

Dissemination of information on voluntary return: how to reach irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities



CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES
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The European Migration Network (EMN) was established in 2003, originally as a preparatory action of the European Commission, with the aim of providing the European Commission and the Member States with objective, reliable, comparable and up-to-date data on migration and asylum, to build policymaking in the European Union and hence their national policies in these areas. Subsequently, the Council of the EU in 2008, with the No. 381/2008/EK Judgment founded the EMN, as permanent structure that will operate within the European Commission, with the participation of Member States in order to achieve these goals.

More information on the EMN and its work can be found on the website

www.emn.europa.eu

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Top-line “Factsheet” (National Contribution)..... | 5 |
| Executive Summary (Synthesis Report) | 7 |
| Section 1: Overview of EU legal and policy context [Maximum 1 page] | 9 |
| Section 2: Overview of the national situation [Maximum 2 pages, excluding Annex 1] | 10 |
| 2.1. Scale of irregular migration and Of Return in the Member State | 10 |
| 2.2. Scale and nature of irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities | 13 |
| Section 3: National legislation and policy on the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return [Maximum 2 pages] | 16 |
| Section 4: Overall national approach to disseminating information on VoluntaryReturn [Max. 12 pages] | 18 |
| 4.1. Actors involved in disseminating information on VoluntaryReturn | 18 |
| Table 1. Other actors disseminating information on VoluntaryReturn, their role and the rationale for their environment..... | 25 |
| 4.2. Channels through which information is provided..... | 26 |
| Table 2. Channels used in the Member State for disseminating information on VoluntaryReturn... | 26 |
| 4.3. Specific campaigns and strategies..... | 29 |
| 4.4. Accessibility of the information..... | 29 |
| 4.5. Content of the information..... | 30 |
| 4.6. Targeting of the information | 32 |
| Section 5: Case studies on information provision to irregular migrants with whom the Authorities do not have contact [Max. 4 pages] | 33 |
| Section 6: Effectiveness of different approaches to disseminating information on Voluntary Return [Max. 4 pages] | 39 |
| 6.1. Evidence from the testimonies of irregular migrants and Returnees | 39 |
| 6.2. Other evidence of effectiveness..... | 39 |
| 6.3. Overall assessment of effectiveness..... | 42 |
| Annex 1 National statistics on returnand number of irregular third-country nationals | 43 |
| Table A.1.a: National Statistics on the number of third-country nationals returning, by year and by type of migrant..... | 43 |
| Table A.1.b: National Statistics on the number of third-country nationals not in contact with the national authorities, by year and by type of migrant | 43 |
| Annex 2 Description of data-collection methods used | 44 |

European Migration Network (EMN)

EMN FOCUSED STUDY 2015

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Top-line "Factsheet" (National Contribution)

National contribution (one page only). Overview of the National Contribution – introducing the study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections of the Focused Study, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policymakers.

This focused study intends to inform Member States and the European Commission on ways and methods adopted to approach irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, in order to disseminate information on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes in Greece. The Greek contribution includes a description of the situation regarding the actors and the practical approaches of irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities and highlights successful practices, as well as the need to strengthen them.

In the Greek Focused Study, initially, an overview of the legal and political framework of the European Union (**Section 1**) is made. Next, an overview of the situation of the migration phenomenon in Greece and the national practices for the Return of migrants is presented. Moreover, the phenomenon of irregular migration and the characteristics of the irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities (**Section 2**) are examined. In addition, the national legislation and policy on the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return (**Section 3**) is analyzed. In **Section 4**, a review of the overall national approach to the dissemination of information on the Voluntary Return programmes is made. Successful and less successful case studies on the provision of information on irregular migrants with whom the Authorities have no contact are examined in-depth (**Section 5**). Finally, in **Section 6** an overview of the effectiveness of various approaches to the dissemination of information regarding the Voluntary Return is provided. The issue of management of the multiple irregular migration flows coming to Greece is not new for Greek political agenda. However, the Greek legislation concerning the effective treatment of the phenomenon and the protection of the fundamental rights of these populations is still at early stage. Effective action through Programmes of assistance on the procedure of Voluntary Return of third-country nationals who are irregularly staying in Greece, has begun since 2010 as an initiative of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) representing the state and the International Organization for Migration(IOM)-Office in Greece as the Executive Agency of the materialization of the project of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. In the Programme participated as partner the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-Office in Greece (since 2010)in order to provide specialized information and counselling on international protection and national asylum system issues to some beneficiaries of the Action and when needed to individuals and/or families (mainly asylum seekers and refugees)through interviews using a tailored questionnaire, before making a final decision regarding asylum in Greece(UNHCR has approached and informed 2.294 beneficiaries until today),funded by the European Return Fund (75%) and the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (25%)(current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction).

