-Applicants (FEDASIL). The reintegration programme is operationally implemented by IOM and Caritas on behalf of Fedasil.

3.5.1 REAB

This humanitarian programme assists migrants in need who wish to voluntarily return to their country of origin or to emigrate to another country and do not have the necessary means to do either. This programme is intended for three categories of migrants in Belgium:

- Asylum seekers who have withdrawn their asylum application;
- Asylum seekers whose asylum application has been rejected;
- All foreign migrants (except recognized refugees, citizens of the EU or a country in the Schengen area) who may qualify for financial support from the Belgian Government and who have asked to return to their own country.

IOM has developed an extensive network of partners covering the entire country in order to implement REAB activities and ensure that migrants can easily access the programme at each stage of their stay in Belgium. REAB's network consists of a combination of non-governmental organizations (NGO), local authorities (cities and communes) and governmental structures for the reception of asylum seekers.

The REAB programme provides the following services:

- Information on possible/available assistance in Belgium
- Information on the criteria to qualify for the REAB programme
- Information on the situation in the country of origin (health care, housing, education, employment, economic situation, transport, telecommunications, existing reintegration schemes, etc.)
- Travel assistance
- Financial assistance to cover possible transport costs in Belgium
- Financial assistance to cover the possible cost of excess luggage
- Assistance with obtaining a valid travel document
- Direct financial assistance
- Medical assistance
- Assistance upon departure
- Assistance in the transit airport
- Arrival assistance in the country of origin
- Support with reintegration in the country of origin
3.5.2 Coordination Cell:

This programme also assists vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied minors, medical patients, victims of trafficking and elderly people. In order to reinforce the assisted voluntary return programme, a Coordination Cell was created within the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) on 1 May 2006. This cell is made up of 5 people and works in close collaboration with the assisted voluntary return programme partners: IOM, CIRE, Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, Caritas International, etc.

The mission of this Coordination Cell is based on 3 objectives:

- Informing asylum seekers, people illegally residing in Belgium and staff working at the Immigration Office, the police, the town council and staff from social services. Information sessions will be organized for the police and town council offices.

- Policy preparation and policy recommendations for the Ministries.

- Training social workers and staff in charge of the reception of asylum seekers, so that they can learn about the situation and resources available in the countries of origin and also about communicating with asylum seekers upon their voluntary return. A training programme for social workers and staff in charge of the reception of asylum seekers will be implemented before summer.

3.5.3 The Reintegration Fund

In June 2006, a new Reintegration Fund was created after an agreement was reached with the Belgian Federal Public Service for Social Integration. Its aim is to provide additional reintegration support to returnees, including vulnerable persons. The specific terms of this Fund has been set up by Fedasil in cooperation with IOM and Caritas.

IOM and Caritas are responsible for assessing each individual reintegration project, which will be validated in collaboration with Fedasil. The Reintegration Fund is a component of the REAB programme.

The aim of the Reintegration Fund is to facilitate return to the country of origin. This Fund is designed to help people to find income generating activities. The Reintegration Fund allocates financial reintegration assistance, which can be used to support reintegration activities benefiting returnees and their family. This fund does not provide cash grants, as these do not promote sustainability and their effectiveness cannot be monitored. A person receives €700 and a family receives €1750.

The assistance provided depends on what is available in the country of return. Reintegration assistance may cover the following: vocational training courses, setting up small businesses, public education, costs related to attending a training course or educational institution, costs related to accessing information on employment opportunities for example through employment agencies, accommodation/rent, additional luggage allowance.

Vulnerable returnees in the REAB programme can receive an additional reintegration support grant of €700 Euro. This extra support is to facilitate safe reintegration in the country of origin, taking into account the specific needs of each vulnerable case. This financial reintegration assistance can be used to support reintegration activities that will benefit the returnee and support their reinsertion into society.

The assistance provided depends on what is available in the country of return. Reintegration assistance can cover the following: Family Tracing, Temporary Housing and Care, Referral to Health Care and Psychological Counselling, Direct Medical Assistance, Medicines, Referral to Formal Education and/or Vocational Training, Additional Luggage Allowance, costs related to shipment of goods.

7 All information was found on the following website : www.belgium.iom.int/
Besides IOM, Caritas also plays an important role in this field. Caritas Belgium provides assistance to migrants in Belgium 8. Caritas’ Return Cell is funded by FEDASIL (Ministry of Social Integration): individual budgets are approved by the return agency within FEDASIL, and Caritas Belgium is accountable for the way in which individual reintegration projects are implemented.

The return cell’s target groups are asylum seekers and undocumented migrants who are returning voluntarily to their country of origin and are in need of assistance. Caritas offers the following reintegration assistance 9:

• After return: practical assistance through their partner organization in the country of origin. This may include: assistance with finding housing, registration (e.g. employment, medical care, old age pensions, unemployment benefits, education for children etc). Advice and support with regard to finding employment.
• Assistance in setting up a small-scale business: (after return) e.g. finding micro credit or help with registration etc.
• Referral to other organizations: e.g. for psycho-social assistance or health care.

**Table 3: Overview of the policy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Stages:</th>
<th>Stakeholders:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>Immigration Office (→ Financed by the Ministry of the Interior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Fedasil (→ Financed by the Ministry of Social Integration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some NGOs have a partnership with FEDASIL for small housing projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling and Pre-departure Counselling</td>
<td>The REAB partners, Caritas, IOM, Red Cross Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced return</td>
<td>Immigration Office in cooperation with the Federal Police (→ Financed by the Ministry of Interior Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Return (+ Travel arrangement)</td>
<td>IOM (→ On behalf of Fedasil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration</td>
<td>Caritas and IOM (→ service providers of Fedasil)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.6 Challenges**

The Belgian return policy currently faces two main bottlenecks with regard to execution. Firstly, the return policy in Belgium is divided between two secretaries of State: the Secretary of State for Asylum and Immigration and the Secretary of State for Social Integration and the Fight against Poverty. This complicates setting up an integrated policy. Two new Secretaries were appointed following the elections of June 2009. This might cause a shift in policy depending on the political will of those in charge.

Secondly, statistics show that few rejected asylum seekers return voluntarily to their home country. It seems that the majority of asylum seekers choose illegality above (sustainable) return. The reasons for this are twofold: the lack of interested returnees and the weakness of the programmes. According to respondents, programmes need to be made stronger and stronger programmes are served by better cooperation.

---

8 Source: www.caritas.be/
9 They also offer predeparture assistance. For more information see Section 2.1.
4 Vision of the future

In general, Belgium considers that it is important to have an effective return policy. Whether or not this return should be sustainable is not (yet) a serious point of discussion. The government is increasingly focused on Voluntary Return, which most respondents believe will, in the long term, definitely include the concept of sustainable return. For example, when asked to choose the most desirable return assistance scenario, the majority of the respondents referred to Scenario 4. This scenario was regarded as the best offer.

The interviewees recommend the creation of an index, based on the cost of living in the Countries of Origin. In some countries of return, €1000 represents relatively more money than in other countries. It was argued that cash assistance should differ from one country to the other, based on the cost of living. One interviewee also suggested differentiating between a ‘Reinstallation’ premium - which can be given to all returnees - and a ‘Reintegration’- premium, which can be given to returnees who expressed a strong desire to develop themselves further in the country of origin.

Most interviewees welcomed the idea of European Cooperation on the return and reintegration of asylum seekers. The respondents also expressed and suggested the need for cooperation in the countries of origin. They noted that several organizations in the countries of origin are implementing projects that are similar to those in various EU Member States. It was argued that return assistance could be more efficient if the Member States worked together. Furthermore, the respondents noted the importance of a single integrated approach whereby projects are monitored properly.

According to most respondents, migrants should not be excluded from a return programme because of their administrative situation in a host country. In other words: most respondents would not like to see a distinction between (rejected) asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. However, they also were of the opinion that reintegration programmes are not meant for migrants who stayed in Belgium for only a very short time, such as for instance two weeks.

Most failed asylum seekers in Belgium originate from the Caucasus, DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Serbia, Bosnia and Armenia. Most undocumented migrants in Belgium originate from Brazil. If cooperation activities are on the way, the Belgian government would be primarily interested in these countries of origin.
1. The Ministry of Social Integration spends 5 Million Euro on Voluntary return Activities. Fedasil is responsible for this budget and funds the REAB + reintegration programme.

2. The European Return Fund spends 3 million Euro on an annual base to finance the return initiatives within Belgium. This amount is divided between the Ministry of the Interior (50% for the Immigration Agency) and the Ministry of Social Integration (50% for Fedasil).

3. On behalf of Fedasil, IOM executes the REAB - programme and as a service provider is IOM (in cooperation with Caritas) responsible for the assessment of each reintegration project Actual Return and Reintegration.

4. As a service provider of Fedasil, Caritas is also responsible for the assessment of each individual reintegration project → Reintegration.

5. Are mainly offering pre-departure Counselling.

6. The ministry of the Interior finances the Immigration office.

7. The immigration Office checks the Asylum procedure and orders deportation when necessary.

8. Involuntary Returnees are deported and loose the right to return back to Belgium.


## 1 Introduction

This document states the general findings of both the desk research and the interviews conducted in Denmark as part of the action research on “European corporation on sustainable return and integration”. The following persons were interviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Level</th>
<th>Katinka Villemoes</th>
<th>Parliament / Folketinget, Head of the secretariat for the committee for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meta Fultsang</td>
<td>MOP, Left wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophie Hæstorp Andersen</td>
<td>MOP, Social Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Level</td>
<td>Pernille Brinch Nissen</td>
<td>Danish Immigration Service, Head of Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kristina Rosado</td>
<td>Danish Immigration Service, Head of Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lene Ahlmann-Olsen</td>
<td>Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integrations Affairs, Head of Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Bartholin</td>
<td>Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integrations Affairs, Head of Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Providers</td>
<td>Karen Inger Thorsen</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bettina Chu</td>
<td>Danish Refugee Council, Programme Coordinator / Legal Advisor, Protection &amp; Repatriation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Torben Jacobsen</td>
<td>Care4You, Ann Schmidt, Deputy &amp; Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delavar Ajgeiy</td>
<td>Care4You, Expert in Iraq (KRG Nordic Coordinator in Denmark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/ Research field</td>
<td>Peter Hensen</td>
<td>Danish Institute for International Studies, Senior Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nauja Kleist</td>
<td>Danish Institute for International Studies, Project Researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this research and are therefore part of the annex of the final report. For comparison and recommendations, please see the final report.

## 2 General overview

The Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration takes decisions on all regulations concerning the admission of or refusal of entry to foreigners. Furthermore, the staff of this ministry prepares and initiates laws and issues ordinances.

In general, there is a tendency among the EU Member States towards increasing the number of returnees through voluntary return actions. This is mainly due to the fact that such programmes have only recently been
established. As part of the broader shift in immigration and asylum policy, the Danish authorities have been introducing a number of measures to encourage the return of failed asylum seekers since 2001.

Denmark is participating in the trend of increasing the number of returnees via voluntary return initiatives, but in general, this approach is still in its infancy. Over the years, increasing numbers of smaller return projects have emerged, such as the country-specific return programmes for Iraq and Kosovo or the RANA programme, which provided reception and reintegration assistance to Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan from European Union (EU) Member States (including Denmark). The programme ended on 30 April 2007.

There is a clear understanding amongst government officials that rejected asylum seekers may only expect a measure of support if they are willing to facilitate their return by cooperating. They will not reward non-cooperative behaviour towards government authorities, either before or after return. This demonstrates the climate in which programmes are offered.

The Immigration Act was changed in 2002. On one hand, it became easier to qualify for refugee status but on the other hand, the rules on the return of failed asylum seekers became stricter. Denmark acknowledges about 50% of asylum applications. It takes 8 years to turn temporary refugee status into citizenship.

Denmark has a very efficient asylum procedure that makes it possible to make a final decision within one year. The government feels it is not the complexity of asylum cases but staff and bureaucratic rules that are the bottleneck in the Danish tradition of long procedures. One example of the Danish solution is that it is possible to make parallel applications. Humanitarian status can be claimed within 14 days after claiming asylum. Another example is that the files on an asylum seeker’s case can be shared directly with the next relevant institution in line. Clear practice is the key. Background information on the situation regarding one case is used as an example for other comparable cases and this facilitates quick procedures.

There is no policy in respect to the (sustainable) return of (ex) asylum seekers in Denmark. Consequently there are no standard programs on offer. In the past, there have been programs for Iraq and Afghanistan. There was also a program for Kosovo that might be prolonged to service the last 10 returning migrants. The Kosovo project had a budget of approximately €1 million and offered support to 89 returning asylum seekers, 60 of whom have remained in Kosovo. Their return was considered more or less successful since they did not return to Denmark. This group consisted mainly of families.

There is one general program that consists of financial support: €400 for every returnee over the age of 18 and €200 for every returnee under the age of 18. These funds are only accessible for rejected asylum seekers who return voluntarily and can not be used by other types of migrants. There were pilots with other amounts of funding. They stopped a year ago but are currently being reconsidered.

There is little or no systematic monitoring & evaluation of what happens after returnees are back in their home country. The Danish government feels that monitoring is not necessary for rejected cases. “Return is possible and safe, otherwise asylum would have been granted” is the general attitude. Those engaged in practical work with returnees, however, fear the consequences of this technical approach.

Some research shows that more than 60% of returnees from Denmark migrate again. If they don't, this is often because they lack the funds to do so. Programmes that only provide financial assistance carry the risk of becoming a pull factor. Some migrants have only come to Denmark to use such a programme, cashed in the money and left again.

So, compared to other countries, Denmark does not have a large return and reintegration programme to help all voluntary returnees to return to their country of origin.

3 Procedures and structure of programmes

3.1 Arriving in Denmark

Asylum applicants residing in Denmark normally receive support from the Immigration Service. Currently, Danish asylum seekers are housed at accommodation centres. In 2008, there were eight
of these centres, accommodating close to 2000 asylum seekers. Most are operated by the Danish Red Cross. The Immigration Service's support covers the following: cash allowances, housing at an accommodation centre, necessary healthcare and social services, school for children, school and other activities for adults, transport to and from meetings with the authorities, hospitals, etc.

Cash allowances are categorised in the following manner:

• A basic allowance which covers expenses for food, personal hygiene items, etc.
• A supplementary allowance for asylum seekers who comply with the terms of their contract with the accommodation centre.
• A caregiver allowance for asylum seekers with children

Asylum seekers are not permitted to work. Unusually, children do not attend school but are taught inside the centres. All asylum seekers over the age of 18 must participate in compulsory activities, such as cleaning, simpler routine tasks and language training (English or the asylum seeker's mother tongue). The purpose is to keep the asylum seekers active.

3.2 Pre-departure counselling

Pre-departure counselling is offered by several organizations and institutions, such as asylum centres and the local authorities. Interested persons can receive specific information regarding return issues and resettlement, the country of origin (e.g. housing, education, employment, health care, etc.) or practical assistance, such as finding housing, etc.

For example, the Danish Red Cross¹ and Care4you ² offer pre-departure counselling in a return project for Iraqis. The Danish Refugee Council offers pre-departure assistance within the scope of a return project for asylum seekers from Kosovo.

At present, IOM Helsinki does not counsel or interview prospective returnees from Denmark through formalized counselling sessions. However, staff at IOM Helsinki is able to provide advice and information on voluntary return.

3.3 Return

With regard to the legal framework, national legislation generally regulates Forced Return, specifying the responsibilities and procedures concerning illegal immigration, border control measures, removal orders, detention, expulsion, police custody and reentry bans. There are, however, no legislative provisions regarding Voluntary Return in Denmark.

3.4 Forced return

The Immigration Service³ determines whether or not asylum can be granted to an asylum seeker. Asylum seekers who have received a final negative decision are supposed to meet up with the police in order to organize return travel. In principle, they are obliged to leave the country. If a rejected asylum seeker fails to cooperate with the police, money allowances might be withdrawn, although the asylum seeker is normally permitted to remain at the accommodation centre and will receive food. In some cases, however, he or she may be detained for refusing to return. If asylum seekers do not leave voluntarily, it is the responsibility of the police to ensure their departure, so that they can be forcibly deported.

3.5 Voluntary Return

As mentioned before, there is no general return and reintegration programme in Denmark to provide voluntary returnees with financial and operational support. There are two country-specific return programmes worth mentioning, namely for Iraq and Kosovo.

¹ www1.drk.dk/
² www.care4you.dk
³ www.nyidanmark.dk/en-US/
3.5.1 IOM

There is no IOM office in Denmark, so IOM Helsinki takes care of assisted voluntary return requests and arrangements from Denmark. In principle, IOM Helsinki can provide voluntary return services to every country in the world from Denmark. This kind of voluntary return service is based on ad hoc arrangements with the Danish government and varies from case to case.

Currently the IOM Helsinki is running a countryspecific return programme for Iraq, in cooperation with IOM Iraq, the Danish Immigration Service (DIS), the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), Care4You and the Danish Red Cross. This programme offers a comprehensive assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme (AVRR) for Iraqi citizens who wish to return to Iraq. Pre-departure information to returnees in Denmark is provided by IOM Helsinki in cooperation with Care4You and the Danish Red Cross (see also section 2.2). IOM Helsinki makes travel arrangements and organizes transit and reception assistance. In addition, IOM organizes the transport of the returnees’ cargo boxes from Denmark to Iraq. On arrival, returnees are met at airports by IOM Iraq staff and provided with additional information about reintegration activities available to them in Iraq. Returnees can benefit from professional counselling, job placement or financial assistance for setting up a small business. Persons interested in further vocational training will be referred to AGEF.

3.5.2 Danish Refugee Council

Since 2006, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has implemented a special program to assist rejected asylum seekers returning to Kosovo. The program offers legal counselling and practical support to returnees and has the two-fold objective of facilitating sustainable return to Kosovo and designing improved models for NGO-assisted voluntary return. The project is co-financed by the European Commission, the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration, and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The DRC offers assistance to rejected asylum seekers returning to Kosovo from pre-return preparations to resettlement in the place of origin and reintegration into the community. It includes all the phases and dimensions of the return process, as coherence between pre-return and reintegration measures is essential to a sustainable return. In Denmark, return counselling is offered to ensure that a decision to return is based on a voluntary and informed choice. Counselling includes legal counselling about the possibilities for staying in Denmark.

Upon arrival in Kosovo the voluntary returnees receive a package containing food, basic tools, firewood etc. based on each family’s individual needs. DRC in Kosovo distributes cash compensation for fresh food, and supports the reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing. To secure a livelihood for the returnees DRC organizes income generation training for adults and language training for minors. Returnees sent back by force, who contact DRC in Kosovo, are offered a return package (the same as for voluntary returnees), information on obtaining micro-credit loans, temporary housing, and assistance with accessing the local authorities.
Table 1: Overview of the policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Stages</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>The Immigration Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>8 Accommodation Centres operated by the Danish Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Counselling</td>
<td>Asylum Centres, IOM, Danish Red Cross, Care4you and the Danish Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced return</td>
<td>The Immigration Service + police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Return (+Travel arrangements)</td>
<td>IOM (though the Immigration Service must approve all applications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danish Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration assistance</td>
<td>IOM (though the Immigration Service must approve all applications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danish Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➔ Financed by the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EC*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exact data concerning the budget could not be given*

3.6 Challenges

The migration debate is highly influenced by the Danish media. As a consequence, politicians are asked to react to return issues on a weekly basis, something they find highly frustrating. There was a common dissatisfaction among the stakeholders approached about the fact that the migration debate in Denmark is more highly influenced by the media than it is in other Member States.

The migration debate is polarized and strongly influenced by this. An example is the debate about the pilots whereby money was provided to returnees. In the debate, exceptional cases whereby money was not spent according to the rules were reported widely. In Danish politics the inability of the left to formulate a clear response to the increasingly hardline stance taken by the right towards asylum seekers in general and returnees in particular, has led to the current position whereby both the left and right are presenting a hardline stance towards returnees in the media. The consequence for policy and practise is that the asylum procedure has become much more efficient in recent years and adopting a softer position is currently viewed as political suicide.

When the Danish people accepted the Maastricht Treaty in the 1994 referendum, it was with three exemptions in the field of foreign and defence policy, and asylum seekers. In practise this means that Denmark does not implement EU Directives in these fields. In Denmark the EU Directives are considered softer than the current Danish standpoint regarding asylum issues. If Denmark should wish to cooperate with EU Member States, collaboration partners would have accept that the Danish policies have not implemented EU guidelines as other Member States might have done. The general opinion in Danish society is that they should get rid of this opt-out clause regarding European asylum seekers policies but a new referendum must be organized. There have been recent discussions about
when this referendum should take place.

Public opinion is not the issue at policy level. Once migrants have entered the country, Denmark is considered as a migrant-friendly country with maybe the largest percentage of asylum cases approved within the EU but with relatively low numbers of entrants in general. The number of asylum applications which was historically low in 2006 with 1960 applications has risen slightly since, reaching 1907 applications during the first seven months of 2009. New rules have made Denmark more accessible for highly skilled migrant workers. Off the record, stakeholders state that politicians and policy makers are even considering circular migration but do not consider that Denmark is ready for that concept yet.

Another issue discussed is that the return programme providing cash to returnees to Iraq stopped in November 2008. In practice this means that Returnees from Denmark do not receive any assistance whereas other Member States do assist returnees. There used to be a program that provided 8000. In Iraq this is a significant amount of money which would go a long way towards building a house. The programme was efficient and gave a positive push in practice.

Several interviewees mentioned the central position of IOM was mentioned without being asked. Most raised the point that for partners outside the Foreign Ministry it is not clear what IOM does or what the outcomes of their activities are. Cooperation between IOM and service providers was set up, but was stopped again after working together on a few cases. Several stakeholders mentioned that it is essential, but difficult to cooperate with IOM.

Summary of the problems stated above:

• The Media steers the migration debate to a large extent
• Under the current conditions, politicians are unable to define individual perspectives on the migration debate
• Consequently, policy making is incident-driven
• The Danish migration debate is not connected to EU decision-making (and EU programmes and funding) and follows an individual path
• There are no reintegration programmes on offer in Denmark
• Cooperation with IOM has only been tested but has not yet developed very far.

4 Vision of the future

Most actors in Denmark are focused on what happens to (ex) asylum-seekers in Denmark. There is no focus on what happens to asylum seekers after return. When they leave the country, there is no more interest in them. Once accepted, refugees have to renew their residence permission every year and can only obtain a more permanent permit after seven years of residence. As a consequence, former ex-asylum seekers feel insecure and are worried that if they leave Denmark, they will be not allowed back in. There is a common understanding that the residence permit should be extended and granted to holders in a way that would ensure a safe return to the country. The change of this procedure would make them more secure, allow them to travel and make them more active. This has been proven to be a “success” in pilot cases with Somali emigrants who lived in the UK and Denmark.

If the Social Democrats win in the 2010 elections, it is expected that they will push for reform with regard to migration. This would focus on improving the situation of asylum seekers during the administrative procedure but in addition to this, new pilots would start with reintegration instruments (not activities for the most part). Family reunion legislation would also be re-examined. Even if Denmark votes to abandon the opt-out clause on asylum policy in a referendum, it is not expected that this will have much direct effect in the next 5 years with regard to opportunities for developing reintegration policy.

Of all the organizations interviewed, only DRC expressed thoughts on how to achieve a consolidated European approach. They identified three levels: the national level, the European level and the international level. Preconditions for improved collaboration and coordination are 1. Agreement on terms and definitions. 2. A common understanding of “sustainable return” and 3. Ensuring necessary information and knowledge sharing.
1. The Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration finance the Return and Re-integration Project RRP for rejected asylum seekers from Iraq.
2. All applications need to be approved by the Immigration Service.
3. IOM executes the Return and Reintegration project for Iraq, in cooperation with the Immigration Service, Danish Red Cross and Care4you. IOM is responsible for travel arrangements and reintegration assistance. DRC and Care4you offer pre-departure counselling.
4. The Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EC finance the Return and Reintegration project for Kosovo.
5. The Danish Refugee Council executes the project for Kosovo.
6. The Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration finances the Immigration Service.
7. The Immigration Service checks the Asylum procedure and orders deportation when necessary.
8. Involuntary Returnees are deported by the police.
FRANCE

1 INTRODUCTION

This document states the general findings of both the desk research and the interviews conducted in France as part of the action research on “European corporation on sustainable return and integration”. The following persons were interviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Level</th>
<th>Martha Breeze</th>
<th>OFII Director of International Affairs and Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Christine Rousselin</td>
<td>Directeur adjoint territoriale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr M. Chtaibat</td>
<td>Directeur Adjoint de l’acceuil et de l’integration OFFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Christine el Gharbi</td>
<td>Directeur adjoint territoriale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this research and are therefore part of the annex of the final report. For comparison and recommendations, please see the final report.

2 GENERAL OVERVIEW

France has only recently established its return and reintegration policy. In 2007 the French authorities began introducing a number of measures to encourage the return of rejected asylum seekers as part of a broader shift in immigration and asylum policy.

In 2007, a separate ministry was created, namely the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development. This Ministry decides on all regulations concerning the admission of or refusal of entry to foreigners. Furthermore the staff of this ministry prepares and initiates laws and issues ordinances. The French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) is responsible for the implementation of all regulations. This Office is also the only agency in France operating and bearing responsibility for return and reintegration programmes. There are no other organizations running return and reintegration programmes in France, including IOM. Lately, IOM and the Office for Immigration and Integration and IOM have been holding negotiations to discuss setting up a partnership.

Due to the recent character of the return and reintegration programmes, it is difficult to obtain statistics and specific information on voluntary return. Information with regard to the budget was also difficult to collect as it is considered confidential.

3 PROCEDURES AND STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES

3.1 ARRIVING IN FRANCE

In France, the reception of asylum seekers and refugees is an obligation arising from France’s ratification of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951. France Terre d’Asile manages more than 2000 places of accommodation in thirty Accommodation Centres for Asylum Seekers (known as the CADA) that are spread over 13 regions.

Families with children, single women with children, young adults and medical cases are given priority. France Terre d’Asile provides legal and medical assistance, schooling and trainings etc.
3.2 **Pre-departure counselling**

Pre-departure counselling is mainly offered by the Office of Immigration and Integration. The Office provides advice, information and informal counselling to refugees and asylum seekers who are considering returning to their country of origin. They can receive specific information regarding return issues and resettlement, the country of origin (e.g. housing, education, employment, health care etc.) or practical assistance, such as finding housing, etc.

3.3 **Forced return**

The French Office for the Protection of Refugees determines whether or not asylum can be granted to an asylum seeker. This office is financed by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development.

Asylum seekers who have received a final negative decision may not be repatriated against their will on the same day. They are given time to alert their lawyer or association.

If asylum seekers refuse to leave after one day, they risk prosecution, a penalty of 3 years of imprisonment and a return ban of 10 years. It is the responsibility of the police to ensure their departure, so that they can be forcibly deported.

3.4 **Voluntary Return**

3.4.1 **OFII- Programme d’aide au retour volontaire**

The delivery of returnee services in France is centralized. The only organization implementing returnee services in France is L’Office Français de l’Immigration et de l’Intégration (OFII). This quango is a public/administrative institution of the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development, created through the law on social cohesion of 18 January 2005. The creation of OFII brought the missions and means of the former ‘Office des migrations Internationales (OMI) and the ‘Service Social d’aide aux Emigrants’ (SSAE) together into one organization. One of OFII’s two missions is to offer counselling to French citizens and workers leaving France. 10 % of all those emigrating from France are former asylum seekers.

OFII has 6 objectives; one of them is related to return to the countries of origin: OFII organizes and implements facilities to support foreigners who want to return to their own country.

OFII has 60 account managers, who implement a strict programme of return services. This programme includes travel arrangements and cash payments that are allocated according to family structure. Cash payments are made in instalments: the first instalment is paid when the migrant leaves France and the remaining instalments are paid 6 and 12 months after their return to their country of origin. OFII makes use of representatives at French embassies to pay the final instalments.

OFII has reintegration programmes which are executed by OFII personnel in cooperation with local NGOs in 32 countries. The programmes aim to effect reintegration in the country of origin (a so-called ‘retour en dignité’) and is designed to help people to find income generating activities or to set up small businesses. The programmes allocate financial reintegration assistance, which can be used to support reintegration activities benefiting the returnee and their family. Countries that benefit from these programmes are those with old (colonial) and political ties to France, such as Congo, Senegal, Mali and Algeria.

