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Ad-Hoc Query on 2023.7 Policies and practices on return and reintegration counselling for migrants in EU+

Requested by EMN Luxembourg on 13 February 2023

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden plus Norway (20 in Total)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Return Directive 2008/115/EC underscores that EU Member States should provide for enhanced return assistance and counselling. The Commission has also recommended[1] that EU Member States take action to improve their processes for disseminating information on voluntary return and assisted voluntary return programmes to illegally staying third-country nationals, in cooperation with national education, social and health services, non-governmental organisations and other bodies.

The EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration[2] and the accompanying annex EU Framework on return counselling[3] further underline the importance of return counselling as part of an effective, humane and dignified return process. The EU Framework on return counselling provides guidance mainly to national authorities responsible for setting up, managing and developing return counselling structures in the Member States. Furthermore, the strategy calls for the development of a comprehensive return curriculum for practitioners that comprises teaching components on all aspects of return policy and practice.

In line with the ambitions set out in the New Pact on Asylum and Migration and the EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, Frontex has developed a Work Plan on Return and Reintegration Counselling for the period 2022-2024. This plan aims to provide for a clear and detailed response by Frontex to the needs expressed by the EU strategy and member States related to activities in the area of return and reintegration counselling. The overall objective is to enhance the capacities of the MS in the area of return and reintegration counselling and supporting the Joint Reintegration Services. Frontex together with COM will align and intensively cooperate based on input from the Member States to increase their investments in return and reintegration counselling in the coming years.

Against this background, this AHQ aims to collect information to prepare the workshop on 4-5 April 2023 on Return Counselling in Stockholm and to be compiled in an inform on “policies, practices and future of return counselling for migrants in EU Member States”. Frontex will take on board all input received via this AHQ for the development of all activities as described in the Work Plan on Return and Reintegration Counselling.

Instructions:

- The AHQ is to be completed jointly by the appointed EMN REG Member and by the appointed member of the Frontex Post Return and Reintegration Network and the Frontex Pre Return Activities Network.
- Responses should be uploaded in the EMN AHQ tool, with the support of EMN NCP (as necessary).
- Please respond to the AHQ focusing on return counselling services provided by national authorities or service providers working under the direct direction of national authorities.

Budgetary value AHQ

- Given the number of questions asked, for budgetary purposes, this AHQ is equivalent to 3 AHQ.

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Note: For the purpose of this AHQ:

- Return counselling – Individual return advice to potential returnees, including (depending on the circumstances of the case) information on the (1) obligation to leave the country and the consequences if not leaving, (2) different return support schemes, (3) information on the situation in the country of origin and (4) the potential prospects for the returnees for a new start in their country of origin with the aim to (5) encourage (assisted) voluntary return[1].
- Return counsellor – is used to refer to a counsellor or other person tasked to provide information on return and reintegration opportunities and to guide the third-country national through the return and reintegration process. A return counsellor can be an employee of a national authority, local administration, international organisation, NGO or any other type of organisation.

Annex

For your perusal, please find attached the compilation of replies provided to :

- AHQ 2019-30 AHQ 'REG – Ad-Hoc Query 'Policies' and practices on return counselling for migrants in EU Member States'
- AHQ 2019-59 'REG Ad-Hoc Query on policies and practices for the support of return counsellors in their role to provide migrants with timely and reliable information on return'

[1] The EU framework on return counselling and the Reintegration Assistance Tool, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021SC0121&...>

[1] COM(2017)1600

[2] COM(2021)121

[3] COM(2021)120

We would like to ask the following questions:

1. Is there an official definition of return counselling provided by national policy/ legislation? YES/NO. If YES, please provide the definition. If NO, please explain on how return counselling is understood in administrative/common practices.

Please make references/ update your replies to Q1 and Q2 of AHQ 2019.59 'REG – Ad-Hoc Query 'Policies' and practices on return counselling for migrants in EU Member States' (see annex).

2. Please indicate at which migration stage return counselling is provided. Please list all relevant stages choosing among the following:

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Available choices: a. During migration (in a country of transit);, b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);

3. Who provide the counselling in EACH migration stage indicated in Q2(e.g. Migration authority (specify), Social services, Service providers (NGOs, International organizations, etc. under a service contract with national authorities.), independent NGOs, international organizations (independently from a contract with national authorities)?

4. Can you provide the number (if not at least an estimation) of counsellors for EACH of the stages mentioned in Q2?

5. Which is the specific method/approach used when providing counselling in each stage mentioned in Q2?

6. Is there a specific training curriculum or dedicated module available in your country regarding return counselling (pre-departure, in the host country)? Please explain in which consists the curriculum/module and please indicate which are the materials used (i.e. handbook or manual).

7. Is there a specific training curriculum or dedicated module available in your country regarding reintegration counselling (after return on the country of origin)? Please explain in which consists the curriculum/module and please indicate which are the materials used (i.e. handbook or manual).

8. Do you have a practical handbook or manual available for return counsellors in your country explaining the objectives and national framework of return counselling? YES/NO.

9. Are there any in-depth modules on specific topics available for return counsellors? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please indicate if your answers to AHQ 2019.59 are still valid. If not please update them (see description)

If yes, please specify if replies to the AHQ 2019.59 REG - Ad-Hoc Query on 'policies and practices for the support of return counsellors in their role to provide migrants with timely and reliable information on return', are still relevant or provide updates on training programmes available in your country, the institutions delivering it, and the type of certification issued.

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10. Is there a platform, fora or dedicated website for return counsellors available in your country on which national and European policies, practices and new EU-wide initiatives are being explained? YES/NO.

Available choices: Yes, No, Not Applicable

11. Which kind of communication tools (e.g. websites or information sheets) are available in your country and being used by return counsellors to obtain information on i.e. European return and reintegration programmes?

12. Besides the information provided in Q.11, do return counsellors in your country have information material for potential returnees explaining the return process and/or reintegration assistance which can be handed out by return counsellors to returnees? (i.e. the Frontex-JRS country leaflets).

13. Do your counsellors interpretation services available in your country, which the return counsellors can make use of during and after the counselling sessions with returnees? YES/NO. If you answer is YES, can you please explain if the number of interpreters is sufficient or not?

14. Is virtual counselling (via online connection) between a return counsellor and a returnee possible in your country? YES/NO.

15. If you answer NO to Q.14, does the legislation of your Member State would allow the use of virtual counselling if this would be established across the EU? YES/NO. If yes, would your Member State would be interested in using it?

16. Are there any strategies or initiative(s) in your country to improve the efficiency of the Return Counselling on national level? YES/NO. If YES, could you please describe.


We would very much appreciate your responses by **27 March 2023**.

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2. RESPONSES

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		Wider Dissemination	
	EMN REG Practitioners Austria	Yes	<p>1. There is no official definition of return counselling provided by national policy/ legislation. However, section 52a BFA-VG contains relevant provisions on return counselling. This includes return counseling and the clarification of perspectives during and after the end of the procedure (§ 52a Para. 1 BFA-VG). The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service (= Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen, BBU GmbH) has the legal mandate to conduct return counselling in Austria as well as to administer pre-return assistance. Return counselling is provided at any stage of the asylum or alien law procedure.</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>a. During migration (in a country of transit):</p> <p>b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending: provided by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service = Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen (BBU GmbH)</p> <p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure: provided by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support</p>

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.

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			<p>Service = Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen (BBU GmbH)</p> <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or status): provided by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service = Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen (BBU GmbH)</p> <p>e. During the return procedure: provided by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service = Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen (BBU GmbH)</p> <p>f. Post-departure (Country of return): Post departure reintegration partner (depending on the country) e.g. Caritas, ETT, IRARA, IOM</p> <p>4. b) – e) Approximately 60 counsellors</p> <p>5. A mix of the migrant-centered approach and the compliance approach;</p> <p>6. Trainings developed by IOM; Manuals are available; BBU-internal training measures (“Bildungscampus”); support and participation of the Ministry of Interior (BMI) and the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) in trainings for return counselors</p> <p>7. Not yet. No special trainings available; IOM/Mol trainings also include the topic of reintegration as part of the presentation of the support services</p> <p>8. Manuals provided by IOM; internal guidelines</p> <p>9. No.</p> <p>10. Yes</p> <p>11. Frontex-JRS Programme Information as well as Country Information leaflets provided on the Homepage Infopoint see Q. 10 and www.returnfromaustria.at. Every two months Q&A Sessions with counsellors where they can ask the Austrian Return and Readmission Unit in the Mol questions regarding european return and the</p>
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			<p>reintegration programmes.</p> <p>Exchange meetings such as the reintegration working group, other operational meetings or events with the aforementioned focus.</p> <p>12. The Federal Ministry of Interior provides information to potential returnees on voluntary return, return assistance and reintegration via leaflets.</p> <p>Potential returnees can also reach a mobile version of the www.returnfromaustria.at website that depicts the return assistance in Austria.</p> <p>FX JRS country information leaflets are still not available for returnees, only for counsellors.</p> <p>13. YES, the BBU-internal interpretation service is available for return counsellors; if the number of interpreters is sufficient or not depends on the language which is required. The approx. 60 BBU return counsellors for the most part have a migration background and have extended language skills. The counselling can therefore be conducted directly in the required language.</p> <p>14. YES, but overall, there is mostly a direct client contact.</p> <p>15.</p> <p>16. YES, in addition to international cooperation and ongoing improvement of counselling (so as project participation at CADRE, Talk2Connect etc.) there are several internal measures to increase quality and efficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Trainings and Guidelines:</u> The Federal agency (BBU) follows an “education plan” with the aim of keeping and continuously improving high-quality counselling. Counsellors will be provided with up-to-date counselling guidelines and receive ongoing trainings. In this regard special courses with focus on vulnerable groups (medical vulnerabilities, minors, elderly etc.) are conducted. • <u>Networking:</u> Furthermore, the expansion of network between the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) and the BBU, which improves and accelerates the processes between the parties, makes
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			<p>them more transparent and facilitates the daily communication and exchange.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Working Group on Quality</u>: Establishment of a working group on compulsory return counseling on national level to develop ideas for using this tool more effectively. • <u>New and updated information materials promoting voluntary return and return counselling</u>: flyers, posters, social media campaign 2.0, redesign of website, outreach (special promotion India, direct mailing).
	EMN REG Practitioners Belgium	Yes	<p>1. NO. There is no official definition of return counselling provided by national policy/ legislation.</p> <p>How is return counselling understood in administrative/common practices? cReturn counselling is understood as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing potential returnees with accurate and up-to-date information; • Helping potential returnees in the decision-making process; • Assessing the needs of the future returnees; • Designing the return path (pre-departure and post-arrival); • Preparing the return before departure (logistical aspects); • Monitoring and follow-up on the return; • Raising awareness to avoid forced return (Immigration Office). <p>2. a. During migration (in a country of transit);, b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);,</p> <p>3.</p> <p>1. During Migration (in a country of transit):</p> <p>When migrants are in transit and present themselves at a Schengen border and are refused entry, they will be assigned an ICAM coach from the Immigration Office upon arrival at a housing unit or detention centre who will discuss their situation with them</p> <p>A team of Fedasil Outreachers targets undocumented migrants avoiding contact with national authorities, of</p>

