



AD HOC QUERY ON 2021.62 The use of innovative migration policy instruments in EU Member States applying insights from the behavioural sciences

Requested by EMN NCP The Netherlands on 8 October 2021

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden (21 in Total)

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1. Background information

Migration policy, like most public policy, is typically based on traditional policy tools such as incentives and punishments. In some cases, policy goals are met only partially, while legal options to impose further measures are exhausted. For instance, motivating rejected asylum seekers in the Netherlands to return to their country of origin is a continuing issue, while options to develop stricter policy using traditional policy tools are limited. For this reason, the migration department of the Dutch Ministry of Justice is interested in potential applications of innovative policy instruments, such as insights from the behavioural sciences. The Netherlands would like to learn how other MS make use of such insights in migration policy.

The behavioural sciences offer a number of potentially relevant tools to nudge migrants into certain behaviour, among which social norms, messengers, framing, and defaults. These are already applied in many public policy areas, and we discuss a (hypothetical) example for the case of migration policy below:

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- Social norms: people tend to follow others' behaviour, and informing them about how many others already perform the desired behaviour can lead to increased compliance. In return policy, this could potentially be used by informing rejected asylum seekers that a majority of their peers have returned voluntarily or that the majority has actively considered voluntary return (if this is indeed the case).
- Framing: in communicating with an audience, reactions are determined to a large extent by what aspect of the message is emphasized. In return policy, this could potentially be used by speaking of 'future orientation' rather than 'return counselling' in communications with rejected migrants.
- Messengers: the source of a message is crucial to the importance and trustworthiness that people attach to the information. This insight is used in the 'Migrants as Messengers' campaign, an information campaign by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) aimed at discouraging irregular migration by sharing actual migrants' experiences.
- Defaults: people tend to be prone to decision-making inertia, making defaults and automatic enrolment a powerful policy tool. In return policy, this could potentially be used by automatically enrolling people for programs or trainings focused on transferrable skills or automatically pairing them with a returnee in the origin country in a remote buddy system.

In order to better understand the potential and see the viability of these innovative policy tools for migration issues, this ad hoc query asks whether other member states have applied them in return policy. It would be useful to know about broad applications (such as encouraging voluntary return) as well as specific examples, such as motivating migrants to take part in a program or training. Moreover, we are interested in applications in other fields of migration policy as well. The scope comprises policy designs (or aspects thereof) that aim to motivate certain behaviour without using force, i.e. without using economic incentives (monetary rewards or fines) or direct consequences (whether positive (e.g. access to services) or negative (e.g. restraining orders)). Please note that the examples provided above merely serve illustrative purposes, and we are interested in any application of the described tools (as well as others) in migration policy in your MS.

2. Questions

1. Has your country applied social norms in return policy? Yes / No If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied.
2. Has your country applied framing in return policy? Yes / No If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied.
3. Has your country applied messenger effects in return policy? Yes / No If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied.
4. Has your country applied defaults or automatic enrolment in return policy? Yes / No If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied.
5. Has your country applied policy instruments based on other behavioural insights in return policy? Yes / No If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied.
6. Do you have examples of the application of behavioural insights mentioned in Q1-5 in other areas of migration policy? Y/N If yes, please elaborate how they were applied. (Please note it is not necessary to provide an exhaustive list of policy instruments, but rather to gather some examples).



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We would very much appreciate your responses by **5 November 2021**.

3. Responses

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		Wider Dissemination ²	
	EMN NCP Austria	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	1. No. 2. No. 3. No. 4. No. 5. No.

¹ If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

² A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."



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			<p>6. The Belgian Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) communicated that there has not been a conscious effort to develop policies founded on behavioural insights with regard to nudging, but unconsciously certain policies could be interpreted in such a sense. The reception model is such an example: for example, recently recognised beneficiaries for international protection are referred to a 'local reception initiative' in the hope that refugees will take up residence in the neighbourhood. The animated informative films available in the Belgian arrival centre about vaccinations and tuberculosis screenings are another example. These videos provide information to residents regarding the necessity of taking health measures and to reassure the residents that vaccination has a positive impact.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Croatia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No in regular return procedure.</p> <p>Regarding AVRR, IOM Croatia has observed such behavior, as in example of labor migrants in Croatia from Vietnam losing their jobs due to COVID-19 negative influence. Return to Vietnam remains difficult as it is possible only using repatriation flights from other EU MS. After first successful return to Vietnam, other Vietnamese workers in Croatia losing their jobs have learned from peers that return is possible through IOM Croatia's AVRR programme. This behavior continued to mid-2021. However, IOM Croatia does not use generalized approach in AVRR using social norms, but migrant-centric individual approach on reaching informed decision to voluntary return.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No in regular return procedure.</p> <p>Regarding AVRR, IOM Croatia is monitoring reintegration efforts of migrants who have voluntary returned to their countries of origin and who are utilizing reintegration assistance offered through AVRR programme. They are collecting successful reintegration stories which will be publicly available and can be used as a factor to take in consideration for other migrants eligible for reintegration assistance.</p> <p>4. No in regular return procedure.</p>