Like many other European countries, France recently reached an agreement with IOM to cooperate on the return of ex-asylum seekers. France and IOM cooperate to achieve AVR in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Iraq-Kurdistan, Iran, Kenya, Kosovo, Pakistan, Serbia, Sudan and Sri Lanka.

As a target group, the group of (former) asylum seekers is not the most important group of
immigrants in France by a long way. Therefore, sustainable return has not been very high on the policy agenda. Although increasing efforts are being made to help (former) asylum seekers to return, for instance through reintegration-programmes and specific counselling, offered by OFII within reception centres run by NGOs, the number of returning (former) asylum seekers is only 10% of the total number of returning migrants. France’s efforts to support sustainable return focus predominantly on the group of vulnerable (former) asylum seekers. The aim is to help these people achieve a ‘retour en dignite’. Programmes designed for these groups aim at achieving self-employment in the countries of origin.

The following persons are eligible for assistance from the programme:
- Asylum seekers whose asylum application has been rejected;
- Foreigners who have been the object of an administrative decision to return at the border, unless they were placed in administrative detention or if they have offended articles 5,7 and 8 of II of article 511-1 of the CESADA.

The programme involves both material and financial assistance paid by OFII in France both before departure and upon arrival in the host country:

In France, returnees receive the following assistance before departure:
- Assistance with obtaining a valid travel document
- Travel Assistance: a one-way ticket to an airport
- Financial assistance to cover possible costs of excess luggage with a maximum of 40 kg per adult and 10 kg per child
- If necessary, financial assistance for accommodation and food while awaiting departure
- Financial assistance, of which the amount depends on family composition. This is transferred in 3 parts, whereby one instalment is paid out in France and the remaining two in the country of origin, within 12 month period.

The returnee receives the following assistance in the Country of Origin:
- Financial assistance to cover possible costs of transportation in the country of return
- Accommodation and food while waiting for transportation to their final destination
- Arrival Assistance in the Country of Origin, especially for families

The financial assistance is regulated as follows:
- €3,500 for a married couple
- €2,000 for an adult
- €1,000 for an accompanying minor up to the 3rd child
- €500 for an additional accompanying minor

The payment is regulated as follows:
- 30% is paid in France upon departure
- 50% is paid in the country of return 6 months after return
- 20% is paid in the country of return 12 months after return

In the country of return, this financial assistance is paid by the representatives of the French Office of Immigration and Integration.

3.4.2 OFII- Programmes d’aide à la réinsertion:

The Office of Immigration and Integration takes part in special reintegration programmes. This is to complete the return programme and involves a financial contribution. The aim of this programme is to facilitate return to the country of origin and is designed to help people to find income generating activities or to set up small businesses. The programme allocates financial reintegration assistance, which can be used to support reintegration activities benefiting returnees and their family.

The OFII has specific reintegration programmes in the following countries:
Algeria · Armenia · Benin · Bosnia-Herzegovina · Burkina Faso · Cameroon · Cape Verde · Comoros
Table 1: Overview of the policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Stages</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>The Office for Immigration and Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>France Terre d’Asile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Counselling</td>
<td>The Office for Immigration and Integration and France Terre d’Asile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced return</td>
<td>The Office for Immigration and Integration with the Federal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Return (+ Travel arrangement)</td>
<td>The Office for Immigration and Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration</td>
<td>The Office for Immigration and Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exact data concerning the budget could not be given as this is considered as confidential.

3.5 Challenges

One important challenge is connected to the internal organizational “culture”: formerly, the OMI operated behind the scenes and delivery of return services by the OFII has only been more out in the open for the past two years. Whereas before, the chief objective was to control the outflow of returnees, nowadays OFII is asked to motivate returnees. This requires a change in organization culture which has started but has yet to be implemented fully.

The further development of OFII as a motivating instead of a controlling organization is the key priority for reorganization in the coming year. In the next three years OFII will undergo a reorganization that will mean the loss of 100 out of 900 jobs and budget cuts that have not yet been made known.

Another aspect is the involvement of governments of countries of origin. The French have a long track record of involving the governments of the returnees’ countries with return programmes. Since this means working with governments in post-conflict situations, transparency and corruption are issues to be dealt with. In order to be able to work with such governments, the French work with French and local NGOs who have contacts in these countries. These networks of governments, NGOs and service providers are built over a long period of time and have their own dynamism.

Cooperation with other Member States is a new challenge. The decrease of direct funding of OFII via the Ministry is partly caused by the increase of France’s contribution to budgets for migration in the European Commission. OFII is coming under increasing pressure from the Ministry to make use of EU funds but this has not been successful so far. The key bottleneck is that cooperation with other Member States is not progressing.

Issues that play a role regarding this are:
• a lack of understanding and training among OFII staff with regard to working with EU funds;
• centralized information loops inside the organization have led to a situation whereby those who will have to initiate EU projects are informed of calls for proposals at a stage at which other member states have already made consortia;
• the lack of a command of the English language, something that is more and more essential for working within the EU arena;
• the travelling involved with EU work is not appreciated by everyone at OFII.

4 Vision of the future

Return is considered to be sustainable in France if the migrant will not return to France in the future. There is a growing opinion in both the French Ministry and its implementing body, OFII, that sustainable return could and should mean more. How the concept of sustainability could mean more is being hotly debated behind the scenes and is strongly influenced by the way in which sustainable return could be organized. There are two camps: those who want the programmes currently offered to be mainly implemented by French governmental bodies and NGOs and another group that sees the added value of involving international service providers and implementing organizations from other Member States. This latter group consists mainly of top management in the Ministry and some OFII staff.

As a consequence there is not much vision in France with regard to this subject. In the French Ministry, the concept of sustainable return is attracting more attention but it is too soon to speak of a vision on sustainable return at this point in time.

The benefits of EU cooperation are being considered more clearly. EU countries could cooperate in exchange programmes, aimed at making each others reintegration programmes accessible for all returnees from EU countries. Presenting a uniform package of return programmes is seen as an advantage, as currently, foreigners are treated differently in different EU countries.

When, in the future, pragmatic proposals for cooperation in the field of return pass by the desks of OFII's international department, they will be treated with special attention, considering the points mentioned below. The concept of cooperation will gain in strength if the activities that OFII currently performs can be co-financed with EU funding.
1. The Ministry for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development finances both the Return and Reintegration Programme.
2. The EU also finances a part of the Return and Reintegration Programme.
3. Pre-departure counselling is mainly offered by the Office for Immigration and Integration.
4. The Office for Immigration and Integration executes both the Return and Reintegration Programme.
5. France Terre d’Asile provides accommodation, legal and medical assistance, schooling and training courses and sometimes pre-departure counselling.
6. The Ministry for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development finances the Office for Immigration and Integration and the French Office for the protection of Refugees and Apatrids.
7. The French Office for the protection of Refugees and Apatrids checks the Asylum procedure and issues deportation orders when necessary.
8. Involuntary Returnees are deported by the police.
1 Introduction

This document states the general findings of both the desk research and interviews conducted in Germany as part of the action research on European corporation on sustainable return and integration. The following persons were interviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Level</th>
<th>Ms. Rita Süssmuth</th>
<th>Former member of the Global Commission on Migration, former president of the German parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Courard</td>
<td>Secretary of State for Social Integration and combating poverty:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Level</td>
<td>Mr. Axel Kreienbrink</td>
<td>Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Tatjana Buralina</td>
<td>Migration Expert, BAMF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Jakob von Weizsäcker</td>
<td>BRUEGEL, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Providers</td>
<td>Ms. Andrea Munck</td>
<td>German Development Cooperation (GTZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Andreas Beckemann</td>
<td>German Development Cooperation (GTZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Klaus Dünnhaupt</td>
<td>AGEF Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Hermann Schönmeier</td>
<td>INTEGPLAN Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic field</td>
<td>Jan Schneider</td>
<td>European Migration Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Stefan Angenendt</td>
<td>German Society for Foreign Policy (DGAP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this study and will therefore be included in the annex of the final report. For comparison and recommendations, please see the final report.

2 General overview

Due to the German federal constitution, the responsibilities of institutions dealing with minorities, refugees and return issues are spread over the federal level (“Bund”) and the state level (“Länder”). The federal government and the responsible Federal Ministry of the Interior take all decisions concerning the regulations on admitting foreigners or refusing entry. This ministry’s staff also prepare and initiate legislation and issue ordinances. The German state’s (Bundesländer) decisive influence on federal legislative acts is not only exercised through the second chamber of the parliament (Bundesrat). The Bundesrat generally exerts influence on immigration issues through their interpretation and implementation of federal provisions that often lead to different practices in different states. For example, legal decisions about returning or accepting refugee groups are decided at state level, usually by the Ministry of the Interior for the concerned state.1

The implementation of return and reintegration assistance in Germany stems from the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the German Government introduced a law on return counselling and assistance for working migrants.2 Part of this law, concerning the right of every migrant to receive counselling upon return, is still in existence. Assistance should also be provided for travel from Germany to the country of origin.

The tendency toward increasing the number of returnees via Voluntary Return actions in the EU Member States, is mainly due to the fact that such programmes have only recently been established. Germany is an exception to this trend as it has cooperated with IOM since 1979 and runs a programme to finance travel costs and offer financial assistance for return: REAG/GARP (see below for more information).

Increasing numbers of smaller and larger return projects have emerged over the years. These projects are sometimes run by small associations, sometimes by foreigner registration offices in municipalities, and

---

1 See: www.reintegration.net/europa/download/Germany.pdf
2 Gesetz zur Förderung der Rückkehrbereitschaft von Ausländern (RückHG), 1983.
sometimes by local branch offices of welfare organizations such as Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Caritas, the German Red Cross, and Diakonisches Werk. This is not only because voluntary return has become an increasingly important and much discussed area of migration policy, but also because return has become one of the areas in migration and refugee counselling that is financially attractive.

While the Federal Ministry of the Interior was reluctant to provide more financing for voluntary return, one by one the federal states set up programmes to promote and support the development of return assistance facilities. When North Rhine-Westphalia directly transferred funding from reception and integration to return, the welfare organizations followed. In 2005, Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz) established a fund of five million Euros for return counselling and assistance (Landesinitiative Rückkehr 2005), which was extended until 2007, and Diakonisches Werk in Trier was assigned to establish a network and assistance structure for return counselling run by municipalities or other organizations. Baden Württemberg finally allocated one million Euros for regional return assistance projects in 2008 and 2009. These three federal states are also currently trying to harmonize and cooperate in the field of voluntary reintegration within the “Integplan” project, whose main focus is on training counsellors and establishing reintegration facilities in certain countries of return.

The Federal Office of Migration and Refugees is responsible for a variety of issues including migration, return, integration and related issues on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. It is responsible for legal decisions on asylum requests and also implements several programmes for the integration of foreigners living in Germany. The federal office is also responsible for the financial administration of the federal budget for voluntary return programme, in particular the Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany (REAG) and the Government Assisted Repatriation Programme (GARP).

The return movements have changed significantly over the years. As we can see in the table below, the movements in the past 6 years have decreased from 11,588 returnees in 2003 to approximately 2,950 returnees in 2008. This is due to the fact that fewer people are coming to Germany, so fewer people have to leave. Another reason is the regulation concerning long-term residence permits, which has led to the granting of an amnesty to those living in Germany for a long period. Consequently, many people are waiting instead of returning.

**Table 1: Movements in the past 6 years**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Returnees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>11,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>9,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,950 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Iraq, Russia, Turkey, Kosovo and Vietnam were the top 5 countries of origin among the 2,950 returnees in 2008.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, the idea of sustainable return has taken root on different levels, both in the areas of implementation and policymaking. However, there is still no consensus with regard to the exact definition of “sustainability” and different viewpoints compete with each other. Programmes implemented by the Ministry for Development Cooperation (BMZ) in some countries of return come closest to the idea of creating a link between reintegration and development, but they are relatively isolated cases and do not constitute a general policy outlook.

3 Procedure and structure of programme

3.1 Arriving in Germany

As mentioned earlier, refugee matters are dealt with at state level (Lander) in Germany. Unlike other countries, the German authorities assign each refugee arriving in Germany to a designated area of temporary residence, beyond which s/he does not enjoy freedom of movement. If the foreigner claims to be an asylum seeker after entering the country, they will be directed to the nearest reception centre and accommodated there. The reception centre responsible for the asylum seeker’s accommodation is then determined on the basis of the “EASY” distribution system applicable throughout Germany. Distribution of asylum seekers is based on the legally stipulated admission quotas for individual German federal states. Asylum seekers must go there and submit their asylum application to a Federal Office’s external branch which is located next to a reception centre.

During this period, benefits are provided both in kind and as financial contributions by local and regional authorities in cooperation with service providers:

- Housing: food, heating, clothing, health and body care products and household utensils and consumables for applicants living in accommodation centres are covered by contributions in kind.
- Health care: the provision of medical care services starts with a medical examination for contagious diseases carried out by the Health Office.
- Schooling: children staying for longer than 3 months in Germany are admitted to the general education system.
- Freedom of movement: asylum applicants can move freely inside and outside the accommodation centre and shared accommodation facilities. They are not entitled to claim to live in a specific federal state or a specific place. During the asylum procedure, the asylum seeker’s place of habitual abode is, in principle, limited to the district of the Aliens Department in charge. Provided they obtain consent from the Aliens Department, however, asylum seekers are allowed to leave their allocated place of abode in order, for instance, to visit a medical specialist.
- Employment: asylum applicants are given access to the labour market one year after filing their asylum application. However, they may only accept jobs that cannot be filled by a German citizen, an EU national or other aliens with a preferred residence status. A work permit from the Labour Office is

---

6 Data received from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), see: www.iom.int/germany/
7 The Federal Ministry of the Interior: See www.bmi.bund.de/cln_012/nn_148130/Internet/Navigation/EN/Topics/ForeignersAndAsylum/ForeignersAndAsylum_node.html\_nnn=true
8 "Development of the German Asylum Procedure", the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), 2005.
required. Exceptions to this rule are only possible in special hardship cases.  

| Stakeholders during the Asylum process | Federal Ministry of Interior  
Federal Office for Migration and Refugees  
(Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge / BAMF)  
16 Ministries of States  
Local authorities  
Welfare organizations |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Donors in order of importance* | Grants of the respective ministry of Interior of the Federal States  
Grants from the EU  
Grants from local authorities  
Private donations, church donations, ... |

*No exact numbers could be given as this is considered confidential. This is why the list is ranked in order of importance.

### 3.2 Pre-departure/return counselling

Many welfare associations’ returnee services focus on pre-departure counselling and assistance to individual clients. The aim of return counselling is to promote Assisted Voluntary Return through intensive counselling for potential returnees residing in Germany. The objective is to provide detailed information to these persons to facilitate their return and reintegration in their countries of origin. Adequate preparation for return makes voluntary return more attractive to migrants. Migrants may ask specific questions regarding: the social situation in their native country, housing, medical support, schools, the labour market and qualification opportunities, relevant contacts in Germany and in the country of return as well as assistance with paperwork, procedures, travel and reintegration preparations, etc.

The following associations offer pre-departure counselling services: Raphael's Work (basically funded by the Catholic dioceses and additional project funds), Caritas ESSEN (whose projects are financed by grants from governmental institutions; church taxes; donations and project grants from the European Commission), Arbeiterwohlfahrt, the German Red Cross, and Diakonisches Werk 10.

In order to support pre-return counselling, an “Information Centre for Voluntary Return” (ZIRF) 11 was established and funded by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in July 2003.

The overall objective of this project is to provide detailed and up-to-date information about return to returnees and return counselling/information centres, to allow them to prepare the returnees’ journey in a way that will facilitate their reintegration in their country of origin. The target groups are migrants currently residing in Germany, German authorities and specialized return counselling/information centres. The voluntary return of persons who are eligible to return home under the REAG/GARP programme can be facilitated under this programme. The information provision in the framework of the ZIRF-Counselling project is two-fold:

- The so-called Country Fact Sheets offer detailed and up-to-date information on return for selected countries of return. These Fact Sheets are financed by the German federal government.
- Moreover, detailed information - specific to the life situation of a returnee - can be requested in the form of individual enquiries. In order to acquire the necessary information, IOM turns to its network of more than 280 missions worldwide. Questions can be asked about the following topics: the local health care situation, labour market prospects, education, housing, social concerns, public administration and vulnerable persons. This part of the project is financed by the German federal states.

Being able to receive detailed information sourced from competent professionals in the country of origin has had a positive impact on the relationship between the counsellors and the potential returnees/asylum seekers. The individual aspect of this counselling service creates trust and both enables and
motivates potential returnees to take the initiative where their personal future is concerned.

Reaching these goals corresponds to the following main task areas:

- initiation, examination and promotion of project applications to promote voluntary returns – also in cooperation with other institutions;
- coordinating return management by acquiring, collecting, processing and passing on information on assisted returns for;
- authorities at Federal/Land/local government level (above all immigration authorities and social welfare offices), where appropriate also in the international context
- other institutions involved
- independent welfare organizations
- churches
- prospective returnees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders during pre departure counselling</th>
<th>Welfare organizations: Raphael's Work, Caritas etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>voluntary agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>local initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>refugee councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>local and regional administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IOM Berlin return counselling office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donors in order of importance*</th>
<th>Pre-counselling in general:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grants from governmental institutions, mainly municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project grants from the European Commission/ ERF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church taxes/ donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ZIRF:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mainly the Federal office for Migration and Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A part is paid by the German federal government and the German Federal States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No exact numbers could be given as it is considered confidential and is funded by different parties. This is why the list is ranked in order of importance.

3.3 Return

With regard to the legal framework, national legislation generally regulates forced return, specifying the responsibilities and proceedings regarding illegal immigration, border control measures, removal orders, detention, expulsion, custody by police and re-entry bans. However, Germany does not have any legislative provisions regarding voluntary return.

3.3.1 Forced Return

Rejected asylum seekers are in principle obligated to leave the country. If they refuse to do so, they may be deported, i.e. forcibly removed, as long as there are no obstacles to deportation. Carrying out deportations is the responsibility of the foreigners authorities of the states, which must abide by all decisions of the BAMF and the administrative courts pertaining to the asylum procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder during the forced return</th>
<th>The foreigners authorities of the states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3.3.2 Voluntary Return

REAG/ GARP Programme

Most of the travel arrangements for return are organized by IOM Nuremberg. The REAG/GARP programme 12 (Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany/ Government Assisted Repatriation Programme) is organised by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and of the competent Land ministries in cooperation with the local authorities, the welfare associations, specialist advisory

---

12 BAMF: See: www.bamf.de/cln_101/fhn_432882/EN/Migration/Rueckkehrfoerderung/ZIRFDatenbank/datenbank-inhalt.html?__nnn=true
agencies, central returnees advice agencies and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is financed by both the German Federal Ministry for the Interior and the Ministries of the federal states. There is an annual budget of approximately 3.5 million for the REAG/ GARP programme (Financial model: 50% Federal Government 50% Federal States). Over the years, the annual budget has increased and is still increasing. These two programmes are the main features for assistance on federal level.

This programme is a humanitarian programme that provides financial and operational support for voluntary return or migration to 3rd countries. It offers start-ups and serves as a steering instrument for migration movements. The following groups may benefit from the programme: asylum-seekers; rejected asylum-seekers; recognized refugees as well as war and civil-war refugees; victims of forced prostitution or trafficking and other foreigners (eligible under § 1 AsylBLG, the Germany asylum seekers' benefit act). Prerequisite is that neither the departing person nor any other person or agency responsible for their support can provide the necessary financial support. Everybody who qualifies according to the criteria can apply either through welfare organizations or institutions responsible for ‘Grundsicherung’ (Sozialamt, “ARGE” [cooperation between municipalities and the employment office with regard to the payment of social allowances]). The following types of assistance are granted within the programme’s framework:

- Payment of transportation costs (by plane, train or bus)
- Petrol allowance for return by car (currently €205)
- Travel assistance (currently €100 for each adult and €50 per child)
- Initial start-up cash to persons from countries that are particularly relevant in terms of migration and vary from year to year:
  - GARP start-up cash assistance - Group 3: €200 per adult/youth and €100 per child under the age of 12 (max. €600 per family) for nationals of: Algeria, Angola, China, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Vietnam.
  - GARP start-up cash assistance - Group 2: €250 per adult/youth and €125 per child under the age of 12 (max. €750 per family) for nationals of: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia (incl. Kosovo except Serbian and Roma minorities from Kosovo), Turkey and Ukraine.
  - GARP start-up cash assistance - Group 1: €500 per adult/youth and €250 per child under the age of 12 (max. €1,500 per family) for nationals of: Afghanistan, Iraq and Serbia (only for Serbian and Roma minorities from Kosovo).

REAG/GARP-applications can be submitted by Social Welfare or Aliens' Offices in any German city or district, welfare organizations, specialized NGOs, central information centres for voluntary return. By signing the REAG/GARP application form, the migrant confirms their willingness to return voluntarily and accepts the conditions of the waiver and the reimbursement of assistance they have received if they return to Germany.

If the applying agencies pay for REAG/GARP assistance, IOM will reimburse them after departure (travel/ GARP start-up-assistance). The Government and the 16 Federal States Ministries are invoiced on a bi-monthly basis for all financial assistance such as transport costs, travel assistance and GARP start-up assistance.

**Special Migrants Assistance Programme (SMAP)**

For those not eligible under the REAG/GARP programme, IOM can arrange flights and offer special fares within SMAP (special migrants assistance programme). This applies to emigrants to the U.S., Canada or Australia in particular. Flight costs have to be covered either by the migrants themselves prior to departure or by a welfare office or NGO.

**Other Initiatives**

Besides the two main programme run by the IOM (see above), a number of other German organizations and initiatives offer a variety of reintegration assistance to voluntary returnees, including: counselling, job training and small business start-ups, assistance to children for successful integration into the education system and special assistance for vulnerable persons:

---

13 The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), see: www.iom.int/germany/
• AGEF\textsuperscript{14}: AGEF mainly offers information, job placement, vocational training, etc. in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iraq (Kurdistan) and some African countries.

• Caritas Essen\textsuperscript{15}: Caritas mainly offers housing/reconstruction aid, vocational training, social services, etc. in Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina. Caritas Essen can also offer the following benefits: travel and start-up assistance (cash from the State of North Rhine Westphalia and the German state through IOM); assistance in kind on an individual case-by-case basis. Caritas Essen receives an annual return budget from the State of North Rhine Westphalia. This budget enables them to contribute to the individual costs of returnees, vocational equipment or medical devices. Beside this, Caritas also has an ERF Budget. The ERF budget allows them to pay for medicine, a rent allowance and school material for children in individual cases. In some cases Caritas works as a “mediation agency”, which means that Caritas helps the refugee to register with reintegration programmes run by other NGOs.

• Heimatgarten\textsuperscript{16}: Heimatgarten mainly offers information, accommodation, etc. in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Many of Heimatgarten’s projects were co-funded by ERF, which has also become a major financial source for other return offices and projects.

• Solwodi\textsuperscript{17}: Solwodi offers return and reintegration assistance to migrant women who want to return to their country of origin.

• Raphael’s work\textsuperscript{18}: In addition to individual pre-departure counselling, Raphael’s Work offers assistance with travel and start-up assistance programmes funded by the federal and German state governments and cash or in kind assistance on an individual case-by-case basis which may be funded by the ERF, governments, church funds, etc. Raphael’s Work does not implement immediate on-site reintegration assistance after return.

• Arbeiterwohlfahrt\textsuperscript{19}: (AWO) in Nürnberg. AWO is responsible for counselling and assistance to voluntary and forced returnees at the URA (Bridge) centre. The overall project is coordinated by BAMF and funded under the EU Return Preparatory Actions. Other financial or material support is not provided and this obviously limits the options for assistance.

• Zentrale Rückkehrberatung Südbayern\textsuperscript{20}: with their ‘Coming Home’ project, ZRS helps returnees to plan their future at home, gives advice about job training and arranges financial support for starting a small business. ZRS also helps returnees to obtain the necessary travel papers, makes travel arrangements, provides financial support for shipping luggage, helps with the authorities and offers individual assistance. This project is funded by the ERF and the Bavarian State.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{14} Arbeitsgruppe Entwicklung und Fachkräfte im Bereich der Migration und der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit: See www.agef.net/AGEF_BERLIN. At first, Heimatgarten was aimed at return assistance for Bosnian refugees, and Heimatgarten was the first organisation to establish facilities for vulnerable persons in Bosnia. Heimatgarten offered its services to other refugee counselling and return assistance organisations. Step by step, this small organisation opened counselling and assistance offices in other countries of origin, such as Serbia and Kosovo, and extended its activities from Bremerhaven to other towns in Germany. Through conferences and bilateral talks, Heimatgarten began intensive communication with governmental and municipal stakeholders.

\textsuperscript{15} Caritas: See www.caritas-essen.de/

\textsuperscript{16} In Bremerhaven in the north of Germany, the local Arbeiterwohlfahrt (a social welfare organisation) expanded a project called “Heimatgarten”: see www.heimatgarten.de/

\textsuperscript{17} Solidarity with women in distress: See www.solwodi.de/

\textsuperscript{18} For more information, see: www.raphaels-werk.de/site/de/index.html

\textsuperscript{19} For more information, see www.equal-bridge.de

\textsuperscript{20} For more information, see: www.zrb-suedbayern.de}
### Stakeholders during the return and reintegration process

- The International Organization for Migration on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Interior and the ministries of the Federal States
- The local authorities
- The welfare associations
- Specialist advisory agencies
- Central returnees advice agencies

### Donors in order of importance*

**REAG/GARP:**
- → approximately 3.5 million is paid by the Federal State and the Federal Government (50%-50%)

**Other return and reintegration programme:**
- → Return (=Travel and Start-up assistance: mostly cash money from the Federal States and the German State coming via IOM)
- → Reintegration Assistance: is mostly financed by the EU, ERF, local authorities, governments, donation, church funds...

*No exact numbers could be given as this is considered confidential and is funded by different parties. This is why the list is ranked in order of importance.*

### 3.4 Challenges

Challenges with regard to existing reintegration programmes exist on different levels and reflect the diverse and sometimes chaotic structure of reintegration policy in the country.

1. The fact that different federal states have implemented their own reintegration activities and added funds to the federal programmes has resulted in a reintegration policy which varies greatly depending on the state a potential returnee is living in. Some states offer generous packages for some countries of return – even assistance in building houses etc. – while other states offer little or no extra incentive on top of the general programme. The community of asylum seekers is well aware of this inconsistency and it is therefore an issue when pre-return counselling is offered, as potential returnees living in a less generous federal state may feel they are being treated unfairly.

2. Cooperation between the relevant ministries, especially between the Ministry for the Interior and the Ministry for Development Cooperation, has not been conducive to establishing a comprehensive and well-understood reintegration policy based on a common definition of sustainability and shared expectations with regard to the possible link between reintegration and development. Programmes financed by both ministries do exist, but work in parallel, rather than within a comprehensive context.

3. With a relative decrease in the number of returnees, awareness regarding the possible link between development and migration has also declined. When numbers were still very high, the debate was more engaged and there was more willingness to experiment with new approaches. With diminishing numbers, the execution of “what is” has become more important than establishing innovative ways of dealing with the target group.

4. European cooperation is hindered by the lack of cooperation both at federal and state level in Germany. One might say that Germany reflects the challenge of EU cooperation at a lower level. Fragmentation and a lack of clear political leadership regarding this issue is currently a major challenge for the German system. Nevertheless, initiatives such as the “Integplan” project prove that awareness of this obstacle has increased.

5. The multitude of organizations and service providers dealing with the target group has led to a certain duplication of efforts as well as a lack of internal transparency and insufficient networking between implementing agencies.
4 Vision for the Future

The general lack of clear political leadership in the field also automatically translates into a general lack of a comprehensive vision with regard to the target group. Decisions are mostly made on an “ad hoc” basis, depending on the particular situation of a given target group which is on the mind of the responsible politicians (such as the recent decision to repatriate a considerable number of Kosovans).

European cooperation may be conducive to inspiring stakeholders in Germany to cooperate more with each other. EU directives and initiatives may therefore function as a “baking form”, in which the fragmentation and diversity of German reintegration policies may still be able to form a comprehensive “political cake”, that would facilitate a more streamlined and efficient system. Still, a leading agency with a clearly defined responsibility for organizing and proactively engaging all stakeholders in the field is needed. This can only be established or reinforced with the necessary political will, something which is currently not evident. Organizing a few conferences is not enough: a more direct intervention with sufficient authority in the background is needed to induce this kind of discussion.