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			<p>whom a significant part are migrants in transit. They will receive counselling and information on, amongst other, voluntary return.</p> <p>1. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending): Counselling is provided by the Immigration Office. The detection comes through interception or spontaneous reporting. The migrant is then invited to ICAM coaching.</p> <p>In addition, counselling is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In FITT units (semi-closed reception unit) - geared towards families in irregular stay accepting to return -, ambulant counselling, provided by Fedasil, is possible on demand of the migrant or staff; • In hospitals, ambulant counselling provided by Fedasil is possible at the request of the migrant or staff; • In detention centres, Immigration Office's staff provides migrants counselling about their return. Caritas & IOM also have access to detention centres to inform detainees. <p>1. Beginning of asylum procedure:</p> <p>Counselling is provided at the beginning of the asylum procedure by the Immigration Office and in reception centres, by Fedasil, Red Cross or other partners organising the reception of asylum seekers.</p> <p>Fedasil: Return Path</p> <p>When introducing an application for international protection at the Immigration Office, applicants are provided with a brochure (standardised leaflet) describing – among other topics – the modalities of the return. During the process of application for international protection, Fedasil, the agency in charge of the reception of applicants for international protection, is also tasked with the implementation of the voluntary return programme. In this framework, Fedasil has implemented a Return Path. In the Return Path, applicants for international protection receive, from the outset of their application for international protection and at specific key moments in their procedure, information about the voluntary return option (and the possibility of reintegration support). Applicants for international protection are provided with tailored information according to their situation. The participation of applicants is required during the counselling (two-way exchanges). By talking to them about the voluntary return option at different stages of the asylum procedure, voluntary return is less taboo and a matter for discussion for the applicant.</p> <p>The main outcome of the Return Path is that all (rejected) applicants are systematically and proactively informed about the voluntary return option and the risk of a forced return (if no compliance) and know where they can find</p>
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			<p>information and/or apply for a voluntary return.</p> <p>1. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);</p> <p>The Immigration Office provides coaching and guidance after a final negative decision.</p> <p>The Immigration Office has developed Individual Case Management coaching (ICAM coaching) as a means to avoid detention for migrants in irregular stay who have been issued an Order to Leave the Territory (i.e. a Return decision).</p> <p>The ICAM coach assesses the administrative situation of the migrant and provides additional information in regard to their individual dossier to find sustainable future perspectives. If, after a thorough analysis, it appears that no further possibilities for residence exist, the ICAM coach will, to avoid a forced return, suggest possible options for voluntary return and provide the necessary information to this end. If the migrant refuses to cooperate, they will be informed about the possibility of forced return. Extra attention is paid to vulnerable persons (e.g. victims of human trafficking, psychological problems etc.). If the migrant decides to do a voluntary return, Fedasil will be contacted.</p> <p>In addition, counselling is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In FITT units (semi-closed reception units) - geared towards families in irregular stay accepting to return -, ambulant counselling, provided by Fedasil, is possible on demand of the migrant or staff; • In hospitals, ambulant counselling provided by Fedasil is possible at the request of the migrant or staff; • In detention centres, Immigration Office's staff provides migrants counselling about their return. Caritas & IOM also have access to detention centres to inform detainees. <p>Fedasil provides coaching and guidance for migrants who want to return voluntarily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return desks are present in the main cities and are accessible to migrants. The migrants, regardless of their status, must have easy access to the voluntary return programme. Return desks were established to: • Inform and prepare the voluntary return of the migrants; • Provide its expertise on return counselling to the reception centres and partners; • Some twenty partner organizations (ASBL, CAW...) are also capable of submitting voluntary return cases <p>A key moments approach (once the decision is issued, on the moment of the appeal, after a second negative decision)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an applicant for international protection receives a final negative decision, he/she is designated
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			<p>from regular places to “open return places” within Fedasil’s network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During his/her stay, the migrant receives sustained information about a voluntary return in three mandatory conversations. These are semi-structured interviews conducted by Fedasil social assistants and the ICAM coaches. The roles of the social assistants and the ICAM Coaches are different but complementary. The social assistant provides information about voluntary return. The ICAM coach assesses the administrative situation of the migrant and provides additional information in regard to their individual dossier to find sustainable future perspectives. If, after a thorough analysis, it appears that no further possibilities for residence exist, the ICAM coach will, to avoid a forced return, suggest possible options for voluntary return and provide the necessary information to this end. If the migrant refuses to cooperate, they will be informed about the possibility of a forced return. • Fedasil, IOM or Caritas counsellors provide migrants with the right information and the possibilities of return at the return desks. <p>1. During the return procedure;</p> <p>Once the migrant decides to return (following the signature of the application for return), return counselling is provided either by Fedasil, IOM or Caritas. Return counselling includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessments; • Journey organisation; • Reintegration design (when applicable); • Contact with service providers in the country of origin: video calls with the local service providers are regularly organized during the pre-departure phase <p>The Immigration Office can also still give counselling during the return procedure and follows the process with Fedasil. If ICAM coaching leads to the decision to return voluntarily, the ICAM coach stays in touch with the migrant during Fedasil counselling to answer questions and make sure they follow through with the process. In addition, counselling is provided by the Immigration Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In FITT units (semi-closed reception units) - geared towards families in irregular stay accepting to return -, ambulant counselling, provided by Fedasil, is possible on demand of the migrant or staff; • In hospitals, ambulant counselling provided by Fedasil is possible at the request of the migrant or staff; • In detention centres, Immigration Office’s staff provides migrants counselling about their return. Caritas
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			<p>& IOM also have access to detention centres to inform detainees.</p> <p>1. Post-departure (Country of return): -</p> <p>Post-departure counselling is provided by CARITAS and IOM. Post-departure counselling includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provider's implementation of the return (follow-up and monitoring): the partners or local desks of Caritas and the IOM ensure the individual follow-up of the reintegration projects for a period of 6 months to 1 year. • Reintegration support can be used in the countries of origin to develop a micro-business, job search or training, housing (renovation), and cover medical costs,.... <p>1. other –describe :</p> <p>A number of programs exist that target migrants outside any of the above-mentioned migration stages: persons in undocumented stay, that have neither applied for asylum nor received a return decision. Some of these counselling projects are solely aimed at voluntary return (Conex, Return desks), while others have voluntary return embedded in a broader case resolution approach (Reach Out, Shelter & Orientation, ICAM):</p> <p>FEDASIL Voluntary return desk: People without legal stay can visit the return desk to receive information about voluntary return. Persons are directed to these desks in many ways, official (flyers, NGO, etc.) and non-official (friends, family, website, etc.). Fedasil has six voluntary return desks: Brussels (2), Liège, Charleroi, Ghent, and Antwerp.</p> <p>FEDASIL CONEX Project: Fedasil has special projects with municipalities to inform migrant and frontline workers about voluntary return and migration in Belgium. Migrants can ask their city to have info about voluntary return. For now, there is 7 Conex project: Liège, Charleroi, Ghent, Antwerp, and Brussels (2).</p> <p>Information could also come from the Fedasil Reach Out Team: It's a mobile (information) team aiming to improve trust and access to information among 'hard to reach' groups (migrants in irregular stay e.g. stranded migrants and migrants in transit). They provide correct information about future-oriented legal options including the possibility of an assisted voluntary return, but also the risk of a forced return, Dublin regulation and other processes and services in Belgium. This multilingual team can reach people living outside official reception structures in squats, on the streets, in humanitarian hubs, parks and other transit places in or outside bigger cities.</p> <p>In shelter and orientation pilot projects for homeless migrants in a prolonged irregular situation (a project of</p>
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			<p>Fedasil and the municipalities of Ghent (and soon Antwerp), migrants are also counselled about voluntary return in the broader case-resolution approach.</p> <p>4. <u>The immigration Office:</u> Stage a – e: The Immigration Office currently has 53 operational ICAM coaches working in the different regions. Other: The family units have nine operational FITT coaches who work on four sites spread over the Belgian territory. In the near future these figures will be doubled: 8 sites + 8 coaches and support services <u>Fedasil:</u> Stage a – f: Fedasil Return Counselling during different stages is provided by staff working in the centres during the entire asylum procedure. In every Fedasil Centre, there is what we call a SPOC VR (Special person of contact voluntary return). It's a social assistant expert in voluntary return that can provide clear information to the migrant in the reception centre. There is one in every of the six centres with "open return places" + one in each Fedasil reception centre (moving target). Fedasil has six return desks (Charleroi, Liege, Brussels (2), Antwerp, Gent). 11 Fedasil return counsellors work at the return desks. Fedasil has a REACH OUT team that could give info about voluntary return. 11 Fedasil Reach Out workers are currently on the field (streets, squat, "transit" zone, etc.) Fedasil also collaborates with Caritas/IOM offices where 15 return counsellors provide counselling. Fedasil CONEX partner in municipalities could give access to voluntary return for migrants. For now, seven workers paid for by Fedasil in local administrations run a local network of information providers and are able to do return counselling themselves. Additionally, Fedasil collaborates with social partner organisations where migrants can ask for voluntary return.</p> <p>5.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During Migration (in a country of transit): YES, the Outreach team has developed a specific methodology to target migrants in transit. This methodology was developed in the ERRIN Reach Out project, and is available online. See below. 1. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending):
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			<p>The Immigration Office's approach: once the Office is informed that someone is in irregular stay, an assessment is made to determine whether the person is eligible for the ICAM coaching. If the person is eligible, they will be invited to a first appointment with an ICAM coach (sent by post).</p> <p>1. Beginning of asylum procedure: Approach: Fedasil provides neutral information about the assisted voluntary return programme at the moment of the application for international protection => Neutral approach.</p> <p>1. After negative decision (on international protection or other status); Approach: key moments approach after a negative decision is issued (once the decision is issued, on the moment of the appeal, after a second negative decision) => Solution-oriented approach (how to render the return possible). Content: Information, choices, options and risks in case of non-compliance</p> <p>1. During the return procedure; Approach: return path approach during the application process => Decision-oriented counselling by discussing choices and options. Content: Information and options.</p> <p>1. Post-departure (Country of return): Post-departure counselling is provided by CARITAS and IOM. Post-departure counselling includes: Service provider's implementation of the return (follow-up and monitoring): the partners or local desks of Caritas and the IOM ensure the individual follow-up of the reintegration projects for a period of 6 months to 1 year. Reintegration support can be used in the countries of origin to develop a micro-business, job search or training, housing (renovation), and cover medical costs,....</p> <p>1. other –describe : Fedasil's approach: reaching out/contact strategy (how to reach these target groups => who you are, what you can do,...) => transparency and then neutral information provision (+/- outreach). Content: Information about AVR. Fedasil is informing many actors by different means: Return counsellors are giving open sessions to local actors, the CONEX project are organising information in their municipalities about Voluntary return, etc. Immigration Office's Approach: Pro-active counselling to convince about the advantage of a non-forced removal. Content: In FITT units and detention centres, emphasis is given to effective return as the people have already exhausted</p>
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			<p>other possibilities to return.</p> <p>6. Fedasil:</p> <p>Induction training, by Fedasil. The introductory training comprises eight modules. Two basic modules on AVR and how to fill a return file. The three next modules address how to discuss AVR (sustainable return, decision-making process and how to prepare the person for AVR). Finally, the three last modules address how to approach the person through conversation technics, motivational interviews and other technics. The detection of vulnerabilities is integral part of the general training provided to future counsellors.</p> <p>Return counsellors use a check-list to assess the vulnerabilities in order to take them into account during the procedure. When counsellors are dealing with migrants in vulnerable situations, they try as far as possible to remain the one and only interlocutor throughout the process.</p> <p>Immigration Office:</p> <p>A training curriculum concerning return counselling is offered by the Immigration Office.</p> <p>The Immigration Office has developed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compulsory (minimum 3-month) training program in which new employees are paired with more experienced employees; • A training manual for new employees that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exercises on how to analyze a dossier and establish the possibility of voluntary return. ○ A complete overview of the different migration procedures and how they interact with return counselling. ○ Guidelines on how to make return negotiable. ○ Instructions on how to effectively collaborate with internal and external stakeholders. ○ Six evaluation tests with feedback. • Training moments and courses organized by Fedasil on various topics concerning return counselling (general modules but also specific modules); • Opportunities to do short-term internships in various settings of stakeholders (Fedasil, CGRS, FITT Houses,...). • Ad hoc Country of Origin-trainings (Afghanistan,...) offered by the Office of the commissioner general for
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			<p>refugees and stateless persons.</p> <p>Furthermore, the workgroup in charge of evaluating and improving the training process is consulting with a coaching expert to learn more general coaching techniques to apply them in the context of ICAM coaching. For example, the coaching expert has given advice on verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as the use of visual supports during the ICAM coaching. All of these will be included in the training program in the near future</p> <p>7. Country fact sheets are produced by Fedasil based on IOM and Caritas counselling experiences. These country fact sheets are presented to IOM and Caritas for validation before dissemination. To prepare children towards a voluntary return, Fedasil developed booklets for children, and the City of Ghent developed a brochure for parents and social workers.</p> <p>8. Fedasil developed a vademecum for return counselling and a handbook handed out during Fedasil's training sessions.</p> <p>ICAM coaches learn everything about the objectives of return counselling during their training, but there's no official manual available yet. They also follow training in partnership with Fedasil about this matter. This is the same for the coaches in the residential units for families (FITT)</p> <p>9. Fedasil has developed a portfolio of training.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fedasil's website for voluntary return: https://www.voluntaryreturn.be/, available in 19 languages • Voluntary Return is also specified as a part of the broader Fedasil Info website (available in 14 languages) https://www.fedasilinfo.be/en/landingspage • The Immigration Office website: an explanatory video is being developed in several languages, and detailed information regarding the Alternatives to Detention will soon be available on the website (https://dofi.ibz.be/fr/themes/irregular-stay/alternatives-la-detention)
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Immigration Office is also currently elaborating leaflets as another means of communication. <p>12. Fedasil has created special leaflets about voluntary return. One is directly for the migrant and available in 19 languages. There is also a leaflet for frontline workers available in 3 languages. The Immigration Office uses Fedasil leaflets and their own training to explain the voluntary return to potential returnees. Once the migrant has agreed to return voluntarily, they meet with Fedasil and Caritas/IOM, who will explain the return process and all the necessary details in depth.</p> <p>13. Yes. The Fedasil team is diverse, and several return counsellors speak multiple languages. If needed, Fedasil can also appeal to external translation and interpreter services. During counselling sessions, Fedasil can also use external interpreter services (by phone or live). The Immigration Office has a dedicated interpretation service that the ICAM and FITT coaches can use. There are also external interpretation services that the coaches can contact in case of unplanned interviews.</p> <p>14. YES. Virtual counselling sessions are organized by Fedasil's reintegration partners Caritas and IOM. Caritas and IOM are in charge of the reintegration counselling and assess whether or not a pre-departure counselling session is an added value for the returnee. While not a common practice in residential units (FITT units), virtual counselling can be provided if necessary. The material is certainly present to make this possible in the residential units. Except for virtual counselling possibilities in FITT units, the Immigration Office has no experience yet with virtual coaching. The Immigration Office would like to explore whether video coaching could be an option in cases where physical coaching is not an option (e.g. people with medical problems). In this context, the Immigration Office welcomes sharing information on virtual counselling from other countries with experience in this area.</p> <p>15.</p> <p>16. As the "Alternatives to Detention" department of the Immigration Office is very new, an evaluation will be done. The department is still in development. The Immigration Office seeks to improve its efficiency by building</p>
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			and to expand networks, creating a legal framework, studying Return Counselling practices in other Member States, etc.
	EMN REG Practitioners Bulgaria	Yes	<p>1. No, there is no official definition of return counselling provided in national policy or legislation in Bulgaria. In Bulgaria return counselling is understood and its done by the law enforcement staff responsible for implementing return decision and their implementation. We have internal guidelines in which staff responsibilities are to counsel illegally staying third country nationals through the whole process of return and where they must encourage them to assist in this manner. Also a part of this counselling is to promote voluntary return instead of forced one.</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);</p> <p>3. Return counselling in Bulgaria is mainly provided by Migration authority. In this manner we also collaborate with International organization such as IOM. Return counselling is provided when third country national had a issued return decision or its in process of issuing a return decision.</p> <p>4. Number of law enforcement staff from Migration authority involved in return counselling is Detention centers staff – 18 Countering illegal migration staff – 40 IOM – not known</p> <p>5. A individual interview is held with every illegal staying returnee in which he is given a full detail of his current status and his legal rights and obligations. Returnee is well aware of possible asylum producers, and also what will happen in case of rejection. Returnee is provided with full information of all available programs of Assisted Voluntary return and also reintegration packages he may benefit from.</p> <p>6. No, there is no specific training curriculum or dedicated module available regarding return counselling. Every staff involved in this process has undergone a professional training in Police academy. We are in constant</p>


