



EMN Ad-Hoc Query on COM AHQ on Asylum seekers withdrawing their application for international protection

Requested by Salvatore SOFIA on 1st April 2016

Protection

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway (22 in total)

Disclaimer:

The following responses have been provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among EMN NCPs in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided, to the best of their knowledge, information that is up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.

Background information:

During the 9th EMN REG meeting on 10th March 2016, some (Member) States reported that they had registered a trend for asylum applicants withdrawing their asylum applications. This concerned, in particular, asylum seekers from Syria who had decided to return to their country of origin or to transit countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey or other neighbouring countries. (Member) States were uncertain about how best to handle these requests, considering that it was not known whether these asylum seekers would be readmitted into transit countries. Similarly, national authorities questioned the appropriateness of handing back ID documents without ascertaining that return had effectively taken place. On a connected note, (Member) States also reported that asylum applicants of other nationalities (e.g. Iraqi and Afghan) had approached the authorities to request support for voluntary return to their countries, expressing disappointment of the living/reception conditions in the (Member) State. In other cases potential applicants were not willing to apply for asylum at the national borders and/or refused to cooperate in identity verification procedures, a stance which could be linked to their intention to seek asylum in another (Member) State. Against this background, the European Commission would like to collect more information from all (Member) States in order to better understand the scope of this phenomenon and which obstacles could hamper the return of former asylum seekers. The result of this Ad-Hoc Query will be discussed during a REG cluster meeting on the issue to be organised in Brussels in the coming months (date to be confirmed).

Questions


1. 1a. Has your Member State registered an increased number of asylum seekers withdrawing their application for international protection in the last six months? Yes/No




1b. If **yes**, please provide any estimations or available data on the nationalities concerned and the number of applications withdrawn.
2. If **yes to Q1**, are those asylum applicants expressing a wish to return voluntarily after withdrawing their applications and, if so, have they requested support to voluntarily return?
3. If **yes to Q1/Q2**, what are the reasons stated by asylum applicants for withdrawing their asylum application and/or for wishing to voluntarily return? (*E.g. disappointment with reception/ living conditions; length of the asylum procedure; wish to be reunited with family members in countries of origin or transit*).
4. If **yes to Q1/Q2**, how have the authorities in your (Member) State dealt with such cases? (*E.g. following the withdrawal of the asylum application, did the authorities handed back the applicant's identity documents or did they*


support him/her in getting the necessary travel documents? Did the authorities facilitate return in any way? How did the authorities ascertain that return had effectively taken place? Did the authorities adopt a return decision and undertake removal action? Etc.)



5. Have you registered an increase in the number of rejected asylum applicants wishing to voluntarily return in the last six months? Yes/No
 5b. If **yes**, please provide any estimations or available data on the nationalities and the number of people concerned.
6. Have you registered an increasing number of potential asylum seekers refusing to apply and/or cooperate with identification procedures at the borders in the last six months?
 6b. If **yes**, please provide any estimations or available data on the nationalities and the number of people concerned.
7. 7a. Are you experiencing obstacles to return former asylum applicants of specific nationalities, either (a) rejected asylum applicants or (b) asylum applicants withdrawing their application? Yes/No
 7b. If **yes**, please specify (1) the nationalities concerned, (2) the countries of return and (3) the obstacles you are experiencing (*e.g.*, obtaining identification documents, getting visa/travel documents, organising flights, contacting the countries of return). Please provide as much details as possible on the reasons of these obstacles.



Responses


	Country	Wider Dissemination	Response
	Austria	Yes	1. According to Art. 25 para 2 Asylum Act, it is not possible to withdraw an application for international protection in the first-instance proceedings. In second-instance proceedings, an application for international protection may be withdrawn. In this case, the first-instance decision will become final. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.