Cooperation efforts are likely to succeed if a relatively rich federal state is approached. The approach must be very pragmatic and its added value must be immediately obvious to everyone.

Generally, it cannot be expected that this apparent fragmentation of reintegration policies will be overcome in the foreseeable future. Any EU cooperation has to bear this “special German condition” in mind. As comprehensive information about the various activities is not easily available, even within Germany, EU-cooperation with Germany will need to take a thorough look at the “state of art” before deciding where cooperation is most likely to succeed.
1. The ministry of the Interior and the BundesLander fund the REAG/GARP project (50%-50%)
2. The ministry of the Interior, the BundesLander and the European Return fund, funds the return and reintegration initiatives of several Social Welfare Institutions
3. Ministry funds BAMF for controlling the asylum procedure & language courses
4. BAMF funds ZIRF to provide specific information on the Country of Origin.
5. IOM is the service provider of the Ministry of the Interior and BAMF and executes the REAG/GARP Project.
6. ZIRF provides information on the situation in the country of return to individual (ex) asylum seekers.
7. Mainly (international) counselling, clothing, medical & psychological support, education, ...
8. Towns provide social benefits up to 75% of that received by German nationals
9. BAMF indicates when the procedure opens, checks individuals’ procedures, provides German language courses and orders deportation
10. Involuntary returnees are deported and lose the right to return to Germany
NETHERLANDS

1 Introduction

This document states the general findings of both desk research and interviews conducted in the Netherlands as part of the action research on “European corporation on sustainable return and integration”. The following persons were interviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Level</th>
<th>Policy Level</th>
<th>Service Providers</th>
<th>Academic field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven Wijnands</td>
<td>Paul Gosselink</td>
<td>Pieter Maas</td>
<td>Joep van Zijl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign affairs</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
<td>Cordaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Han Baartmans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vluchtelingwerk Nederland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this study and are therefore included in the annex to the final report. Please see the final report for comparisons and recommendations.

2 General Overview

The Netherlands is experiencing increased migration flows and an effective return policy is considered an important aim within the context of developing a comprehensive migration policy. This often starts with Voluntary Return programmes. For years, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been implementing a programme of assisted voluntary return targeting asylum seekers (REAN) on the basis of an agreement with the Dutch Ministry of Justice (see section 2.3.2. for more information). In addition to the usual voluntary return programmes, a reintegration contribution was introduced for a specific group of (former) asylum seekers (see below).

The Dutch government’s increased priority on return also led to the setting up of an organization separate from the Immigration and Naturalisation Office, namely the Repatriation and Departure Service (R&DS), which became operational in 2007. This organization specifically deals with the return of migrants to better ensure the effective implementation of Dutch return policy (for more information see section 2.3).

In the Netherlands, it is considered that return assistance programmes must start in an early phase, preferably upon arrival before settlement leads to further integration. The Dutch government wishes to widen the field of voluntary return and offer the target groups incentives other than money to stimulate return and improve their chances of reintegration.

With regard to the legal framework, Dutch legislation generally regulates forced return, specifying responsibilities and procedures regarding illegal migration, border control measures, removal orders, detention, expulsion, police custody and reentry bans. Procedures related to voluntary return are either sufficiently, or to some extent, regulated by legislation.

In 2008, the Netherlands assisted 1767 returnees. This number had increased compared to 2007 (n=1559). Of the 1767 returnees, 247 were from Brazil, 194 were from Iraq, 128 were from Ukraine, 113 were from Indonesia and 85 were from Angola. So, these are the top 5 countries of origin of returnees.
Table 1: Voluntary Returns: January – December 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Asylum requests: January – December 2008

In 2008, 13,559 persons applied for asylum in the Netherlands. As shown in the table below, the top five countries of origin were Iraq, Somalia, China, Afghanistan and Iran.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>5,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>3,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special programmes for asylum seekers who wish to voluntarily return were/are also offered by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, the Repatriation and Departure Service and NGOs such as Cordaid, Vluchtelingenwerk and Samah.

Currently approximately eight of the most relevant government supported service providers are in the process of setting up the Platform for Sustainable Return. The aim of this platform is to establish a national system of chain management that could assist migrants who are interested in voluntary return. The process is still in its initial phase and does not yet implement programmes.

3 Procedures and structures of programmes

3.1 Arriving in the Netherlands

The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) is a department of the Ministry of Justice and acts on behalf of the Secretary of State of Justice. The INS is responsible for implementing immigration policy in the Netherlands. INS assesses all applications submitted by foreign nationals who wish to stay in the Netherlands or who wish to become Dutch nationals (including refugees and asylum seekers).

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) is responsible for the reception and housing of asylum seekers. COA provides accommodation during the asylum procedure and prepares asylum seekers for remaining in the Netherlands, returning to their country of origin or resettlement in a third country. At present, COA manages reception centres throughout the Netherlands divided into 12 clusters. COA has two kinds of reception centres: an Asylum Seekers’ Centre (AZC) focused on orientation & integration, and an AZC focused on repatriation. The stage of the asylum procedure determines the kind of reception centre the asylum seekers are accommodated in. COA also has Departure Centres (for people under the Old Aliens Act) and Shelters (for people under the Aliens Act 2000). COA occasionally cooperates with Dutch municipal councils when asylum seekers receive a positive decision. This enables asylum seekers to live in the community, as opposed to a COA location.

Upon their first arrival, asylum seekers receive an amount of money for purchasing cooking utensils.
and clothing. After this, COA provides them with a weekly allowance (around €54 per adult) which enables them to buy food, clothing and other items. Parents receive an allowance for school materials for each child at school. Books are provided by the school. People with a private source of income must pay something towards their stay in the centre. Regarding insurances, asylum seekers have medical insurance and social security similar to that of Dutch citizens.

### 3.2 Pre-departure Counselling

Pre-departure counselling is offered by several organizations and institutions, such as COA, The Dutch Council for Refugees and IOM. Interested persons can receive specific information regarding return issues and resettlement.

For example, counselling in the four major cities (RIIM) is organized by IOM. In the four major cities that constitute the Randstad conurbation, IOM cooperates with social organizations and municipal councils in order to reach and inform migrants without residence permits. Many of them live in difficult circumstances, with no fixed abode and often no money.

### 3.3 Forced Return

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Justice finances and is responsible for all government funded return initiatives carried out in the country. The Ministry of Justice usually organizes voluntary returns by enlisting IOM as a service provider. A special agency for forced returns has been created on behalf of the ministry of Justice.

A separate return organization, the Repatriation and Departure Service (Dienst Terugkeer & Vertrek)\(^5\) is in charge of forced return activities. Repatriation, previously the responsibility of the INS and Aliens police, is now combined within this new service. Its mission is to ensure the actual departure of aliens who have no right of residence. R&DS focuses on two target groups: illegal aliens and rejected asylum seekers.

The Repatriation and Departure Service tries to stimulate voluntary departure. However, if a returnee refuses to leave voluntarily, the R&DS will implement their forced departure.

### 3.4 Voluntary Return

#### 3.4.1 IOM\(^6\)

In order to assist foreign nationals with their departure from the Netherlands, the IOM offers the aforementioned REAN programme: Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands. This programme is financed by the Ministry of Justice.

Returnees are eligible for the REAN programme if they meet the following criteria:

- Unable to pay for the journey.
- In possession of a valid travel document (passport or laissez passer) or can obtain one (through an intermediary, if necessary).
- Agree to allow the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) to cancel their application for a residence permit, or to withdraw their residence permit.
- Have not left the Netherlands under the REAN scheme in the last five years.
- Have not been removed from the Netherlands at the expense of the Dutch government in the last five years.
- Not a national of one of the countries that are excluded from participation in the REAN scheme (the European Union and a number of other Western countries).

IOM provides assistance in the form of a one-way ticket to an airport that is as close as possible to the returnee’s final destination. Assistance is also provided at Schiphol airport and, if necessary,
at the airport to which the person is travelling. Besides this, they also receive financial support, consisting of €500 for an adult or single minor asylum seeker (AMV) and €100 for every minor accompanying an adult;

Alongside the REAN facilities, IOM is also responsible for paying out the reintegration amounts that the Dutch government has made available for returnees through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Return and Reintegration Regulation (Herintegratieregeling-HRT) offers an additional reintegration contribution to aliens who applied for asylum in the Netherlands before 15 June 2006. The objective is to facilitate the independent departure from the Netherlands of the target group and to promote re-integration in the country of origin or in a third country. The amounts are €1,750 per adult or unaccompanied minor and €875 for each minor.

This reintegration sum is meant to cover the initial period after resettlement in the country of origin. Not everyone is entitled to the same amount; each client's specific conditions are checked by the Ministry of Justice. Eligibility for this contribution and the amount to be received depends on the migrant's family situation and residency status in the Netherlands.

Migrants are eligible for the Return and Reintegration Regulation if they:

- Submitted their first application for asylum in the Netherlands before 1 January 2008;
- have spent an uninterrupted period of time in some form of shelter;
- have not been declared an undesirable alien or constitute a risk to public order or national security and have not been denied asylum under article 1F of the Refugee Convention;
- are not a citizen of an European Union country or any other western country and meet the other REAN requirements;
- applied for asylum before the departure term expired (for aliens who applied for asylum under the VW2000) or applied for departure during the intake meeting at the departure centre at the latest (start Phase 2 for aliens who applied for asylum under the old asylum legislation).

In July 2008, IOM also began implementing the UAM project (Unaccompanied Minors). The project, conducted in collaboration with Samah (see below), aims to work with young migrants who have no chance of obtaining legal residence in the Netherlands, by assisting them with a sustainable and voluntary return to their country of origin. Additional assistance can be offered to “vulnerable” returnees, such as victims of counter-trafficking and medical cases.

3.4.2 Cordaid

The assistance offered by the Mediation Agency for Return is tailor-made and this agency works with individual mediation requests. Cordaid can offer the following re-integration assistance:

- Pre-departure: specific information regarding the country of origin (e.g. housing, education, employment, health care etc.) or practical assistance through one of our partner organizations (such as finding housing, arranging medical care etc.).
- After return: practical assistance through our partner organization in the country of origin. This may include: assistance in finding housing, registration (e.g. employment, medical care, old age pensions, unemployment benefits, education for children etc.), advice and help with finding employment.
- Assistance in setting up a small-scale business after return: e.g. finding micro credit or help with registration etc.
- Referral to other organizations: e.g. for psycho-social assistance or health care.
- All other relevant questions or needs.

Cordaid's clients rarely receive financial assistance since many returnees receive money from the Dutch government to cover most of their resettling expenses. For those who are not entitled to this money, the Mediation Agency for Return has a budget to cover essential needs during the initial
post-return period. This is tailor-made and therefore varies per client.

The Mediation Agency for Return receives funds from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cordaid and the Dutch Council for Refugees.

3.4.3 SAMAH
Samah offers return and reintegration assistance to young asylum seekers for their possible return to their country of origin. SAMAH runs joint projects with Cordaid and IOM.

**Table 3: Overview of the policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Stages</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) → Financed by the Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Central Agency for Reception of Asylum seekers (COA). → Financed by the Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure counselling</td>
<td>The Dutch Council for Refugees, IOM, COA, Samah → Financed by the Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced return</td>
<td>The Repatriation and Departure Service (Dienst Terugkeer &amp; Vertrek) → Financed by the Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Return (+ Travel arrangement)</td>
<td>IOM → Financed by the Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration assistance</td>
<td>IOM → Financed by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign affairs COA → Financed by the Ministry of Justice Cordaid - Mediation Agency for Return → Financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Samah → Financed by the Ministry of Justice The Dutch Council for Refugees → Financed by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Challenges

Return policy in the Netherlands is divided between two ministries: the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Justice could be described as the key “problem owner” of undocumented ex-asylum seekers. After the government pardoned 26,000 former asylum seekers in 2007, increasing pressure has been put on the Secretary of Justice to ‘solve the problem’ of former asylum seekers and other undocumented, unpardoned migrants who are still living in the Netherlands. Consequently, the return - either forced of voluntary - of former asylum seekers is a political hot potato for the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs actively promotes voluntary return within the context of Migration and Development. It finances initiatives that might stimulate the voluntary return of former asylum seekers to a limited number of countries. This means that illegal migrants who have never applied for asylum are excluded from extra return assistance offered by Foreign Affairs.

It is not clear to what extent the shared starting point and policy framework of the two ministries complicates or obstructs the establishment of an integrated return policy. There are no indications that the two ministries have a completely different vision regarding the voluntary return of former asylum seekers. So far, the results of the return policy have been evaluated negatively. The consensus in Dutch
politics is that too few rejected asylum seekers return (voluntarily) to their home country. It seems that many rejected asylum seekers choose illegality above return. The government tries to adopt a dual track policy, whereby the threat of forced return should promote voluntary return.

Potentially, the main obstruction to the national return policy is the fact that local governments, NGOs and religious organizations continue to support undocumented migrants. Shelters exist all over the country. National government invests a great deal of energy in convincing local governments, NGOs and religious organizations to support the national return policy. Another possible bottleneck could be that too many parties have provided return assistance in the past. Migrants wishing to return had so many organizations to choose from, that this might possibly have led to the post-ponement or cancellation of their actual return.

4 Vision for the future

In general, the Dutch government attaches importance to an effective return policy. For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is imperative that return is sustainable, as this is the only way in which return migration can have a developmental impact. From the Ministry of Justice's point of view, sustainability is seen as a pragmatic way of safe-guarding that people do not return.

Not all relevant actors in the Netherlands acknowledge the need to harmonize return and reintegration activities within a European context. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs seems to promote more cooperation and harmonization at EU level. It focuses more on the ‘soft’ side of cooperation, such as promoting shared return services in countries of origin or seeking relations with development. The Ministry of Justice is more reluctant in this respect. When it thinks about cooperation in an EU context, it rather refers to policies that could foster forced return, such as improving registration systems, organising combined charter flights for forced deportees, or joining pragmatic coalitions to support return to specific countries of origin. The Ministry of Justice experiences the greatest pressure from political reality and this influences progress. It prefers to allow different initiatives to coexist alongside each other, hoping that maybe one of the executing providers will succeed. With the establishment of the platform, the service providers are slowly but steadily moving towards cooperating at a national level. This process has only recently started and is in its initial stage. There is not as yet any cooperation with service providers in other European countries.

In general, the interviewees in the Netherlands expressed the following countries of origin as interesting countries and/or regions in which to set up cooperation: DR Congo, Iraq, Georgia and Afghanistan. If cooperation activities are on the horizon, the aforementioned countries of origin would be most interesting to the Dutch government.
1. The Ministry of Justice finances the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers.
2. The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Return Fund finance reintegration activities implemented by Cordaid, IOM, Samah and the Dutch Council for Refugees.
3. The Ministry of Justice finances the REAN Programme.
4. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs finance the Return and Reintegration Regulation, which is implemented by IOM.
5. IOM offers return and reintegration assistance through the REAN Programme + the Return and Reintegration Regulation.
6. Cordaid offers reintegration assistance.
7. The Dutch Council of refugees offers predeparture counselling.
8. Samah offers return and reintegration assistance to youngsters.
10. Involuntary Returnees are deported and lose the right to return to the Netherlands.
11. COA is responsible for the reception and housing of asylum seekers and also offers reintegration assistance.
UNITED KINGDOM

1 Introduction

This document states the general findings of both the desk research and the interviews conducted in the UK as part of the action research on “European cooperation on sustainable return and integration”. The following people were interviewed:

| Political Level | Kerstin Thompson | UK Border Agency: AVR policy and returns |
| Policy Level    | Eileen Gough     |                                         |
| Service Providers | Lyndon Jeffels | IOM                                      |
|                 | Gary Bell        | Refugee Council Voluntary Return Projects |
|                 | Jonathan Parr    |                                          |
|                 | Ryan Nelson      | Refugee Action                           |
| Academic field  | Michael Collier  | Sussex University                        |

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this research and are therefore part of the appendix of the final report. For comparison and recommendations, please see the final report.

2 General overview

In the UK, legislation generally regulates forced return, but with regard to assisted voluntary return the proceedings are also regulated by legal acts. The legal basis for Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) is section 58 and 59 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002).

Assisted voluntary return is by far the preferred option, both for the UK and for the returnee. It is considered to be not only a more dignified way for the migrant to return, but also less expensive and expected to be more sustainable than forced return as the following example illustrates. The National Audit Office (NAO) has found that assisted voluntary returns cost less than enforced removals. A NAO report in 2005 estimated that AVRs were approximately 10-15% of the cost of forced return. ¹ In 2009 they found that return under the programme cost less than enforced removals by between £100 and £3,400 for a single adult and between £1,400 and £14,600 for a family, despite taking longer and perhaps incurring higher support costs (NAO 2009 p.26). ² In the UK, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) operates the two main AVR programmes on behalf of the UK Border Agency.

As part of the Government’s strategy to manage migration to the UK, the FCO launched the Returns and Reintegration Fund ³. The fund will be used to significantly increase the number of foreign national prisoners and failed asylum seekers who return to their countries of origin and to ensure that those who return voluntarily are effectively reintegrated.

This is a cross-government fund (FCO, UK Border Agency, DFID (the development agency of the Foreign Office), Ministry of Justice) that builds upon the former Home Office and FCO Migration Funds. The objectives of the migration funds have been refined to focus on programmes and projects which will facilitate a greater number of returns of individuals to their countries of origin in a sustainable manner.

Discussion of migration issues is an important part of the UK Government’s relationship with other countries and one of the top priorities for the Foreign Office. The FCO wants to work with other governments to increase the numbers of foreign national prisoners and failed asylum seekers who return to their own countries and remain there. The fund will enable the FCO to support countries which face the biggest challenges in accepting back their nationals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Statistics on Assisted Voluntary Returns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVRIM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: figures are rounded to nearest five, therefore totals may not add up.
Information with regard to the budget is difficult to gather due to confidentiality issues.

3 Procedures and structures of programmes

3.1 Arriving in the UK

The UK Border Agency (UKBA), part of the Home Office (HO), is responsible for immigration and asylum law and policy. Applicants must claim asylum in person, either at the port of entry to the UK or, if they do not do this on entry, they must go to the Asylum Screening Unit in South London. Procedures have been introduced to speed up the asylum process. Since March 2007, every new asylum application is allocated to a single person who will deal with every aspect of it from beginning to end. These are called case owners. By the end of 2011, the Agency aims to conclude 90% of new asylum claims within six months of application.

The UKBA will support an asylum seeker, but they must be able to show they made their asylum claim “as soon as reasonably practicable” after arriving in the UK. If they cannot do so then they will get no support at all. Asylum support is made up of financial support and (if needed) accommodation, but the applicant has to agree to be “dispersed” by the UKBA to cities and towns across the UK. Some people stay with family/friends and only need financial support.

The level of asylum support depends on age and the number in the family. The rates of support (as of December 2009) are:

- qualifying couple (married or in a civil partnership): £69.57
- lone parent aged 18 or over: £42.16
- single person aged 18 or over, excluding lone parent: £35.13
- person aged at least 16, but under 18 (except a member of a qualifying couple): £38.18
- person aged under 16: £50.81.

Various refugee agencies assist asylum seekers during the asylum process, such as Refugee Action, the Refugee Council, Migrant Helpline, the North of England Refugee Service, the Scottish Refugee Council, the Northern Refugee Service, and the Welsh Refugee Council.

In the UK, all children from the ages of 5 to 16 must be in education. Asylum seeker children are placed in mainstream schools alongside other pupils and extra language teaching is provided. Some asylum seekers can take free English and basic computer classes.

Asylum applicants are not permitted to undertake paid work. They can apply for permission to work if they have waited for more than 12 months for an initial decision on their claim and the delay is not their fault.
3.2 Pre-departure counselling

Several organizations and NGOs offer support and pre-departure counselling. There can be many factors bearing on a refugee or asylum seeker's decision as to whether to return permanently to their country of origin. Some may require information about conditions in the country of origin, or about services in the UK or the help available from the assisted return programmes. The following organizations provide advice, information and informal counselling to refugees and asylum seekers who are considering return to their country of origin: Choices (Refugee Action) 7, the North of England Refugee Service 8, Safe Haven Yorkshire 9, the Refugee Migrant Centre 10, the Refugee Council and the Refugee and Migrant Centre.

3.3 Return

The procedure of forced return is first implemented by the authorities in cooperation with border police and private contractors acting on behalf of the Secretary of State. The other options are voluntary departures or AVR.

3.3.1 Forced return
UKBA regulates forced return, specifying the responsibilities and proceedings on illegal immigration, border control measures, removal orders, detention and expulsion, police custody and reentry bans. UKBA is sometimes limited in its abilities to remove and deport foreign nationals by the need to consider the individual's rights under the Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights. This can prevent the removal of individuals to certain countries or geographical areas or of certain groups to particular areas.

3.3.2 Voluntary return
Some asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and irregular migrants voluntarily choose to return to their country of origin, or a country that will accept them, and do so independently. These individuals might, or might not, inform UKBA that they are leaving. The number of such returns is therefore uncertain, however from 2005 onwards, "other voluntary departures" given in the statistics include persons of whom it has been established that they left the UK without informing the immigration authorities.

If a person wishes to return to their country of origin and wants help to do so, they can apply for AVR via IOM (sometimes through other agencies as listed above). The AVR team of the UK Border Agency must approve all applications. IOM will then make all the necessary arrangements.

IOM UK runs two voluntary return programmes: one is for anyone who has been in the asylum system at any stage - applying, appealing, refused: the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) and another for irregular migrants, who have overstayed their visas or have been smuggled or trafficked into the country, Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants (AVRIM). Under both programmes IOM arranges flights and onward transportation to the home doorstep, but under the scheme for asylum seekers IOM also delivers reintegration assistance in the country of return. Apart from a relocation grant, given to each individual returnee at the airport of departure, this assistance is not delivered in cash but is provided in kind according to an Individual Return Plan (IRP) tailored to meet the needs of each returnee. Targeted payments in kind can be made towards a range of things including: payment of fees for vocational training courses at colleges or for higher education or for children's schooling, a three month salary supplement for a job placement, short term accommodation, an extra baggage allowance, or to help buy equipment and supplies to set up a small business. The aim of this assistance is to contribute to a more sustainable return.

A. VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) 11
This programme is co-funded by the UK Home Office 12 and the European Return Fund and is open to most asylum seekers in the system regardless of their country of origin. It is the largest AVR programme in the EU and some 25 to 30% of the returnees make use of the services of the programmes.

---

7 www.refugee-action.org.uk
8 www.refugee.org.uk
9 www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk
10 www.rmcentre.org.uk
11 The information was gathered on the website of IOM : www.iomlondon.org/
12 www.homeoffice.gov.uk
Since 2002 the programme has placed more emphasis on the reintegration component.

Applications for return under VARRP will be accepted by the IOM from anyone* who is, or is the dependant of, a person who:
- has an asylum application pending
- has been refused asylum and is appealing against that decision
- has been refused asylum and has exhausted the appeals process
- has not withdrawn their asylum application
- falls within any of the above categories and is detained by the immigration service solely in relation to immigration offences, except where the applicant has been assessed by detention services as violent and/or may pose a threat to IOM staff
- has been refused asylum but granted discretionary leave to remain in the UK outside the immigration rules

*except where:
- the applicant is involved in ongoing matters pertaining to the criminal justice system
- a deportation order (DO) has been made against the person
- arrangements for the person's return are already in place
- prior to IOM receiving an application, the applicant has received custodial sentences, in the United Kingdom, totalling in excess of 12 months
- the applicant is a dependent who is not involved in the asylum application.

VARRP is not open to those who:
- are British citizens or nationals of Switzerland or a European Economic Area (EEA) state
- have been granted humanitarian protection, indefinite leave to remain and/or refugee status
- have never sought asylum in the United Kingdom
- have permission to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for non-asylum reasons, e.g. students, spouses, visitors etc.
- are immigration detainees and have had removal directions set at any time
- are convicted prisoners subject to deportation orders
- have been convicted of a serious immigration offence
- whose purpose in leaving is to nullify their adverse immigration status in order to re-enter the United Kingdom.

In general, VARRP offers advice, counselling and information about return; assistance in obtaining travel documents and payment of costs incurred; flight home; a meet and greet service at airport on return (for most countries) and help with onward travel to final destination.

Besides this, another component of the VARRP is the reintegration assistance. Each returning family member is eligible to receive a relocation cash grant of £500, paid on departure at the UK airport, and inkind reintegration assistance. This might be an extra baggage allowance, up to three months temporary accommodation following return and payment of childcare fees for infants. Furthermore, IOM talks to the returnee about drawing up an Individual (or family) Return Plan which might include help with:

- establishing a business
- education
- job placement
- vocational training.

Whichever option is chosen, the assistance is not paid in cash to the returnee but in kind or to the service provider.

Assistance with small business set-up is the most frequently used option and can include:

- a training programme of up to 4 weeks on setting up a business
- a subsistence allowance during the training programme
- financial support for the purchase of identified equipment or business supplies of up to £1,500
• additional financial support for the business, paid in kind, if required following a review at 6 months.

B. AVRIM (Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants) 

This programme helps people who have never claimed asylum but have, for example, overstayed their visas. There is no reintegration assistance available, however, IOM will arrange travel documents and flights and pay for these. Applications for return under the AVRIM programme will be accepted from anyone* who is, or is the dependant of, a person who:

• has been accepted by the UK Border Agency as a victim of trafficking
• has entered the United Kingdom illegally, having been smuggled from abroad
• has otherwise entered the United Kingdom illegally
• has been granted conditional leave to enter or to remain, but has breached one or more conditions of that leave
• falls within the above categories, is detained by the UK Border Agency and is detained solely in relation to immigration offences, except where the applicant has been assessed by Detention Services as violent and/or may pose a threat to IOM staff.

*except where:
• the applicant is involved in ongoing matters pertaining to the criminal justice system
• a deportation order has been made against the person
• arrangements for the person’s return are already in place
• prior to IOM receiving an application the applicant has received custodial sentences, in the United Kingdom, totalling in excess of 12 months.

The programme is not open to those who:
• are British citizens or a national of Switzerland or a European Economic Area (EEA) state
• have been granted humanitarian protection, indefinite leave to remain and / or refugee status
• have sought asylum or humanitarian protection in the United Kingdom and have not withdrawn the application or left the United Kingdom since that application
• have permission to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for non asylum/humanitarian reasons e.g. students, spouses, visitors etc.
• are immigration detainees and have had removal directions set at any time
• are convicted prisoners subject to deportation orders
• have been convicted of a serious immigration offence
• whose purpose in leaving is to nullify their adverse immigration status in order to re-enter the United Kingdom.

In contrast with the VARRP Programme, the AVRIM programme does not usually offer reintegration assistance, but exceptions can be made for particularly vulnerable groups on a case by case basis, such as unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, etc.

C. Programmes for Zimbabwe:

ZIM-VARRP is a 6-month project that started on 1 February 2009 and which provided additional humanitarian assistance to people who wished to return to Zimbabwe under VARRP. The reintegration assistance was enhanced to include an increase in the pre-departure relocation grant, an increase in the in kind business assistance, and provide a cholera prevention assistance package. This was extended to 31 December 2009.

D. Facilitated Return Scheme (FRS)

The UK also has a voluntary return programme for Foreign National Prisoners (FNPs). FRS is a voluntary scheme designed to help foreign national prisoners resettle on their return home. All non-European Economic Area (EEA) foreign national prisoners who have been convicted of a crime and have served a custodial sentence in the UK can apply.

FNPs returning under the programme can receive their plane ticket home and a grant worth:

23 The information was gathered on the website of IOM: www.iomlondon.org/
24 www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/howwehelp/directly/voluntary_returns/zimbabwe.htm
• up to £5,000 if they are still serving their prison sentence when they apply
• up to £3,000 if they have served their sentence when they apply.

This includes £500 cash as part of their total reintegration assistance.

The grant can be used to:
• help set up a business, or buy into an existing business
• help with educational or vocational studies
• help secure housing in their home country up to the total amount of their reintegration grant
• help with childcare or medical expenses
• help them relocate within their home country.

As with VARRP, the grant is administered by IOM in the country of return and is provided in kind.