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			<p>improvement in this area and we are in close contact with new created project for Return counselling training provided by FRONTEX.</p> <p>7. No, there is no specific training or curriculum or dedicated module available in Bulgaria regarding reintegration counselling. Until now 8 of our staff have been trained to use RIAT for the purpose of JRS, there roles are counsellors.</p> <p>8. No</p> <p>9. No</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Such information is spread internal to all relevant actors involved in the return process. (ex. Information about JRS was reported to all staff involved of daily interviews with third country nationals with issued return decision and also the one who are in a illegal situation(inside the Ministry of interior).</p> <p>12. Yes, together with information about the services, they are also provided with information materials</p> <p>13. Yes, Responsible authority for controlling migration flow, detention centers, and also return process is Migration directorate. Migration directorate has signed contacts with translation agency to provide service that can be used on a daily basis during interviews by the return counsellors.</p> <p>14. In case of a need our staff is flexible and YES virtual counselling is possible.</p> <p>15. We are interested in any EU initiative that will bring a real added value to the return process of illegally staying third country nationals.</p>
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			16. Yes, Bulgaria has national strategy for Migration 2021-2025, its not exactly dedicated only to return counselling, but its focused on more effective return and in this regard return counselling is appointed as a main instrument/tool.
	EMN REG Practitioners Croatia	Yes	<p>1. No, there is no definition of return counselling in Croatian legislation. The Aliens Act contains a provision (Article 202) which states that for the purpose of encouraging voluntary departure, the Ministry of the Interior may conclude agreements with the authorities of EEA Member States and the authorities of third-countries, as well as with other state authorities, international organisations and civil society organisations. For the purpose of encouraging voluntary departure, the Ministry may procure travel documents and travel tickets and make financial payments.</p> <p>In practice, giving information (informing) and individual consultations are considered counselling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> giving information (informing) - includes providing written information about rights and obligations in the return process (in our answer from 2019, it was explained that these are information leaflets). Also, the return decision contains a warning that the person will be forcibly removed if he does not leave the EEA within a certain period. Informing also includes providing written information about the possibilities and advantages of voluntary return, about available AVRR programs (the national AVRR program implemented by IOM and the Frontex JRS program). individual consultations - which include individual interviews with persons in detention, persons in international protection procedure or those with negative decision on request for international protection and who are interested in returning, as well as with other third-country nationals in the process of return or in illegal stay in Republic of Croatia. <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;</p> <p>3. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending); Yes, national authorities – Ministry of the Interior, Border Police - in the form of informing (see answer to Q1.)</p>

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			<p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure; During the asylum procedure, all applicants are not systematically consulted, those interested in voluntary departure are informed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IOM within the national AVRR program (at the moment we are expecting new project to be contracted and start soon, last project finished at September 2022) - Frontex return counsellors within the JRS program <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status); Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frontex return counsellors, - IOM under a service contract with national authorities (at the moment we are expecting new project to be contracted and start soon, last project finished at September 2022) <p>e. During the return procedure; Yes,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national authorities – Ministry of the Interior, Border Police - Frontex return counsellors, - IOM under a service contract with national authorities (at the moment we are expecting new project to be contracted and start soon, last project finished at September 2022) <p>4.</p> <p>b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending); considering that at this stage counselling is carried out in the form of information as stated in the answer to Q1, we cannot give an estimate on the number of counsellors</p> <p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure; 2 Frontex counsellors, IOM 2</p> <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status); 2 Frontex counsellors, IOM 2</p> <p>e. During the return procedure; 6 Border police officers in deportation centres, 2 Frontex counsellors, IOM 2</p> <p>5. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending); information leaflets, return decisions that contain a warning that the person will be forcibly removed if they do not leave the EEA on their own</p> <p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure; information leaflets, counselling interviews, IOM website</p> <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status); information leaflets, counselling interviews,</p>
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			<p>IOM website</p> <p>e. During the return procedure; information leaflets, counselling interviews, IOM website</p> <p>6. No, training on return procedure in general includes also counselling in form of giving information about return procedure, obligations and rights for TCN.</p> <p>7. No</p> <p>8. No</p> <p>9. No, same answer as in AHQ 2019.59 REG</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. All information leaflets are distributed to illegal migration officers with instructions on how to proceed and with information on available programs. Police officers in charge for counselling in detention centres and in the Ministry can use RIAT.</p> <p>12. Yes, they have information leaflets.</p> <p>13. Translators are available for counselling during the return phase, the asylum procedure and after a negative asylum decision, and there are enough of them for the languages of the country of origin that are currently in the program. In the first phase, encountering an illegal stay, translators are not always available and in that situations communication is mostly in English or through written materials that have been translated into the languages the migrants most often speak.</p> <p>14. No, currently not available</p>
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			<p>15. Yes. We would probably use it if it was enabled at the EU level.</p> <p>16. No</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;,, d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;</p> <p>3. Frontex Return Counsellors in stages (b), (c) and (e) & Asylum Service Staff in (d)</p> <p>4. 11 Frontex Counsellors</p> <p>5. One-on-one counselling sessions explaining the return procedure, the return options, the rights and obligations, and guidance to the relevant authorities to obtain the necessary documents (travel documents, withdraw asylum application or appeal to the court)</p> <p>6. There is no training curriculum or module.</p> <p>7. There is no training curriculum or module.</p> <p>8. Yes</p> <p>9. No. The training programmes available in 2019 are no longer in place.</p> <p>10. No</p>

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			<p>11. There are leaflets and information on the website of the Ministry of Interior</p> <p>12. Yes, there are the following leaflets: Leaflet “Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Programme” and the JRS country leaflets.</p> <p>13. Yes. When needed, interpreters are available on a on-demand basis. The available number of interpreters depends on the language and in some languages there is a shortage of interpreters.</p> <p>14. No</p> <p>15. Yes. Also virtual counselling was available during covid-19 period for forced returns only.</p> <p>16. Cyprus is in the process of drafting a return counselling strategy, as part of updating the current SOPs for returns.</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Czech Republic	Yes	<p>1. NO.</p> <p>There is no official definition provided in national legislation. Return counselling is a part of interviews that are provided by state authorities on regular basis with non-/detained foreigners, asylum procedure and administrative procedure on return run by the Police. It is also provided by social workers in prisons. Return counselling is part of voluntary returns procedure and includes information on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. obligation to leave the country and the consequences if not leaving, 2. different return support schemes, 3. the potential prospects for the returnees for a new start in their country of origin with the aim to, 4. encourage (assisted) voluntary return <p>2. a. During migration (in a country of transit);, b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;,, d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;,, f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p>