The difficulty in implementing Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes for irregular migrants lies on the problems in approaching these populations by the Authorities due to the lack of data, the fact that the migrants are afraid to come in contact with the institutions in general, in fear of their apprehension, or their inability due to their entrapment in exploitative work conditions, human trafficking etc. The informational activities of the migrant populations that have realized and continue to take place until today have the form of distribution of printed material(leaflets) translated in sixteen languages in institutions that provide services to third country nationals and in places where migrants are gathered and migrant communities and associations. There are also posters at central points of daily transit, face-to-face meetings take place between the executive staff of IOM and interpreters and possible beneficiaries in places where migrants are gathered.

Despite the focused actions described above, reviewing the actual numbers of Returnees, the conclusions drawn indicate that the numbers of Returnees are very low compared to the numbers of entries in the country. Main conclusion of the study is that there is an urgent need to design more effective policy in the field of migration by implementing absolutely the European Return Directive and completely adapting it to the national requirements. The issue of irregular migration management, in a country that is still under severe economic recession and political and social crisis, such as Greece, should not be addressed as a national problem, but as a European one. Greece is not only a destination country for migrants coming from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh etc., but also a transit point to the entire European space. These migration flows have resulted in the establishment of official proposals for a comprehensive approach to the effective management of irregular migration. On this basis, the Greek legislation implemented the European Return Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Commission in the Law 3907/2011, concerning the Return of irregular migrants in the countries of origin in complete

compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. EU cooperation with other countries on migration issues should be further improved. The need for coordinated action is evidenced by the multiple waves of migrants, who enter Europe through land and sea borders that put to test the strengths of European host countries. As irregular migration grows in fields and complexity and has a serious impact mainly in the countries of Southern Europe, which receive the largest number of migrants, the European Union should handle the issue in an overall socio-economic context, which has so far characterized a lack of substantive decisions and actions.

Executive Summary (Synthesis Report)

Synthesis Report (up to three pages). Executive Summary of Synthesis Report: this will form the basis of an EMN Inform, which will have EU and National policymakers as its main target audience.

What results from the research conducted in the context of the focused study concerning the actions on Assisted Voluntary Return in countries of origin, for migrants residing irregularly in Greece who are not in contact with the Authorities, is the need for a more decisive national policy concerning the management of the major issue of irregular migration; a policy that will be able to provide solutions for both society and migrants who do not qualify for legal stay in the country.

In **Section 1** of the study, a brief overview of the legal framework and European Union policy initiatives on Voluntary Return, including Voluntary departure is provided. This section contains a presentation of the main provisions of the EU Asylum Acquis and the European Return Directive (Directive 2008/52/EC) and also an overview of the European framework concerning the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return programmes, as implemented by the Member States of the EU. In **Section 2** of the study, is conducted a review of the overall national situation in Greece, presenting the scale of irregular migration flows for the years from 2010 to 2014. Greece from a sending country of migration in the first half of the 20th century has become a receiving country, while the uncontrolled movement of these populations is causing a growing concern in other European countries. Our country receives massive flows of irregular migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Syria, Iran and other third countries on a daily basis. In response to the issue of irregular migration, the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration under the funding of the European Return Fund, undertook the initiative of the implementation of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in the countries of origin for irregular third country nationals living in the country, since 2010. However, the difficulty in the effective implementation of the relative actions is due to the fact that it is difficult to identify, update and integrate in the above Programmes individuals who have no legal residence documents, documents which have been filed as forged or changed, individuals who are human trafficking victims or hidden and informal workers and they do not come in contact with the Authorities. In **Section 3**, the provisions of the national legislation on irregular migration in accordance to the terms of the European Return Directive (Return directive 115/2008/EC) as adapted to the Greek Law 3907/2011 are set. An important conclusion to be held in this section, is the lack of legal provisions on the dissemination of information concerning the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes. The relevant dissemination of information is realized as an initiative of the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and IOM. In **Section 4** presents the overall national approach to disseminate information about the programmes of Assisted Voluntary Return, stakeholders with main actor the IOM and the means used to disseminate information, such as the distribution of printed material and dissemination of directions through the use of electronic media and social media and other activities that in total have been implemented from 2010 until nowadays. In **Section 5** we present the practices adopted by our country concerning the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return, in order to point out successful and less successful practices implemented in Greece for the dissemination of information on the Programme to irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities. Finally, in **Section 6** an overall assessment of the effectiveness of various approaches to the dissemination of information regarding implemented actions on Voluntary Return, through the testimonies of irregular migrants and Returnees, is made. Moreover, the factors that make these approaches successful/not so successful information dissemination channels on the motives for Voluntary Return of irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities are evaluated.

Nowadays, the effective management of irregular migration from all the perspectives is one of the main priorities for Greece and the European Union. Given that migratory flows are increasing, what is principal and must be stressed is that Greece is the State of the EU which is most exposed to international migration mainly due to its particular geographical position in the geopolitical system of Southeastern Mediterranean. No one can ignore the social, economic and political problems, the ineffective policies and tragedies that accompany irregular migration as well as the precarious life migrants of all ages and both genders are forced to endure. However, the escalation of irregular migration concurred with the conversion of Greece from a sending country of migrants to a receiving one. The issue of irregular migration has become a major national issue and as such must be treated by the Greek migration policy. Greece, due to its geographical position, in combination with the social instability of the neighboring countries and the economic recession of the recent years, is the most promising initial station, or otherwise gateway, to the EU with final destination other countries of Central and Western Europe.