**Table 2: Overview of the stakeholders in the return and reintegration policy in the UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Stages</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>UK Border Agency (part of Home Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Counselling</td>
<td>Refugee Action - Choices, Safe Haven Yorkshire, North of England Refugee Service, Refugee and Migrant Centre, Refugee Council and IOM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced return</td>
<td>Enforcement Units of the UK Border Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Return (+ Travel arrangement)</td>
<td>IOM (though the UKBA must approve all applications).  → This is financed by UK Home Office and the European Return Fund*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration assistance</td>
<td>→ This is financed by UK Home Office and the European Return Fund*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exact data concerning the budget could not be given as this is regarded as confidential.*

### 3.4 Challenges

Both the home office and IOM feel the programmes they offer are very successful. IOM carried out a monitoring and evaluation exercise to see how people who returned during the period 2002-2005 were doing. The exercise was designed to assess the impact of reintegration assistance in particular and, more generally, identify ways in which the UK's VARRP could be improved. The exercise was conducted by staff from 27 IOM missions worldwide and from IOM UK. More than 1,000 returnees were interviewed. It is interesting that IOM found that 81% of those interviewed chose to start a small business and that 77% of these small businesses were still operational. 7% opted for job placement and 4% chose to continue their education.

IOM states that 92% of the returnees found the reintegration assistance “very helpful”. Indeed, all interviewees state that the UK programme is “state of the art” and the best available within the EU.

This is in stark contrast to the independent research done by Sussex University that interviewed 56 returnees in Sri Lanka one year after their return. 80% of the small business projects had failed (although their failure was not caused by any deficiency of the programme they participated in) and all of the returned migrants stated they would never make the same decision again if they had known...
what they knew at the time of interview before return. Sussex University states that “voluntary return is very questionable” and that there is no evidence of success.

It seems that AVR programmes lack independent monitoring & evaluation to show which elements are successful and which are not.

The available evaluations lack transparency.

There is no clear definition of sustainable return, there are no sustainability indicators.

4 Vision of the future

Although policies might not yet reflect this move, the UK is moving towards sustainability: sustainability, not only in terms of staying away from the UK, but also in terms of embedment in the country of origin. It means little support in cash and the majority of support in kind. Nevertheless, some interviewees claim that the current discussion is dividing development and return into two different areas. While sustainability of return is very important, the claim is that it does not necessarily contribute to the development of the country of return, but is visible only and foremost at the micro-level of the individual returnee. Mixing up development and return is therefore not necessarily feasible.

The current programmes are reasonably well embedded in UK society through the many NGOs that fulfil roles such as counselling and other type of support while in the UK.

There are already programmes open to irregular migrants, with the restriction that only vulnerable groups and special cases are allowed to make use of the reintegration assistance.

Although the government and IOM feel that their programmes are very successful they are open to the suggestion of collaboration with other EU member states. A pilot with a specific country of origin could be useful but IOM (Geneva) should be involved. Still, the general feeling is that while other countries might be able to learn from the UK experience, the UK has nothing or less to learn from the activities of other EU countries, therefore any exchange will be somewhat one-way.

The VARRP programme is either scenario 3 or 4: support before departure, counselling, making plans and an individual return plan, cash, reintegration assistance consisting of education, job placement or setting up a small business. It is felt that only the full combination can work.
1. The Home Office finance return initiatives in the UK, such as the AVR programmes, through the UK Border Agency and The European Return Fund.
2. IOM operates the VARRP and AVRIM programmes on behalf of the UK Border Agency and administers the reintegration component within the VARRP programme.
3. The UK Border Agency considers approval of all the VARRP and AVRIM applications.
4. IOM offers travel and reintegration assistance (where applicable) to successful AVR applicants.
5. Several organisations and institutions offer pre-departure counselling.
6. The Home Office finances the UK Border Agency.
7. The UK Border Agency checks the asylum procedure and orders deportation when necessary.
8. Those who do not return voluntarily can be forcibly removed by the enforcement teams of the UK Border Agency.
1 Introduction

This document states the general findings of both the desk research and the interviews conducted in Sweden as part of the action research on “European cooperation on sustainable return and integration”. The following people were interviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Level</th>
<th>Karin Laan</th>
<th>Secretary of Parliamentary committee on Social Insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Level</td>
<td>Monika Wendleby</td>
<td>Director Reception, Migration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kristina Rannar</td>
<td>Head of Unit, Reintegration services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johan Malkan</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice, head of the migration unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Providers</td>
<td>Hugo Rickberg</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helena Sprengler</td>
<td>Goteborg Initiativet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic field</td>
<td>Christian Rabergh</td>
<td>ESF Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of this report will contribute to the final report of this research and are therefore part of the appendix of the final report. For comparison and recommendations, please see the final report.

2 General overview

The Swedish Migration Board (SMB) of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Justice is responsible for the implementation of all return policies, including assisted Voluntary Return 1.

Since 1992, a system in Sweden has been in place that makes a clear distinction between those asylum seekers in procedure and those who are no longer in procedure. Sweden is generous to all those who are in procedure but when a person is given a negative decision to his application, a clear path towards return is indicated for them. In the Swedish system the government is responsible for the person up to the moment the ex-asylum seeker steps out of the plane after return.

The government Bill 1996/97:25 is the legal instrument which emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and well-planned voluntary return programme. This Bill has also highlighted the importance of NGOs in implementing such programmes. In this respect, the Migration Board works in collaboration with a range of governmental, NGOs and national bodies such as SIDA, Caritas Sweden2, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, the Advisory Office for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, the Swedish Red Cross3 and IOM. Voluntary return programmes are mainly implemented by the SMB, and in some cases in cooperation with the IOM. Most programmes concentrate on particular countries of origin such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Somalia.

Sweden is part of the trend towards increasing the number of returnees by means of voluntary return actions. Over the years, increasing numbers of smaller return projects have emerged, such as the country-specific return programmes for Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Kosovo or the RANA programme, which provided reception and reintegration assistance to Afghan nationals who returned to Afghanistan from one of the European Union (EU) Member States (of which Sweden was one). The programme ended on 30 April 2007.

So, compared to the return and reintegration policy in several other countries, Sweden does not have one big return and reintegration programme, helping all voluntary returnees to return to their country of origin. In Sweden, the tasks are centralized within the SMB, which is responsible for the whole return process, except in cases of forced return.

---

1 The information was found on the following website: www.migrationsverket.se/english.html
2 www.caritas.se/
3 www.redcross.se/
Sweden is of the opinion that the nature of assistance and service given to asylum seekers whilst in the
country is so generous that once returned there is no further commitment of the part of the government.

It is only since August 2007 that a new regulation has been set up to facilitate cash support. Basic principles
entitling someone to apply for cash support are:

1. the asylum seeker originates from Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza or Kosovo
2. application for funding is made within 2 months of the legal decision
3. return is voluntary and does not include detention or guided travel.

Recently the first of these regulations was changed and a set of 21 countries was added to the list.

Voluntary return projects where support in kind is also provided are mainly carried out by The Red Cross, The
UNHCR and The Goteborg Initiativet. The Swedish Migration board has set up a pilot with service providers
who are forced to specialize in countries of origin. The Swedish Red Cross provides return services in Kosovo,
Serbia, Iran and Iraq. The Goteborg Initiative specializes in pre-departure counselling and first aid assistance
and training in local schools in Somalia. UNHCR is in charge of providing a full package of return services in
Afghanistan. All three service providers face major problems in setting up return programmes.

In the last three years AGEF Berlin has implemented a project providing jobs in Iraq: this has not been very
successful.

Currently the Migration Board is in negotiations with IOM Iraq, AGEF and one other party to set up a system
of return counselling in Iraq.

The cash support system seems so far only to have had an effect with regard to the increase in numbers of
Iraqi returnees. Most interviewees stressed that a more important effect in the case of Iraq is that it is the only
return country where forced return is actually applied effectively.

3 Procedures and structures of programmes

3.1 Arriving in Sweden

Asylum applicants residing in Sweden normally receive support from the Swedish Migration Board.
Currently, the SMB offers asylum seekers temporary accommodation and organizes activities whilst
the investigation is in progress.

An asylum seeker who does not have money of their own can apply for a daily allowance from the
Migration Board. The allowance is:

- SEK 71 per day for adults
- SEK 61 per person per day for persons living together
- SEK 37–50 per day for children aged 0–17 years (this allowance is halved from the third child onwards)

The money should, among other things, be sufficient to pay for food, clothes, shoes, toiletries, daily
newspapers and telephone calls. Initially, many asylum seekers live at Migration Board centres where
they also have meals provided. In this case the daily allowance is:

- SEK 24 per day for adults
- SEK 19 per person per day for persons living together
- SEK 12 per day for children aged 0–17 years (from the third child onwards the allowance is halved).

If it is estimated that it will take more than four months to deal with an asylum case. The asylum
seeker may be exempted from the requirement to hold a work permit and is therefore allowed to work.
Exemption can only be granted if the asylum seeker can prove his or her identity.

In Sweden a forced return –including detention and guided travel- can still be taken up in the statistics as a voluntary return
3.2 Pre-departure counselling
Pre-departure counselling is offered by the SMB who may refer people for further counselling through organizations such as Caritas, the Swedish Red Cross, UNHCR and the “Gothenburg initiative”. IOM in Helsinki can offer counselling by telephone for migrants from some countries. There is, for example, a helpline for returnees from Afghanistan.

3.3 Return
With regard to the legal framework, national legislation generally regulates forced return, specifying the responsibilities and proceedings on illegal immigration, border control measures, removal orders, detention, expulsion, police custody and re-entry bans. With regard to voluntary return, legislative provisions began to evolve in the late 1980s in response to the influx of migrants from conflict-ridden states (See above).

3.3.1 Forcible return
The Swedish Migration Board determines whether or not asylum can be granted to an Asylum seeker. The decision of the SMB can be appealed in the Migration Court and further in the Migration Court of Appeal. The SMB has the main responsibility for the enforcement of return decisions. If the asylum seeker goes into hiding or it is considered that physical enforcement is needed the SMB can hand the matter over to the police. An appeal against a negative decision from the Migration Board must be filed with the Aliens’ Appeal Board Migration Court within three weeks. An appeal does not automatically suspend the order of expulsion.

Asylum seekers who have received a final negative decision are told to come to the SMB for counseling and information regarding their return. They are entitled to financial support and social benefits until their return. This requires, however, that the alien must stay in a residential centre, a detention centre, or at an address known to the government. Unsuccessful asylum applicants are expected to cooperate with officials to facilitate their return, and if such cooperation is not forthcoming, the amount they receive may be gradually reduced until it covers only basic expenses such as food. If the asylum seeker does not leave voluntarily, the SMB hands the matter over to the police who thereafter have the responsibility to ensure their departure, so that they can be forcibly deported.

3.3.2 Voluntary return (called Voluntary repatriation in Sweden) 5
In general, a person who wishes to repatriate contacts the Swedish Migration Board for return assistance. The beneficiaries eligible for return assistance are:

• individuals with a residence permit
• refugees
• persons who have been granted residence for other humanitarian reasons
• persons accepted as part of the refugee quota.

The above persons may apply for the allowance, which will cover travel expenses from Sweden plus a cash amount of 10,000 kronor for each adult and 5,000 kronor for each child under 18. The maximum for one family is 40,000 kronor.

The SMB is currently investigating the possibility of implementing a further reintegration project and is looking at several organizations for that purpose.

3.3.3 Reintegration Assistance
IOM 6:
Currently, the IOM Helsinki is operating country-specific return programmes in Afghanistan. In January 2009, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Helsinki and the Swedish Migration Board ("Migrationsverket"), in cooperation with the IOM office in Kabul, offer an information service through a telephone helpline to prepare Afghans who want to return voluntarily from Sweden to Afghanistan. IOM will counsel the returnee on the reintegration assistance available and other options in Afghanistan. In conjunction, IOM in Afghanistan is running a programme providing reception assistance, counselling and reintegration assistance to voluntary returnees through one of IOM Afghanistan’s network of eight offices in Faizabad,

---

5 The information was found on the following website: www.migrationsverket.se/english.html
6 The information was found on the following website: iom.fi/About/RegionalOffices
Gardez, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar.

There are three main reintegration options:

- start up of a business / self-employment
- vocational or educational training
- employment through job referrals.

Reintegration assistance is offered to Afghan nationals who have applied for asylum in Sweden and are willing to return voluntarily to Afghanistan.

In the past, the IOM also ran a country-specific programme to Somalia and a voluntary return and reintegration programme for elderly Bosnian nationals from Scandinavian countries.

IOM Helsinki is also in charge of a helpline for returnees to Afghanistan, counselling and information regarding reintegration assistance and the situation for returnees in Afghanistan. Everything is financed by the SMB.

Other projects:

- Praxis 7, which is a local NGO in Serbia, runs a project to help returnees with all kinds of documents they might be lacking. The project is for the most part directed at minorities (Ashkali, Roma). It was financed by the SMB for the period of 1 December 2008 – 30 November 2009.
- The activities of the Swedish Red Cross 8 are directed towards returnees from Serbia, Kosovo and northern Iraq. The officers at SMB give information to the returnees about the possibility of contacting the Red Cross for information about their return. This project is financed by the Swedish Government (3 million SEK).
- The Somali Return and Reintegration Project is the work of a local Swedish NGO, the Göteborgs Initiativet 9. This organization offers reintegration through vocational education and employment promotion. This project is financed by the European Return Fund, co-financed by the SMB together with other NGOs, such as Caritas and the Social Mission.
- UNHCR ROBNC 10 offers counselling for returnees to Afghanistan. This project is financed by the SMB.

3.3.4 Reintegration grant

A reintegration grant (cash amount) can be granted to those returning voluntarily to Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan and Gaza. The amount is 30,000kr for adults and 15,000kr for children, with a maximum amount per family of 75,000kr. To further promote voluntary return, the countries where the grant can be claimed have recently been increased by approximately another 20 countries. These include: Burundi, Congo, Eritrea, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

The payment is arranged by IOM in Iraq and Afghanistan and returnees to Somalia get the money at the airport as they are leaving the country.
Table 1: Overview of the policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Stages</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>The Swedish Migration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Justice*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>The Swedish Migration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Justice*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure Counselling</td>
<td>Swedish Migration Board, Caritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Justice*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced return</td>
<td>The Swedish Migration Board + police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Justice*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary return (+ Travel arrangement)</td>
<td>The Swedish Migration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Foreign Justice*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration assistance</td>
<td>The Swedish Migration Board IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Göteborgs Initiativet, UNHCR ROBNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Financed by the Ministry of Justice, SMB and ERF*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exact data concerning the budget could not be given as this is regarded as confidential.

3.4 Challenges

Swedish return policy currently faces two main bottlenecks in its execution. Firstly, the return policy is implemented by one organization that has the monopoly on asylum-seekers issues. The Migration Board takes care of reception (including psychological assistance) as well as the legal procedure. This complicates gaining the trust of asylum seekers and being able to speak to them about their motivation. It also complicates the delivery of tailor-made services. It is only recently that the Migration Board has shifted its internal organizational culture away from a control/policing attitude towards being a more open, idea-seeking type of organization. Depending on the outcome of the elections next year it is possible that the Migration Board will be split into a reception organization and a legal procedure organization. Secondly, Sweden does not like to discuss the possibility of backdoor entry into the welfare state. Return is a hot potato that no one really wants to talk about (it is dealt with by a small group of experts in six organizations), and migration generally is hot. According to the interviewees, Sweden was the first to implement very open labour migration laws that still currently present “Chinese walls” to the asylum process. It looks as if the process will not take long and asylum seekers who find work for more than 12 months will be allowed to switch status. So far the numbers of asylum seekers have not decreased but a change is expected. Understandably this will also change the numbers of potential ex-asylum seekers returning, even those making voluntary return a non-issue because of the small numbers.

4 Vision of the future

In general, Sweden considers a strict and effective return policy important and in the last year inefficiencies in the system have been dealt with. Formally the responsibility towards the returnee stops as of the moment he or she sets foot in the country of origin or any other country they may travel to after leaving Sweden. In practice Sweden is more in line with other Member States and works with the concept of sustainable return. The government has set up pilots to test cash support and return services in four countries of origin. Interviewees believe that in the long run this will include the concept of sustainable return. When asked what scenario of return assistance would be most desirable, the majority of the respondents referred to Scenario 3 as an example. One should not forget that Sweden only started experimenting with return support in August 2007.
The interviewees recommended examining the effects of the cash support provided. The support can reach an amount of €7,000 and more than half of the respondents have the impression the money is used by more than 60% of returnees to move a second time. Research into information flows for returning and expected asylum seekers is needed in cooperation projects.

In Sweden, interviewees understand the idea of European cooperation on the return and reintegration of asylum seekers, but are not convinced of the added value to the Swedish system. Respondents consider the Swedish system among the best in Europe, if not the best. Those respondents working within the EU cooperation initiative are more sober in their judgement, and expressed and suggested the need for cooperation in the countries of origin. They noted that in reality it can be seen that several organizations in the countries of origin are implementing similar – and sometimes even contradictory - projects to the different EU Member States. Especially there, where development aid can be combined with return cooperation, added value is possible. EU cooperation in the field of return and development can even lead to stronger cooperation between the Migration Board and the Swedish Development organization SIDA.

In Sweden there is a strict line between a voluntary and a non-voluntary return. Formally, when an individual decides for illegality they forfeit their rights to any support, and most respondents agree with this principle. On the other hand, respondents understand that undocumented migrants cannot be excluded from a return programme, because after their return to the host country they are country nationals. In other words: Swedish experts would like to see the strict distinction between (rejected) asylum seekers and undocumented migrants disappear in the long run. However, they also felt that reintegration programmes are not intended for migrants who stayed for only two weeks in Belgium or for those that test the legal aspects of the Swedish welfare state to its limits.

In general, the interviewees in Sweden expressed the following countries of origin as interesting countries and/or regions to set up cooperation: Bosnia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Gaza, Somalia, Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the Caucasus. Most of the interviewees stressed the interest of Sweden in the first six countries. In the case of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova some respondents were reluctant to consider cooperation with other partners. If cooperation activities are to be explored, the above mentioned countries of origin would be of the most interest to the Swedish government 11.

In the Swedish welfare state, stakeholders are accustomed to judging the potential of cooperation on the quality of the idea. Central organizations have strong strategies but encounter problems translating views into goals and activities. Bottom-up initiatives are not much welcomed and are only appreciated when in line with expressed strategies. In addition Sweden has recently introduced a new system for labour migration that could have an effect on the number of those initiating an asylum procedure.

This does not detract from all the relevant actors making policies and conducting implementation in Sweden – from the Migration Board to the service providers – who understand the need to professionalize and harmonize return reintegration activities within Europe. This makes Sweden potentially an interesting partner to start a pilot with.

Sweden might also be an interesting partner because of the relatively centralized character and small number of the supporting stakeholders.

---

11 Please see the attached country report on Belgium for more information on a top 10 of countries of origin of asylum seekers and returnees.
1. The Ministry of Justice finances the Swedish Migration Board.
2. The ERF also finances projects of the Swedish Migration Board.
3. The Swedish Migration Board and the European Return Fund finance several projects by different institutions, such as IOM, Praxis, Goteborgs Initiativet, UNHCR and the Swedish Red Cross.
4. A person who wishes to return contacts the Swedish Migration Board for return assistance.
5. The IOM runs a country-specific return programme in Afghanistan.
6. The UNHCR offers counselling for returnees to Afghanistan.
7. The Swedish Red Cross offers counselling to returnees from Serbia, Kosovo and Northern Iraq.
8. The Goteborgs Initiativet runs a return and reintegration project to Somalia.
9. Praxis, which is a local NGO in Serbia, runs a project for helping the returnees with all kinds of documents they might be lacking.
10. The Swedish Migration Board determines whether or not asylum can be granted to an Asylum seeker.
11. If the asylum seeker does not leave voluntarily, the SMB hand over the matter to the police who thereafter have the responsibility to ensure his/her departure, so s/he can be forcibly deported.
ANNEX B : COUNTRY REPORTS ON COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

ACTION RESEARCH IN IRAQ,
JULY 5TH – 10TH 2009

Interview team  Frans Bastiaens, HIT Foundation
                Caro Zwaenepoel, HIT Foundation
                Jan Vranken, Central Organization for the reception of asylum seekers
                Zana Abdallah, Kurdistan Region – EU Mission

1 INTRODUCTION

This report is part of the action research “European cooperation on sustainable return and re-integration” conducted by HIT foundation on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As part of the exercise leading towards the final report, this paper will try to answer the five general questions posed by the research programme, namely:

1. To what extent do EU member states strive to achieve the sustainable reintegration of returning (former) asylum seekers?

2. Which programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin are implemented/financed by EU member states?

3. What benefits can be obtained by setting up programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin at a European level and in cooperation with the countries of origin?

4. To what extent is it possible to set up reintegration support programmes in the countries of origin at a European level and together with the countries of origin?

i. To what extent is there political support for cooperation?
   1. From European institutions?
   2. From national member states?
   3. From civil society?
   4. From parties in the countries of origin.

ii. Under which preconditions is European cooperation practically feasible?

5. To what extent is it advisable to bring local reintegration support programmes under umbrella programmes led by governments in the countries of origin?

For this case study, questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 are of primary concern. Therefore, the major goals of this report were to

- Identify current stakeholders in reintegration activities
- Review the government’s official standpoint on reintegration measures
- Collect feedback from relevant NGOs, INGOs or international organizations with regard to return and reintegration and reflect on future possibilities for a comprehensive programme

2 METHODOLOGY

This report is based on interviews conducted by the research team during a one-week stay in Iraq from the 5th to the 10th of July 2009. A full schedule of visits can be found in the annex. The interviews were either conducted by the group together or separately as the schedule demanded. All interviews are documented in short summaries, which can be found in the annex. In addition, printed material on the question at hand was
collected and scrutinized when available.
Below you can find the interview list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political level</th>
<th>Mr. Falah Mustafa Bakir</th>
<th>Head of the Department of Foreign Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Zagros Fatah</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of General Development and Planning, Ministry of Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy level</th>
<th>Mr. Shler Abdullah A</th>
<th>Ministry of Labour &amp; Social Affairs, Minister Bureau. Director of relation &amp; coordination/Minister Bureau (Molsa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dara Jalil Al-Khayat</td>
<td></td>
<td>President Kurdistan Federation Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Vice President Iraq Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dr Dendar Zebary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinator to UN and NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>???</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director Vocational Training centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International organizations</th>
<th>Mr. Azad A Mahmoud</th>
<th>IOM Erbil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sada Salman S</td>
<td>Swedish Red Cross &amp; ICRS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Erich Gutmann</td>
<td>AGEF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Charles Lynch-Staunton</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ghassar al Sarraf</td>
<td>ILO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Migrants                   | 4 individual returnees |

| Educated labour force      | 15 graduate students of the Faculty of Economics at Salahuddin University in Erbil |

3 Background information

3.1 Political background

Iraqi Kurdistan or Kurdistan Region is an autonomous, federally recognized region of Iraq. It borders Iran to the east, Turkey to the north, Syria to the west and the rest of Iraq to the south. Its capital is the city of Erbil.

The establishment of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq dates back to the March 1970 autonomy agreement between the Kurdish opposition and the Iraqi government after years of heavy fighting. Following the agreement, wars between Kurdistan and Iraq removed much of the sovereignty the Kurds were entitled to. In 1991 Iraq retaliated against the Kurds for supporting Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, and during the “al-Anfal” (“spoils of war”) campaign, it slaughtered thousands of civilians and uprooted 1.5 million people from their homes. Thousands fled to Turkey.

After the Persian Gulf War, Iraq's Kurds rose up against Saddam Hussein, encouraged by the United States. Iraq quashed the rebellions, killing thousands. The Kurds were forced to flee the country to become refugees in the bordering regions of Iran and Turkey. The U.N. coalition forces did not come to the aid of the Kurds, but eventually established a no-fly zone in the north for their protection and to facilitate the return of Kurdish refugees. So, Kurdistan became de facto independent and Iraqi Kurds now control a territory of around 40,000 square kilo-metres and have a population of between 4 and 6.5 million (17% of Iraq's population).

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by joint coalition and Kurdish forces and the subsequent political changes in post-Saddam Iraq led to the ratification of a new Iraqi constitution in 2005. The new Iraqi constitution

---

1 This information was found on the website of the Kurdistan Regional Government: www.krg.org/
2 This information was found on the Kurdish History timeline: www.infoplease.com
stipulates that Iraqi Kurdistan is a federal entity recognized by Iraq and the United Nations. Kurdistan is a parliamentary democracy and its main institutions are the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Kurdistan Region Presidency, and the Kurdistan National Assembly (parliament). As stipulated in Iraq’s federal constitution, Kurdistan's institutions exercise legislative and executive authority in many areas, including the regional budget, policing and security, education and health policies, natural resources management and infrastructure development. The Iraqi Kurdistan legislative elections of 2009 took place on 25 July 2009. A total of 2.5 million citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan were eligible to vote in the parliamentary and presidential elections. People currently living outside Iraqi Kurdistan were not allowed to vote. The elections followed the Iraqi Kurdistan elections of 2005. The parliamentary elections coincided with the direct election of the President of Kurdistan. Unlike the Iraqi Kurdistan elections of 2005, the president of Kurdistan was to be chosen directly through popular votes. Disputes remain between the central Iraqi government and the Kurdish government about predominantly Kurdish territories outside the current borders of Iraqi Kurdistan. Maintaining its own foreign relations, Kurdistan hosts a number of consulates and representation offices in several countries, most notably in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Israel and Russia.

3.2 Economic situation
As a major economic power in Iraq, Kurdistan has the lowest poverty rates and highest standards of living in Iraq. It is the most stable and secure region in the country. The Kurdistan region of Iraq receives 17% of the oil profits, and this forms the basis of its economy. 78% of this money is spent on government operations (40% staff, 60% infrastructure) and 22% is spent on investments (roads, water, electricity, construction). 60% of the working population works for the government (for life) due to the advice given by the Americans to “keep the population under control”. People pay no income tax or, for instance, car/road taxes. As a consequence, productivity is extremely low. There is no money for broader investments or innovation. Historically and culturally, the population has little or no ambition. People expect the government to take care of them. Consequently, they don’t feel the need to educate themselves. In general in Iraq, education is public and free at all levels from primary to higher education, and mandatory at the primary level. Private schools are prohibited. Compulsory education lasts for 6 years. 74% of the population completes primary education and female enrolment is 44%. 33% start secondary education. The illiteracy rate is 59.6%. Education in Iraq is under the control of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. An additional problem is that most professions do not require diplomas or other qualifications. Anyone can be an electrician, a plumber or a bricklayer. As a result, buildings are poorly constructed. There are many labourers from neighbouring countries, who are willing to work for low wages since no qualifications are required. It is very hard to convince people to work for the private sector. The economy runs on income from oil profits and trade. Almost everything is imported. There is no industry of any significance in Kurdistan.

3.3 Migration patterns
In general, most statistics on migration patterns in Iraq only give an overview of Iraq as a whole. It is therefore difficult to obtain figures on Kurdish migrants. While some estimates exist, the major problem in obtaining reliable data is connected to the fact that migration to and from the province is not recorded by government authorities and therefore, informal migration predominates. Furthermore, no distinction is made between returnees from abroad and IDPs outside those organizations dealing with the issue. For the Kurdish government, returnees from neighbouring countries such as Syria are the most important, as they comprise the highest numbers. Returnees from Europe are not very high up on the agenda, therefore no official data is collected. Having said this, some general comments can be made to illustrate the situation. Since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003, Iraqi Kurdistan has witnessed massive immigration from Arab parts of Iraq as well as from Turkey and South Asia. Because of the stability and security Kurdistan has witnessed, non-Kurdish Iraqi immigrants are settling in Kurdistan, seeking employment and protection and fleeing from the relatively unstable Arab Iraq. Estimates range from 100,000 to 250,000 non-Kurdish Iraqis in Kurdistan since 2003. Widespread economic activity between Kurdistan and Turkey has given Turks the opportunity to seek
jobs in Iraqi Kurdistan. A Kurdish newspaper based in the Kurdish capital estimates that around 50,000 Turks are now living in Kurdistan. Reports about immigrants from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan have also been published.

UNHCR has published more concise data about migration flows into Iraq, claiming that during the war and its aftermath, more than 2 million citizens left their home, in addition to large numbers of IDPs. The process of return started in 2003. In 2008, IOM claims there was a total of 195,890 returnees, 23,000 of whom arrived in the first quarter of 2009. A total of roughly 1 million returnees has been recorded since 2003. Of the regions, IOM claims that Baghdad, Diyala and Nineveh have the highest number of returns, while Kurdistan and the rest have the least.