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			<p>3.</p> <p>A) During migration: International organization, NGOs, National state authorities (Ministry of the Interior (Mol), Foreign Police Service);</p> <p>B) Moment of detection of irregular stay: National state authorities (Mol, Foreign Police Service), International organization, NGOs</p> <p>C) Beginning of asylum procedure: National state authorities (Mol), NGOs</p> <p>D) After negative decision: National state authorities (Mol, Foreign Police Service), International organizations, NGOs</p> <p>E) During the return procedure: National state authorities (Mol, Foreign Police Service), International organizations, NGOs</p> <p>F) Post-departure (Country of return): Service providers (International organizations, local NGOs)</p> <p>4.</p> <p>A) During migration: 115 (15* + 70** + 30***)</p> <p>B) Moment of detection of irregular stay: 115 (15* + 70** + 30***)</p> <p>C) Beginning of asylum procedure: 115 (15* + 70** + 30***)</p> <p>D) After negative decision: 115 (15* + 70** + 30***)</p> <p>E) During the return procedure: 115 (15* + 70** + 30***)</p> <p>F) Post-departure (Country of return): N/A****</p> <p>* Return specialists providing return counselling under the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>** Departments of the Foreign Police Service partially providing return counselling.</p> <p>*** Social workers partially providing return counselling under Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>All provided data are estimations.</p> <p>**** No clear data available.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>A) During migration: check migration history, check status of stay, awareness of return/reintegration possibilities,</p>
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			<p>ad hoc individual assistance if needed (i.e. accommodation, health issues, transportation, assistance with documents and with competent state authorities)</p> <p>B) Moment of detection of irregular stay: check migration history, awareness of illegal stay and of possible solutions, awareness of return/reintegration possibilities, ad hoc individual assistance if needed (i.e. accommodation, health issues, transportation, assistance with documents and with competent state authorities)</p> <p>C) Beginning of asylum procedure: check social profile and migration history, awareness of return/reintegration possibilities and of all procedural steps related to asylum</p> <p>D) After negative decision: awareness of return/reintegration possibilities, ad hoc individual assistance if needed (i.e. accommodation, health issues, transportation, assistance with documents and with competent state authorities)</p> <p>E) During the return procedure: individual in-depth return/reintegration consultations, ad hoc individual pre-departure assistance if needed (i.e. accommodation, health issues, transportation, assistance with documents and with competent state authorities), assistance at the airport / to the country of origin if needed (i.e. assistance with transfer, financial support)</p> <p>F) Post-departure (Country of return): post-return counselling is provided by the service providers in the country of origin. Returnees are referred to those providers who help them to elaborate the plan of support (reintegration plan) that is later validated by MS to be implemented.</p> <p>6. Dedicated module or specific training curriculum is not available. There is a methodology elaborated for the purpose of conducting return counselling elaborated for internal proposes of the Mol. The methodology describes the course of the interview with foreigners who already expressed their interest in voluntary return or may be potentially interested in return and main topics are to be discussed with the applicants (or potential applicants).</p> <p>7. There is no training curriculum focused on reintegration counselling available. As Czech Republic provides reintegration assistance only in the framework of Joint Reintegration Services (JRS), the reintegration counselling after return to country of origin is provided by service providers (reintegration partners) on the spot. However, the role of return counsellors in the Czech Republic is first of all to assess the eligibility of returnee to</p>
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			<p>be involved in reintegration programme (based on dedicated methodology). Another counsellors' task is presentation of reintegration programme and assessment of returnees' needs that are later shared with reintegration partners. In case that returnee expresses his/her interest to be in touch with reintegration partners prior to departure, the Czech Republic can organize such virtual meeting.</p> <p>8. YES. There are methodology sheets made available internally to return counsellors regarding specific issues related to return.</p> <p>9. NO.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Most of return counsellors are part of EU networks, programmes and projects that represent multidimensional space for sharing return-related and reintegration information. The rest of return counsellors (can) have access to this information via centralized on-line EU platforms (mainly via ECAS gateway). Information sheets or ad hoc information are further provided to return counsellors if needed within particular units of the Mol.</p> <p>12. Yes, return counsellors have brief information leaflets (Mol leaflets, JRS leaflets) about return/reintegration procedure that can be ad hoc handed out to returnees in many multilanguage copies.</p> <p>13. YES. Number of interpreters is sufficient for most of languages used. However, a few rare languages can be identified as hard to manage during counselling sessions. It includes: Bengali, Nepali, Somali and other languages located in the territory of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and central Asian states. VCI has been used to make it more feasible for interpreters to be available upon request.</p> <p>14. YES (via national videoconferencing system).</p> <p>15. The national legislation allowing use of virtual counselling is already in force. Using interpreters based in other EU country would indeed be considered as a great benefit mainly in cases where no interpretation is</p>
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			<p>available in the Czech Republic. In such case we would appreciate if there would be a list available centrally to all MSs as we experienced obstacles in external payments/accounting in the past.</p> <p>16. YES. The Czech Republic is planning to involve several return counsellors into return counselling trainings organised by Frontex. There will be also continuous education available for all return counsellors in counselling techniques, communication with specific groups of returnees such as minors, people with mental disorder, people from different cultural backgrounds etc.</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Estonia	Yes	<p>1. Individual counselling is organized for all applicants for international protection and returnees, with the purpose to provide free, reliable and unbiased information about their rights and obligations in a language they understand. Counselling is provided throughout the international protection proceedings as well as return proceedings directly in accommodation centres, detention centre, the offices of the Police and Border Guard Board (hereinafter PBGB) and in writing/over phone. National legislation nor policy doesn't provide an official definition of return counselling. Although Estonian legislative acts – the Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry Act § 10 p 2 (31) and the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens § 29 p 1 (5) provide since 27th June 2020 a new surveillance measure, appearing for counselling. Explanatory memorandum (worked out in 2018) which precedes and explains the legislative changes, foresee that in return procedures a person who has no legal basis to stay in Estonia can be obliged to appear for counselling as a surveillance measure (same as an alternative to detention). The purpose of this legislative change was creating a possibility to refer those persons, who has no legal basis to stay in Estonia and are not placed in detention centre, to return counselling service, provided by the PBGB. The return counselling service could assist these persons to plan and organize their return journey and provide them if needed social and psychological assistance.</p> <p>In international protection procedures the purpose was to enable the PBGB to use mandatory counselling service in case of specific applicants that international protection procedure would be more purposeful, effective, simple and fast. Depending on applicant's needs, a counselling may include, for example psychological, legal, crisis- or adoptive, general supportive or other counselling. The amendment expands the alternatives for detention and enhance an individual approach.</p>

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			<p>In the end of 2022, Ministry of Interior ordered an in-depth study to better understand whether current counselling service offered by the PBGB (financed via AMIF) meets the expectations of all involved parties e.g., applicants for international protection, returnees, legal aid providers, case workers, organizations monitoring human rights etc. In terms of return counselling, the study aims at finding out how the counselling could better support the return procedure. First results of this analysis are expected to be presented by the end of March 2023. Document will be for internal use only.</p> <p>2. a. During migration (in a country of transit);, b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3.</p> <p>a. During migration (in a country of transit);, the PBGB and IOM Tallinn branch b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, the PBGB c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; the PBGB, free state legal aid and Estonian Human Rights centre if the person has applied for it d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, the PBGB and IOM Tallinn branch, free state legal aid and Estonian Human Rights centre if the person has applied for it e. During the return procedure;; the PBGB and IOM Tallinn branch f. Post-departure (Country of return); IOM</p> <p>4. The PBGB has 3 part time counsellors who provide return assistance service mentioned in Q2 (except for f.) and IOM Tallinn branch has 1 counsellor.</p> <p>5. For the PBGB it is not specified; an individual return counselling approach is used, and case-by-case principle followed. IOM Estonia tries to provide tailor-made service for their beneficiaries. They prioritize that beneficiaries would feel comfortable and not intimidated in their office. That is why they first try to make them feel as comfortable</p>
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			<p>as possible and explain them IOM is not law enforcement. Then IOM counsellor listens to the stories that persons tell and then IOM decides if these people are eligible for AVRR program. This includes psychological preparedness for travelling and also verifying that people wishing to join IOM AVRR program would have the Order of Leave (return decision) from PBGB.</p> <p>6. It is not specified in the PBGB. IOM answer: IOM tries to implement best practices concerning the dignity of our beneficiaries. For these purposes, IOM has recently launched Return and Reintegration Due Diligence toolkit, which is to be gradually implemented by all AVRR counsellors in IOM offices worldwide. It includes rapid screening form to detect special vulnerabilities, like being previously subjected to violence or sexual harassment. It also puts strong emphasis on beneficiary's consent for being interviewed. We also use toolkit for counselling migrants with health concerns. This toolkit helps us to better detect possible chronic health issues, including mental health problems. IOM tries to ensure the best interests of children, that is why the organization also implements Guidance Note on AVRR for Unaccompanied and Separated Minors. Compliance with this internal procedure is strictly mandatory. It ensures that IOM formulates BID (Best Interest Determination) on behalf of the minor to determine if AVRR is in best interest of the child. BID stipulates us to interview minors with special diligence and empathy.</p> <p>7. No. IOM has a program called Virtual Return and Reintegration Counselling, where AVRR counsellors liaise beneficiaries with virtual counsellors in their destination countries. These counsellors can provide beneficiaries with information online. This pilot project started in Germany 2019 and virtual counselling is now available in 23 countries. Estonia has not yet joined this program, but they have been in contact with the people responsible for this curriculum.</p> <p>8. No.</p> <p>9. For Estonia the answers to AHQ 2019.59 are still valid also in 2023. The PBGB provides to counsellors a wide</p>
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			<p>range of trainings related to migration/asylum and international law, for example overview of migration processes; trainings on cultural differences; early signs of noticing of radicalization; first aid trainings; how to identify a person with special needs; procedures to determinate a refugee status; psychological assistance in the return process etc. A list of training providers varies from Estonian Lawyers' Association to international organizations as Frontex and UNHCR.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Information is mainly delivered via e-mail.</p> <p>12. Return counsellors have access to national data basis, and prior counselling they have possibility to go through all person-concerned information. Counsellors also have information materials and leaflets regarding assisted voluntary return (provided by the IOM).</p> <p>13. Yes. For proceedings performed by the PBGB officials (including counsellors), interpretation is organized via PBGB 's special translation unit and certified interpreters are used of whom some can act as intercultural mediators at the same time. Exotic languages are translated with the help of intermediary languages such as English. For this, interpreters are involved via using different means of communication such as Skype or telephone. Difficulties have been encountered in finding interpreters from rare languages, especially dialects. Sometimes English or French is used as a relay language. From IOM perspective the answer is also yes. They have been cooperating with various translators, e.g., to translate Arabic and Armenian. Usually, translation is not needed as they beneficiaries either know English/Russian or they have a friend who can provide translation for them. So, there are only very few cases when translation has been needed. In 2022, there was one Turkish man who was completely monolingual in Turkish, but he decided to apply for international protection and did not join VARRE program in the end.</p> <p>14. Yes.</p>
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			<p>15. Yes.</p> <p>16. Yes, please see answer to Q 1. As stated above, in the end of 2022, the Ministry of Interior ordered and in-depth study to better understand whether current counselling service offered by the PBGB (financed via AMIF) meets the expectations of all involved parties. According to the Internal Security Development Plan 2020-2030 approved by the Estonian government, goals of a balanced migration policy include ensuring a high quality of international protection proceedings and return policy that complies with fundamental rights. In order to achieve these goals, activities are being planned to increase the awareness of international protection applicants about their rights and obligations and to make the return of foreigners staying in Estonia without a legal basis faster and more efficient. This in-depth study will support the implementation of these activities.</p>
+	EMN REG Practitioners Finland	Yes	<p>1. Two responding agencies: Finnish Immigration Service for voluntary return (FIS) and Finnish Police (FP) for forced and other returns</p> <p>FIS: There is no official definition of return counselling in Finnish national legislation. Finnish Immigration Service considers return counselling as an activity that provides individual counselling and information regarding the option of voluntary return and reintegration, taking in account each person's individual circumstances such as residency status (including lack of legal status) and needs.</p> <p>FP: The police will inform all returnees of their options in regards of their return decision and refer all eligible and interested returnees to Finnish Immigration Service's voluntary return program. Non-voluntary returnees are informed of their rights and responsibilities in regards of their departure.</p> <p>2. c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;</p> <p>3. FIS:</p> <p>c) Reception center service providers (NGOs, FIS, municipalities and private companies) provide information on voluntary return and reintegration upon arrival to reception system.</p> <p>d) FIS, reception center social counsellors, police.</p>


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			<p>e) FIS, reception center social counsellors, IOM</p> <p>4. FIS: Difficult to estimate, for each returnee it may vary from 3 to 5 persons may provide counselling in each migration stage. FP: The pre-return information to the returnees is given out by the Immigration police investigators. The Police of Finland is starting more in-depth return counselling in the coming weeks, since we're adopting the Frontex JRS. In Q2-Q3 2023 FP will recruit four principal return counsellors.</p> <p>5. FIS: We do not have any specific approach or method for return counselling for each phase of the process. What kind of information and to what extent depends on the case and context. FP: (D: After negative decision) The returnee is met face to face with interpreter present (or a call-in interpreting). If the returnee is eligible for the assisted voluntary return program, a information leaflet is provided.</p> <p>6. FIS: No specific training curriculum is implemented in Finland for voluntary returns. Guidelines and information on voluntary return and reintegration is updated and maintained by Finnish Immigration service. All material is available in intranet platform that reception center counsellors have access to. Also, FIS provides trainings to reception center staff regularly. FP: Not yet. FP will participate on the Frontex Return Counselling training in the Spring 2023. On addition the police's return counsellors will be familiarized with our national guidelines for the eligibility of the reintegration support, as well as the national and European legislation on the return and migration issues.</p> <p>7. FIS: No. FP: no.</p> <p>8. FIS: No. FP: the JRS handbook will be available for the police return counsellors.</p> <p>9. FIS: No. FP: No, but the return counsellors are free to consult the e-learning module from the IOM website.</p>
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			<p>10. No</p> <p>11. FIS: FIS has intranet platform that is used to provide up-to-date information on voluntary return and reintegration practices and official guidelines. FP: None yet, but information material is being prepared.</p> <p>12. FIS: Yes, we have some information leaflets that provide information regarding voluntary return process and reintegration options. FP: The police will use the JRS country leaflets.</p> <p>13. FIS & FP: Yes. Each actor has interpretation services available. Usually interpretation is provided on phone (interpreter calls to the counsellor who the returnee is with).</p> <p>14. FIS: No, but we would be interested. We are looking forward to include such option in future. FP: Videocalls will be used. The police return counselling will be conducted from Helsinki and will serve all Finnish police departments. The returnees on other departments will be contacted via videoconferencing. If needed and asked by the returnee, police will try to facilitate a video or phone connection to the reintegration provider at the destination country.</p> <p>15. FIS & FP: Unclear if there is legislative obstacles for utilizing virtual counselling established across EU. However, we interest in such initiatives.</p> <p>16. FIS: No. FP: The police will adopt the Frontex JRS program. This will make the return and reintegration counselling and support available for the non-voluntary returnees and failed residence permit applicants.</p>
	EMN REG	Yes	1. There is no legal definition of return counselling. Return assistance is governed by articles L711-2 and R711-3