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			<p>In context of Croatian AVRR programme migrants with medical needs, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied single migrant children and other vulnerable migrants are automatically eligible for reintegration assistance, individually tailored for their specific needs.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. Not explicitly. However during return counselling, potential returnees may be informed about persons returned voluntarily or persons that expressed interest for returning.</p> <p>2. Not explicitly. However return counselling, especially to asylum seekers, focuses on possible pathways in Cyprus, rather than return. Aim is for the potential returnee to be able to make a well informed decision.</p> <p>3. Not explicitly. However, usually we use translators in order to promote/disseminate voluntary returns</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	Yes	<p>1. Yes, Czech Republic has applied social norms in return policy. CR informs potential applicants for voluntary return how asylum process works and what will happen after rejection of their application for international protection and that many rejected asylum seekers have chosen voluntary return. We also inform potential applicants about advantages of voluntary return.</p>



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			<p>2. Yes, Czech Republic has applied framing in return policy. CR informs every applicant for voluntary return what will happen in the future and we ask about applicant's future plans in the country of return.</p> <p>3. No, Czech Republic hasn't applied messenger effects in return policy yet.</p> <p>4. No, Czech Republic hasn't applied defaults or automatic enrolment in return policy.</p> <p>5. No, Czech Republic hasn't applied policy instruments based on other behavioural insights in return policy.</p> <p>6. No, Czech Republic does not have examples mentioned in Q1-5 in other areas of migration policy.</p>
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. Only policy instrument in this context is the return counselling what we are using in return proceedings, within which it might be possible to influence returnees' possible choices for future (e.g. through voluntary return and reintegration assistance).</p> <p>6. No.</p>


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	<p>EMN NCP Finland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No. Usually the case is that the rejected asylum seekers exactly know that many of their peers have stayed in Europe which encourages them to stay more strongly than any of our messages.</p> <p>2. Yes/No. Within return counselling we try to put a lot of effort on talking about the future, trying to plan it and thus creating a path for the client who is stuck here in his/her situation.</p> <p>3. No. We used to have an AMIF project with a Facebook campaign where we targeted the failed asylum seekers in Finland/Europe. We specifically targeted the message to Europe, because studies have shown that information campaigns trying to stop illegal migration can also create migration, when people see it as a viable way as “someone of my peer also made it”. Also, from IOM we’ve understood that they’re rather hesitant to do these campaigns with actual returnees and their faces, as IOM says that many returnees regret taking part on the campaign later on.</p> <p>4. We have a Sustainable Reintegration in Iraq project under ERRIN, but we have not yet seen results of the business trainings we are providing for the Iraqi returnees.</p> <p>5. -</p> <p>6. -</p>
	<p>EMN NCP France</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of messenger effects in return policy. However, the French office for immigration and integration (OFII) produce films of testimonies of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVR/R) programs’ beneficiaries. The OFII also mentions an innovative initiative under process consisting in the co-financing of a feature film by a Senegalese</p>



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			<p>director that highlights the risks of irregular immigration and presents assisted voluntary return and reintegration programs (AVR/R) as a possible way out of a migratory impasse.</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<p>1. No. Such social norms were applied in an anecdotal way at best. There was no approach that could meet scientific standards (like conceptual and theoretical considerations) in this regard.</p> <p>2. No. Framing was applied in an anecdotal way at best. There was no approach that could meet scientific standards in this regard (like methodological, conceptual, or theoretical considerations). Indeed, a pragmatic approach with identifying best practices was applied here.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. No. Such defaults were not applied.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. Yes. For instance, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees finances various courses which migrants teach themselves. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation courses in the native language of asylum seekers (pilot project) <p>The courses provide asylum seekers with useful information for everyday life in their respective mother tongue, as well as with the essentials of cultural coexistence in Germany, immediately after their arrival</p>


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			<p>here in Germany. The courses are taught by cultural mediators who have a migration background. They know the course attendees' mother tongue and culture, and they themselves have personal experience with migration. This enables them to build bridges between the cultures, at the same time providing a positive example by sharing their life stories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Migrant Women Simply Strong in Daily Life (<i>MiA</i>: Migrantinnen einfach stark im Alltag) <p>MiA is a course offered by women for women. The women get useful information for their daily life and can improve their German language skills. By offering a safe space, the courses create the opportunity for women to discuss sensitive topics and to empower each other.</p> <p>Both the courses employ the knowledge that peers are more believable and that they are the most powerful messengers (peer education).</p>
	EMN NCP Hungary	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. The Hungarian authorities provide information on the option of voluntary return. 2. No. The Hungarian authorities provide information on the option of voluntary return. 3. No. 4. No. 5. No. 6. N/A
	EMN NCP Ireland	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. 2. No