			<p>2. N/A. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>3. N/A. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>4. N/A. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>5. In principle, yes. 5b. In 2015, there were 5,152 voluntary returns. These have increased by 71 per cent in comparison to the year 2014. Im Jahr 2015 erfolgten 5.152 freiwillige Ausreisen. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>6. Since autumn 2015, a significantly high number of people has entered Austria in order to move on from Austria to Germany or Northern European countries. 6b. Since September 2015, 800,000 persons have entered Austria. Approx. 88,000 persons have lodged an application for international protection in Austria in 2015. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>7. Regarding forced return, Austria is dependent on the cooperation of the countries of origin. The quality of this cooperation varies. There are special challenges with respect to North African and Central Asian nationals. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p>
	Belgium	No	
	Bulgaria	No	
	Croatia	Yes	<p>1. Yes, the number of application withdrawals has been increased in the past two months. According to available statistical data, the following numbers are only estimations of applications withdrawals. There were approximately 50 applications withdrawals in the last six months. Identified nationalities are from Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan.</p>


			<p>2. Yes, especially applicants from Iraq expressed a wish to return voluntarily in the country of origin after withdrawing applications. They have requested support for return from respectively embassies.</p> <p>3. Usually domestic reasons such as death of family member and separation from the rest of the family.</p> <p>4. After withdrawal of procedure on international protection, their documents were returned to them and issuing returns decision. In practice, there were no cases of undertaking removal actions.</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. Yes. Approximately 20% applicants who expressed wish to apply for international protection refused to lodge application for international protection. Identified nationalities are Iraqi and Afghans. Also, from September 2015 Croatia was faced with massive numbers of migrants which were potential applicants as most of them were from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (16.9.2015.- 31.12.2016. – 555 700). From that number of migrants only 24 of them applied for international protection.</p> <p>7. N/a.</p>
	Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. N/A It should, however, be mentioned, that there is a possibility for voluntary return for rejected asylum applicants or applicants who have decided to withdraw their asylum application [via a) the co-funded Assisted Voluntary Return Program of the Ministry of Interior or b) IOM Cyprus, who is currently implementing the Project “Assisted Voluntary Returns Information Centre” within the framework of the Asylum Migration Integration Fund].</p> <p>3. N/A</p>


			<p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. This has been the case in 2015, but this phenomenon was significantly reduced in 2016.</p> <p>7. Cases of Iranian nationals with no travel documents.</p>
	Czech Republic	Yes	<p>1. NO</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. NO</p> <p>6. NO</p> <p>7. YES – however, not any substantial. As already specified above, the Czech Republic does experience minor obstacles. However, they happen only very rarely and we can count such cases only in units per year. They concern the nationalities and the countries of return which embassy is missing in the CZ, thus obtaining identification documents is complicated. The obstacles experienced in the Czech Republic are related to the nationality of returning person concerned (no diplomatic representation in the CR) with no relevance to the fact that the person concerned is former asylum seeker.</p>
	Estonia	Yes	<p>1. Number of asylum seekers in Estonia is low, but we have noticed that some Iraqi asylum seekers have withdrawn their applications. Recently there have been 3 cases.</p>



			<p>2. Yes, they requested supported voluntary return. They were supported by International Organization of Migration thorough voluntary return programme.</p> <p>3. Applicants wanted to return to Iraqi Kurdistan after they were provided opportunity to give their explanations and objections to possible negative decision. They explained that they lost all savings during journey and with help of IOM they can start a new life in Iraq again.</p> <p>4. All applicants had travel documents. Return was facilitated by IOM Estonia.</p> <p>5. N/A</p> <p>6. There have been a few cases when person refused to apply for asylum. The main reason for refusal was to reach another EU country instead of Estonia. 8 applicants from Afganistan.</p> <p>7. Yes. Guinea nationalities to Guinea, lack of cooperation with the person (impossible to identify person's identity); Mali nationalities to Mali, lack of cooperation with the embassy.</p>
	Finland	No	
	France	Yes	<p>1. (waiting for the response from the competent service)</p> <p>2. If we compare the first semester 2015 to the first semester 2016, there is no increase but a decrease of 22% - see chart attached for nationalities and number of applications. see chart attached</p> <p>3. We do not have any information on this issue</p> <p>4. If the applicant wishes to apply for voluntary return, s/he needs to obtain a certificate or statement from the OFPRA (French office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons) or the CNDA (National Court for Right of Asylum) attesting s/he has withdrawn his/her application.</p>