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	Practitioners France		<p>to R711-5 of the CESEDA.</p> <p>According to the website www.retourvolontaire.fr:</p> <p>If a foreign national wishes to return to their country of origin, the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII) can organize their return (travel expenses, financial assistance, and administrative support to prepare for the trip). They will travel in the same way as an ordinary passenger and the authorities of their country of origin will not be informed of their return.</p> <p>To apply for assisted voluntary return, the applicant must be irregularly staying in France, or involved in an asylum procedure (which they do not wish to pursue or the application was rejected) or have received an Order to Leave French Territory (OQTF).</p> <p>The OFII can help the applicant benefiting from both return assistance and social reintegration assistance and help them finding a job or creating their own business. A selection committee in the country of origin checks whether the project is sustainable.</p> <p>The OFII offers reintegration assistance in the following 22 countries: Armenia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Congo DRC, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Georgia, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Kosovo, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan. Reintegration is suspended in Russia and Afghanistan. The amount of reintegration assistance may vary depending on the country of origin and on the project.</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3. OFII offices' counsellors are responsible for providing information and processing applications for assisted voluntary return and reintegration. It is possible to go to OFII's offices to obtain information, regardless the stage of the migration procedure.</p> <p>Return counselling is also provided at the different stages of the migration procedure by the following actors:</p> <p>b. During the detection of irregular stay (in the absence of application for international protection or regularization pending) : Prefecture officials (at the time of communication of the removal order) and OFII marauders</p>
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			<p>c. At the beginning of the application process for international protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefecture officials and OFII's agents when the asylum application is submitted (information available within the asylum seeker's guide given to third-country nationals when they submit an application) • Associations in charge of reception centres for asylum seekers and emergency accommodation for asylum seekers <p>d. After a negative decision (on international protection or another status): Prefecture officials (at the time of communication of the removal order)</p> <p>e. During the return procedure: OFII mediators.</p> <p>4. There are 44 agents involved in return counselling in the OFII's territorial directorates. In addition to this number, there are agents in administrative detention centres who can advise detainees on assisted return, as well as agents based at OFII headquarters in charge of issuing consular passes. Finally, a dozen agents are based in the OFII's tour operator units to book tickets and welcome returnees at airports. In total, over 61 full-time equivalents are mobilised for returns.</p> <p>5. The return counselling provided by the actors at different stages of the migration procedure follows the approaches below:</p> <p>b. During the detection of irregular stay (in the absence of application for international protection or regularisation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling focuses on information on the national legal framework applicable to migration, return planning, reintegration planning and access to reintegration assistance. • Applicant-centred approach: the aim is to individualise the counselling approach (each situation is unique) <p>c. At the beginning of the asylum procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling focuses on information on the national legal framework applicable to migration and access to return and/or reintegration assistance <p>d. After a negative decision (on international protection or other status) ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling focuses on information on the national legal framework applicable to migration, return planning, reintegration planning and access to reintegration assistance.
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			<p>e. During the return process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling focuses on identifying and assessing situations of vulnerability that require the enforcement of specific protection measures before return <p>6. Counsellors are trained internally within the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII). Trainings provided are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training "Return and reintegration processes, communication tools": one-day continuous training provided by the OFII on return and reintegration processes and communication tools • Training " Use of the computer tool dedicated to the return and reintegration activity " : one day continuous training provided by the OFII on the use of OFII's IT tool • Reception of new return agents or videoconference with the heads of the return and reintegration departments at OFII's headquarters; if necessary, additional visit to the travel service. <p>7. Counsellors are trained internally within the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII). The training provided is the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-day training provided by the OFII, containing a presentation and discussions of programs dedicated to reintegration assistance <p>8. Yes, there is a manual dedicated to return counsellors.</p> <p>9. Counsellors are trained internally within the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII). The trainings provided are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on « the use of the IT tool dedicated to return and reintegration activities »: one-day training provided by the OFII on the use of OFII's IT tool • Half-day training provided by the OFII, including a presentation and discussions on programs dedicated to reintegration assistance <p>Counsellors also received a specific training for recognising victims of trafficking in the context of the CARE+ project.</p>
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			<p>10. No</p> <p>11. Information documents (in particular country information sheets) are available on the OFII's intranet as well as on the business software and the website dedicated to voluntary return. A manual dedicated to the return counsellors also exists.</p> <p>12. All information concerning assisted voluntary return is available on the website www.retourvolontaire.fr. The website allows users to obtain in a simple way on a single platform, all necessary information concerning the different types of assistance offered by the OFII, the modalities to benefit from it, the steps to take and the concrete organisation of the departure and arrival. The information is available in 18 languages and includes infographics for non-readers and non-scribers. Testimonials from beneficiaries are also available. On the same site, four "return" and "reintegration" leaflets and informative posters summarising the procedures and listing the contacts of the various OFII's territorial offices to be contacted for information or to apply for assisted voluntary return, are available. These leaflets can be spread out on a number of occasions to foreigners staying in France (first reception, accommodation, OQTF...).</p> <p>In addition, the OFII disseminates information on voluntary return via its social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook).</p> <p>13. Yes. To facilitate the dialogue, the OFII uses interpreters in the applicant's language.</p> <p>14. No. In order to benefit from the assisted voluntary return and reintegration program, and to obtain information, you must contact a counsellor at an OFII's office, by visiting the office on-site.</p> <p>15.</p>
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			<p>The current legislation does not provide further details on the use of virtual tools in assisted voluntary return procedures.</p> <p>16. we are not aware of it</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Germany	Yes	<p>1. No. As described in the reply to AHQ 2019.59, the Federal States are responsible for the organization and implementation of return counselling in Germany. Return counselling is not only provided by governmental agencies but also by NGOs (there are approximately 1.000 return counselling centres across Germany). As a result, the German return counselling landscape is very heterogeneous even within the Federal States. It entails different support measures depending on where it takes place. The term return counselling in Germany usually also includes aspects of reintegration counselling.</p> <p>On the administrative and working level, return counselling is understood as a format where migrants can report on their personal situation and then receive non-binding information on individual support options. Return counsellors share information about financial support options for departure and possible reintegration services in the destination country. After a decision to return voluntarily has been made, the application must be completed together with the return counsellors on site. Return counselling is always individual, non-binding, unbiased and free of charge. It does not oblige the person to leave the country.</p> <p>2. a. During migration (in a country of transit);, b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure; f. Post-departure (Country of return); 2_20237_policies_and_practices_on_return_and_reintegration_counselling_for_migrants_in_eu_72c.docx</p> <p>3. Return counselling is provided by both governmental agencies (the BAMF) and NGOs. This varies depending on the federal state in which return counselling takes place.</p> <p>The information on voluntary return in the context of the asylum procedure are solely provided by the BAMF.</p>

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			<p>4. Due to limited data and the variety and number of actors involved in the return counselling landscape in Germany, no specific number can be provided.</p> <p>5. The method and approach of a return counselling session does not vary depending on the migration stage. Return counselling is always individual, non-binding, unbiased and free of charge.</p> <p>6. Generally, there are various training modules for return counsellors offered by different providers in Germany. However, these are not mandatory and can be attended on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>The two main providers are IntegPlan and IOM.</p> <p>IntegPlan (Integrated Return Planning) is a co-operation network made up of various national agencies and German federal states. It is supported by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the programme "Perspektive Heimat" by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The services provided by the network are mainly aimed at return counselling centres and their counsellors.</p> <p>IntegPlan provides training sessions for the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public relations • Information on return and reintegration programmes • Addicts in return counselling sessions • Counselling on voluntary return and reintegration • Dealing with mentally ill and traumatized clients • Entrepreneurship • Country-specific trainings • Supervision <p>IOM Germany provides training for the following topics:</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic and advanced training on the return programmes REAG/GARP and StarthilfePlus • Submitting an application for REAG/GARP and StarthilfePlus through the application tool OAM • Basic and advanced training on MEDA-cases • Support of unaccompanied children • Information platforms: ZIRF-Counselling, Virtual Counselling and the information portal on voluntary return and reintegration www.returningfromgermany.de <p>A training curriculum for return counsellors (virtual or in person) with dedicated modules is organized on a regular basis for employees of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) working as return counsellors in six different locations across Germany. While the BAMF offers modules on national and European return and reintegration programmes (JRS), on available information material, case management as well as monitoring and evaluation, external training providers for return counselling are usually also commissioned by the BAMF for the purpose of the trainings.</p> <p>7. IntegPlan provides modules on return and reintegration programmes as well as country specific trainings in the context of a virtual or in person training session.</p> <p>8. Yes.</p> <p>Guidelines for nationwide uniform standards in return counselling were developed in cooperation with the federal states and are published in the first quarter of 2023.</p> <p>Complementing the nationwide uniform standards for return counselling, various other guidelines published by different return counselling centres exist.</p> <p>9. Yes, see answer provided for Q6.</p> <p>10. Yes</p> <p>2_20237_policies_and_practices_on_return_and_reintegration_counselling_for_migrants_in_eu_72c.docx</p> <p>11. Return counsellors are regularly provided with up-to-date information through different sources and channels.</p>
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			<p>The most important sources for return counsellors are www.bamf.de, www.returnsfromgermany.de, ZIRF-Counselling and newsletters by the BAMF the respective Federal States.</p> <p>12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers with information on voluntary return and reintegration programs • Posters with information on voluntary return and reintegration programs • ZIRF-Country Fact Sheets (CFS) • Frontex-JRS Country Information Leaflets <p>Apart from general information on support available through programmes related to voluntary return, Country Fact Sheets (CFS) are also available on RfG for many target countries. These are available in German, English and the respective national language. The information contained in the CFS usually covers the following areas: health care, labour market, housing market, social services, education, children, contact information and useful links to organizations and support options in the destination country.</p> <p>13. No.</p> <p>Not all return counselling centres have access to interpretation services and counsellors sometimes have to rely on online translation services, native speakers among staff or family members of clients to provide interpretation.</p> <p>14. Yes.</p> <p>Complementing regular return counselling, a virtual service is provided by IOM return counsellors. IOM counsellors are based in 19 countries. They speak the language of the relevant country in any given case, provide information about the situation in the countries of destination, and advise on voluntary return and reintegration programmes of the prospective returnee. An overview of the current virtual counselling services including contact information is available on RfG.</p> <p>Counsellors can be contacted through various online messenger services like WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook or Skype. The contact details can be found on the relevant pages for the countries.</p>
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			<p>Standard return counselling is usually provided in presence.</p> <p>15. -</p> <p>16. Yes.</p> <p>As mentioned above, guidelines for nationwide uniform standards in return counselling are published in the first quarter of this year. The guidelines are aimed at providing a framework to achieve uniform standards of information and quality in return counselling, so that all persons seeking return counselling can make a decision on the basis of the same, well-founded information.</p> <p>The guidelines also refer to the Operational manual on return counselling from ERRIN and the Handbook on return from the EU COM.</p> <p>Information and training events are provided on a regular basis for the continuous development and improvement of the return counselling services.</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Hungary	Yes	<p>1. Return counseling starts in the Hungarian system when a TCN's asylum request is rejected and return has been ordered or when the irregularly staying TCN appears before the immigration authority and his/her return is ordered. The immigration authority conducts an interview with the TCN in his/her native language or another language he/she understands. The costs of translation and interpreting services is covered by the competent immigration authority.</p> <p>The TCN is informed by the case officer of the immigration procedure, if the detention of the TCN will be ordered, about the country of return (based on the statements of the TCN), the type of return (voluntary departure or forced return).</p> <p>As the assisted voluntary return programme in Hungary is provided by the International Organization for Migration (hereinafter referred to as IOM), TCNs are usually informed about the possibility to apply for the IOM programme.</p>