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			<p>3. No. A dedicated policy decision to apply this concept has not been made. However, information campaigns are used in the context of voluntary return.</p> <p>4. No</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. Unknown</p>
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<p>1. No, nevertheless in the counselling and information activity in favour of migrants, complete information is provided on the AVR measure, also referring, where applicable, to other returnees of the relevant country of origin .</p> <p>2. What matters most is highlighting the opportunities provided by the AVR measure.</p> <p>3. successful AVR experiences/stories were published on the reports developed by the AVR projects and published on the relevant websites</p> <p>4. The AVR measure is characterized by the willingness of the migrant concerned, in every aspect of this procedure, including reintegration. Such a decision is made by the migrant concerned, after he has been properly informed of all the opportunities offered by this measure.</p> <p>5. A national AVR campaign was developed in Italy, which directly involved migrants and focused on the positive aspects of returning into his/her own country of origin, by highlighting the prefix “Re” and the key message “Dream is Reality Re-Turning and Re-Starting at Home is possible”</p> <p>6. No</p>



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	<p>EMN NCP Latvia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of social norms in return policy. There aren't any approved policies, official guidelines/strategies or official return counseling techniques that could be seen as directly derived from the knowledge of behavioral sciences about social norms. Although, there are good practices and individually tailored strategies by return experts. One of the methods used by some return experts is to appeal to the person's rationality / rational interests and to highlight a certain strategy of actions (return) as rational to the person and in the person's own interests. In those cases where it can be seen as useful there is also an orientation towards universal values - trust and cooperation. The return expert, for his part, provides complete information, identifies himself as reliable and co-operative, with special emphasis on it. Thus, it is more likely that a person driven by intrinsic values will also perform actions rooted in the same values.</p> <p>2. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of framing in return policy. There aren't any approved policies, official guidelines/strategies or return counseling techniques that could be seen as directly using framing as a method. Although, there are good practices and individually tailored strategies by return experts. Individually tailored strategies by return experts where framing can be identified: Return expert in communication with the illegal migrant, motivating him to leave voluntarily, emphasizes the benefits of voluntary departure compared to forced removal from EU and the possible future scenario following each type of return. Namely, there is a focus on the fact that in the case of voluntary return a person is given a more favorable decision compared to forced removal. It is also pointed out how return based on a person's voluntary departure has less negative consequences for future decisions (decisions on reentry and legal stay). So there can be an orientation towards the future vision (framing this vision specifically by return expert) and activities that should be done by person to fulfill this vision after return will be concluded.</p> <p>3. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of messenger effects in return policy. There aren't any approved policies, official guidelines/strategies or return counseling techniques that could be seen as directly using messenger effect as a method. Nevertheless, in return experts return activities there is a significant involvement of the IOM, as the IOM representative is seen by the person, i.e., illegal migrant, as a party who is disinterested in a negative</p>
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			<p>outcome for the person - a safe and reliable messenger, and trustee who is interested in a more favorable outcome for the person in occurred situation. The IOM representative as a reintegration support provider also highlights successful return and reintegration experiences.</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. No</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. NO. If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied. N/A.</p> <p>2. NO. If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied.</p>



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			<p>N/A.</p> <p>3. NO. If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied. N/A.</p> <p>4. NO. If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied. N/A.</p> <p>5. NO. If yes, please elaborate on the way this tool is applied. N/A.</p> <p>6. No. If yes, please elaborate how they were applied. (Please note it is not necessary to provide an exhaustive list of policy instruments, but rather to gather some examples). N/A.</p>
	EMN NCP Netherlands	Yes	<p>1. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of social norms in return policy.</p> <p>2. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of framing in return policy.</p> <p>3. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of messenger effects in return policy.</p> <p>4. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of automatic enrolment in return policy.</p> <p>5. No, we have not identified any examples of the application of other behavioural insights in return policy.</p>

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			<p>6. Yes, as part of the Dutch integration program, migrants follow a course on Dutch democratic norms and values, and declare that they will comply with these. This program speaks to the behavioural insight of commitment: people are more likely to comply when they have formally declared that they will do so. The Netherlands is engaged in the 'Migrants as Messengers' campaign, aimed at discouraging irregular migration by providing real accounts of the experience of migrating and living in the Netherlands illegally. This campaign speaks to the behavioural insight that the source of the message matters and people are more likely to trust information from their peers than from the authorities.</p>
	EMN NCP Poland	Yes	<p>1. NO 2. NO 3. NO 4. NO 5. NO 6. NO</p>
	EMN NCP Portugal	Yes	<p>1. Yes (at least partially). Considering the definition provided, this is something we have been doing in the framework of ARVoRe implemented projects. It is frequent to ask returnees and reintegration beneficiaries to tell us their stories, to talk about their expectations and we often use those stories to illustrate social media contents; reports, presentations to partners and donors, etc. Nevertheless, this is not seen as a tool to change a certain behaviour but as a way to show assistance in practice, same way it is not defined with basis on behavioural sciences but as a way to better communicate and show how assistance works.</p>