			<p>5. If we compare the first semester 2015 to the second semester 2015, there is a slight decrease of 6% - see chart attached for nationalities and number of applications</p> <p>6. NO, we have not received any information regarding any refusal of cooperation related to asylum applications at the borders over the last 6 months</p> <p>7. (waiting for the response from the competent service)</p>
	Germany	Yes	<p>1. 1. Yes 1 b. Apart from the data provided to Eurostat (see attached document), there is no further statistical record of the nationality of persons withdrawing their asylum application. The number of persons who have withdrawn their asylum applications has steadily increased in the last six months.</p> <p>2. The data collected on asylum seekers withdrawing their applications do not cover the reasons for withdrawing the applications nor if an asylum seekers wants to return voluntarily to this his/her country of origin. However, an increase of the number of applicants for the REAG (Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany) /GARP (Government Assisted Repatriation Programme) support programme provided by the IOM can be seen as a general trend on the demand for voluntary return. The statistics on REAG/GARP include asylum applicants, whose application has been rejected. Since the programme does not only offer support members of the aforementioned group, but to a wide range of persons wishing to return voluntarily there is no direct link between those two statistics. There has been however a significant increase of persons from the Western Balkan states applying for support of the programme, since the chances of an asylum application being rejected are high for people from this region.</p> <p>3. As mentioned above, the reasons for withdrawing an asylum application are not incorporated into the official statistics. Applicants for the ERIN return project have however stated that the main reasons for returning to their country of origin are the wish to be reunited with family members, wrong expectations with regard to their perspectives in Germany or the length of the asylum procedure. These statements correspond with the reasoning of asylum seekers who have</p>


			<p>sent e-mails to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees expressing their wish to withdraw their applications. These statements are, however, exemplary and are not statistically sound.</p> <p>4. If an Asylum applicant wants to withdraw his/her application he/she needs to get in contact with the local branch of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees responsible for his/her asylum application. He/she then needs to sign a disclaimer on withdrawing the asylum application. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees then sends a stoppage order (Einstellungsbescheid), the travel documents and identity documents of the person withdrawing his/her asylum application to the foreigner's registration office responsible. The foreigner's registration office then handles any further procedures, such as offering counselling on voluntary return or undertakes removal actions, if the person refuses to leave the country. Also, a "Grenzübertrittsbescheinigung" (border crossing certificate) is given to persons who wishes to leave the country voluntarily. This document has to be handed in at a border inspection post as proof that the person in question has left the country.</p> <p>5. 5. Yes 5b. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees does not keep record on rejected asylum applicants expressing the wish to return voluntarily. However, the statistics on people applying for the REAG/GARP programme, provided by the IOM, include rejected asylum seekers. It has to be mentioned however, that statements regarding the reasons for applying for support are given on a voluntary basis, so there is no absolute certainty about those numbers. There has been a significant increase of asylum seekers from the Western Balkan states whose asylum applications have been rejected since the end of the year 2015 and persons from other countries of origin applying for support of the REAG/GARP programme. Therefore it can be concluded that there is a rising demand for voluntary return.(See also the attached figures from IOM)</p> <p>6. No information on this question available.</p> <p>7. 7. Yes 7b.The main difficulties of returning former asylum applicants are within the area of obtaining identification or travel documents. An exemplary case would be the states of the Maghreb region: Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. There have been longstanding problems with obtaining identification or travel documents, often because the collaboration with officials from</p>
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			<p>those countries of origin is in need of improvement. Another problem is that rejected asylum applicants from those regions often actively refuse to cooperate with identification procedures, thus making forced return to their countries of origin impossible. Another, similar example would be some states in West Africa, like Burkina Faso, Ghana or Ivory Coast. The cooperation with the embassies or national authorities of those states has been proven to be rather difficult. It is very difficult to identify persons hailing from those states and attaining identification or travel documents. The procedure of attaining documents is very time consuming and is often not successful.</p>
	Hungary	Yes	<p>1. Based on the statistical data available we have not registered an increase in the number of explicit withdrawal of applications.</p> <p>2. The reason for withdrawal is hardly expressed by the applicants, so we do not have any relevant information on the reasons of the withdrawals. Even if the asylum application is withdrawn, the applicability of non-refoulement principle is always examined.</p> <p>3. See Q1 and Q2.</p> <p>4. Please, see above.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. The asylum authority does not have statistics on potential asylum seekers.</p> <p>7. The most significant obstacle in the return procedures is the identification process and obtaining the travel document, especially in cases involving Moroccan, and Algerian nationals. The vast majority of asylum applicants don't have official documents, which makes it necessary to conduct an identification procedure before obtaining the travel documents. The authorities do not disclose any information to embassies regarding the asylum procedure; therefore the embassies rather differentiate between migrants who wish to return to their home country voluntarily and those who do not. Usually the asylum applicants who withdraw their application are the ones who are willing to return voluntarily. Most embassies show little to no effort to</p>