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			<p>General information about the IOM Assisted Voluntary Return programme is available at the premises of the regional directorates of the National Directorate General for Aliens Policing (hereinafter referred to as NDGAP) (just as in the detention centres operated by the Hungarian Police) in the form of leaflets, posters. Return counseling is available for the TCN during the timeframe of the organization of the return. Also, the possibility of returning home will be communicated to the client during the asylum procedure. If the need for voluntary return or repatriation arises, the person concerned receives information in verbal form on the possibility of voluntary return when submitting an asylum application and/or during the asylum proceedings.</p> <p>Furthermore, pursuant to Point d) of Section (1), Point b) of Section (3) of § 15 and, § 31, Point e) Section of (1), Point b) of Section (3) of § 37, Point d) of Section (1), Point c) of Section (3) of § 37/A, and § 50 of Government Decree no. 301/2007 (XI.9.) on the implementation of the Act LXXX of 2007 on Asylum, (as per the general legislation) persons seeking recognition, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection with social needs may receive an allowance for final departure from Hungary. Upon the request of the person seeking recognition, for his/her repatriation or final departure into a third country, on the basis of a certificate issued by the foreign representation of the country concerned, the asylum authority shall ensure a ticket (flight ticket) valid up to the destination designated on the certificate or subsequently reimburse the price of the ticket (flight ticket) and may fully or partially cover properly certified expenses related to travel of one occasion.</p> <p>2. c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3. The immigration authority (case workers of NDGAP), or IOM during the return procedure and post-departure.</p> <p>4. HU plans to involve more colleagues to return counsellors trainings provided by Frontex.</p> <p>5. In order to promote the AVR programme, in Hungary, IOM visits the detention centres, the community shelters and conducts information campaign to potential returnees and social workers. The organisation promotes the programme with multilingual brochures and posters. Also, they have dedicated a multilingual website and an</p>
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			<p>information line free of charge for this purpose.</p> <p>When based on the circumstances of a case the possibility to take part in a voluntary return programme arises and is justified, the aliens policing authority itself offers the returnee to fill in an application form for assisted voluntary return.</p> <p>6. The following took place:</p> <p>Intercultural training for case workers and staff members working in NDGAP's regional directorates; training on asylum, intercultural competence and English language for NDGAP's staff members, main modules were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercultural sensitivity training; • Middle East, North Africa, South Asia: culture, basic social knowledge, religion, communication; • Sub-Saharan Africa: culture, socio-economic fundamentals, religion, communication. <p>7. HU does not have any post-arrival or post-return activities related to forced return. For voluntary returns – within the framework of the IOM AVR programme – there is a possibility to apply for a reintegration support provided by IOM.</p> <p>The reintegration support seeks to help 39 returnees including vulnerable returnees and returnees with chronic medical conditions during their reintegration in their countries of origin.</p> <p>The complex reintegration support includes individual needs assessment and reintegration counselling, as well as a reintegration grant to be used by beneficiaries to finance various activities included in their pre-defined reintegration plans. Some of the most common activities to be supported within the framework of the programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business start-ups: The beneficiary might decide to use the reintegration grant to start his/her own business by submitting a business plan. • Business Partnership: The beneficiary might use the reintegration grant to enter in a partnership with an already existing company. • Salary Subsidy: The beneficiary might use the reintegration grant to have his/her salary subsidized
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			<p>while working as an employee at an already existing and functioning company. The applicant will be expected to describe the relevance of his/her previous work experience and training in the proposed employment.</p> <p>IOM's programme is financed from AMIF funds.</p> <p>8. No specific handbook or manual, information for internal use are shared among the colleagues responsible for return counseling.</p> <p>9. No</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Information for internal use is shared among the colleagues responsible for return counseling.</p> <p>12. HU has no experience participating in reintegration assistance under the Joint Reintegration Services (hereinafter referred to as JRS), and the use of the RIAT yet; however, HU expressed their interest in JRS, and is looking forward to the first meeting and training session in connection with JRS/RIAT. The negotiation is currently in progress.</p> <p>13. No</p> <p>14. Yes</p> <p>15. N/A</p> <p>16. When a new method is developed, it is shared among the colleagues responsible for return counseling. HU is planning on to involve more colleagues to return counselling trainings provided by Frontex.</p>
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	EMN REG Practitioners Italy	Yes	<p>1. NO. As for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, return counselling is understood as the procedure, during which detailed information about is provided, the Individual Reintegration Plan is explained and drawn up, the psychological support, whenever necessary, is granted, and all the implications of the return to one's country of origin are clarified. As for JRS forced/voluntary returns, counselling is carried out at 16 pilot Immigration Police offices/detention centres.</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;</p> <p>3. As for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Counselling is provided by implementing partners (usually third sector associations.) who have been entitled to the AMIF funding according to a relevant Public Notice, issued by the AMIF Authority of the Department of Civil Liberties and Migration of the Ministry of the Interior. As for JRS forced/voluntary returns, counselling is provided by immigration police officers.</p> <p>4. As for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration It depends on the dimension of the activity of the relevant implementing partner. In Italy the most recent AMIF AVR cycle has been implemented by 6 entities; for example, the biggest one could rely on approximately 15 counsellors for the pre-departure stage and on approximately 30 counsellors in the reintegration process in the country of origin. As for JRS forced/voluntary returns, 32 counsellors in 16 pilot immigration offices</p> <p>5. The adopted counselling method is the same at each migration stage and is based on the migrant-centred approach, with particular emphasis on supporting people's preferences and needs, making an informed decision and aiming at providing the support adapted to the specific needs of each returnee. The entire mechanism is well described also in the Return Counseling Toolkit published in July 2022 by OIM (pp.31-38). Through this approach, specific support is provided, according to the migrants' situation, their specific needs, their country of origin as well as their own skills and capabilities.</p>
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			<p>The approach covers not only the individual's future, but aims at providing tailored support, that takes into account the migrant's psychological well-being, by taking into consideration the previous migration experience and seeking to understand, what pushed the migrant to leave his/her country of origin and why he/she decided to return. While the discussion remains return-focused, it provides an understanding of the wider context, since being aware of the migrant's situation is essential to providing tailored support. In this process, the active role of the returnee is paramount, as well as trying to highlight his/her strengths and capabilities.</p> <p>6. Some of the operating implementing partners do not have a specific training curriculum, because the content of the training varies and is reviewed periodically, on the basis of the specific background and experience of the targeted counsellors. In any case, the training plan always aims at providing a complete general picture on the main national and EU legal framework relevant to return counselling, including the respective fundamental rights framework. In addition to the national laws and regulations, the module covers Return Directive 2008/115/EC as the principal legal act regulating return- related issues in the EU and the Return Handbook (guidance on the implementation of each article of the Return Directive). The programme also introduces the main elements of the Asylum Procedures and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).The training is mainly based on actual case studies to ensure that the content remains relevant. The exercise includes simulations of real interviews. Still police officers acting as counsellors for JRS, need to undergo specific training</p> <p>7. NO</p> <p>8. As for AVR the counsellors are invited to start from the tools already implemented, in particular reference is made to the operational-training Manual on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration created within the Re.V.ITA project, co-financed by the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020 and by the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>9. NO</p> <p>10. Yes</p>
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			<p>11. There are various websites (such as https://www.cir-onlus.org/ritorno-volontario-assistito-e-reintegrazione/, https://www.cies.it/progetti/ermes-3/) where the assisted voluntary return projects are explained in details, but there are no platforms, fora or dedicated websites as well as space for discussion between return counsellors, on which practices and new EU-wide initiatives are being explained.</p> <p>Here follows a list of the main websites used by return counsellors:</p> <p>https://returnnetwork.eu https://returnandreintegration.iom.int http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/i-progetti-r... https://www.icmpd.org https://reliefweb.int https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/ https://www.unhcr.org/50aa59459.pdf https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-predeparture-counselling-brief-2022-final.pdf https://www.returningfromgermany.de/en/ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu https://emn.ie/return-migration/ https://www.oecd.org/</p> <p>12. Returnees are usually given a copy of the project brochure and leaflets in their own language as well as the contacts of the on-site organization, that will follow them in their reintegration process.</p> <p>13. The system can rely on teams of cultural mediators and interpreters, who are not specific interpreters/cultural mediators for the return, but professionals who receive ad hoc internal training on AVR&R followed by periodic updating sessions</p> <p>14. YES</p>
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			15.
			16. The recent involvement of Police authorities in JRS for forced/voluntary returns represents a new step to enlarge the number of beneficiaries.
	EMN REG Practitioners Latvia	Yes	<p>1. No. There is no official definition of return counselling provided by national policy/legislation. The return counselling is provided by IOM Riga Office. At the same time the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and State Border Guard, who are responsible for issuing return decisions, informs third country nationals about IOM AVRR program and have close cooperation with IOM Riga Office.</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3. IOM</p> <p>4. 2 counsellors.</p> <p>5. National authorities inform TCN about opportunity to turn to IOM and receive return assistance. Persons usually are informed at the moment of detection, after negative decision (on international protection) and during the return procedure. Information on specific counselling method/approach could be provided only by IOM.</p> <p>6. As mentioned before, IOM provides AVRR (including counselling) in Latvia, and the organization itself conducts training of consultants.</p> <p>7. IOM provides AVRR (including counselling) in Latvia.</p>