Return statistics for 2008 and 2009 show the following figures for the three provinces which make up the Kurdish area of Iraq (including both refugees and IDPs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>1st quarter 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sulaynaniya</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irbil</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamim</td>
<td>3410</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only counting refugees from outside Iraq, the numbers are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sulaynaniya</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irbil</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamim</td>
<td>2060</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All in all, the returnee population registered by IOM and the UNHCR for 2008 is close to 3000 individuals, and similar figures are expected for 2009. Nevertheless, this cannot be described as the definite figure, as an undisclosed number of returnees return privately, especially from neighbouring countries, without registering or using the services of relevant organizations in the region. Judging by the fact that return numbers are generally lower in Kurdistan and bearing in mind that most refugees and IDPs came from the more violent and war-torn areas of the country, one can only estimate that the overall number of returnees will not exceed 5000-6000 persons per year.

4 Return and reintegration activities

The Kurdistan region of Iraq is regarded as safe. Consequently, all EU member states request countries harbouring former asylum seekers from this region to implement “voluntary” or forced return.

There seems to be no collaboration with Kurdistan’s regional government. However, several conferences have been organized between the EU and the Iraqi Government with the aim of drafting a comprehensive plan on Voluntary Return in Iraq, for instance the Senior Officials Meeting on a Comprehensive Plan on Iraq, The Hague, 1-2 December 2008.

All the involved EU member states provide support for returning (former) asylum seekers “voluntarily” to Kurdistan. There is no ‘standard’ type of support. Consequently there are huge differences. Support may range from a financial contribution for resettlement to a combination of financial support, counselling, vocational training and job placement. There are no monitoring systems to identify the quality of the supporting services nor is the effect monitored in any way. Returnees complain about the differences in support, organizations complain about the total lack of initiative and ambition on the part of the returnees.

This brief example illustrates the diversity of approaches: 4 An Iraqi returnee in Germany receives 500 Euros per adult and pre-departure assistance, such as counselling, job training and small business start ups, whereas they receive the same kind of pre-departure assistance in Belgium but with a cash assistance of 700 Euros. In the Netherlands the return and reintegration regulation offers an additional reintegration contribution of 1750 Euros to Iraqis in addition to the financial contribution of 500 Euros. In the UK they receive a relocation grant of 500 pounds and post-arrival assistance, while the ‘Return and Rebuild’ programme also offers Iraqi returnees extra support in order to help them build a family home.

5 Please find the chair’s conclusions on the following website: www.gdisc.org/uploads/bk_gdisclb/Chair_s_conclusions_The_Hague_1-2_December_2008.pdf

6 For more detailed information on the different types of return and reintegration assistance between EU member states, please see the Matrix in the attachment.
While this picture shows the relevant governmental organizations (note that they are not really ministries, as this is only a regional government, but fulfil more or less the same tasks), it has to be repeated that the government has no direct interest in return policies and is not involved in the reintegration activities of INGOs in the country.

4.1 Quantitative assessment of return and return policies
Despite the relatively high number of returnees and the condition of peace in the region, only two organizations in Kurdistan deal with returnees as defined as a target group for this research, namely IOM and AGEF. The Swedish Red Cross is only providing monetary payments to re-turnees, their activity is due to end in early 2010.

International organizations could be divided into international service providers who deliver services to returning migrants from EU member states, such as IOM and AGEF and interna-tional organizations with broader goals, such as UNHCR and ILO.

International service providers
Kurdistan has two international service providers that offer assistance with the reintegration of returnees from the EU.
Both organizations are financed directly by sponsors within the EU Member states. Sometimes these are the responsible ministries within the member states, but financial aid is just as likely to come from independent state agencies or projects. There are general agreements about the type of support for returning migrants, but both IOM and AGEF obtain approval for individual cases.
There are no (other) NGOs supporting retuning migrants unless one classifies the Swedish one-man office as such. The explanation for the absence of NGOs in the field of (voluntary) return is simply that this is a new issue. The Kurdistan region is a post-conflict region that might be more in transition in contrast with developing countries. Governance and education are fragile but clearly embedded in society. Finances are available due to their natural resources and are shared with the majority of the population.
There are major differences in the ways in which IOM and AGEF support returnees. Some only receive referral in Kurdistan and a contribution in cash (Sweden), while others receive support in cash and in kind such as counselling, education and job placement.

The IOM offers return and reintegration services: arrival support to returning asylum seekers, financial contribution in cash, and post-arrival counselling and advice services. The cash contribution varies depending on which host country they have returned from.

IOM is in charge of the following programs, which are financed by various donors, such as the United Nation Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), several EU Member States (the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the United Kingdom), the Government of Australia, Japan, the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

- Reintegration Assistance to Iraqi Voluntary returnees
- Regional Operation Centres
- Capacity Building in Migration Management Programs
- Evacuation Assistance to stranded Migrants
- Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons

IOM is also in charge of other programmes, which are not mentioned in this report.

The second international service provider, AGEF offers reintegration assistance and training with the purpose of upgrading them. They also help returnees to find employment or start their own businesses. AGEF is currently in charge of the following programmes:

- **Return to Employment in Iraq (REI)**
  - **Leadership Training Programme** - AGEF is implementing a capacity building programme for staff members, senior management and executives in Iraq, especially the Iraq Kurdistan Region. The programme is sponsored by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany. A programme of further education and qualification geared to the needs and the set target was established on the basis of a needs analysis made in 2006 and research conducted in 2008. About 1,200 staff members and executives from ministries and public institutions are to attend this programme. The programme, which started in February 2009 includes: language courses (extra-occupational), courses on information technologies (IT), occupational courses and special courses. Special courses are offered in but not limited to the fields of: procurement, budgeting and finance, banking, environment, communication (e.g. press relations and presentation techniques and the legal system (for judges, attorneys and lawyers). The Iraqi-Kurdish Regional Government’s Ministry for Planning and Development acts as a partner for the training courses for staff members, senior managers and executives. The cooperation is established by a memorandum of understanding.
  - **Disaster preparedness programme** - supported by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany. The aim of the project is to support about 1,000 people who live in areas threatened by natural catastrophes and to teach them about precaution measures and disaster control by means of training courses. In the event of an emergency, they can use this knowledge to help people survive. Raising awareness and training will help the locals to take initiative and leaders in the rural communities to take responsibility for disaster control and coordination on the basis of this knowledge (what needs to be done?).
  - **Business start-up training for women**, to train a trainer and support the establishment of a business women's association in Iraq Kurdistan Region.

Both service providers operate individually. They are financed by different organizations and they feel the market is enough scope for both of them. One distinction is that AGEF also trains government staff in general and has good contacts and a good record with government officials in this area.

**4.3 Role of government and government agencies in return and re-integration**

The Kurdish Regional Government has no official policy regarding the return of migrants. Therefore, there are no government supported instruments that returnees can benefit from. Kurdish returnees may only rely on the assistance of IOM and AGEF.

The official position of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) is that it does not favour or support any kind of return. The government will not accept returnees unless forced to do so by international
treaties. The government does not agree with the forced expulsion of Kurdish mi-grants from the EU and is not willing to cooperate in the field of forced return. The KRG govern-ment is reluctant to accept forced returnees.

The interviewees stated that in light of the bright economic future it is understandable that mi-grants want to return to this region. The relations with the Iraqi government are good though fragile. There are good relations with Turkey and improving relations with Syria and Iran. From the economic perspective, the region is developing and construction is booming.

Return is not on the current government’s agenda. Returning citizens have equal opportunities to obtain their “share” of the oil revenue through more or less meaningful employment, just like those who stayed. The government does not give special consideration to “returnee status”.

4.4 The perspective of the returnees and of the future elite

HIT Foundation also talked with two returnees from the Netherlands, one returnee from Ger-many and one from Sweden. This was useful to obtain a rough idea of how returnees are com-ing back and how they experienced their return to Kurdistan. In general, the returnees are dis-satisfied with the assistance from the Kurdish government and consider the differences in as-sistance (cash) between the different EU Member States as being unjust. They all explicitly expressed the need for larger amounts of money in order to realise a sustainable return 7.

In order to obtain a complete and comprehensive picture of circumstances, ideas and assump-tions leading to economic independence for individuals in Kurdistan, a workshop was orga-nized for graduates and post graduates of the economic faculty of Salahuddin University. The outcomes were relevant for our research, as the opportunities and threats mentioned during the workshop, are possibly the same opportunities and threats that returnees might encounter when returning to Kurdistan8. In a brainstorm session the students were asked to think about three opportunities and three threats for themselves with regard to achieving economical independ-ence.

The following threats were mentioned during the workshop:

No Job Opportunities
In general, the students saw the biggest threat to their own economical independence in the fact that there are very few job opportunities in the Kurdistan region for people with higher educa-tion. The private sector is not sufficiently developed to generate enough work for everybody. There-fore, well-educated people either go abroad or stay and work for the government, which is the main employer in Kurdistan, based on ancient socialist principles. There is no incentive for young people to work in the private sector, as working for the government assures you of a lifelong income, and offers the only possibility to obtain ownership of a parcel of land.

Over-qualification as a pre-condition
Since there are not enough high-level jobs, and there is no incentive for people to acquire quali-fications, being qualified can even be considered as a pre-condition. In Kurdistan, practically any profession can be practised by unqualified persons. Anybody can be an electrician or a welder. Certification has not yet taken off in Kurdistan, therefore there is no incentive to attain qualifications.

No Social Insurance
Unlike most of Europe, Iraqi Kurdistan does not have a social security system. Therefore peo-ple are not prepared to take risks to climb the ladder of opportunity. Instead, they focus on find-ing the best way to obtain a secure income. For the well-educated, this means a job within gov-ernment.

Absence of support from the private sector
The private sector is still in its developing phase and therefore the students could not find op-portunities in the private sector.

Corruption
Widespread corruption is considered a major threat to the future of these young people. It is almost impossible to find a job if you are not well-connected to the government. An open job market as in Europe simply does not exist here.

7 For more information, please see the report attached in the annex.
8 For more information, please see the report attached in the annex.
**Absence of independent economy**
Kurdistan is part of the federal republic of Iraq, and although the Kurdish Regional Government has maximized independence within the current possibilities, the students perceive the fact that Kurdistan does not have an independent economy as a major threat. There is, for instance, no stock exchange or other important economic systems, such as land ownership. This is still regulated through old feudal and socialist systems.

**Passivity**
In general, the working population in Kurdistan suffers from a great deal of passivity. Because of the reasons mentioned above, people are not activated or stimulated to engage in entrepreneurship.

**Workers going abroad**
The most gifted and well-educated often go abroad to work for major international companies. This Brain Drain is perceived as a threat to Kurdistan's economy.

**Low living standards**
Economic development on one hand and low living standards on the other, is making daily life more and more difficult for the Kurdish people.

**Migrant workers in Kurdistan**
There are increasing numbers of migrant workers in Kurdistan, such as construction workers from Bangladesh and Africans doing unskilled labour that Kurds consider to be beneath them.
The following opportunities were mentioned during the workshop:

**Government Support**
The students feel the KRG should do more to support the Kurdish people. This support should be in the form of more and better social security, and a more active role by the government in developing the private sector and the country's educational system.

**Job Creation**
Overall there is a need for more jobs in Kurdistan. People who went abroad are returning in larger numbers and they all need work. So, on one hand, government jobs are seen as a threat, but on the other hand, they are seen as a possibility to increase employment opportunities in the near future.

**Freedom of Choice**
People should have freedom of choice, so that they can influence their political future. Increasing freedom is seen as a great way in which to increase personal opportunities.

**Economical and Political Stability**
After years of war and terrorism there now is the beginning of political and economical stability in Kurdistan.

**Positive Attitude and Self Reliance**
Most students consider a positive attitude, combined with a healthy form of self-reliance as a very important ingredient in achieving economic independence. Instead of waiting to see what your family or government does for you, it is better to take actions into your own hands and create your own future.

**Ongoing Education**
Lifelong, continuing education is seen as one of the important pillars of development for the Kurdish people, one that will increase development in the region.

**Political Influence**
If the KRG has more influence on the Federal government, this will increase the region's economic strength and individual opportunities.

---

9 It is interesting to note that this impression from the students clearly contradicts the general findings of this research from other sources.
5 Vision of future reintegration policies and programmes

It is difficult to elaborate on a clear vision for future reintegration policies based on the findings of this research without repeating the basic fact that currently, the government is using its rev- enues from oil export to cushion any negative economic effect for its people, while disregarding any economic incentives beyond paying salaries. The Kurdish region in Iraq can best be described as a classical “rentier state”, where the revenue from selling a highly priced natural resource is replacing other meaningful economic activity. By spending money to “pacify” the population's social interests, the government also reinforces the habit returnees have of thinking that “the government will take care”. This coincides with the fact that both IOM and AGEF have found that returnees do not take advantage of vocational training courses on offer. They collect their money, but do not show up for any additional certification or counselling. It is evident that returnees expect the government to support them in their livelihood, be it through employment as a civil servant or other subsidies.

5.1 Implementing organizations proposals and ideas on cooperation

IOM and AGEF feel that it is necessary to standardize the services offered and are willing to collaborate with the Kurdistan Regional Government and EU member states. Both service providers feel an integrated approach should start in the EU because it is extremely difficult to persuade returnees to join any programme other than cash support. Still, it is not clear in how far both organizations would envisage changing the motivational challenges in dealing with returnees for as long as the general habit of relying on the government for sustenance cannot be changed. Even with an integrated approach, in which the reintegration programmes channelled through IOM and AGEF are standardized, returnees will still remain suspicious of or disinterested in anything more than collecting money.

5.2 Proposals and ideas of the government on sustainable return

Interviewees stated that they can imagine a favourable attitude towards the voluntary return of migrants if an integrated approach could be realized. An integrated approach would have to lead to a single EU programme in connection to policy development on the Kurdish side. The goal would be to invest in the skills and knowledge of returning migrants in order for them to contribute to the development of the Kurdish region. Several leaders of the Kurdish regional government have studied abroad and see themselves as examples. Their biggest problem with the current situation is that migrants waste their time in Europe because there is little or no access to education and the labour market. People returning have gained little but lost a lot.

The interviewees specifically asked for the exchange of knowledge, know-how and advice on the policy and practical level.

It was also suggested that instead of spending money in Europe, it could be spent in Kurdistan. An example of cooperation could be the establishment of one or more vocational training centres. There would be a need for proper buildings with infrastructure, (educated) teachers and management and real diplomas. The government could learn from EU member states to renew policies in relation to the labour market.

It is clear that this approach would at least enhance the quality of those inevitably employed by the government. As it is public policy to include as many people as possible in government-sponsored activities or appoint them as civil servants to maintain a certain level of peace and stability, it cannot be expected that this approach will provide much benefit to the private sector in the foreseeable future.

6 Conclusions

The situation in the Kurdish region of Iraq is difficult. Unlike other post-conflict-scenarios, this is less because of mortal danger or economic deprivation and more because of the potential abundance of income through oil revenue and the government's policy of inclusion in order to maintain stability. Reintegration activities geared towards self-employment, training, job-placement and such have to face the underlying current in the Kurdish society that one doesn't need to do anything because the state will provide. Consequently, any programme focusing on empowerment will face serious motivational challenges from the target group.

Aside from this general observation, collaboration between the local government, AGEF and IOM should be to the advantage of all stakeholders involved. As IOM and AGEF are the only two service providers in the region and both are offering almost the same kind of reintegration assistance, it seems naturally to establish
cooperation.

In general the conclusions come down to the next points:

6.1 **Positive potential for a reintegration programme**
- Even though the Kurdistan region in Iraq is a post-conflict area, its regional government is sincerely searching for ways to improve the future for the population it represents.
- There is an economic basis through the oil revenues that are shared with the population.
- Voluntary return is a fact. EU member states actively promote and execute the return of (ex) asylum seekers to Kurdistan.
- There are many differences in the way returnees are supported. Therefore, there is experience in implementing such programmes.
- All stakeholders involved are willing to invest in further collaboration that should lead to an integrated approach and mutual benefit. The government is willing to accept the need for more highly qualified staff within the civil service which absorbs most of the returnees.
- Judging from the quantity of Iraqi Kurds living outside the country, the amount of returnees will most likely be sufficient for reintegration efforts in the future.

6.2 **Challenges for a reintegration programme**
- The inheritance of decades of war and a paternalistic government is not easily wiped away in the minds of people, especially with regard to important issues such as entrepreneurship, self-empowerment and self-employment.
- There is a need for policy renewal in many areas. There is a need to restructure the economy, the labour market and the education system. While this need is also shared by the government, current policy on cooperation is focused on maintaining the somewhat fragile stability of the region, while neglecting long-term reform strategies not related to the oil sector.
- The effects or efficiency of supporting policy, structure and programs are not monitored. Experiences gathered show that any traditional approaches towards reintegration beyond the provision of monetary incentives face serious challenges.
“This is Georgia, this is not Europe. Here people depend on each other.”

1 Introduction

This report is part of the action research “European cooperation on sustainable return and re-integration” done by HIT foundation on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As part of the exercise leading towards the final report, this paper will try to answer the five general questions posed for the research programme, namely:

1. To what extent do EU member states strive to achieve the sustainable reintegration of re-turning (former) asylum seekers?

2. Which programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin are implemented/financed by EU member states?

3. What benefits can be obtained by setting up programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin at a European level and in cooperation with the countries of origin?

4. To what extent is it possible to set up reintegration support programmes in the countries of origin at a European level and together with the countries of origin?
   i. To what extent is there political support for cooperation?
1. From European institutions?
2. From national member states?
3. From civil society?
4. From parties in the countries of origin.
   ii. Under what preconditions is European cooperation practically feasible?

5. To what extent is it advisable to bring local reintegration support programmes under umbrella programmes led by the governments in the countries of origin?

For this case study, questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 are of primary concern. Therefore, the major goals of this report were to:

- Identify current stakeholders in existing reintegration activities
- Review the government’s official standpoint on reintegration measures
- Collect feedback from relevant NGOs, INGOs or international organizations with regard to return and reintegration and reflect on future possibilities for a comprehensive programme

### 2 Methodology

This report is based on interviews conducted by the two researchers during a one week-stay in Georgia from the 7th to the 11th of September 2009. A full schedule of visits can be found in the annex. The interviews were either conducted by both consultants together or, where the schedule demanded, separately. All interviews are documented in short summaries, which can also be found in the appendix. In addition, printed material related to the question at hand was collected and scrutinized when available.

Below you will find the interview list. The interview partners represent NGOs as well as the governmental level, and include some returnees and their personal experiences. Altogether, 48 people were interviewed, either individually or in group sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political level</th>
<th>Ms. Tamar Beruchashvili</th>
<th>Deputy Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zurab Mchedlishvili</td>
<td>Parliament of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy level</td>
<td>Irakli Kokaia</td>
<td>Ministry for Refugees and Accommodation, Department for Migration, Repatriation and Refugees, Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zaza Imedashvili</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Konstantine Razmadze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Francois Massoulié</td>
<td>EU Delegation responsible for migration and mobility partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nino Kochishvili</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uruzmag Karkusov</td>
<td>Deputy Minister for Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louise Bermsjö</td>
<td>Swedish Embassy, SIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natia Gvazava</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ekaterine Machavarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nadia Sahtout-el Ouahdani</td>
<td>Dutch Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International organizations/INGOs</td>
<td>Ms. Edina Dziho</td>
<td>UNHCR Protection officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Sheehan</td>
<td>Director IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marc Hulst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edina Slipicevic-Dziho</td>
<td>Liaison officer Migration UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Red Cross Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guy Edmunds</td>
<td>Danish Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Local NGOs/ Service providers/ Research institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position &amp; Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nana Nazarova</td>
<td>Director, People's Harmonious Development Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikoloz Loladze</td>
<td>Management of Mobile Finance Eurasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archil Bakuradze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besarion Bokhashvili</td>
<td>Director of Georgian Young Lawyers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Natia Chelidze</td>
<td>Tbilisi State University, Institute for Migration Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koba Turmanidze</td>
<td>Caucasus Research Resource Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irma Tseretelli</td>
<td>Responsible for Program fur Ruckkehrende Fachkrafte (CSG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina Mekshi</td>
<td>State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrants & Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 individual returnees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 employers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Background information

3.1 Political background
The Republic of Georgia is an independent republic, established out of the former Soviet Union. Geographically, it is located in the Caucasus region and borders Turkey, Armenia, the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan. Its capital city is Tbilisi.

Georgia has a long, centuries-old history with a rich tradition of statehood and of violent conflict, as is significant for the whole region. Alongside other former soviet states, Georgia re-gained its independence shortly after the end of the cold war in 1991. A period of instability followed and culminated in a coup d'état against president Gamsachurdia in 1992. Former Soviet foreign minister Eduard Schewardnadse became president and head of an increasingly unpopular regime, which was then replaced by the administration of the current president Sa-akaschwili after the “Rose Revolution”.

Promising economic development, especially in the tourism sector, was halted abruptly by the military conflict with Russia in August of 2008. A fifth of Georgia is described as occupied territory: South-Ossetia and Abchasia declared themselves independent states in the 1990s, but are only recognized as such by Russia and some of its allies and are guarded by Russian troops. The military conflict has caused massive internal population displacement, which is the greatest concern with regard to migration policy at this time. Georgia currently houses 300,000 internally displaced persons from these two regions. 38 refugee centres were built for them within six months of the start of the war.

The political situation can best be described as fragile at the moment. The political euphoria of the “Rose Revolution” has faded, and the current president, despite being re-elected in 2005, does not enjoy the same amount of popular support as in the past. This is despite the fact that significant progress has been made in the process of fighting corruption and strengthening state structures. The increased importance of the security agencies and the all-powerful Ministry of the Interior has led to an uneasy political atmosphere which erupts into violence at irregular intervals. Georgia can best be
described as a defective democracy, which has some-how stalled half way in its development into a viable democracy. The unstable political, and subsequently economic, situation does not bode well, either for the containment of future migration or for the effective reintegration of returnees.

3.2 Economic background

The Republic of Georgia has had a chequered and recently very difficult economic history. Despite some economic gains achieved before the August war, the per capita GDP remains relatively low. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia was disconnected from that market and consequently economic activity suffered. A range of structural reforms launched since 2004 has achieved some progress, and in 2007 and 2008 the World Bank rated Georgia among the countries with the fastest improving business climate in the world. This apparent progress was totally shattered by the August war and its consequences. In particular the ban imposed by the Russian Federation on imports from Georgia is affecting the economy. Despite being traditionally an agricultural country, development in rural areas has stalled and remains at the level of subsistence farming, with small, export-oriented production in areas such as wine production. All major economic activities are either concentrated on the capital Tbilisi, where around half of the total population of 4.5 million lives, and the coastal areas, where investment in tourism is particularly evident. All in all, Georgia's economy is slowly moving in the direction of services. Tourism is a significant part of the economy, reaching one million visitors in 2006, but suffering a steep decline after the war in 2008. Numbers recovered somewhat in 2009, but have not reached the peak of travel before the outbreak of hostilities.

The large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from South-Ossetia and Abchasia are still a significant financial burden for the government, as they tend not to find employment and have to be taken care of in all social aspects by the public budget. The government built 38 reception centres in the six months following the start of the war, and these now house around 26,000 IDPs. Official labour market statistics are of little value, as no official labour policy exists. This means that unemployment statistics do not reflect reality, especially as the informal sector has been growing in importance for the subsistence of the population. Even going by the official numbers, unemployment is rated as about 14% of the population of working age.

Remittances are an important source of income for Georgian society. Many families have one or more of their members somewhere abroad. While the value of remittances fluctuates and has been on the decrease, especially because of the resettlement of Georgian workers from the Russian Federation, the eagerness of the Georgian government with regard to the return of the diaspora is somewhat limited by the significance of the remittances for keeping the Georgian economy alive. The Global crisis has begun to take its toll on these remittances.

3.3 Migration patterns

It is estimated that around one million Georgians live abroad. Generally, statistical data is sketchy, especially for the migrants in the Russian Federation, but also because of a good percentage of undocumented migration to other countries. 40% of those living abroad are in Russia and another 30% in the European Union, at least according to official estimates. The subsequent crisis within Georgia, most recently the war against Russian troops in August 2008, and the continued economic problems of the country have led to a variety of waves with regard to emigration. Judging from IOM’s latest migration report about Georgia, the country lost more than 20% of its population between 1989 and 2002 due to migration. The majority moved to the Russian Federation (40%); most continue to live there despite all the efforts by Moscow to extradite them after the August war. Another important country of destination is Turkey (12%), as the border agreement with that country was formalized quite early (disputes still exist with other neighbours, not only with Russia). Another flow of migrants, mostly asylum seekers, has entered western Europe (30%). The majority of applications can be seen in Germany, Austria and France. Before the August war, Georgia was a recipient country of migration, a transit stage for migration to the west as well as a source of migration. The military crisis has tilted the balance more towards being a source of migration.

The number of asylum seekers is of particular interest for the purpose of this report. The following table from IOM’s migration report shows the registered asylum seekers in countries of the European Union at the end of 2007.
The IOM report on the migration profile of Georgia also lists the destinations of general migration and the official numbers of Georgians living abroad. It has to be taken into consideration that there is an unknown number of undocumented (illegal) Georgian migrants - several experts mentioned that undocumented migrants are by far the biggest group within the total group of migrants. The collected official data therefore only gives a rough indication of migration flows, not necessarily a conclusive figure reflecting the whole reality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of asylum</th>
<th>No. of applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>20,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>7,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>7,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>5,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>4,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>2,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>2,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>2,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>2,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all countries)</td>
<td>69,571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>52,900</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Foreign citizens, Russian Census 2002(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>13,791</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Residence permits, Ministry of Interior, Department of Social Integration, Greece, 2007(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>13,120</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Stock of foreign population by nationality, Federal Statistical Office, Germany, 2002(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>10,530</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Stocks of Georgian nationals, US Census 2000(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>5,682</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Foreign citizens, Ukraine Census 2001(^5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3,382</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Residence permits, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain, 2006(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>2,471</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Stock of foreign population by nationality, Bevölkerungsstand 2007, Statistik Austria, 2007(^7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Foreign persons registered in the national register, SPF Interieur, L'Office des Etrangers(^8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,979</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Population who immigrated to Turkey between 1995 Census and 2000 Census, Turkish Statistical Institute(^9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, 2006(^10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Residence permits, ISTAT Italian Statistical Office, 2007(^11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Stock of foreign population by country of nationality, 1999, Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques 1999(^12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Data from Russian Census 2002
\(^2\) Data from Ministry of Interior, Department of Social Integration, Greece
\(^3\) Data from Federal Statistical Office, Germany
\(^4\) Data from US Census 2000
\(^5\) Data from Ukraine Census 2001
\(^6\) Data from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain
\(^7\) Data from Bevölkerungsstand 2007, Statistik Austria
\(^8\) Data from SPF Interieur, L'Office des Etrangers
\(^9\) Data from Turkish Statistical Institute
\(^10\) Data from Statistics Canada
\(^11\) Data from ISTAT Italian Statistical Office
\(^12\) Data from Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques
4 Return and reintegration activities

The research team tried to provide a stakeholder overview of relevant actors in the field of migration. While some important information about relevant institutions has been gathered, the following assessment, both on organizational as well as activity level, does not claim to reflect the whole reality or to include all possible institutions. The fact that even those active in the field had serious problems in naming all relevant stakeholders shows that the research team has not been the only one with this problem. In general, the result of the stakeholder identification process looks like this:

The following chapters will try to elaborate this picture in more detail.