			<p>cooperate with the immigration authorities in cases where the client doesn't want to return voluntarily, meaning the embassies do not reply to identification requests, or they seem hesitant to conduct personal interviews, or the identification procedure takes long time. However, in cases where clients contact the embassy directly, or are generally willing to return to their home country voluntarily, the embassies tend to be far more cooperative; the time of the identification procedure decreases, and the embassies issue travel documents without delay.</p>
	Latvia	Yes	<p>1. No – the number of asylum seekers withdrawing their applications has not increased in the last six months. Though the number of withdrawn applications differs from month to month, the total number is comparatively small – 16 withdrawn applications (from 1st October 2015 to 31st March 2016). The main nationalities – Iraqis, Vietnamese, Ukrainians, Georgians.</p> <p>2. Yes, there were applicants who expressed a wish to return voluntarily, as well requested and received support for voluntary return.</p> <p>3. The most frequently specified reasons for withdrawing applications – wish to be reunited with family in the country of origin or changes of personal situation that caused the flight from the country of origin.</p> <p>4. In case of withdrawal of application the decision to discontinue examination of the application has been taken, the State Border Guard handles back asylum seeker's identity documents (In practice documents are given back to the applicant right before the departure. This is done to be sure that person leaves the country and return procedure has gone successfully) or supports him/her in getting the necessary travel documents, the International Migration Organization provides support for return.</p> <p>5. No significant changes.</p> <p>6. In accordance with Asylum law Article 7 the State Border Guard of Latvia registers the application for international protection submitted by the asylum seeker within 3 working days. In practice the application for asylum is registered at the date of its submission. The asylum procedure starts from the moment of submission of asylum application and ends at the moment</p>


			<p>when the administrative procedure is finished (a decision is taken) even if the asylum seeker after submission of asylum application has withdrawn his/her application. The procedural actions are carried out inter alia related with identification. Taking into account the above-mentioned there is no a category of potential asylum seekers in Latvia. Each foreigner who has submitted the application for asylum and afterwards refused to follow this procedure will receive a decision.</p> <p>7. The problems or obstacles related with return of former asylum applicants arise when the foreigner refuses to cooperate or provides false information or data on himself or herself. Currently the State Border Guard has the problems with: - identification of citizen of Algeria – the person refused to cooperate and provided false data about himself. - identification of citizens of Pakistan – persons refuse to cooperate, provide incorrect data about themselves, as well as long identification procedure is done by the competent authorities of Pakistan.</p>
	Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. 1. No. 1b. N/A.</p> <p>2. N/A.</p> <p>3. N/A.</p> <p>4. N/A.</p> <p>5. 5. No. 5b. N/A.</p> <p>6. 6. No. 6b. N/A.</p> <p>7. 7. Yes. 7b. Lithuania experiences difficulties when trying to return citizens of Vietnam to their country of origin due to inability to establish their identity and get their travel documents.</p>
	Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. a. No. In the period between September 2015 and February 2016 there was an increase from 6 withdrawals in September to 30 withdrawals in November 2015. Then there was a decrease to 14 withdrawals in December 2015, 12 in January 2016 and then an increase to 30 withdrawals in February 2016. In total there have been 113 withdrawals during the period September 2015 and</p>