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			<p>8. No.</p> <p>9. Information on in-depth modules could be provided only by IOM.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Information on communication tools is provided only by IOM.</p> <p>12. Yes, the State Border Guard of Latvia is developing booklets for TCNs, explaining the return procedure and the booklets will be translated into different languages, at the moment IOM representatives have developed booklets on the possibility of applying for the voluntary return programme and receiving reintegration support, which is used by Inspectors of the State Border Guard interviewing the returnee and explaining all possible options of the procedure. As well there are IOM leaflets and contact information for potential returnees.</p> <p>13. The State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia has a contract with a translation agency, thus, the Inspector of the State Border Guard can use the services of an interpreter at any stage of the return procedure and also in asylum procedures. So far there have been no problems with the use of interpreters, and it is also possible to use interpreters' services remotely via videoconferencing (e.g. webex). At the moment we could not provide information on interpretation services provided by IOM.</p> <p>14. Yes.</p> <p>15. N/a</p> <p>16. No.</p>
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	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>Every third country national on irregular stay in Luxembourg may return to his/her country of origin with the Luxembourg AVRR programme (AVRR-L). Return counselling is understood as a process through which concerned irregular migrants may receive information on the AVR programme; it can also be a session during which the organisation of the travel and - in case the person is eligible - the reintegration project will be discussed and defined. It supports TCN's informed choice, provide information on logistical arrangements, on reintegration possibilities, fill in the registration and reintegration forms as well as assess any vulnerabilities that have to be taken into account during the pre-departure phase (risk assessment in the case of victims of trafficking (VoTs), family assessment in the case of Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC), in the organization of the travel (need for medical or social escort) or in post-arrival support needed (medical assistance for example). Source of information: Internal IOM procedure and AVRR project design (project document).</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending): The return counselling is organized by the Directorate of Immigration or by IOM directly when a person registers to voluntary return.</p> <p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure: From the moment a foreigner has lodged an asylum application, return counselling becomes an integral part of the accompaniment offered to asylum seekers in all reception facilities. The topic of voluntary return is raised by the authorities to the international protection seeker since the beginning of the procedure. A flyer/brochure in different languages explaining the AVR program is handed out by the Directorate of Immigration that contains information about the voluntary return.</p> <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status): Once that the order to leave the country is</p>
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			<p>notified to the rejected asylum seeker, the above-mentioned flyer/brochure is systematically joined to the Directorate of Immigration's decision and the person is invited by the Directorate of immigration to an interview on his/her administrative situation where the AVRR-L is explained.</p> <p>e. During the return procedure: IOM Country office for Belgium and Luxembourg – IOM staff working on Luxembourg projects are present in Luxembourg every Wednesday and Thursday. Wednesdays are usually dedicated to return counselling while Thursdays are dedicated to airport assistance in the case of AVRR departures. If necessary the person may be invited at this stage also to an interview on his/her administrative situation and AVRR-L counselling at any time.</p> <p>f. Post-departure (Country of return): IOM reintegration officer in the country of origin. This counselling concerns more the reintegration plan to be implemented after return (when the returnee is eligible to reintegration assistance).</p> <p>4. Number of counsellors per stage in the AVRR-L :</p> <p>b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending): 1 IOM counsellor, 2 Directorate of Immigration counsellors</p> <p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure: 1 IOM counselor</p> <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status): 1 IOM counselor, 2 Directorate of Immigration counsellors</p> <p>e. During the return procedure: 1 IOM counselor, 2 Directorate of Immigration counsellors</p> <p>f. Post-departure (Country of return): 1 IOM counselor when the beneficiary is entitled to a reintegration support.</p> <p>5. The content of counselling does not change according to the migration stage. Its focus is on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How to access return assistance, what the different categories of beneficiaries there are (depending on their status, time spent in Luxembourg, time elapsed since the order to leave the territory etc) •plan return,
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •plan the reintegration and access reintegration-related assistance, •identification and assessment of situations of vulnerability that require application of specific safeguards prior to return (e.g. risk assessment in case of victims of trafficking, examination whether return is in the best interests in case of children, etc.) •assessment of the capacity to take an informed decision and provide consent (e.g. in case of children or persons with serious mental health needs) <p>The approach followed in the AVRR-L is migrant centered. It is open discussion, focused on listening and responding to any questions or doubts they may have. IOM does not try to convince or persuade as the program remains one of voluntary return. Should the candidate have questions more specific to reintegration and worry they will not benefit from it, IOM Luxembourg organizes a call with their colleagues in the concerned country of origin.</p> <p>6. No. In Luxembourg the training of the counsellors is Peer to peer training from more colleagues in the form of induction training regarding on the counselling procedure. Occasionally, the return counsellors participate in a training organized in another member state. When they are confronted with vulnerable cases they can be supported on a case-by-case basis by the Regional Thematic Specialist (RTS) on Migrant Protection Assistance (expert on vulnerable cases) with specific queries or whenever in doubt with appropriate processes or procedures to follow. Existing SOPs are in place (with checklists, requirements, procedures to follow) regarding the organization of voluntary return for UMC (eg. the conduction of a family assessment in the UMC's country of origin and confirmation of their willingness and ability to receive their child is a pre-requisite for a voluntary return to be organized by IOM), VoTs (eg. a risk assessment of the trafficking network is a pre-requisite) and medical cases (eg. an assessment by the treating doctor and a fit-to-fly form is a pre-requisite before organizing the return of a medically unfit candidate).</p> <p>7. No. See answer to Q.6. We could add that counsellors have regular contact with reintegration officers and counsellors in countries of origin and communicate directly with them regarding specific cases including migrants' needs and available support in countries of origin to respond to said needs.</p>
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			<p>8. No.</p> <p>9. No. the answers to AHQ 2019.59 remain valid.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Same answer as for question 12.</p> <p>12. Yes. There is a leaflet that provides all the information in different languages. There is the website of the AVRR for Belgium and Luxembourg that is available for the general public (https://belgium.iom.int/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration#:~:text=In%20Luxembourg%2C%20IOM%20is%20currently%20implementing%20an%20Assisted,European%20Commission%20%28Asylum%2C%20Migration%20and%20Integration%20Fund%2C%20AMIF%29.) providing information of the system.</p> <p>13. Yes. They use interpretation provided by the Red Cross.</p> <p>14. Yes. IOM can organize virtual counselling (since the COVID pandemic) if a physical one cannot take place.</p> <p>15. N/A.</p> <p>16. Not as such. But Directorate of Immigration counsellors and IOM counselors may be contacted each day by the concerned persons to the return.</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Poland	Yes	<p>1. There is no official definition of return counselling provided by national policy. Currently Polish Border Guard provides reintegration services only to forced returnees. Return counsellors have the knowledge and experience in asylum and return procedures. Additionally, they undergo training in counselling and qualifying for reintegration</p>

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			<p>services. Border Guard officers are trained of AVR qualification and procedures combined with JRS at Border Guard Training Centres and by Frontex experts through online trainings and study visits in detention centres. In the area of organisation of assisted voluntary returns Polish Border Guard cooperates with IOM which provides return counselling to potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>compilation_af_on_approaches_to_return_counselling_v3_pl.xlsx</p> <p>2. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>ahq_on_support_to_return_counsellors_compilation_pl.xlsx</p> <p>3. Ad. b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularisation request pending) - Polish Border Guard Ad. d. After negative decision (on granting international protection or other status) - Polish Border Guard; IOM Ad. e. During the return procedure - Polish Border Guard Ad. f. Post-departure (Country of return)- JRS Service providers (NGOs, International organizations, etc.) - Staff at reception centres</p> <p>4. Ad. b. Initial return counselling is provided by officers in Border Guard posts, as a part of routine activity (no data provided) Ad. d. After negative decision counselling is provided by officers in Border Guard posts; IOM Poland staff (no data provided) Ad. e. 12 two return counsellors in each detention centre Ad. f. JRS Service providers (NGOs, International organisations, etc.), staff at reception centres (no data provided)</p> <p>5. Ad. b. Initial return counselling is focused on AVR Ad. d. For the programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, carried out by the service provider under direct contracting which is IOM in this case, the approach is migrant-centred</p>
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			<p>Ad. e. For forced return (carried out by the national authority) the approach is return oriented with reintegration in mind</p> <p>Ad. f. JRS Service providers (NGOs, International organizations, etc.) have their own methods depending on conditions in the country of return, returnee family status and their health condition.</p> <p>6. The training for return counsellors covers areas such as: introducing the ongoing projects, return procedure, interviewing, approach to vulnerable groups, joint reintegration services regarding in particular the pre-return procedure, use of the RIAT system.</p> <p>7. N/A</p> <p>8. N/A</p> <p>9. N/A</p> <p>10. Yes</p> <p>11. Border Guard Headquarters maintains internal website with instructions, procedures, leaflets in different languages, upgrades made available to officers participating in return procedures.</p> <p>12. Besides leaflets in different languages, reintegration spot in 9 languages is displayed in social rooms in detention centres</p> <p>13. Interpreters are available on request</p> <p>14. YES. Virtual counselling is possible but currently not used</p> <p>15. N/A</p>
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			16. It is planned to change the regulations in the area of organising assisted voluntary returns and reintegration, which will streamline activities in the area of return counselling
	EMN REG Practitioners Portugal	Yes	<p>1. NO. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies. The Portuguese Government is restructuring the national model of reception, integration, documentation and return of TCN, foreseeing the creation of an Agency for Migration and Asylum (APMA) within a few weeks, to replace SEF, making some decisions in the area of migration to be somewhat undefined.</p> <p>2. a. During migration (in a country of transit);</p> <p>3. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policy.</p> <p>4. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>5. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>6. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>7. N/a</p> <p>8. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>9. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>10. Not Applicable FRONTEX and ICMPD will soon provide training targeting return counselling. Preparations are being made to hold various training sessions shortly.</p>

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			<p>11. FRONTEX and ICMPD will soon provide RIAT training. Preparations are being made to that purpose.</p> <p>12. See the Q11 answer</p> <p>13. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>14. IOM Portugal provides return counselling grounded on IOM's policies.</p> <p>15. FRONTEX and ICMPD will soon provide training targeting return counselling. Preparations are being made to hold various training sessions shortly.</p> <p>16. See the Q15 answer.</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Slovenia	Yes	<p>1. No. Return counselling is understood as an individual return advice to potential returnees including information about the obligation to leave the country (EU and SAC) and the potential prospects for the returnees in their country of origin with the aim to encourage (assisted) voluntary return.</p> <p>2. d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);</p> <p>3. Migration authority (Police).</p> <p>4. Cca 5 counsellors.</p> <p>5. Individual counselling, migrant-centred approach (help the individual to make an informed decision about his/her stay or departure) and compliance approach (convincing the migrant to return or to comply with a return decision).</p>


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			<p>6. No, no training curriculum in place yet. Self-education is currently carried out on an individual basis in the form of ad-hoc/self study training, using the material available on-line or received via networks.</p> <p>7. No.</p> <p>8. No.</p> <p>9. No.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. Slovenia is using FX JRS, in case the support from FX is needed, we contact them. SI counsellors exchange experiences and best practices in regular meetings. They are also participating in on-line meetings, workshops etc. regarding RRC. We are informed from FX about JRS (materials, country leaflets, procedures in RIAT).</p> <p>12. Yes. Returnees are provided with eligibility letter (contacts of reintegration partners). Information from country leaflets are explained during return counselling session.</p> <p>13. So far yes. We have contracts with interpreters who are available 24/7. When the activity (counselling) will be expanded, difficulties regarding interpretation may be an issue (not enough interpreters, interpreter for certain language would not be available).</p> <p>14. No. Until now, there has been no such need.</p> <p>15. There are no legal restrictions in place. If a virtual counselling were to be set up, and if it complied with the requirements for the protection of personal data, we would be interested in using it.</p>
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			16. Until the end of 2021 Slovenia had a contract signed with IOM for providing return counselling. Slovenia (Police) joined FX JRS in April 2022. Consequently the activity of return counselling is relatively new and needs to be further developed both in regard of training as well as range of individuals in need for counselling (within territory of Slovenia).
	EMN REG Practitioners Spain	Yes	<p>1. No. Return counselling is done by NGOs and by IOM counsellors, which may include personal assessment, individual itineraries for return and reintegration adapted to returnees. Every NGO counts with information, orientation and counselling activities about job search and any other activities which improve reintegration in the country of return.</p> <p>2. e. During the return procedure; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3. During the return procedure, it is done by NGOs and IOM's workers specialised in counselling. Post-departure, the counterparts in the countries of origin take care of the reintegration procedure and NGOs from Spain supervise the returnees and the difficulties they may have once returned i.e.: job, reintegration into society, schooling, housing, etc.</p> <p>4. In Spain these projects are carried out by NGOs and by IOM (under the agreement between Spain and that international organization) depending on the Entity the number of counsellors may vary. They count with permanent staff and volunteers for these matters.</p> <p>5. The information is generally shared face to face but there is the option of doing it via telephone or other telematic media (i.e. if the person has mobility problems or lives in a different region).</p> <p>6. No. Every NGO has its specific training, but there is not a common training curriculum in Spain.</p> <p>7. NO. NGOs and counterpart are the ones managing reintegration in the country of origin.</p> <p>8. No</p>

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			<p>9. No</p> <p>10. No NO, there is the Ministry website with information on return and also NGOs and IOM websites explaining detailed information about Voluntary Return. The Ministry also has published a Handbook of Voluntary Return Procedures, with basic information.</p> <p>11. The tools available are websites and leaflets made by NGOs and IOM. If return counsellors have any questions about European programmes, they get in touch with the Ministry.</p> <p>12. NGOs publish in their websites information regarding Return process and through social media, also via informative talks about Voluntary Return procedures.</p> <p>13. The returnees have the right to count with an interpreter for these sessions. Counselling includes interpretation services when needed: NGOs ask for authorisation to the Ministry for interpretation expenses. These expenses are automatically approved if necessary.</p> <p>14. It is possible via online connection for cases that cannot be done in person i.e. mobility problems, different regions, vulnerabilities.</p> <p>15.</p> <p>16. It is planned to increase the budget for the next annual agreement that Spain maintains with the IOM, this increase will also have an impact on the tasks of advice for return and reintegration.</p>
	EMN REG	Yes	1. No. There is no official definition of return counselling. There are however guidelines established by the