4.1 Quantitative assessment of return and return policies

There are no official statistics on return. As we will see, organizations dealing with returnees are few and scattered, and they do not exchange statistical data. Government statistics are not available. Some numbers are claimed by institutions interviewed in this report. Please review the following table for the cases reported during the meetings. The table also gives a reference regarding the organizations involved in return activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Returnees yearly</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return and reintegration programme, training and policy advice</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>120-150</td>
<td>More than half of these cases are of Swiss origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy advice and training</td>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Works together with ICMPD. DT&amp;V co-finances parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td>80-120</td>
<td>Cooperation between Red Cross International and RC Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return services</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not within their mandate, aid when there is health or extreme humanitarian aid required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services and Development</td>
<td>Caritas Georgia</td>
<td>Be 5, NL 1</td>
<td>Projects with Caritas Belgium and Maatwerk. Also organized training for Georgians as development aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return and reintegation services</td>
<td>Caritas Austria</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Project is finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services and development aid</td>
<td>People in Need</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration and return services</td>
<td>French NGO</td>
<td>Approx 4</td>
<td>Especially focused on severe cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Return Programme</td>
<td>GTZ, implemented by AGEF</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Only those who have studied or are studying at German universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some reintegration services</td>
<td>Anti-Violence Network HPDS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>In cooperation with Latvian and Greek partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy research and when asked advice</td>
<td>Eurasia</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Mostly US funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td>GYLA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td>People defender &amp; World Vision</td>
<td>No numbers known</td>
<td>All those interviewed stated these organizations are only marginally involved in reintegratation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return and Reintegration services</td>
<td>State Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Specific target group, only government programme connected with return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return and reintegration services</td>
<td>People’s Harmonious Development Society</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>In cooperation with German NGO “Heimatgarten”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services</td>
<td>Ministry for Internal Affairs</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Special programme for highly qualified returnees, offer of employment in public service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All in all, the research has identified 16 organizations somehow involved with the return issue. As can be seen from the table, only very few of these organizations are dealing with the issue specifically and devote most of their capacity to return and reintegration services. Aside from the scattered INGOs and NGOs working in the field - without any cooperation and co-ordination in between them - there is only one government-sponsored programme somehow related to return, focusing on the special target group of victims of human trafficking.

The number of returnees derived from the responses of interviewees adds up to between 250 and 350 returnees per year. IOM claims in its migration report that between 2005 and 2006 it assisted a total of 867 individuals with return, the majority of them from Austria. For the last few years, the number seems to have fallen by more than half.

The interviews with returnees and the assessment of some interview partners point to the fact that the actual number might be considerably higher, especially if undocumented migration is counted. IOM claims that more than 10,000 persons were forcibly returned to Georgia from a variety of countries – not only EU-member states – between 2002 and 2007.

It has not been possible to develop a full profile of returnees registered in all of the programmes mentioned above. From the information gathered, the total number consists of former asylum seekers, ‘illegal’ migrants, returning students and special vulnerable groups. More specific data is not available.

4.2 Type of assistance for reintegration and return

As no comprehensive national reintegration programme exists in Georgia, activities are scattered among the organizations mentioned above and vary in quantity, length and breadth depending on the type of assistance donors are providing. IOM deals with the well known variety of assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes established by European governments, notably the United Kingdom and Switzerland. These programmes normally include a cash payment, given upon return, an offer of counselling and advice services, support with finding employment or starting self-employment, help in organizing shelter and, depending on the individual case, provision of certain medical services. Most programmes offer similar services, although not always with the same sophistication or length. Psychological support, especially the treatment of traumatized returnees, is also available in some of the schemes. One of the two government run programmes – for victims of human trafficking – employs the whole range of services, including payment of compensation to victims, support with legal issues, offers of vocational training and support with job placement. As no employment agencies exist in Georgia and the economic situation can best be described as difficult, job placement and income generation are major challenges for any reintegration activity. For this purpose IOM has established two job counselling centres in the country.

IOM stands out as a principal partner for most relations with the government, but admitted to receiving not more than 120 returnees, through various return programmes, each year, around half of them from Switzerland. The Danish Refugee Council, with their consortium partner ICMPD, is also actively involved in shaping policies as well as conducting research into the matter. DRC explained that they are engaged in an awareness raising activity to focus government attention on the problem. This is partly funded by the Dutch government (40,000 Euros and hours and travel of experts from DT&V). It involves some research into the situation of returnees with recommendations for reintegration (A report is expected by December 2009. The draft was not made available to the research team).

The interviews showed clearly that no actor has a full overview over all other actors in the field and that coordination, cooperation or communication is not organized in any meaningful way. In the case of CZ aid, one coordination initiative has taken place for the last three years, but its only result has been a single workshop. Points of cooperation exist where organizations coincidentally use their colleagues’ services with regard to individual cases or where meetings in other setups exist. All actors clearly state that no efforts towards coordination or supervision by government agencies are visible; some interviewees even state clearly that any involvement of the government might cause more problems than it would solve.

The local, or ‘home-grown’, NGO scene can best be described as limited. Despite the fact that officially more than 5,000 NGOs are registered with the government, it is clear that many of these organizations have been founded in order to access donor money, especially in such vague areas of activity as
'democracy', 'human rights' or 'good governance'. Hardly any Georgian NGOs deal exclusively with issues of migration or, even more specifically, the issue of reintegration, at both the practical and policy programme level. One of the few exceptions is Eurasia/CRRC which provides migration research. On the other hand, as many interviewees pointed out, local capacity for implementing aspects of reintegration programmes exists within general NGOs. Current initiatives only make marginal use of these resources, but this has more to do with certain services these NGOs are capable of providing and the willingness for the present initiatives to include local resources, and less to do with specialized agencies devoted to the issue of reintegration.

In general, many interviewees stated that reintegration is done informally and is working quite well because the relevance of family structures is still very high in Georgia. This view is supported by the interviews with returnees, who claimed that friends and family provided the major support structure for reintegration, even if some official support has been given.

4.3 **ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN RETURN AND REINTEGRATION**

Aside from the previously mentioned special programme for victims of human trafficking - supervised by the Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs - there is only one other specific programme for highly qualified returnees, run by the Ministry for Internal Affairs, which guarantees every returnee with adequate qualifications a job in the public service. There is no clear responsibility for migration matters located in any specific ministry or agency.

The Ministry for Refugees and Accommodation deals predominantly with IDPs. The Justice Ministry touches on the migration issue in running its Civil Registration Authority. The Ministry for Internal Affairs deals with formal, administrative readmission procedures. The Ministry for the Diaspora is viewed by all interviewees as being without any clear mandate or sufficient resources.

The proposal for the foundation of a specialized Migration agency has been on the government's table for quite some time, in line with a new migration strategy developed with the support of the DRC. Up to now, no decisions with regard to its possible implementation have been made. It is quite evident that when it comes to migration, the government is fully preoccupied with the challenge of IDPs within the country. Nevertheless, awareness of re-integration is rising, partly because of the negotiations about the mobility partnership with the European Union, though this awareness is clearly confined to a declaratory level of politics.

4.4 **THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RETURNEES**

During the course of the study, three returnees and two employers were interviewed. Aside from telling their individual stories and giving the general impression that due to their strong family ties, returnees do not really need a lot of assistance and extra care, not many significant conclusions could be drawn from the interviews. All of them claimed that there were no particular problems that they could not solve themselves upon return. On the other hand, they defined the duration of full reintegration as up to one year, especially with regard to readjustment to cultural attitudes and psychological problems. No open dissatisfaction with the absence of reintegration services has been voiced. All but one returnee found a job within eight months of return. One returnee claimed to have legal problems in defining the status of one of her children who was born during her time in Germany. All interviewees described economic challenges, but claimed to have overcome these either through their own efforts or with the help of friends and family. Three people received a small amount of financial support on return from the host government, but claimed that this was completely exhausted during the first weeks after return.

The two employers stated that people with a western attitude towards work are needed desperately at the moment. Both employers had returnees at work in their organizations. Two issues were mentioned in both discussions: undocumented Georgian migrants living in Europe, with no or low qualifications, mainly have unqualified jobs with poor working conditions. One issue upon their return is that their quality of life in Georgia rises as long as they are able to live in the cities; they lose face upon return, since Georgian society expects returnees to come back educated and rich. Secondly the employers indicated a trend of a larger number of returnees due to the global crisis. Since the number of people interviewed on these issues is low, the remarks made above can only be seen as an indication and no more than that.
5 Vision of future reintegration policies and programmes

5.1 Proposals and ideas of executing organizations on cooperation

NGOs and INGOs are generally in favour of a comprehensive reintegration and return programme, although their enthusiasm for cooperation on the issue beyond a donor/recipient relationship seems to be somewhat limited. When asked again, international organizations and INGOs state that although coordination, cooperation and communication seem interesting both from the European as well as from the final beneficiary perspective, their organizations currently benefit more from the lack of it, and they stated that, more importantly, their donors do not show any interest in it either. As one interviewee put it: “Budget lines are currently not set up to make a coherent programme for the client and we - INGOs - are better off like that”.

The NGOs and INGOs we interviewed did not specify any programme or activity that was desperately needed in Georgia. When the content of a return and reintegration programme was discussed, even basic issues were not necessarily agreed upon. Some respondents proposed the establishment of a reception centre close to the airport as a first stop for returnees. Others disagreed and proposed either a more decentralized approach or the use of already existing facilities. Regarding the process for the returnee, the full range of familiar reintegration measures, from profiling, psychological counselling, employment support, job placement, vocational training, through to support in finding accommodation, provision of medical and social services, legal aid and family support was mentioned. The proposed length of support activities also varied, ranging from three months to two years if required. Most respondents claimed that individual reintegration budgets should be used in cooperation with a counsellor to design specific reintegration packages depending on the needs of the individual returnee. Additional training - such as managing individual finances, setting up businesses etc. - were mentioned as well. In summary, the idea of a comprehensive reintegration programme was welcomed by most interviewees; the proposed activities and the content of such a programme were in line with similar projects in many other countries and no specific need for Georgia has been identified which would deviate from the traditional approach for such an activity.

As was to be expected, most of the NGOs and INGOs involved claimed that they would be the best organization to implement such a programme, while only a few were capable of expanding on clear criteria as to why they should be chosen. Evaluation of the NGOs and INGOs is only done marginally. So far there is no data to substantiate how effectively and efficiently the work of these organizations is carried out.

5.2 Proposals and ideas of the government on sustainable return

As has been said, there is no government agency clearly in charge of migration and therefore also of a reintegration and return programme. While some were aware of the possible implications of the mobility partnership, it became evident that generally, the issue of reintegration is not high on the political agenda. Therefore a future reintegration programme was greeted as a positive step, but without a great deal of enthusiasm.

In considering the practical implementation of a comprehensive reintegration programme, the need to identify possible returnees and assert their legal status has been emphasized several times - also by staff of the embassies. Comments further revealed that the government has not given the matter much consideration and relevant institutions see it more as a technical and administrative issue than a social and developmental one. It is also clear that there is no overview of all players involved at a governmental level. While some ministerial staff were able to demonstrate some idea of players in the other ministries, there was no interviewee who could mention more than 30% of the other stakeholders or their activities.

When it came to the question of how far local authorities - the municipalities - were capable of supporting a prospective reintegration programme there was a wide range of responses. Answers varied from assessing the capabilities as very weak and highly corrupt to judging the idea worth contemplating, as the returnees, especially in rural areas, will have family connections with the staff of local authorities and therefore commitment will be visible. Some interviewees said that local structures are too weak for any implementation and a lot of capacity building would be necessary, others said that the situation differs from one municipality to another and that resources have increased during the last four to five years, while independence has decreased. All interviewees were unanimous in stating that political
will has to be transmitted from the political centre to make local authorities feel comfortable with
the idea of cooperation in any effort of this kind. Currently, decentralisation of powers towards the
municipalities is a political hot potato.

Concerning where to place responsibility for a reintegration programme, ideas also varied widely. The
Georgian governmental structure is undergoing permanent changes, with various degrees of authority
of vested in different and sometimes competing agencies. Currently, the Ministry for Refugees and
Accommodation is theoretically the best placed to take up the issue of reintegration, especially as the
task is written into their constitution and they have a rel-evant department carrying the issue in its
name. On the other hand, the Ministry's main task so far has been to deal with IDPs, and capacity is
not sufficient to administer a full-blown reintegration programme. Recent initiatives to rename them
the Ministry of Migration failed. Still, the relevant department within the Ministry is clearly trying
to position itself to take the lead in the matter, despite serious reservations about this from other
influential actors in the field.

No clear vision exists as to the content of such a programme. It became quite obvious that the details
of such a programme would be seen primarily as the responsibility of the executive agencies and the
donors who would provide funding. No ideas were mentioned or highlighted which differ from the
already recognised, traditional approach and a number of interviewees were not even aware of these
well established methods and approaches.

With regard to the target group, most interviewees accepted the research teams' focus on re-jected
asylum seekers. Some asked about illegal migration, but generally the impression held that any target
group defined by those funding such a programme would be acceptable to the government. In one
instance the issue of forcibly returned migrants from the Russian Feder-ation was mentioned because
of their potentially high number and the need to include them in any reintegration activity.

6 Conclusions

The action research shows clear potential for a reintegration programme in Georgia, but it has also been
possible to define certain challenges.

6.1 Positive potential for a reintegration programme

- Basically, the mobility partnerships deal for Georgia comes down to the facts that obtaining a visa is
easier for those who want to move out of Georgia, and more costs are involved with those who return.
But the government is not actively against the reintegration of returnees and has agreed in principle
within the negotiations about the EU mobility partnership, because the deal involves give and take
from both the EU and Georgia. To a lesser extent, openness and the readiness to deal with the EU
on these issues is seen as part of Georgian efforts to come closer to the European family and show
goodwill.

- Government has some experience in dealing with groups of special concern in programmes related
to IDPs and victims of human trafficking. Some INGOs and a handful of local NGOs are involved in
this field. If coordinated in a coherent programme, experiences from staff in these activities might
bear fruit in efforts to reintegrate returnees.

- In the past, most social integration of returnees has been possible with the support of family
structures helping returnees to find accommodation. Low numbers of returnees currently make use
of the struggling returnee programmes from INGOs and NGOs. When programmes are set up they
should be focused on a short basic aid period and on a job placement as soon as possible, within
three to six months.

- Current returnee numbers are low and family structures work effectively. This points towards a
generally positive attitude in the wider society with regard to returnees. The expectation is that the
numbers of returnees will rise and the question is to what extent the absorption capacity of families
will be able to keep up the positive potential.

- Programmes for the more difficult processes concerned with the legal aspects of return should not be
intermingled with the ‘softer’ side of return. Organizations assisting in the travel and administrative
procedures do not qualify as strong partners for the rehabilitation and reintegration process.

- There are a few organizations with a certain degree of experience in reintegration activities, in
addition to a variety of NGOs and other service providers who could be called upon for the provision of specific services. The country is currently reintroducing a vocational training system that could be strengthened with the help of expertise, money and participants to coach returnees.

- The Ministry for Refugees and Accommodation is actively interested in taking up the issue, and is willing to provide coordination for any reintegration programme if asked to do so. Most parties favour the scenario where a special agency for return is involved in the coordination of returnees. This initiative could be started by an NGO that could be institutionalized over time.
- Georgia is a relatively small country with a small population. The government has shown its ability to integrate European initiatives quickly. If well organized, reintegration activities could be quite effective because of the limited geographical scope. Furthermore, reintegration in rural areas can have a very good cost/effect ratio because of the substantially lower living costs in those areas.
- Because of the fact that a reintegration programme does not exist and new and government structures are not yet in place, the chances are that sponsors would be able to shape the way it was structured and implemented quite easily. Current INGOs and NGOs should be included in the design.

6.2 Challenges for a reintegration programme

- Apart from the generally problematic economic climate, definite information about important issues related to successful economic integration – like reliable labour-market data – does not exist. The government does not have any employment agencies. Informal employment is at least as important as formal employment.
- Government does not have a clear implementation structure available for these kinds of programmes. This could result in conflicts of interest, inter-ministerial competition and ambiguity of responsibilities and must, therefore, be dealt with. Intergovernmental organizations show signs of strong competition and do not work together: something that does not help government to shape a clear forward strategy.
- Local NGOs dealing with migration issues are few and do not always have the capacity to implement larger programmes. Capacity building might be necessary.
- Coordination between current reintegration programmes does not exist. Some organizations seem to compete with each other and bringing them to one table might become a difficulty if the incentives for cooperation are too small. Self-regulation on this point is highly improbable.
- The government will not rate reintegration very highly on the priority list for political action as long as the problem of IDPs persists. In addition, this is reinforced by significant funding support for IDP activities, which helps to draw the government's focus to this specific problem.
- Important actors in the field, especially UNHCR, do not support or recommend 'return in displacement', i.e. facilitating the return of migrants from the occupied areas in a state of displacement within Georgia. If those numbers were significant, a discussion about the issue might surface.
- While all stakeholders generally agree upon the feasibility and usefulness of a comprehensive reintegration programme, only a few received the idea enthusiastically, indicating that that the problem is not much on their mind at this point.
- The majority of migrants is estimated to come from the countryside. Most returnees live in cities. To a large extent, these people try migration to another Member State within five years of return. If reintegration into the regions is not effectively facilitated, the chances are that reintegration will adversely contribute to the growth of Tbilisi, which is the major urban centre, at the expense of the rest of the country. This will contradict the potential developmental aspects of a sustainable return policy. Second movement of returnees should receive special attention in any return programme.

7 Next steps

- The migration arena in Georgia lacks a responsible agency with influence, resources and ambition, able to prepare the country for expected higher returnee numbers. As yet there is no apparent sense of urgency. Steps forward should include:
  - involvement of a local component (to ensure that returnees do not experience jealousy from those who stayed)
  - a focus on rural areas (since many returnees have rural origins and current in-itiatives provide specialized services for this group only marginally)
  - cooperation with the small group of INGOs already present, and strengthening local NGOs, possibly instituting a specialized NGO for this purpose.
• Implementation of a comprehensive reintegration programme is dependent on the political commitment of decision makers at governmental level. As the Georgian political system is highly centralized, it will be necessary to identify the most important actors who would be responsible for creating sufficient political leverage to cover the implementation of such a programme. The negotiations about the mobility partnership provide an excellent background for gathering political commitment and the idea of a comprehensive reintegration programme should be introduced as early as possible to pave the way for tangible activities.

• While the exact definition of the returnee or refugee has not been the basis of this research, this seems to be a point of importance for all stakeholders involved. Some interviewees seem to look more favourably on the return of rejected asylum seekers than undocumented, irregular migrants. Since these groups might be somewhat inter-mixed, depending on the administrative provision of the EU member state where they live, it might be necessary to clarify the target group for which the reintegration programme will be available and which categories of returnee would be excluded. It must be remembered that too narrow a definition would exclude a great many returnees, such as those from the Russian Federation, who would not qualify for any support. This might be the cause of internal friction within the country.

• IOM must be considered as an implementation agency right from start, as the organization wields some significant influence in government. Nevertheless, a more local service provider with a positive image should be selected, capable of inspiring an atmosphere of cooperation in order to access the good services of other organizations in the field to develop reintegration activities for individual returnees.

• Consultations must include the influential Ministry for the Interior, either to make sure that legal proceedings in defining the status of returnees will not cause unnecessary bottlenecks (as they have in some cases in the past) or to gather sufficient political influence to compel other government agencies, including the local authorities where required, to cooperate. Other government partners are: experts from the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Education and Sciences.
Action research in the Republic of Congo, October 17th to 24th 2009

Interview team: Mattijs Maussen, HIT Foundation
Jan Vranken, HIT Foundation, on a special task for COA, the Central Organization for the reception of Asylum Seekers in the Netherlands

“Mikili a Gogo - Never enough of Europe”

1 Translation of the slogan of a mobile phone company that is currently advertised all over the richer parts of Kinshasa
1 Introduction

This report is part of the action research “European cooperation on sustainable return and re-integration” conducted by HIT foundation on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As part of the exercise leading towards the final report, this paper will try to answer the five general questions posed for the research programme, namely:

1. To what extent do EU member states strive to achieve the sustainable reintegration of returning (former) asylum seekers?

2. Which programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin are implemented/financed by EU member states?

3. What benefits can be obtained by setting up programmes to support reintegration in the countries of origin at a European level and in cooperation with the countries of origin?

4. To what extent is it possible to set up reintegration support programmes in the countries of origin at a European level and together with the countries of origin?

   i. To what extent is there political support for cooperation?
      1. From European institutions?
      2. From national member states?
      3. From civil society?
      4. From parties in the countries of origin.

   ii. Under which preconditions is European cooperation practically feasible?

5. To what extent is it advisable to bring local reintegration support programmes under umbrella programmes led by the governments in the countries of origin?

For this case study, questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 are of primary concern. Therefore, the major goals of this report were to:

- Identify current stakeholders in reintegration activities, if existing.
- Review the government’s official standpoint on reintegration measures.
- Collect feedback from relevant NGOs, INGOs or international organisations with regard to return and reintegration and to reflect upon future possibilities for a comprehensive programme.

2 Methodology

This report is based on interviews conducted by two researchers during a one-week stay in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from the 17th to the 24th of October 2009. A full schedule of visits can be found in the annex. The interviews were either conducted by both consultants together or, where the schedule required, separately. All interviews are documented in short summaries that can also be found in the annex. In addition, printed material referring to the question was collected and scrutinized where available. Below you can find the interview list. The interview partners represent NGOs and government actors as well as returnees sharing their personal experiences. All in all, 31 persons were interviewed, either individually or in group sessions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Level</th>
<th>Zephyrin Mungongo</th>
<th>Vice minister of the interior and security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kayembe Tshikudi</td>
<td>Ministry of Plenipotentiaries, Director of the Service for Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colette Tshomba Ntundu</td>
<td>Vice Minister of the Congolese Diaspora</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibrahim Bin Angali</th>
<th>Assistant Coordinator, in charge of planning, Ministry of foreign affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joko Bale Kongolo</td>
<td>General Director of the Immigration Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Drion</td>
<td>Vice Coordinator of the tax department, Ministry of finances, Cofed Attached to the department for European Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roland Kashwantale</td>
<td>Central Director of Statistics Department of the Immigration Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaques Ikwa Ekila</td>
<td>General Director of the National Border Police DGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Muland</td>
<td>Counsellor to the minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diplomatic Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andreas Magnusson</th>
<th>First Secretary political relations, Embassy of Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan Huesken</td>
<td>Vice-Ambassador, Dutch Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alain Delamotte</td>
<td>Consul, French Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunita Verlinde</td>
<td>First Secretary political relations, Dutch Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter F. Stern</td>
<td>First secretary, consular affairs, Dutch Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didier Verwaerde</td>
<td>Consul, Embassy of Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffroy de Liedekerke</td>
<td>Ambassador for the Sovereign Order of Maltese Knights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mme Susan Curtis</td>
<td>Second Secretary in charge of migration issues, Embassy of the United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INGOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Franz Rauchenstein</th>
<th>Chief of Mission, International Red Cross Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Lelu</td>
<td>Project Manager Maison des Congolais d'etranger, for IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Bruno Miteyo Nyenge</td>
<td>Vice President Caritas Africa, Caritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed Toure</td>
<td>Vice representative for protection, UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndeye Ndour Mbaye</td>
<td>Representative, Regional Assistant (Operations), UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlene Ostrowska</td>
<td>Project Development Officer, IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali Elavia</td>
<td>Resource Management Officer, IOM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Background information

3.1 Political background

In a strictly legal sense, DRC has a government. This, however, differs in practice, and all respondents - except those from the government – said more or less the same: there is a state, a capital and a currency, but the state started to disappear after the Congolese war.

By the mid 1980s, the Congolese state wasn’t performing even minimal functions as a result of decades of misrule. Reconstructing a collapsed state takes years of effort, and this is one of the reasons why DRC has been attracting violence from neighbouring countries. DRC is a huge country with 52 million inhabitants and nine neighbouring countries. Reconstruction will be a major challenge for the next few years, or even decades.

In a country haunted by forty years of dictatorship under Mobutu SeseSoko, the 5 years of Africa’s version of a World War between 1998 and 2003 cost 3.8 million lives. Mobutu was defeated by Kabila senior in 2004 and after his death in 2005, the Democratic Republic of Congo held elections that were an important step towards political normality in the second half of 2006. After an arduous process lasting three months, which occasionally threatened to erupt into violence, a new cabinet was declared on 5 February 2007. Despite the positive political atmosphere that has accompanied these more democratic structures, there are three main questionable political trends:

• The cabinet is large (6 ministers of state, 34 ministers and 20 deputy ministers), although this is probably a necessary evil given all the necessary inclusions.

• The absence of any opposition personalities either from the defeated Bemba camp, veteran politicians like Étienne Tshisekedi or from the camp of Baluba. This latter group is generally considered the most serious risk as it could marginalize an important ethnic group from the Kasai region that had always featured prominently in leading the country. As one of the respondents said: “The one that rules Kasai, rules the country”.

• The cabinet is a “winner-takes-all” body. Kabila’s party, Alliance pour la Majorite Presidentielle or AMP took 11 provincial governorships and 55 of the 108 senate seats through dubious manipulations. It also has 34 ministerial positions. In parliament, the AMP has 330 MPs out of 500 and with the new laws stating that presidencies will be chosen by majority vote, Kabila has ensured that it has almost total control over the entire government.

Reforming the security sector reform is the new government’s main problem. The militias of the east are a nuisance for Kinshasa and a tragedy for the local population in the Kivus who suffer under them. The DRC’s official army is a danger in social and security terms. It is composed of elements from the various armies that fought each other during the war. The soldiers are poorly paid, poorly trained, poorly integrated, tribally divided and brutally treated by their officers who tend to steal their pay. The army is only one notch up from banditry.

The reshuffling of the different armies has been unsuccessful so far for three reasons: the necessary trainers are not always available; the foreign donors for the mixing process (Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, South Africa and Angola) cannot agree among themselves about what to do and corruption has wreaked havoc with the process (over $30m has “disappeared” from the

---

Source: Gérard Prunier is research professor at the University of Paris and director of the French Centre for Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa. He is the author of The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide (C Hurst, 1995), Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide (C Hurst, 2005), and From Genocide to Continental war: The Congolese Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa (C Hurst, 2006)

With the notable exception of the presidential guard, which is an army within the army.
demobilisation fund in the last 5 years).
The situation is worrying. But even when all the negative factors are taken into consideration, the DRC today is capable of a real democratic transformation for the first time since independence in 1960. However, it still has a long way to go.

3.2 Economic background
Sparingly populated in relation to its area, DRC is home to a vast potential of natural resources and mineral wealth. Despite this, DRC has been listed as one of the five poorest countries in the world for the past 10 years and the per capita annual income was approximately $184 in 2008. This is the result of years of mismanagement, corruption and war.

The key economical trends in relation to migration are:
• There are not enough opportunities to find work or generate income in DRC. The World Bank has estimated unemployment at 85% in the 4 main cities. Consequently, the informal economy is the country's financial backbone.
• DRC has appeared on the Dutch government's annual list of less favoured countries to do business with for the past 10 years.
• The DRC's lack of economic development is linked to the conflicts in and around the country. This, together with the absence of strong governance, encourages mass emigration. 3.7 million people of Congolese descent live outside the country. The number of Congolese asylum seekers is a mere fraction of the numbers of IDPs and refugees that DRC host themselves. There is more information about figures on page 11. As one of the respondents stated: “In DRC, people rarely laugh on the streets”.
• There is a lack of qualified professionals in important departments such as Health Care and Education.
• The percentage of Congolese living under the ‘poverty line’, on less than $1 per day has risen from 44.5 % in 1994 to over 70 % in 2003. It is estimated that of the current population living under the poverty line, 80 % are living on less than $0.20 per day.
• More and more children are leaving school before finishing high school. The education system does not connect to the needs of the population; therefore a significant part of the population does not receive any form of education.
• Hygiene, the lack of access to healthcare and the increasing rates of HIV-AIDS infection are complex matters which are becoming ever more worrying.

In summary, increasing numbers of former asylum seekers from Europe who have been declared illegal are being extradited to DRC, where they fall into poverty. Furthermore, over 23,000 Congolese have been sent back from Angola. They made a second move and returned to Angola, where they are still under the threat of deportation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DRC</th>
<th>SE, DE, D, F, B, UK, NL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Km²</td>
<td>2,944.585</td>
<td>1,809.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>$206.4 Billion</td>
<td>$727.16 Trillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants</td>
<td>52 Million</td>
<td>213 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants</td>
<td>212,713 Refugees</td>
<td>163,253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|          | 1,400,900 IDPs' | Asylum seekers
Agriculture is the mainstay of the Congolese economy, accounting for 42.5% of the GDP in 2007. Industry accounted for 28.4% of GDP in the same year, of which 6.4% came from manufacturing. Services accounted for 29.1% of GDP in 2007. The DRC's formal economy is dominated by the mining sector. Minerals account for the vast majority of exports and represent the single largest source for foreign direct investment. Copper, cobalt, gold, coltan, tin, and zinc are the main metals being mined and produced.