			<p>February 2016. According to IOM Brussels Office which handles the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme for Luxembourg there has been an increase in the voluntary returns before the beginning of 2016. b. Table n° 1: Withdrawn applications by month and nationality (Sep. 2015 – February 2016). See document upload)</p> <p>2. As it is seen from the table above there are 43 individuals from West Balkans countries (38%) that cannot benefit from the AVRR-L programme. These individuals are returned with the assistance of the Directorate of Immigration via bus. This is the only assistance they get. In regards to the other nationalities the voluntary return is primarily used by the individuals who withdraw voluntarily their international protection applications. For the period September 2015 – February 2016 the AVRR-L assisted the following returnees who withdraw voluntarily their application: Sep-Dec. 2015: 20 Iraqis, 1 Iranian and 1 Turk. Jan-Feb. 2016: 14 Iraqis and 5 Iranians.</p> <p>3. The reasons exposed are: a) a precise family reason (death of a family member) or b) a combination of factors: length of the procedure, homesickness and worries about the family members left behind. The Iraqis who return have mentioned that they return to join their anguished families who they have left alone for such a long time taking into consideration the danger and the risks of living in Iraq (length of the procedure and incertitude on the possibility of a family reunification).</p> <p>4. In the case of voluntary return, the documents will be handed at the airport or when the individual boards the bus. If the person is admitted in the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR Luxembourg) handled by IOM, the documents are handed by the Directorate of Immigration to the responsible person of the IOM in Luxembourg. This person will render the documents to the third-country national either when s/he has to go to the embassy of his/her country of origin to obtain a travel document, or if the third-country national already has a travel document, the documents will be handed at the airport when leaving the country. The AVRR Luxembourg provides assistance for obtaining travel documents (i.e. it covers the fees and the travels that the applicant has to do to the embassy of the country of origin in Brussels), transport from Luxembourg to their village of origin, assistance at the Luxembourg International</p>
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	Malta	Yes	<p>1. Refer to attached</p> <p>2. Refer to attached</p> <p>3. Refer to attached</p> <p>4. Refer to attached</p> <p>5. Refer to attached</p> <p>6. Refer to attached</p>

			7. Refer to attached
	Netherlands	Yes	<p>1. See attached document</p> <p>2. See attached document</p> <p>3. See attached document</p> <p>4. See attached document</p> <p>5. See attached document</p> <p>6. See attached document</p> <p>7. See attached document</p>
	Poland	No	
	Slovak Republic	Yes	<p>1. The Slovak Republic has not registered an increased number of asylum seekers withdrawing their application for international protection in the last six months. During the period from September 2015 to April 2016 there were 11 withdrawals of application for international protection registered (4x India, 2x Ukraine, 1x DRC, Russia, Iraq, Syria, Algeria), which creates 1,57 of application per month. In the previous period of January 2014 until September 2015 there were 35 withdrawals of applications for international protection registered, which constitutes 1,66 of application per month. This provided, shows that the withdrawing of applications is on a constant level, no rising.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. N/A</p>

			<p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No, the Slovak Republic have not registered an increase in the number of rejected asylum applicants wishing to voluntarily return in the last six months.</p> <p>6. The Slovak Republic has not registered an increased number of potential asylum seekers refusing to apply for asylum and/or cooperate with identification procedures at the border in the past six months.</p> <p>7. No, the Slovak Republic has not experienced any specific obstacles in returning former asylum applicants of specific nationalities. However, the Slovak Republic does not monitor the obstacles to return former asylum applicants in relation to whether persons applied for asylum in the past or not, or whether they withdrew the application. The experience of the Slovak Republic is that the persons who withdrew their applications are predominantly returned by assisted voluntary return to the country of origin and are willing to cooperate.</p>
	Slovenia	Yes	<p>1. Yes. In 2016 we notice increasing numbers of asylum applications (576) due to the larger migration flow which transited Slovenia in the second half of 2015 as well as slightly increasing numbers of withdrawing of asylum applications (265). Comparing with previous years: in 2013 there were 272 asylum applications and 177 cases of withdrawn of asylum application, 2014; 385 asylum applications and 216 withdrawn of asylum application, 2015; 277 asylum applications and 89 withdrawn of asylum application.</p> <p>2. We are promoting voluntary return and providing assistance if alien asked for assistance. However we do not collect such data.</p> <p>3. We do not collect such data.</p> <p>4. We do not collect such data.</p> <p>5. No, we did not register increase of rejected asylum seekers wishing to voluntary return home.</p>