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	Practitioners Sweden		<p>different authorities (the Swedish Migration Agency for voluntary return and the Swedish police Authority for forced return) to ensure a standardized approach. There are also protocols, manuals, handbooks and regulations to support the handling officers in their work. Return counselling is understood as providing asylum seekers, returnees and third-country nationals with information as well as individual advice and/or counselling about return procedures, rights and obligations, existing return and reintegration support and how to apply as well as of practical assistance that can be provided.</p> <p>2. c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);,</p> <p>3. Beginning of asylum procedure: The Swedish Migration Agency is carrying out a collective information meeting at the reception centre within 30 days from the date an application of asylum has been lodged. After negative decision: Asylum seekers issued a return decision are informed orally about the decision by a handling officer at the Swedish Migration Agency. The number of appointments depend on the circumstances of the return, The first is the notification appointment when the returnee is informed about the rejection of the application for asylum. The others may take place after an appeal has been lodged and/or upon a decision of refusal from the Migration Court. During the return procedure: The number of appointments at the Swedish Migration Agency or the Swedish Police Authority depend on the number needed to enforce the return decision or the circumstances of the return. Post-departure: International organisations or independent NGOs under a service contract with national authorities.</p> <p>4. N/A.</p> <p>5. The method/approach applied depends on the actor providing the counselling but also to some extent when counselling is provided which has been described above Q3. The approach of the Swedish Migration Agency is migrant centred but with prime emphasis on return. Content of counselling is always based on the needs of the individual but the information provided also depends on the</p>
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			<p>migration stage, what specific information an/or information/support is relevant or being asked for. Motivational interviewing is the method that is applied in all counselling included return counselling at the Swedish Migration Agency.</p> <p>The Swedish Police Authority is responsible for the return cases handed over by the Swedish Migration Agency, but also handles the return for people convicted to deportation and cases where the Police Authority has taken the decision for expulsion (e.g. refusal of entry). The handling of all cases follow the similar routine when it comes to counselling, and is dependent of the circumstances in the individual case. In cases (countries) where support for reintegration and return is available the returnee is informed and offered the support.</p> <p>6. Capacity Development and Training for Return Counsellors (CADRE) aims to improve training practices and capacity development opportunities and overall to contribute to increased harmonisation and quality of return counselling. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups. Method applied is train-the-trainers. Sweden has provided experts to develop the CADRE training curriculum and staff have been participating in training. The Swedish Migration Agency has adapted the CADRE concept to national conditions and provides training to counsellors from autumn 2022.</p> <p>Case officers working with voluntary return are offered two digital introductory training modules (in total about two hours) for return and detention. Added to this the Swedish Migration Agency offers an introductory workshop (about 16 hours) on return counselling twice a year. Case officers also have a mentor who supports them and share their skills and experiences. There is a specific training module on how to handle threats and violence. This is offered on a regular basis within the Swedish Migration Agency and a professional counsellor is also available if required.</p> <p>Case officers working with forced return are employed by the Border Policing Sections throughout Sweden. They are not referred as return counsellors but as return case officers. They are offered a national introduction course for ten days and an additional course on return for six days.</p> <p>7. N/A</p> <p>8.</p>
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			<p>Yes, the Swedish Migration Agency has manuals and protocols focusing not only return counselling but the return procedure as a whole to support the case officers in their work. Manuals and guides are also available for the different appointments that are carried out for those with return decisions.</p> <p>Legislative information, routines and guidelines are distributed by the Swedish Police Authority to support the case officers in their daily work. Routines are produced at national level, but in cooperation with representatives from the regional level. The work to create a standardized way of conduct for the border police is a continuous work including e.g. creating standardized routines and forms.</p> <p>9. Yes, see Q6 regarding CADRE which is an update to replies to the AHQ 2019.59.</p> <p>10. Yes</p> <p>11. The Frontex JRS country leaflets are available as well as information sheet concerning cash support for reestablishment.</p> <p>12. Yes, there are leaflets explaining the return process (from the rejection of the application for asylum to the actual return), translated into 12 languages, which are used during the appointments to explain the process but also handed out after the appointment by the Swedish Migration Agency.</p> <p>13. Yes interpretation services are available during the counselling session with returnees. The Swedish Migration Agency also have interpreters in the reception areas but most interpretation is carried out via telephone.</p> <p>14. Yes virtual counselling is possible but rarely used by the Swedish Migration Agency and by the Swedish Police Authority only if there are specific circumstances to do so.</p> <p>15. N/A.</p>
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			<p>16.</p> <p>The Swedish Migration Agency is implementing the Cadre-methodology as explained in Q6 above. There is also an ongoing project at the Swedish Migration Agency in Stockholm. The Stockholm City Mission is present at the agency's premises, giving the returnees the opportunity to talk about their return decision and their future. The aim of the project is to gain understanding, clarity and acceptance of the situation and to mobilize resources in order to make a conscious and informed decision. Another development work that the Swedish Migration Agency is involved in is Talk2Connect, a project that is carried out in cooperation with the Return and Reintegration Facility and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The aim of the project is to provide quality return counselling which requires accurate information about the country of return. Talk2Connect provides opportunities for counsellors in different EU Member States to connect in order to share knowledge and experiences but in particular with organizations in third countries for information about the country of return.</p> <p>The Swedish Polish Authority is planning an Asylum Migration and Integration Fund project on return of third-country nationals. The application for financing was submitted in February which means the project is still at the planning stage. The project aims to review and to develop methods and support for case officers in their work to prepare and motivate third-country nationals for their return.</p>
	EMN REG Practitioners Norway	Yes	<p>1. NO</p> <p>National Police Immigration Service (NPIS) is responsible for registering all asylum applications in Norway. During the initial stages of registering their asylum application, the NPIS is obliged under the Administration Act to inform the applicants about their rights and obligations. The information is given orally through interpreters and as handouts in standardized forms containing information on asylum seekers rights and obligations, including the obligation to leave Norway/Schengen/EU area territory if a negative decision is given. On 48-hour (fast track) procedure applications, or with applications that are apparent will be rejected, NPIS initiate an orientation informing the applicants of the likelihood of the UDI rejecting their application. This includes the obligation to leave voluntarily, and the consequences if failing to do so when the application is rejected as informed to the applicant by NPIS.</p>

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			<p>All asylum seekers staying in Reception Centers (RC), shall have a counselling session on voluntary assisted return with a staff in the RC responsible for the return work in the RC. They shall have one counselling session after they receive a negative decision to their application for protection from the The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, UDI, and if they appeal and receive a negative decision from the Appeal board (UNE), they shall also have a second counselling session.</p> <p>2. a. During migration (in a country of transit);, b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending);, c. Beginning of asylum procedure;; d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status);, e. During the return procedure;; f. Post-departure (Country of return);</p> <p>3. NPIS and local police will provide counselling already at the first encounter according to our legislation. During the asylum interview, the UDI informs about the possibilities of a negative decision and advantages of voluntary assisted return. At arrival in a Reception center (RC), asylum seekers are again informed about the possibility of a negative decision to their application for protection and the benefits of applying for assisted return, by the NGO, Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers (NOAS). After the first negative decision from the UDI, the applicants shall have one formal counselling session with a RC staff responsible for return information. After the second negative decision, from the Appeal Board (UNE), the applicants are offered a second counselling session. The RCs shall in addition ensure that the residents have adequate knowledge of the option for assisted return.</p> <p>a. During migration (in transit) At airports in Norway or police controls on the territory, the police have discovered that asylum seekers use Norway as a transit on their way to other countries e.g. UK. The Norwegian Police have used the Norwegian Immigration Act in order to prevent the misuse of the asylum institute. In such cases a decision of rejection or expulsion can be given. Information is given to the persons on the prospects of their irregular stay and the consequences of not complying to the decisions to be made.</p> <p>b. Moment of detection of irregular stay (no international protection or regularization request pending); When the police during ordinary assignments or controls performed on the territory detect foreign nationals</p>
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			<p>staying illegally, the persons detected will be given the prospects of their irregular stay and the consequences of not complying to the decisions to be made. The same applies when the foreign national has not applied for a renewal of a permission to stay (e.g. student permits, family reunifications, ordinary work permits).</p> <p>c. Beginning of asylum procedure; See Q1 and NPIS routines on registration.</p> <p>All asylum seekers are interviewed by UDI about their application for asylum and the possibility of applying for voluntary assisted return at all stages of the process.</p> <p>d. After negative decision (on international protection or other status); The applicant will be informed of their obligation to cooperate on their return and consequences on failing to do so. In all negative decisions this information will also be given in writing as a pre-notification. All asylum seekers staying in Reception Centers (RC), are offered two formal counselling sessions on consequences of irregular stay and the possibility of voluntary assisted return. This is conducted with a person in the RC responsible for the voluntary assisted return work there. The first counselling is given after a negative decision to the application for protection from the UDI. The second is offered after a negative decision from the Appeal Board (UNE).</p> <p>e. During the return procedure; The NPIS coordinates all forced returns and assisted returns, sometimes also voluntary returns when IOM is not an option. According to the Return Directive, Norway aims at using Voluntary return as the preferred option. When a third country national (TCN) do not comply with the obligation to return the police consider the use of coercive measures. Cf. Section 106 Cf. section 99. The police inform the TCN of the consequences of not leaving voluntarily including the obligation to cover the costs of the return and the costs for escorts when needed. Case handlers are familiar of the different available return support schemes Norway have for certain countries. They use their knowledge actively to motivate and give sufficient counselling to certain individuals/groups that are reluctant to return. The NPIS have developed special procedures, both in writing as instructions but also in a practical training of instructors, on how to handle and communicate with minors, vulnerable persons and families with children in the return process in order to provide these groups with the necessary care and guidance. Applicants for voluntary assisted return who have received a positive decision on their application for voluntary</p>
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			<p>assisted return are offered a counselling session online with IOM or, if possible, other relevant service provider who will be facilitating the return and reintegration.</p> <p>f. Post-departure (Country of return); Returnees are offered counselling and follow up on arrival in country of return. This includes a reception, assistance for the travel to final destination, and the release of cash support. For vulnerable cases, the follow-up is more extensive and counselling is offered up to 12 months after return and includes a reintegration support in kind implemented by the IOM.</p> <p>4. The NPIS (National Immigration Police Service) and the police in general do not have specific counsellors available but gives counselling as part of performing their tasks. In almost all forced returns NPIS will have a conversation with the returnee in order to inform the TCN about the upcoming return and procedures in this regard. Usually there is one counsellor available per counselling session. These are counsellors responsible for the overall work with assisted return in the Reception center.</p> <p>5. In the specification of requirements for the Reception centers (RC), it is stated that the operator of the RCs shall offer their employees a training in conversational methodology/counselling methodology. Motivational Interviewing (MI) methodology has been widely used, but is not compulsory.</p> <p>6. Not at the time being. Each Reception center is free to use their own methods.</p> <p>7. No. Each service provider responsible for the counselling and follow-up after return has their own material and procedures.</p> <p>8. Not at the time being for UDI. See Q 2 e) for return counselling performed by the NPIS.</p> <p>9. NO</p>
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			<p>See Q 2 e) for return counselling performed by the NPIS.</p> <p>10. No</p> <p>11. The UDI offer information to the RCs through UDI's official website.</p> <p>12. In addition, the IOM has developed brochures targeting ordinary and vulnerable migrants.</p> <p>13. The counselling sessions shall be conducted in a language that the applicant is familiar with and an interpreter shall be used when requested for by the applicant.</p> <p>14. YES</p> <p>15. Virtual counselling is offered between returnees and the IOM in Norway. In vulnerable cases, the returnee might be invited for a meeting with IOM Country of Origin, if needed. For countries where IOM is not the reintegration partner, the returnee might be offered counselling/conversations with relevant reintegration partners in the country of return. The Norwegian immigration authorities find it interesting to make use of virtual counselling if it is established across the EU.</p> <p>16. Currently the NPIS have no written strategies on return counselling or initiatives in place. Norway has a return strategy and country specific action plans on return (currently under revision). Over the years NPIS has good experience in collaborating with UDI. By using a mix of case workers and police officers on return counselling where specific targeted groups have been given information on possibilities to return voluntary and with assistance. This information in combination with information on the consequences on not using the voluntary return option gives applicants a better understanding of their situation. UDI has good experiences from initiatives for developing return counselling. One such initiative has been counselling offered to asylum seekers with a negative decision, focusing on content of the asylum decision and</p>
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			<p>the consequences of an irregular stay. This has been conducted by UDI officers online or face-to-face. The UDI officers have access to information on the asylum seekers situation as a whole, including other forms of applications he or she has submitted. The purpose is to ensure that the asylum seeker has a better understanding of the reasons behind the decision and of his or her status regarding other permissions he or she has applied for, i.e. a holistic approach to their own situation. We experience that with a better understanding of their own situation, the asylum seeker increases his or her possibilities of making a well informed decision on a return decision. At the time being we do not offer this kind of counselling due to lack of human resources. We are planning to re-establish this approach before summer 2023.</p>
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