The diamond sector currently accounts for about 10% of the DRC's export revenue which was around $875 million in 2008 and may approach $1 billion in 2009. All diamond production in the DRC is currently artisanal.3

For decades, corruption and misguided policy created a dual economy in the DRC. Individuals and businesses in the formal sector operated with high costs under arbitrarily enforced laws. As a consequence, the informal sector now dominates the economy and only 230,000 Congolese working in private enterprises in the formal sector were enrolled in the social security system.

In recent years, the Congolese Government approved a new Investment Code and a new Mining Code and designed a new Commercial Court with the goal of attracting foreign investors. The main investors since then have been Chinese entrepreneurs. The World Bank also is supporting efforts to restructure the DRC's large parastatal sector and to rehabilitate the DRC's neglected infrastructure, including the Inga Dam hydroelectric system.

The DRC has been significantly and negatively impacted by the global financial crisis due to its heavy reliance on natural resources for foreign exchange and revenues and its limited capacity to protect its economy against external shocks. Reduced demand and lower prices for minerals have lead to a significant contraction of the DRC’s mining sector, the driver of the DRC’s recent economic growth and a major source of formal sector employment and investment. The Congolese franc (CF) depreciated by 27% in 2008 (down from 500% in 2001), with the depreciation rate accelerating in the last quarter of the last year and spiking in mid-January 2009. At the same time, continuing conflict in eastern DRC is having an adverse impact on the fiscal balance through public expenditures. The international donor community, including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, African Development Bank and European Union provided emergency financial assistance to the DRC in early 2009 to augment international reserves and help ensure the continued provision of basic services.

The DRC's five year development framework focuses heavily on President Kabila's five priority areas: infrastructure, employment, education, water/electricity and health. At a Consultative Group meeting held in November 2007, international donors pledged $4 billion to support the implementation of the PRSP and broader economic development for the period 2008-2010. Many donors had disengaged from the DRC prior to 2002.

In early 2008, the DRC concluded an agreement with a consortium of Chinese companies to create a joint venture to exploit mining resources and develop the Congolese infrastructure. As originally envisaged, the project was to be financed by a $9 billion loan arranged by the consortium. To ensure DRC's long-term debt sustainability, however, some of the loan agreement's provisions must be amended before the DRC and the IMF agree on a new PRGF program.

3.3 Migration patterns

On an international level, DRC is characterized as both immigration and an emigration country. This is the case despite the fact that the internal situation is not favourable for attracting foreign populations due to ongoing unrest in most of the country. State services and economic activities are both experiencing a steep decline.

Key tendencies in the field of migration are:
• DRC has become a transit country for people from neighbouring countries who want to migrate to South Africa.
• Since 2002, there has been a decline in the number of refugees, from over 300.000 in 2002 to around

Sources: World Bank reports, USA Department of state - Bureau of Public Affairs,
200,000 in 2007. This is due to a decrease in the intensity of several conflicts in and around DRC, as well as an increased number of UNHCR operations. Because of this, 40% of the refugees on DRC territory left the country between 2005 and 2007.

- Certain kinds of formal work, especially in construction, mining and the hotel industry are mostly done by foreigners. Most of the foreign workforce do not have permits to work or reside in DRC, and therefore work in the informal sector. Most of these irregular foreigners work in commerce (selling second hand spare parts for cars, hand-made bijous and trafficking precious metals and stones illegally).

- As mentioned earlier, 3.78 million Congolese citizens live abroad, as compared to 2.13 million in 1995.

- An important tendency seen in emigration from DRC is the ongoing diversification of the profile of emigrants. An increasing number of women and children are leaving the country. This conflict-driven emigration occurs on both an individual and collective level. In the latter case, groups of same ethnicity fle lunch together. An example of this is the Banyamulenge in the east of the country. They were invited to several European countries and the UK as refugees.

- Besides the traditional destinations in Europe, such as France, Belgium and Germany, there is an increase in ‘new’ destinations such as the UK and China. South Africa has also become an important destination for migrants from DRC, even though most Congolese emigrants are still in other parts of Africa.

- The Brain Drain is a major problem. 65% of the higher educated Congolese live abroad. Within this group, health professionals are the most important. Most of these professionals are now working in countries such as Zambia, Namibia, Botswana and South-Africa. The brain drain is expected to continue in the years to come.

- Over 80% of households in major cities such as Kinshasa and Lubumbashi are dependent on remittances from Congolese living abroad. Most of these remittances are paid through informal channels.

The lack of statistics is important. It is very difficult to find a good report on the situation in DRC due to the deplorable condition of state institutions. Most studies on migration show that available statistics often contradict each other. This lack of official information has been recognized by the UN and the World Bank who recently began collecting information themselves.

The main problem is that returning Congolese do not want to be registered as such. This is partly due to the fear of corruption when entering the country with sums of (return) aid. Other aspect is the “loss of face” that is a major aspect of Congolese culture for someone who has returned without success and riches. It is therefore to be expected that the numbers below may be exponentially higher in reality.
## Returnees to the DRC, overview 2004-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Africa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Return and reintegration activities

The research team tried to provide a stakeholder overview of relevant actors in the field of migration. While some important information was gathered on relevant institutions, the following assessment does not claim to reflect the entire situation or to include all possible institutions at either the organisational or activity level. The fact that even those active in the field found it difficult to name all the relevant stakeholders shows that this problem was not limited to the research team. In general, the result of the stakeholder identification process looks like this:

**Member States**
- Dep. for Diaspora
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Labour Dep. for Diaspora
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Sociology

**European Commission**
- UNHCR
- IOM
- RED Cross Int.

**Government Providers**
- OFII
- GTZ
- People in Need
- Caritas
- RED Cross DRC

**Inter-Governmental Service Providers**
- CODHO
- L’Ordre de Malte

**Local Providers**
- Municipalities
- Community based Organisations
- Church based Organisations
- Family & Friends

**Client**
- DGM
- Cozy Christian Aid
- Int. Rescue
- VDSV
- CESVE
- CRAIES
- L’Ordre de Malte

(ex) Asylum Seeker

The following chapters will try to elaborate on this picture in more detail.

#### 4.1 Quantitative assessment of return and return policies

There is no official data on return. As we will see, there is only one organisation dealing with returnees, a local network of former asylum seekers called Craeis. Practically all organizations mentioned that IOM has the monopoly on handling returnees. The other organisations are scarce and scattered, and do not exchange statistical data. Even information about each other’s activities is only exchanged by accident. There are no government statistics available. Some figures are claimed by institutions interviewed in this report. Please see the following table for the cases reported during the meetings.

4 Source : IOM report on national status 2004-2009 & World Bank reports
5 From the NL 3 persons returned that are in this statistic
The table provides a reference to the organizations involved in return activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Returnees yearly</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return and reintegration programme, emergency reception and some transport, entrepreneur training and medical assistance</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>UK, Belgium and Swiss are the top 3 countries. Next to the “normal” IOM programme, they have the Don Bosco house, 2.5 hours from the airport and implement a programme together with Caritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration package</td>
<td>l’ordre de Malthe</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Works together with the l’ordre de Malthe network worldwide. Budget of 120,000 euro for 3 years funded by the French government and the European Return Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Cooperation between Red Cross International and RC Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return services</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not within their mandate, aid when there is health or extreme humanitarian aid required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services and Development</td>
<td>Caritas Congo</td>
<td>Be 5, NL 1</td>
<td>Projects with partners from the Caritas network focused on the development of the local economy in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return and reintegration services</td>
<td>Caritas</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Project is finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services and development aid</td>
<td>People in Need</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Czech development NGO that sporadically takes care of returnees in their development aid programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audits of the embassy and special cases on return issues</td>
<td>OFII</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Presence on the floor but it is not clear what they do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Return Programme</td>
<td>GTZ</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Only those have studied or are studying at German universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some reintegration services</td>
<td>Voie des sans Voie VDSV</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Voice of the small voices foundation defending the human rights of individual returnees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy research and when asked advice</td>
<td>Clinton and Jimmy Carter foundation</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>US funded. NGO that defines the rights of all migrants in their relation with the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td>CODHO</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Italian NGO. All those interviewed stated that these organizations are only marginally involved in reintegration, performing legal services for returnees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return and reintegration services</td>
<td>CRAIES</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Network of former returnees mostly funded by the UK. Involved in awareness campaigns such as TV programs, comics strips and poster campaigns. Also key in finding respondents for research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services</td>
<td>CISPE</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Italian NGO mentioned by 6 stakeholders as working in the field of human rights and personal aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration services</td>
<td>Ministry for External Affairs, department for diaspora services</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Offers employment both in Congo and abroad and a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All in all, the research identified 16 organisations somehow involved with return. As can be seen from the table, not one of these organisations deals with the topic specifically or devotes most of their capacity to return and reintegration services. IOM started focussing on return services in 2001. In 2005 IOM started working on large-scale projects connected to strengthening military and police forces and this is currently 95% of their work in DRC. Apart from the scattered INGOs and NGOs who work in this field without any mutual cooperation and coordination, there is also the government supported House of the Congolese Migrants, which is sponsored mainly by Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, by the UK. This project is related to return, but focuses on both immigration and emigration. Belgium is the main actor in the field of visas. The Belgians set up a so-called Schengen house where the handling of visas is centralized.

Responses from those interviewed puts the number of returnees somewhere between 150 and 350 persons per year. More specific data is not available.

There is one important remark to be made here: almost all respondents stated that the biggest issue with returnees in DRC is their “loss of face”, the return without dignity. The notion that they have failed and are being sent back means that most returnees do not want to be registered as being on the receiving end of return services. Since the Congolese government does not register returnees either, the only statistics are from professional estimates by officials in Europe. Interviews with those in direct contact with returnees confirms this statement.

4.2 Type of assistance for reintegration and return
As there is no comprehensive national reintegration programme in DRC, activities are scattered among the organisations mentioned above and vary in quantity, duration and scope, depending on the type of assistance provided by donors. IOM is the largest player on paper and deals with the well-known variety of assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes established by European governments, notably the United Kingdom and Switzerland. These programmes normally include a cash payment upon return, counselling and advice services, support in finding employment or starting in self-employment, help in organizing shelter and, depending on the individual case, certain medical services. When asked about PDPs (Personal Development Plans), the concept was generally unfamiliar to IOM officials, who had to search to find the plans. IOM confirmed that most plans made for the returnee’s future are not used. Business plans, on the other hand, showed 5-6 successful cases in the past year in the field of transport, agro business and health care services. Most programmes from the other players offer similar services although never of the same sophistication or duration. Psychological support, with the exception of the rare cases in which traumatized returnees receive treatment, is not available. Families, friends and churches play an important role in the treatment of mental distress upon return.

As there are no employment agencies in DRC and the economic situation can best be described as fragile and informal, job placement and income generation are major challenges for any reintegration activity in DRC. In post-conflict countries remittances are an essential part of the stabilization strategy and many families send members abroad to ensure a constant cash flow. As one of the respondents formulated regarding the position of the families: “When you, the unlucky family member, sending 50 Euro home to DRC monthly, are returned, the family decides to send 3 other persons who could ensure remittances of 100 Euro monthly”. For this purpose the UK government is setting up awareness campaigns in the country stating the risks of illegal migration.

IOM stands out as a principal partner for most relations with the government, but admitted to receiving no more than 30-50 returnees through various return programmes each year, around half of them from the UK. The Swiss government is also actively involved in supporting government activities, and
helped to fund the House of the Congolese Migrants. The Dutch Embassy financed the construction of the ‘Boboto’ house on the grounds of the Don Bosco youth centre. This project was intended to cater to returning former asylum-seekers from the Netherlands, but so far it has not been used. Key issues are the distance to the airport (a ride of 2.5 hours through areas that most taxi driver will not drive in) and the returnees’ fear of registration.

The UK Embassy explained that they are engaged in an awareness-raising campaign to focus the government’s attention on the problem. It involves researching the situation of returnees both in the UK and in DRC with recommendations for reintegration (report is from May 2009). The draft was made available to the research team.

The interviews clearly showed that no actor has a full overview over all the other actors in the field and that coordination, cooperation or communication is not organized in any shape or form. The only coordination initiative in the past three years was when IOM used Caritas for implementation, but its only result was a one-off workshop. Points of cooperation exist where organisations coincidentally and sporadically use their colleagues’ services with regard to individual cases or where meetings are held in other setups. All actors clearly stated that government activities display no visible coordination or supervision efforts. Most respondents are even clear that any government involvement might cause more harm than good. Most also stated that government approval is essential when setting up such activities. In order to obtain this approval, it is necessary to state the benefits –in stakes but especially in cash- before a project can commence.

The local, “home-grown”, NGO scene can best be described as small, fragmented and fragile. Despite the fact that more than 500 NGOs are officially registered with the government, it is clear that the main reason for establishing many of these organisations is to access donor money, especially in such vague areas of activity such as “democracy”, “human rights” or “good governance”. Hardly any Congolese NGOs focus completely on migration issues or, specifically, on the issue of reintegration nor are they involved in practical implementation in addition to work at the policy programme level. One of the few exceptions is CRAIES, an organisation that provides respondents for migration research. The local capacity for implementing aspects of reintegration programmes exists, on the other hand, within “general” NGOs, as many respondents pointed out. Current initiatives only make marginal use of these resources. Most returnees do not want to be registered as such as this is perceived as a loss of face. When local NGOs are used, this has more to do with certain services these NGOs can provide and the desire for initiatives to include local resources, and less with the presence of specialized agencies devoted to the issue of reintegration.

In general, many respondents stated that reintegration occurs “informally” and is working quite well. Do not forget that most returnees do not arrive unexpectedly and have had a long period to prepare for return, especially with regard to earning money while waiting for their return date. Because of the importance of remittances for family structures in post-conflict countries, many families will send other members abroad. This view is supported by the interviews with returnees, who claimed that friends, family and churches provided the major support structure for a second move or replacement by other family members, even if some official support has been given.

4.3 The role of government and government agencies in return and reintegration
Apart from the aforementioned special programme at the House of the Congolese Migrant that is supervised by the Ministry for External Affairs, there is no official programme to support returnees. The country has large numbers of IDP refugees and is receiving so many migrants that small numbers of returnees from Europe are only of interest when there is money involved in possible projects. When government programmes are set up in cooperation with donors, member states are said to highjack events to raise awareness for the issues of returnees from Europe. Responsibility for migration matters is clearly located at the Ministry of Interior department DGM where a border service is involved. All other migration matters are located at the Ministry of External Affairs Department for the Diaspora.
The Ministry for Refugees deals predominantly with IDPs. Next to the aforementioned DGM department, the Ministry of the Interior touches the topic of migration when operating its ANR (National Security Service Authority). The Ministry of Justice deals with formal, administrative readmission procedures. All those interviewed saw the Ministry for Social Affairs as lacking a clear mandate and sufficient resources for anything other than giving the clearance needed for minor ex-asylum seekers.

It is quite evident that with regard to migration, the government is quite preoccupied with the challenge of IDPs and, to a lesser extent, with the refugees inside the country. Nevertheless, awareness of reintegration is increasing due to the focus on funding, partly because of the negotiations on the decreasing numbers of forced returns from the European Union and the increase of small, fragmented initiatives by individual Member States. This awareness, however, is clearly confined to a declaratory level of politics.

4.4 The perspective of the returnees

Three persons who were in direct contact with returnees, one returnee and two employers were interviewed during the course of the study. In addition to telling their individual stories, the respondents elaborated on one point. Families see returnees as a terrible failure if they do not return with sums as large as €15,000 EUR, and returnees are probably worse off upon return than they were when they left the DRC. That aside, not many significant conclusions could be drawn from the interviews. All of the respondents claimed that there were no particular problems that they could not solve themselves upon return. As a matter of fact, they claimed that return programmes would only be used to obtain funding for activities that would take place anyway. On the other hand, they defined the period of full reintegration as up to six months, especially with regard to readjusting to cultural attitudes and psychological problems. No open dissatisfaction was voiced regarding the absence of reintegration services. Most returnees have serious problems finding a job in the months after. All respondents described economic challenges, and claimed not to be able to overcome them either by their own persistent efforts or with the help of friends, family and the church. Most received a small amount of financial support from the host government, but claimed that had been spent in the first 2 weeks after returning to the country.

Returnees are being offered an information centre in the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Kinshasa. The house is equipped by the Swiss and UK governments and run by IOM staff. The house holds information gatherings for immigrants and informs emigrants. While the house was visited by four returnees in the last 2 months, 70 visitors provided daily information on emigration. There is a clear picture that proportionally more people want to leave than are returning. In addition to this, Member States are providing funds for emigration services while the same and other Member States are preventing leaving and motivating return.

The two employers stated that people with a “western attitude” towards work from a Congolese background are freely available. Moreover, employees with integrity and work spirit and with a willingness to work for a national salary are preferred. Both employers stated that they could not consider working without expats and employed returnees in their organizations. Two issues were mentioned in both discussions: Congolese with an income have a large number of family and friends depending on them. In DRC, everyone is equally poor and anyone who wants to step out of this system will become a social pariah.

Returnees at work

One issue upon return is that the quality of life in DRC will not decline drastically if returnees can live in the capital. The problem is that the government does not allow returnees to come back to Kinshasa as the city is experiencing an explosive population growth. Other aspect that returnees face upon return is that Congolese society expects returnees to come back educated and rich. This image is reinforced by those who belong to the lower classes in Europe, but who spend large sums of money when they return to Congo for holidays in order to project a false image of success.

Secondly, the employers indicated that the global economic crisis has had no influence on the number of returnees. Even severe living conditions in Europe are perceived as being better than the situation that returnees would face when reabsorbed into their original circle of family and friends. Since these issues were only discussed with a few people, the above remarks should be regarded as nothing more than an indication.
5 Vision of Future Reintegration Policies and Programmes

5.1 Proposals and Ideas of Executing Organisations on Cooperation

NGOs and INGOs generally understand the advantages of a comprehensive reintegration and return programme, but enthusiasm for any cooperation beyond a donor-recipient-relationship seems to be non-existent. When questioned repeatedly, international organisations and INGOs stated that although coordination, cooperation and communication seems interesting almost only from the European perspective and to a lesser extent from the “final beneficiary” perspective, their organisations currently benefit more from the lack of it. They stated that, more importantly, their donors were also not interested in it. To the contrary, there are examples whereby national initiatives have been counterproductive when attempts were made at burden sharing between Member States. For example, the UK hires marketing companies to strengthen the imago of IOM in the UK, but other Member States hire IOM for capacity building of the police and building barracks for the military.

Interviewed NGOs and INGOs did not specify any programme or activity directly needed in DRC. When discussing the content of a return and reintegration programme they could not even agree upon basic issues. For example, some respondents proposed the establishment of a reception centre close to the airport as a first stop-off point for returnees. Others disagreed and proposed either a more decentralized approach with the use of cheap hostels. Yet others proposed the use of already existing facilities built for other purposes like the Don Bosco house, the Belgian reception centre or the Congolese house of migrants that is built with Swiss and UK funding. All of these locations are extensively maintained but none of them seem to be able to attract returnees. After returning, people seem unwilling to trust organisations that have been close to the government in the host country, such as IOM and the Swiss and Belgium return forces.

A wide range of “well known” reintegration measures, from profiling, employment support, job placement, vocational training, support in finding accommodation, provision of medical and social services, legal aid and family support was mentioned with regard to the process for returnees. When asked about the organisational aspect, most activities could be delivered by most of the actors involved. When asked about details of the delivery - with the exception of the few IOM cases - there was little to indicate that services were actually being provided. To cut it short: there are suppliers enough but nearly no one has experience.

Psychological counselling has not been developed in DRC and is mainly provided by families, friends and church-based organisations - the same actors who were involved in making the decision to emigrate in the first place. IOM claims to have two experts in psychological support but no services have been provided to returnees in the last 3 years.

When discussing the preferred duration of support activities most actors were unanimous: after a week of rehabilitation, it should be as short as possible. The mental distress that accompanies return to the home country after mostly a long stay in Europe usually has a deeper impact than the shock of arriving in Europe. Most respondents claimed that individual reintegration budgets should be used in cooperation with a counsellor to design specific reintegration packages fitted to the needs of individual returnees. Additional training courses, such as managing individual finances, setting up businesses and time-management, were also mentioned.

There are two clear visions on the financial contributions for returnees given by most countries upon return:
- cash donations should be limited to the absolute minimum while funding should be used to set up a tailor-made programme of specialized services such as psychological counselling in combination with business skills courses and providing goods to support the business;
- sober but transparent systems that provide budgets of a minimum of €15,000 per person paid in instalments.

Quote from a respondent from an INGO:
“The notion that the returnee has failed and therefore will lose face is the single crucial bottleneck but not taken in account in any current approach. INGOs prefer to work with existing programmes on activities that bring cash and that have minimal effect in the field of return”.

Quote from a respondent:“The notion that the returnee has failed and therefore will lose face is the single crucial bottleneck but not taken in account in any current approach. INGOs prefer to work with existing programmes on activities that bring cash and that have minimal effect in the field of return.”
In both cases, it is stressed that it is essential to spread the delivery of a combination of cash and/or services over a period longer than a year. Since remittances are essential for 80% of the population of the four largest cities in DRC, alternative sources of income have to be supported.

“In aid, never enough” stated a respondent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In summary, the idea of a comprehensive reintegration programme was welcomed by most respondents. The proposed activities and the content of such a programme were in line with similar projects in many other countries and with the exception of psycho-sociological support no specific need for DRC has been identified which would deviate from the “traditional” approach for such an activity.

As was to be expected, most of the NGOs and INGOs claimed that they would be the best organisation to implement such a programme, while only few were able to state clear reasons as to why they should be chosen. It was clearly stated that INGOs working closely together with governments in Europe and DRC were less well-equipped to deliver return services. The work of NGOs and the INGOs is only marginally evaluated and fails to focus on the lessons learned. So far there is no data to substantiate how effective and efficient these organisations are.

5.2 Proposals and ideas of the government on sustainable return

As stated, there is no one organisation clearly in charge of returnees from Europe or a reintegration and return programme. Some respondents believed that IOM has the monopoly on the provision of return services, which are only provided marginally and not as part of a wider cross-border concept. Generally, it became evident that the issue of reintegration is not high on the political agenda. The number of returnees from Europe is irrelevant in comparison to IDPs, refugees or others struggling on the Congolese labour market. A future reintegration programme was perceived as being premature, overly complicated and too much a case of “western-care-harmful” thinking. It was therefore met without much enthusiasm.

With regard to the practical implementation of a comprehensive reintegration programme, the need to make projects as practical as possible and to identify possible returnees as early as possible has been emphasized several times – especially by the staff of the embassies. Comments also revealed that the government did not pay much attention to the issue and institutions see it more as a possible way of obtaining funding, as a technical and administrative issue rather than as a social and developmental issue. It is also clear that while the government needs to be kept at a distance from the programme, it cannot be left out completely. IOM is the only actor to have an overview of all players involved, and even this is only to a limited extent. While some embassy staff were able to indicate players in the other ministries and at service provider level, not one respondent could mention more than 40% of the other stake-holders or their activities.

There were a variety of responses to the question of how far local authorities - municipalities - were capable of supporting a prospective reintegration programme. A general picture appeared that their capabilities are very weak and highly corrupt and should only be involved if the returnees - especially in the rural areas - have family connections with the local authorities as this would ensure commitment. Some respondents said that local structures are not capable of any implementation and capacity building would be necessary.

Ideas as to who should be responsible for a reintegration programme varied widely. The Congolese governmental structure has become accustomed to extensive funding from a wide range of donors due to its donor darling status as a post-conflict country. The government is quasi non-existent and ministries are more like paper structures than implementing bodies. Currently, the Ministry for Foreign Relations and the Department for Diaspora is theoretically the best place to take up the issue of reintegration, especially as the current Minister has adopted initiatives towards immigration, albeit in combination with emigration support. On the other hand, the Ministry of the Interior and its department for border control, DPM, has a strong say in the issue as well. Since it is this Ministry’s responsibility to control persons coming into the country, a procedure which is influenced by a great deal of corruption and power play while negotiating forced returns, this Ministry cannot be left out of the discussion on who is to manage the return dossier in DRC.

There is no clear vision with regard to the content of such a programme. The research team realized that by asking questions on this topic, it was encouraging service providers in DRC to believe that host
countries would be interested to set up funding. It became quite obvious that the details of such a programme would be seen as a new source of income that could support already existing structures and provide services now provided to IDPs and refugees. It is believed that returnees bring in more money than the first two groups. No new ideas were mentioned or highlighted that were not mentioned in the studies in Kurdistan and Georgia, except for the observation that there is no professional psycho-social assistance for returnees in DRC. Respondents stated that returnees are just too rich for these types of services in comparison to those who stayed behind in DRC.

With regard to the target group, most respondents did not accept the research team’s focus on rejected asylum seekers. Most respondents clearly thought that whether voluntary or involuntary, documented or undocumented, all those returning are Congolese as soon as their documentation proves so after setting foot in the country. Most asked about “illegal” migration and could understand that Congolese do anything possible to find better living conditions outside the country. Most also stated the irrelevance of the returnee population when compared to the total group of IDPs (1 million), Refugees (300,000) and Diaspora as a whole (3.7 million worldwide).

6 Conclusions

The action research showed that potential for a reintegration programme in DRC is extremely limited and defined clear challenges.

6.1 Positive potential for a reintegration programme
- The government has limited experience in dealing with special concern groups in programmes related to IDPs and victims of human trafficking. A large group of INGOs and a handful of local NGOs are involved in this field. Another group of NGOs is involved in human rights issues concerning Refugees and IDPs. If coordinated in a coherent programme, experiences from staff in these activities could bear fruit with regard to efforts to reintegrate returnees over time. Expectations of donors and returnees regarding its success should be managed closely.
- Most returnees currently do not use any return support other than the funding provided to them while in the Member State. When setting up a reintegration programme, the crucial influence of family, friends and church communities should be taken into account.
- Current official returnee numbers are low and family structures are hard towards those who return. This points towards a generally negative attitude in society towards returnees. The numbers of returnees is expected to increase slightly and the question is to what extent the absorption capacity of family will lead to a more negative attitude that will cause larger numbers of migrants to attempt to leave the country.
- There are 3 organisations with a degree of experience in reintegration activities, adding to a variety of NGOs and other service providers who could be called upon for the provision of distinct services. Capacity building for all of these organisations is essential for the implementation of a larger reintegration programme.
- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is interested in picking up the topic if it is combined with negotiations about accepting Congolese migrants in Member States. The Ministry is willing to provide coordination for any reintegration programme if asked to do so and if sufficient funding is enclosed. Most parties favour the scenario whereby the embassies concerned provide both each other and service providers with an overview of who is doing what. This initiative could be started off by the Ambassador’s board decision for embassy staff to spend time on organizing joint events that disseminate the different activities conducted by the various service providers.
- DRC is a very large country with a large population. The government does not yet demonstrate the ability to integrate European initiatives thoroughly. At the moment reintegration activities could only be effective, providing that they are well organized, if the (I)NGOs involved are reasonably well distributed across the country. Furthermore, reintegration in rural areas could have a better cost-effect-ratio but only if monitored very closely.

6.2 Challenges for a reintegration programme
- Key actors in the field, especially UNHCR, IRC and IOM, state that remittances and returnees supporting large family and friends groups with remittances –estimates vary from 15 to 60 persons—are considered an important stabilizing factor in post-conflict countries (80% of the inhabitants of
the 4 biggest cities depend upon them for their basic needs). When the remittance flow stops due to the return of the friend or family member from Europe, it is almost certain that the group will make several new attempts to send out new members to re-establish the remittance cash flow from Europe. Most stakeholders agreed that returning people from Europe to DRC leads to more candidates attempting to enter Europe. Any return programme should pay special attention to second moves by returnees or their family or friends.