			<p>6. Yes, we have identified nationality swaps in higher numbers. Especially nationals of Northern African countries pretended to be Syrians or Iraqis. No numbers available.</p> <p>7. In the return procedure we do not distinguish different categories of asylum seekers based on their reasons for return such as rejected asylum seeker, withdrawing asylum application, etc. Based on the Chapter VI of the Alien Act return decision shall be issued by the police as responsible authority to each alien who is residing illegally in the Republic of Slovenia, if legislation do not foreseen differently.</p>
	Sweden	Yes	<p>1. Yes, please see the attached statistics.</p> <p>2. The normal situation is that the applicant withdraws the application and at the same time states that he or she wants to return to their country of origin. During this meeting the handling officer informs what kind of support is available, for example a reestablishment-support (in-cash) that is provided for those who return to for example Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and some countries in Africa. Persons returning to Afghanistan may also receive reintegration support (in-kind) The practical arrangement regarding the journey is usually done by the Swedish Migration Agency (the alien normally does not have any money for the ticket).</p> <p>3. The reasons for returning vary from person to person and it is also difficult to know whether the Swedish Migration Agency receives the correct information regarding the reason for withdrawing the application. Reasons we have heard is long processing time in the asylum procedure, the accommodation is not good enough, the awareness of that their application for asylum will probably be rejected, the awareness of that it will be difficult to get family reunion, wish to be reunited with family members in countries of origin, etc.</p> <p>4. These persons receive a decision of rejection (formal grounds) and are handled the same way as a person that have received a rejection of the asylum application. Usually though when the wish of the person is to return the return procedure becomes easier. The Swedish Migration Agency facilitates the return, make reservations for the ticket, hand back identity documents and if it is necessary, support him or her with getting the necessary travel documents. Depending how the return take place the agency is either at the airport making sure the persons leave the country</p>

			<p>or the alien is told to hand in a “proof of leaving Sweden” to the boarder control when leaving Sweden.</p> <p>5. Yes, please see the enclosed statistics. Please note that the statistics provided is excluding Dublin-transfers.</p> <p>6. 6. Yes 6b. During the latter part of 2015 it was an increase of migrants, many Iraqis, who entered Sweden, from Denmark, and travelled on to the northern part of Sweden and into Finland. During September-October travelled about 2,000 migrants a day into Sweden. Approximately half are estimated to have applied for asylum in Sweden. This number is however a very rough estimate due to large influx of migrants. During this time one must remember that approximate 7 000 people/week did in fact apply for asylum in Sweden.</p> <p>7. Usually when a person will is to return home the presumed obstacles seem to be solved. The identity becomes clear and documents are handed in. At the moment we are experiencing some problems regarding the return of unaccompanied minors that withdraw their application and want to return to Afghanistan. The arrangements around the return and the issue regarding who is going to meet the minor at the airport tend to be a bit lengthy. This makes both the minor and the guardian a bit unsatisfied but the Swedish Migration Agency must get confirmed, as long as it is a minor in our register that someone will meet up at the airport. 7b. See above.</p>
	United Kingdom	Yes	<p>1. Please see attached table.</p> <p>2. Information not readily available</p> <p>3. Information not readily available</p> <p>4. Information not readily available</p> <p>5. Please see attached table. N/A</p>