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			<p>Please note that this answer concerns only voluntary return.</p> <p>2. No, but this might be related both with the target group of ARVoRe projects in Portugal (mostly Brazil) and the way message is perceived and also with the fact that AVRR is considered as preferential over forced return meaning it benefits from a positive perspective from state and non-state actors.</p> <p>Please note that this answer concerns only voluntary return.</p> <p>3. Yes, as mentioned in the first question, this is something we have been doing in the frameworks of AVRR projects/related projects implemented by IOM in Portugal. One good example are the videos produced under SURE project available at https://reintegracaobrasil.com/?lang=en. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that this is not seen as a messenger effects tool but as a way to show assistance in practice, same way it is not defined with basis on behavioural sciences but as a way to better communicate and show how assistance works.</p> <p>Please note that this answer concerns only voluntary return.</p> <p>4. No, enrolment in AVRR program in Portugal, implemented by IOM in the framework of ARVoRe Projects is not automatic. It always comes from migrant will and necessity to return and is based on information and counselling as one of the main pillars of voluntariness. It also requires the consent from migrant rooted on IOM Data Protection principles.</p> <p>Please note that this answer concerns only voluntary return.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. Yes, mentioned along the answers.</p>
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	<p>EMN NCP Slovakia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No. However, in the context of AVRR programme in Slovakia which is exclusively operated by IOM, return counseling must be factual and neutral and should allow the migrant to make an informed decision about his/her return. Rather than trying to influence migrants' decision to return, counselling aims at providing the potential returnee with a balanced mix of objective, up-to-date and relevant facts and figures that enable him/ her to make up his/ her own mind about the suitability of AVRR option for his/ her current needs. In instances where migrants display distrust in the AVRR programme and the services it offers, migrants are also provided with examples of stories of return from their respective country of origin.</p> <p>2. No. But during actual counselling sessions within the AVRR programme, which in Slovakia is exclusively operated by IOM, the information provided can be individualized according to specific needs and requests of returnees. Rather than change migrants mind regarding return, aspects of behavioral science are used to get access and approach migrants in a manner that respects their individual situation and fosters trust. See also response to Q1.</p> <p>3. No. In the context of AVRR programme, the importance of trusted sources of information about AVRR is recognized through production and promotion of migrants' testimonies and stories of return as a part of AVRR outreach component. These are available on AVRR website either in the form of an article with pictures or short videos showing real life experience with return and reintegration. If needed direct communication with IOM AVRR staff in countries of origin can be arranged so that potential returnees can verify the information they already received during return counselling in the sending country with IOM staff from their own country who speak their language and have direct experience with delivery of assistance. In general, the more sources of information are available to migrants the easier it is for them to overcome the initial distrust some of them might be having.</p> <p>4. No. In the context of AVRR programme in Slovakia which is exclusively operated by IOM, defaults or automatic enrolment in AVRR is not applied.</p>
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			<p>5. No. As for AVRR programme, see responses to Q1, Q2 and Q3</p> <p>6. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Slovenia	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. Not applicable.</p>
	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	<p>1. When a person applies for asylum, the Swedish Migration Agency informs him or her about statistics regarding rejections and residence permits so that the person can get a realistic idea of the situation and possible outcomes at an early stage. Providing information regarding the number of asylum seekers that actually leave Sweden after being rejected is generally not considered particularly useful because these numbers are relatively low for certain nationalities.</p> <p>2. Please see above. The Swedish Migration Agency tries to implement return counselling as a discussion about available reintegration support and legal ways to receive a residence permit rather than as a discussion about the possible consequences of not following a decision. However, the Agency considers “future orientation” and “return counselling” to be closely linked.</p>

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			<p>3. The Swedish Migration Agency is responsible for the whole asylum process and for voluntary return. However, it considers that correct information about the process and an individual's situation should not only come from the Migration Agency itself but also from other actors in Sweden, such as the Swedish Red Cross, Amnesty International, etc. Several NGOs are involved in a project of the Migration Agency regarding information about positive incentives to return. The Migration Agency also has meetings with the Red Cross on a regular basis regarding several areas, one of which is return.</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. Not really, but the Swedish Migration Agency participates in the CADRE-project, which aims to give return counsellors tools to use in return counselling sessions (conversation methodology).</p> <p>6. No.</p>
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