- Apart from the very difficult economic climate, there is no definite information about important issues with regard to successful economic integration, such as reliable labour market data. Informal employment is currently five times more important than formal employment.
- The government does not have employment agencies, apart from the Maison des Congolais Etranger. Donors declared that they financed this house to establish more direct communication lines with The Vice Minister. Informing returnees about their possibilities upon arrival was a minor objective. All three donors that were spoken to stated not to have visited the house in the past 3 months. In practice the house acts as an information and advice centre for those researching the possibilities concerning migration to Europe.
- The government is corrupt and used to donors bringing in large sums of partly unlabeled aid. Corruption is not discussed often between INGOs and some stakeholders considered the topic taboo. There is no clear implementation structure for reintegration programmes. Conflicts of interest, possibilities for fraud and ambiguity of responsibilities will have to be dealt with. Intergovernmental organisations currently have other pressing priorities, are showing signs of completion and do not work together. The government started to shape a country strategy forward but this is in its very early stages and only makes progress when actors remind the government of the prospect of possible funding.
- Local NGOs dealing with migration issues are focused on IDPs and refugees. There is only marginal capacity for implementing larger programmes and the costs of this are high. IOM is considered to have the monopoly on return in the country but in practise, 95% of its other activities are - according to the returnees - in conflict with reintegration support, such as, for example building barracks for the Military and capacity building for the police and border control.
- Coordination between the few current reintegration programmes is non-existent. Within the few activities that European and Swiss embassies conduct in this field, there are contradictory and, in a single case, conflicting initiatives. Organisations seem to compete with each other and bringing them to one table might be difficult if their donors in Europe do not provide any incentives for cooperation.
- The government only rates reintegration highly when there is funding involved. IDPs and refugees are very high on the political agenda due to the conflict in the east of the country. This is also reinforced by significant donor support for IDP activities and the fact that although they are poor, most returnees are still better off than 70% of the Congolese population, something that does not help to draw government attention to the reintegration issue.
- While some stakeholders generally understand the feasibility and usefulness of a comprehensive reintegration programme, most left the interviewers with the impression that Europe would create a demand instead of solving an issue of any importance in the DRC.
- A majority of returnees is estimated to arrive via the main airport in Kinshasa. Most returnees live in the 4 largest cities, even if they originally came from the countryside. Reintegration into smaller cities is considered to be more sustainable by stakeholders from INGOs but is not currently considered as a realistic alternative for returnees.

### 7 Next steps

- The migration arena in DRC is feeling the lack of a “responsible” personality that, with power, resources and ambition, could prepare the country for expected higher returnee numbers. There is no sense of urgency as yet. Steps forward should include:
  - the involvement of a local component (to ensure that returnees do not face jealousy from those who stayed);
  - in addition to the cities, plans should also focus on return to the smaller cities (since returnees to smaller cities are believed to have more opportunities);
  - cooperation with a small group of already present INGOs and strengthening local NGOs. This could result in establishing a specialized NGO for this purpose.
• The timing is not right to implement a comprehensive reintegration programme in DRC at the moment. Other countries with less corruption, less severe situations for returnees and a more cooperative atmosphere between donors and embassies seem better equipped for such initiatives than DRC.

• In the DRC, the political system is corrupt and there are numerous opportunities for fraud, therefore if projects in EU cooperation are to be established there, it will be necessary to identify the most important actors who will be in charge of creating sufficient political backing for a reintegration programme, while keeping the government out of its implementation. Depending on the results, it seems appropriate to reconsider Joint European initiatives after the Congolese elections in 2011.

• While the exact definition of the “returnee” or “refugee” was not the basis of this research, this seems to be an important point for all stakeholders involved. It seems that some respondents look more favourably on the return of rejected asylum seekers than undocumented, irregular migrants. Since these groups might intermingle somewhat depending on the administrative provision of the EU member they were residing in, it might be necessary in any joint EU initiative not to split initiatives between documented and undocumented returnees. It has to be kept in mind that a great quantity of returnees will not qualify for any support if definitions are too narrow and this might cause internal friction.

• As an implementation agency with existing contacts in some Member States, IOM must be considered right from the start, as the organisation wields significant influence on the government. Still, a more local service provider with an extended network all over the country and with a positive image should be selected. They must be capable of inspiring an atmosphere of cooperation in order to be able to use services from other organisations in the field to develop reintegration activities for individual returnees. Currently, IOM’s other activities in DRC are too conflicting to allow this.

• Consultations between embassies involved in the return issues such as Switzerland, UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands and the representation of the European Commission could be set up on a 3 monthly basis to keep track of possibilities for EU cooperation. In the first phases an overview of the different activities can be disseminated, so that they can be distributed among the service providers already present in DRC in a second phase.
1. Introduction

Introduction
Within the broader context of this research, return policy in several EU Member States is closely looked at. All Member States subject of this research are part of the European Union. Placing the findings into perspective, it is inevitable to have a look at the current state of affairs in the EU and what this means for choices to be made by Member States. Following the efforts the EU has been taken to harmonise legislation on asylum, return policy is a logical next step in harmonisation efforts. For extra efforts done to facilitate or support the return of an individual returnee, this may potentially lead to new migrants and, as such, competing policies between member states.

Besides what is to be found in European documentation, special efforts have been taken to ask policy experts from different DG's in the Commission, from the European Parliament, from international organisations such as ICMPD and UNHCR and from a specialised policy consultant to their (unofficial) opinions on the general trends in harmonisation of reintegration and return. This softer information, coming from 12 policy experts, provides more insight in realistic expectations for the years to come than any official document and is incorporated in this chapter.

Relevance
Return has been increasingly on the agenda of the European Union in the last decade. The issue is sensitive, which has been expressed by all the commotion at the time of the adoption of the Return Directive as media took it up speaking of the Directive of Shame and government leaders in the development world expressed their resistance. It is also an issue where Member States have an ever increasing expectancy of the added value of a European approach. Whereas the development of a common asylum- and migration policy is only slowly developing and much hesitation still exists with the Member States, there is much legitimacy for common return policies, especially on the aspects of organisation, control and facilitation of return. The recently introduced return fund is a tool for the Commission to produce quick results and show the added value of the whole area of Solidarity and the Management of Migration Flows.

Questions
Voluntary return, re-integration and the links return policies have with development cooperation, positive or negative, are part of return policy but have not been the first issues of cooperation in the EU. Central question is, to what extent are these issues part of the European approach and what can be expected in the next couple of years? Is sustainability of return an essential part of the European policy debate? Are developments so quickly that a European approach on sustainable return can be expected in the near future, or should Member States better aim at bilateral cooperation with several like-minded States?

Several questions we have asked ourselves, written sources as well as a number of key figures in the European arena concerning the European approach of return are:
- What are the aims of return policy?
- How much is relatively invested in sustainable and voluntary return?
- What can we expect in the coming years in the areas of sustainable and voluntary return?

2. Political framework

Background
Return policy in the European Commission is, primarily, the responsibility of the DG for Justice, Freedom and Security, within the larger framework of migration and asylum policy. Only secondary there is attention for return policy in the DG for External affairs (Relex) and the DGs responsible for development cooperation and humanitarian aid (DEV/Aidco).
The basis of current return policy can be found in the Financial perspectives for 2007-2013:...with the adoption of a European Return Action Programme in 2002, Member States have pledged to develop a common return policy on the basis of common standards and best practices. An effective Community return policy is a necessary complement to a credible legal immigration and asylum policy as well as an important component in the fight against illegal immigration. The efforts of individual Member States regarding return management are not only limited in financial terms, but also in terms of political impact and signal effect; Member States face similar difficulties in implementing return operations and they can collectively be better overcome by pooling resources and experience. Moreover, Member States should be encouraged to develop ‘integrated return management’: analysing and assessing the potential group of returnees, the legal and logistical constraints in the Member State and the situation in the country of return, and developing specific and targeted actions commensurate to the challenge. This should contribute to reducing, in the EU without internal borders, secondary movements of illegally staying third country nationals. 

It is clear that two principles form the basis of return policy:
1. Without return policy there is no credible migration- and asylum policy
2. Return policy is an essential part of the fight against illegal immigration

Financial
Of the overall budget of the European Union in 2008 16,7% is spent on Freedom, Security and Justice (JLS). Of this budget 392,5 million, little more than half of the Freedom, Security and Justice-budget and approximately 9% of the total budget of the European Union is spent on overall actions in the area of Solidarity and the Management of Migration Flows. Besides this budget a much more modest amount is spent on migration under development and external actions. This budget is more fragmented due to primary geographical instead of thematic spending.

The budget Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows is subdivided in four categories/funds: the refugee fund, the external borders fund, the integration fund and the return fund. For the period 2007-2013 the division between funds is the following:
- External borders 2.152.000.000
- Integration 1.771.000.000
- Asylum 1.184.000.000
- Return 759.000.000

The Return Fund for the period 2008-2013 consists of 676 million euro's, spent on:
- 629 is divided among Member States based objective criteria showing the number of third country nationals who are subject of return measures.
- 47 million (7% a year) for Community actions

The amount spent on return on the side of Development can be illustrated by the amount spent within the framework of their main instrument, the Thematic Programme for Migration and Development. The programme, in 2008 consisting of slightly over €30 million euro's, selected and approved 54 projects. Of those 54 projects maximum of three projects were dealing (partly) with the topic of return.

The design of the relation of the return fund and the thematic programme for migration and development, according to several Commission officials, is that of the first being responsible primarily for the short term and the return process, while the latter should prioritize the longer term, including sustainability and re-integration.

There are other sources of finances which offer possibilities to return, mainly the EU/UN joint migration and development initiative. As this has only been started in 2009, the attention given to return cannot be estimated completely. However, as it consists of small projects combining to a total worth of €10 million, covering a wide range of issues, the overall value will not change the total picture. It is more difficult to speak of delegated development funds, spent by Commission delegations in countries of origin. Commission officials did not exclude the possibility that activities related to reintegration or return are sometimes financed, but the geographical focus does not offer a way of getting more insight in another way than looking country by country and could not offer any estimate themselves.

1 From: framework programme 2007-2013
2 Financial perspectives 2007-2013
3 Website JLS
3. Policy

Goals
Return is a cornerstone of EU migration policy. An effective return policy is seen as key in ensuring public support for legal migration and asylum.

Priorities within return policy are the conclusion of further readmission agreements; progress on the proposed return Directive that is currently under negotiation in Council and Parliament; enhanced use of joint return flights by Member States; improved possibilities for documentation for return of third-country national who do not have travel documents; and the establishment of common training standards for officers involved in return. 5

Clearly, as mentioned in the introduction and looking at official priorities, the attention of return policy lies with management and control and only secondary with voluntary return, reintegration and the links return policy has with development cooperation. Voluntary return is an official goal. The Commission states that “to every extent possible, priority should be given to voluntary return for obvious humane reasons, but also due to costs, efficiency and sustainability.”6 The sustainability of return is at this point not an overall goal of return policy, but it is a desired outcome. It is also an issue receiving increasing attention in the last years in the Council as well as the Commission, mentioned by several officials and policy experts.

Terminology
Commission, Parliament and Council documents use several terms.

1. Integrated Return Management is an official goal of the Commission and, judging by the context it is used in, means ‘comprehensive’ or ‘tailor-made’. Asking several key officials in the Commission to its definition, the clear answer was that none such definition exists.

2. Voluntary return is all return not involving deportation of the returnee, the definition that should be used can be found in the Return Directive. The return directive does not mention a term or period within one can still speak of voluntary return.

3. Sustainable return is not used as a definition in policy documents. In rare cases the sustainability of return is mentioned, without defining what is considered to be sustainable. Outside the documents the term is mentioned to gain importance within Council as well as Commission discussions and meetings. Within Parliament discussion are not focused on sustainable return (yet).

4. Reintegration is not an automatic part of return policy in the programme goals. In implementation of the return fund as well as the thematic programmes initiatives on reintegration can explicitly be funded.

Target Group
The European Union has a very broad target group definition of return policy. Whereas Member States differ making distinction in targeting asylum seekers, ex-asylum seekers and/or illegals with several programmes, the EU speaks of “third-country nationals”.

‘third-country national’ means any person who is not a citizen of the Union within the meaning of Article 17(1) of the Treaty and who is not a person enjoying the Community right of free movement, as defined in Article 2(5) of the Schengen Borders Code; 7

Member States are able to put their focus into the national strategies for the return. They are not able to change the official target group, it is however possible to use all funds towards projects proposing activities in line with their national strategies.

Implementation
Implementation of European return policy is almost exclusively done through the Return Directive and executed through the Return Fund. The Return Fund started in 2008. Before, return was a part of the refugee fund, showing its increased importance in the past years.

Focusing on the part of voluntary return in the return fund, the Commission prioritises the following actions:

- information and advisory services concerning voluntary return initiatives or programmes;
- information on the situation in the country or region of origin or former habitual residence;
- general or vocational training and help with reintegration;

---

5 Website JLS
6 Return Directive
• action by communities of origin resident in the European Union to facilitate the voluntary return of the persons referred to in this Decision;
• actions which facilitate the organisation and implementation of national voluntary return programmes 8.

As mentioned before however, voluntary return is only a part of the return fund. Where the division of funds in practice has been easily obtainable for the Thematic Programme for Migration and Development, this is different for the Return Fund. The management of the funds lies for 93% with the Member States, with each their own priorities reflected in financed projects. As the return fund only exists since 2008, no data on the spending of the overall finances per sub-theme are available. Commission officials also stated they could do no educated guess for the investment proportions in forced and voluntary return for the 93% of the fund managed by the Member States. The 7% that finances Community actions focuses for an essential part on voluntary return and, as stated by Commission officials, actively promotes the increased use and knowledge of voluntary return, especially in countries where no such tradition exists. However, also for this 7%, no statement could be made what proportion “an essential part” is.

5. CONCLUSIONS FOR THE YEARS TO COME

What are the aims of return policy?
In summary and in general, at this point return policy in the European Union aims at legitimizing forms of legal migration and fighting illegal migration. Links with countries of origin and European policies towards countries of origin are acknowledged, but as return policy has only just seen the light of the European arena as a substantial policy area, it is not a main point of attention and will not be for several years to come.

How much is relatively invested in sustainable and voluntary return?
Voluntary return is any return which is not deportation. The Commission prioritizes in its programmes to work with as much alternative solutions to deportation as possible. As mentioned by Commission officials, this does in most cases not include reintegration or sustainability. A lot of efforts go to simply introducing the general concepts of assisted voluntary return in Member States with no tradition in this area. Although by several sources, inside as well as outside, this is seen as a main priority of the Commission, financial proportions are not (yet) visible.

The philosophy behind different means of funding, that the return fund aims at the short term return processes and the thematic programmes for migration and development aim for longer term, sustainability and coherence with development, is in practice not (yet) working. The thematic programme finances such a wide range of issues, that it is clear that considering investment proportions in return between the return fund and the thematic programme, the thematic programme has had negligible attention for return (3 out of 54 projects that are worth a total amount of € 30 million comes down to at maximum a few million euro's in 2008, opposed to the 759 million euro's in 7 years under the return fund). Other forms of investment under development are not excluded by Commission officials, but return experts do not know of any examples, making it questionable whether this would be substantial.

What can we expect in the coming years in the areas of sustainable and voluntary return?
The adoption of the Return Directive has been a high profile policy initiative for Commission, Council and Parliament. With the coming into action of the Return Fund last year, the first step has been taken towards a common approach on return. The most sensitive issues in the Return Directive have not been issues around voluntary return, development and reintegration, as these themes are neither official goals nor long-standing practice in all of the member states. The high profile areas concerned management and human rights issues, such as a maximum period of custody and the re-entry ban.

Within the European Parliament the division of responsibilities has steered the discussion. As the main responsible Committee is the Justice and Civil Liberties Committee, development has only marginally discussed return policies.

All experts interviewed stated that while much has to be done, and many mentioned explicitly reintegration or sustainability as important areas for the future, from the EU not much can be expected on short term that
is not yet a part of the programmes. The next time that a substantial discussion will be taken in the European arena will only be after 2010, on the first monitoring of the return directive. Only after that consultations and negotiations a follow-up will start.

Next steps and cooperation between Member States
Describing the possibilities of cooperation on return between Member States outside a European Union approach, starting by taking first steps, all actors have expressed interest. For European Commission officials this is mentioned to be an opportunity to take more steps at a time in the next stage of legislation.

When asked for specific directions in reintegration concerning individual assistance, the amount of an allowance, preference for cash or kind investments etc., all respondents but ICMPD and UNHCR officials stated they are too far away from such policies to have an educated opinion.
## ANNEX D : COMPLETE CONTACT LIST (COUNTRIES, NAMES, ORGANISATIONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belgium</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Roosemondt</td>
<td>Director of Alien Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Neelen</td>
<td>Fedasiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Pleysier</td>
<td>Ex-Director of Fedasiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Dirk Van Den Bulck</td>
<td>Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. Marie-Claire Fobelts</td>
<td>Professor of migration law at the Catholic University of Leuven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. Dirk Van Heule</td>
<td>Professor of migration rights at Antwerp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Dussart</td>
<td>Head of Return, Caritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pascal Reyntjens</td>
<td>Head of AVR IOM Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pieter Degryse</td>
<td>Flemish Refugee Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td>Philippe Etienne</td>
<td>Director of immigration at the Ministry of Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martha Breeze:</td>
<td>Director OFII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patrick Weill</td>
<td>Director of Research CNRS (Sorbonne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christine EL Gharbi en</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christine Rousselin</td>
<td>Director of local implementation for Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frederic Viel</td>
<td>Director of reception and integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catherine Withol De Wenden</td>
<td>Director of Study Centre and International Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forster Florian</td>
<td>IOM Paris: Chief of Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jean-Pierre Garson</td>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Netherlands</strong></td>
<td>Robert Bijkerk</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paul Gosselink</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wijnands Stevens</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Han Entzinger</td>
<td>Professor and migration expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Mommers</td>
<td>Project Manager AVR research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pieter Maas</td>
<td>IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joep Van Zijl</td>
<td>Head Cordaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edwin Huizinga</td>
<td>Dutch Refugee Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td>Andreas Beckermann</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Division BMZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrea Muck</td>
<td>Desk Officer BMZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oliver Auge</td>
<td>Managing Director, Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regina Bauerochse Barbosa</td>
<td>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (GTZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Irina Kausch</td>
<td>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (GTZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Axel Kreienbrink</td>
<td>Head of Division, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Frithjof Zerger</td>
<td>Division for Migration and Asylum Policy, German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jakob Von Weiszacker</td>
<td>Migration expert at Bruegel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lydia Schauer</td>
<td>IOM Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrea Felissche</td>
<td>Caritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sabrina Krishat</td>
<td>Heimatgarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Herman Schoenmeier</td>
<td>AGEF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### UK

- **Michael Collyer**: Professor Migration Studies, University of Sussex
- **Saskia Gent**: idem
- **Kerstin Thompson**: Head of AVR Policy and Returns and Readmission Policy
- **Eileen Gough** and **Clarissa Azkoul**: AVR Policy and Returns and Readmission Policy
- **Ivan Ballester-Mollina**: IOM: Evaluation Return Programmes
- **Gary Bell**, **Jonathan Parr**, and **Theodoros Abraham**: Refugee Council, Voluntary Return Projects
- **Kerstin Thompson**: Head of AVR Policy and Returns and Readmission Policy
- **Eileen Gough**: AVR Policy and Returns and Readmission Policy
- **Clarissa Azkoul**: Chief of Missions: IOM
- **Gary Bell**: Refugee Council, Voluntary Return Projects
- **Jonathan Parr**: Refugee Council, Voluntary Return Projects
- **Theodoros Abraham**: Reconnect

### Sweden

- **Hugo Rickberg**: Red Cross, Return counsellor, International Law and Refugee Dpt
- **Helena Sprengel**: Goteborgs Initiativet, Deputy Director
- **Johan Malkan**: Ministry of Justice (Division for Migration and Asylum Policy), Return & Integration
- **Karina Laan**: Swedish Parliament, Head of Secretariat, Committee on Social Insurance
- **Kari Hasselberg**: Swedish Parliament, Committee Secretary, Committee on Social Insurance
- **Ann Nordberg**: “Swedish Migration Board, Legal Advisor at the Division for European and International Cooperation, Unit for International Strategies”
- **Monika Wendleby**: Swedish Migration Board, Director of Division for European and International Cooperation
- **Krister Isaksson**: Swedish Migration Board, Senior Specialist at the Unit for Planning and Analysis, European and International Cooperation
- **Kristina Ränna**: Swedish Migration Board, Principal Immigration Officer, Support and Coordination Unit
- **Christian Rabergh**: Migration Expert

### Denmark

- **Pernille Brinch Nissen**: “Danish Immigration Service, Head of Division“
- **Kristina Rosado**: Danish Immigration Service, Head of Section
- **Lene Ahlmann-Ohlsen**: “Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integrations Affairs, Head of Division“
- **Peter Bartholin**: Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integrations Affairs, Head of Section
- **Bettina Chu**: Danish Refugee Council, Programme Co-ordinator / Legal Advisor, Protection & Repatriation Department
- **Katinka Villemoes**: “Parliament / Folketinget, Head of the secretariat for the committee for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs “
- **Meta Fultsang**: left wing, member
- **Torben Jacobsen**: “Care4You, Ann Schmidt, Deputy & Consultant“
- **Delavar Ajgeiy**: “Care4You, Expert in Iraq (KRG Nordic Coordinator in Denmark)“
- **Peter Hensen**: Danish Institute for International Studies, Senior Researcher
- **Nauja Kleist**: Danish Institute for International Studies, Project Researcher
- **Sophie Hæstorp Andersen**: social democrat
- **Karen Inger Thorsen**: Red Cross
- **Elisabeth Collett**: Policy Analyst, EU Integration and Citizenship Programme, EPC
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Georgia</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Konstantine Razmadze</td>
<td>Ministry of Refugees &amp; Accommodation, Head of Migration Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Sheehan</td>
<td>IOM, Chief Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irakli Kokaia</td>
<td>Ministry of Refugees &amp; Accommodation, Head of the Refugee and Repatriation Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaza Imedashvili</td>
<td>Ministry of Refugees &amp; Accommodation, Head of the Migration Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edina Dziho</td>
<td>UNHCR Protection officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natia Tchelidze</td>
<td>Tbilisi State University, Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teimuraz Abashidze</td>
<td>Head of Municipality of Mtskheta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamar Beruchashvili</td>
<td>Office of State Minister for European &amp; Euro-Atlantic Integration, Deputy Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irma Tsereteli</td>
<td>Career Service Georgien (CSG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Hulst</td>
<td>IOM, Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natia Gvazava</td>
<td>Ministry of Internal Affairs, Head of International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekaterine Machavariani</td>
<td>Ministry of Internal Affairs, Deputy Head of International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia Sahtout - el Ouahdani</td>
<td>Dutch Embassy, Second Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congo</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Rauchenstein</td>
<td>Chef de Delegation, CICR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolly Ibefo Mbunga</td>
<td>Directeur Executif Adjoint, La voix des sans voix pour les droits de l'homme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Ntumba</td>
<td>Coordonnateur, La voix des sans voix pour les droits de l'homme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zephyrin Mungongo</td>
<td>Vice ministre de l'interieur et Securite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Lelu</td>
<td>Project Manager MCDEM, IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurentius Boots</td>
<td>Directeur Financier, Brahma Brasseries et Limonaderies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Bruno Miteyo Nyenge</td>
<td>Vice President Caritas Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Bin Angali</td>
<td>Assistent Coordonnateur, Charge d'études et planification, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andreas Magnusson</td>
<td>Premier Secrétaire, Ambassade de Suede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Huesken</td>
<td>Chef de Mission Adjoint, Ambassade du Royame des Pays-Bas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joko Bale Kongolo</td>
<td>Directeur de Cabinet, Direction Generale de Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Toure</td>
<td>Representant Adjoint (Protection), UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alain Delamotte</td>
<td>Consul, Ambassade de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunita Verlinde</td>
<td>Premier Secrétaire, Ambassade du Royame des Pays-Bas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayembe Tshikudi</td>
<td>Ministre Plénipotentaire, Directeur chef de service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colette Tshomba Ntundu</td>
<td>Vice Ministre des Congolais de l'étranger, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Drion</td>
<td>Coordonnateur adjoint, Cofed Cellule d'appel a l'ordonnateur national du fonds européen de développement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roland Kashwantale</td>
<td>Directeur Central des Etudes, Documentation et Informatique, DGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter F. Stern</td>
<td>Premier Secrétaire affaires consulaires, Ambassade du Royame des Pays-Bas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndeye Ndour Mbaye</td>
<td>Representant Regional Assistant (Operations), UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didier Verwaerde</td>
<td>Consul, Ambassade de Belgique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlene Ostrowska</td>
<td>Project Development Officer, IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali Elavia</td>
<td>Resource Management Officer, IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Rauchenstein</td>
<td>Directeur central de la Police des Frontieres, DGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffroy de Liedekerke</td>
<td>Ambassadeur Ordre souverain militair hospitalier de Saint Jean de Jerusalem de Rhodes et de Malte, Ordre de Malte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Muland</td>
<td>Conseiller du Ministre, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remco Rijsenbrij  Manager Bralima Brasseries et Limonderies
Mme Susan Curtis  Deuxième secrétaire charge de la migration, Ambassade du Royaume Uni
Leen Revaillier  Représentant du pays, Croix Rouge de Belgique - Flandre
Gabor Muller  Section Economie et Droits Humains, Union Européenne
Tiziano Bassi  1er Secrétaire / Chef de chancellerie, Ambassade de Suisse

Iraq

Zagros Fatah  Director General of Development and Planning, Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Regional Government
Sada Salman  Coordinator (SRC) +J33& (ICRS-EB programme to (KRG), Swedish Red Cross & ICRS
Wria Ahmed Rashid  Senior Reintegration Assistant, IOM Erbil
Azad A Mahmoud  Regional Coordinator, IOM Erbil
Alan A Shermani  Programme Assistant/Monitoring, IOM Erbil
Shler Abdullah A  Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Minister Bureau. Director of Relation & Coordination/ Minister Bureau (Molsa), Kurdistan Regional Government
Kawani Dlawar Anwar  Assistant general director, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Kurdistan Regional Government
Charles Lynch-Staunton  Head of Office UNHCR Erbil Iraq
Ghassar Al Sarraf  Chief technical advisor to Iraq, ILO
Dr Dendar Zebary  Coordinator to UN and NGO’s, contacts: via assistent Dhr Samir S Qadir, Kurdistan Regional Government
Falah Mustafa Bakeer  Head of the Department of Foreign Relations, Kurdistan Regional Government
Omer Rasheen  Assistant to the Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Kurdistan Regional Government
Dara Jalil Al-Khayat  President of the Kurdistan Federation Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Vice President of the Iraq Chamber of Commerce
Carol Prunhuber  Author of book on Kurdish refugees, journalist
ANNEX E : LINK-LIST FOR INTERNET SOURCES

Belgium
www.fedasil.be/
www.belgium.iom.int/
www.dofi.fgov.be/
www.caritas.be/
www.vluchtelingenwerk.be/

France
www.immigration.gouv.fr/
www.ofii.fr/
www.france-terre-asile.org/demander-asile/entree-sur-le-territoire

The Netherlands
www.iom-nederland.nl
www.ind.nl
www.coa.nl
www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl
www.cordaid.nl/
www.samah.nl

Germany
www.reintegration.net/europa
www.bamf.de
www.iom.int/germany/
www.drc.dk
www.agef.net/AGEF_BERLIN
www.caritas-essen.de/
www.heimatgarten.de/
www.solwodi.de/
www.raphaels-werk.de/site/de/index.html
www.equal-bridge.de
www.zrb-suedbayern.de

U.K
www.fco.gov.uk
www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/
www.refugee-action.org.uk
www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk
www.rmcentre.org.uk
www.iomlondon.org
www.homeoffice.gov.uk
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Sweden
www.migrationsverket.se
www.redcross.se/
www.unhcr.org
www.initiativet.nu
praxis.org.rs/
www.caritas.se
Europe
European Migration Network: emn.sarenet.es
ERSO return and Reintegration Assistance: www.erso-project.eu/

Denmark
www.nyidanmark.dk
www.drc.dk
www.ft.dk
www.care4you.dk
www.diis.dk
www.redcross.dk

Georgia
www.iom.ge
www.mra.gov.ge
www.unhcr.org
www.tsu.ge/en/
www.mtskheta-mtianeti.gov.ge/indexENG.html
www.mfa.gov.ge/
www.alumniportal-deutschland.org/netzwerke/alumninetzwerke-liste/career-service-georgien.html
www.mia.gov.ge
www.mfa.nl/tbi

Congo
www.icrc.org
www.vsv-rdc.com
www.vsv-rdc.com
www.iom.int
www.heineken.com
www.caritasdev.cd
www.mcdem.cd
www.swedenabroad.com/kinshasa
www.mfa.nl/kss
www.unhcr.org
www.mfa.nl/kss
www.cde.cd
www.mfa.nl/kss
www.unhcr.org
www.diplomatie.be

Iraq
www.kurdistan-molsa.com
www.krg.org
www.erbilchamber.orgS