			<p>6. Information not readily available</p> <p>7. Where former asylum applicants choose to return through the voluntary returns process there have been no obstacles to return because of asylum status. While there are obstacles to return because of access to travel documents etc. these are usually overcome in time.</p>
	Norway	Yes	<p>1. YES. Please see document with attached tables.</p> <p>2. Over the last months Norway has noticed an increased interest in voluntary assisted return from persons who are still in the asylum process. (When asylum seekers contact the police to get their travel documents back, so that they can return to Syria/ surrounding areas on their own, they are informed about the consequences of withdrawing their applications, that Norwegian authorities cannot take responsibility for these returns, nor assist financially or by any other means in their return to this area as long as the applicant does not qualify for assisted return. The applicants have to organize their return themselves, including paying for tickets. When told this, some asylum applicants choose to stay in Norway and try their asylum case anyway, because they are not in a financial position to pay for their own ticket. Some have tried to apply for a voluntary return with IOM, but most do not have a residence permit in 3rd countries, and therefore do not qualify for help from IOM.)</p> <p>3. There is no systematic information available concerning the reasons why these persons have withdrawn their asylum applications. The suggested 3 main reasons for withdrawing applications listed in the question above are also applicable for NO. The source of information concerning the reason for wanting to return comes from the media, reception centre staff as well as from some of the asylum seekers themselves.</p> <p>4. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) assists persons applying for assisted return to third countries if the persons have a valid residence permit to that country. Very few persons have such a permit. In 2015, 64 persons from Syria applied for assisted return. Only 12 returned to a third country. Persons returning through the AVRRE Programme receive their ID documents upon departure. We follow-up and check that returns have actually taken place through IOM AVRRE operational reports or in dialogue with the Immigration Police. According to the</p>

			<p>Norwegian immigration act art. 93 (1) the applicants are obligated to hand in their travel document and/or passport when applying for asylum. The documents that are handed in are systematically kept until the applicants are returned to their country of origin. The applicants who withdraw their application no longer have a permit to stay in Norway and they are obligated to leave the country. If they do this voluntarily they will be handed their documents upon the day of return. Applicants who want to withdraw their asylum application will have to contact the police and inform them of the date and time of their planned departure. The police will then make sure that the documents are at the specific point of border crossing. If the applicant(s) should continue to reside in Norway without a permit, the authorities will issue a return decision and if necessary, accompany them to their destination. In some instances, such as with some Somalia and Eritrea cases, the police can organize tickets and help access travel documents. The authorities do not facilitate returns to countries that most likely will breach the principle of non-refoulement. The Norwegian authorities have agreed to hand back Syrian documents in connection with a return, if the applicants have a valid passport and if the passport is authenticated by a document specialist. The authorities also check registers to make sure the person is not registered with any on-going criminal cases nor has a previous behaviour pattern indicating that the person may pose a security threat. The applicants wanting to return also have to submit a copy of their flight ticket before we hand out the documents. For Syrians, the police inform the asylum applicants that they have to organize and pay for their return themselves, and that the authorities are not responsible for any costs. The applicant(s) have to check themselves if they need a (transit) visa or if the airline accepts them boarding the plane. The travel documents are handed out at the airport, before check-in. Then the applicants travel as any other passenger.</p> <p>5. YES The number of applications for AVRR increased from 990 (previous 6 month period) to 1384 (last 6 month period). The largest numbers one year ago were from the following nationalities: Russia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan and Iraq. The largest nationalities the last 6 months are: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine and Lebanon. Please note: The info presented above is based on statistics showing the persons applying for assisted return regardless of the status of the asylum application process. The statistics may therefore cover persons who have decided to apply for assisted return without having received a rejection on their asylum application.</p>
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			<p>6. NO</p> <p>7. YES. Norway does not return Syrians, but we experience obstacles with Syrians who wish to return voluntarily and do not have a valid passport or wish to return to e.g. Turkey where they need a visa. We cannot assist in any way to obtain a travel document or visa. One specific Airline (Aeroflot) has also rejected a few Syrians with a flight ticket to Beirut via Moscow.</p>
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