Immediate acceleration of initiatives from the European Commission to create solidarity mechanisms in the fields of asylum and migration policy is vital and strengthening the Voluntary Returns Programmes. It is vital to direct political decisions taken by the European Commission as Greece cannot take any more migratory pressure as both the Greek society and migrants face serious problems. European aid and solidarity are imperative.

However, after three decades of extensive migration flows, the international implications that the migration phenomenon takes in the 21st century should be taken into account, focusing on the needs of modern Greek society and other European countries, the labor market and the economy, protection of public health and human rights, for the development of an appropriate, realistic framework for: achieving

social inclusion, maintaining social cohesion between the Greek society and migrant populations and the respect for the European framework of principles and values. Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration should be an integral part of a synthetic humanitarian approach and political action towards the systematic management of migration flows that are constantly increasing in recent years in Greece, and which would aim to the enhancement of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of migrants who cannot or do not want to stay in the host country and who wish to return to their country of origin in accordance with the provisions of the EU Directive on equal treatment of Returnees, without discrimination. The successful application of the Assisted Return and Reintegration Programmes require not only the collaboration and participation of the Greek State and the complete support of EU, but also and institutions dealing with migrant issues, including the governments of the host and home countries.

Section 1: Overview of EU legal and policy context [Maximum 1 page]

This section of the Synthesis Report will briefly outline the EU legal framework and EU policy on Voluntary Return, including Voluntary departure. This will involve a discussion of the main provisions within the EU's asylum acquis and the Return Directive (Directive 2008/52/EC), as well as describing the EU's perspective on the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return, as defined in policy documents, EU communications and research commissioned by the EU institutions. This section will be developed by the EMN Service Provider and no input from the EMN NCPs is required.

The effective approach to the issue of Voluntary Return of third country migrants residing irregularly in the territory of a European state, is a crucial factor for the implementation of the EU policies on migration and asylum, and on the reliability of Member States in response to existing deficiencies in the implementation of the practices associated with the Assisted Voluntary Return.

The European Union has adopted a number of legislative acts as result of the Acquis of the Schengen Agreement to support the national efforts of the Member States, to better manage irregular migration flows with ultimate aim to create a common framework for action in the field of Return, in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and under the principle of promoting the assisted voluntary departure over forced. The Asylum Acquis of the European Union and the Return Directive of the European Parliament and the Council of the 16th of December 2008 (2008/115/EC), established a set of clear, transparent and fair goals for the implementation of the return and repatriation procedure, based on common standards without discrimination to all third-country nationals, who do not fulfill the conditions of entry, stay or residence in a Member State in order to return to their countries of origin, on favorable terms and in full respect of their fundamental rights and dignity. Decisions taken in accordance with the general principles of the legal framework of the European Union and the Community and bilateral readmission agreements with third countries should be adopted in each case and on the basis of objective criteria and transparent procedures in fully respect of the principle of non-refoulement. Implying that consideration should go beyond the mere fact of an irregular stay. International cooperation with the countries of origin at all stages of the return process, is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable return. The dissemination of information concerning the Assisted Voluntary Return Programs, is carried out through the cooperation of the national Authorities of each Member State with organizations and NGOs, as well as through the network of contacts with migrants' countries of origin, conducting public awareness and information campaigns at international, European and national level, for the sustainable return of returnees in medium and long term.

In this context, the externalization of the European policy for the effective management of the issue of irregular migration flows to the European territory is characterized as a necessity, in order to address the deeper causes of the influx of migrants from third countries and to establish an effective policy of voluntary return and repatriation.

Section 2: Overview of the national situation [Maximum 2 pages, excluding Annex 1]

2.1. SCALE OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND OF RETURN IN THE MEMBER STATE

Q1. If available, please provide any estimates of the scale of irregular migrants in your Member State 2010–2014. The purpose of providing such information is to give an idea of the scale of third-country nationals residing irregularly in the Member State, in order to provide a context to the information on national approaches to the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return. If available, please provide the estimates for each year, as well as a brief footnote describing the population covered, the method used to reach the estimates any caveats as to their likely accuracy. It should be noted, given the differences in methods used to make the estimates, it will not be possible to synthesize this information to produce a 'total EU estimate' for the Study. Please do not here include Euro stat information on third-country nationals found to be irregularly present, as this information is available publicly and can be therefore analyzed centrally for the Synthesis Report.

Even in these times of deep economic recession, the southern European countries are considered as places of hope by impoverished populations¹. Violent conflicts and population explosion in the developing world have also increased the orientation of large numbers of migrants and their families, to western countries in search of a better life². Irregular migration to Greece has increased rapidly over the past several years with more than one million migrants having arrived in the territory over the course of two decades. In Greece the phenomenon of irregular migration has put pressure on multiple social sectors, affecting both the natives and the migrants themselves: in demographic data, in precarious, low-status/low-wage employment in the sectors of public health, education, in border control, in the institutions of law enforcement and security³.

The uncontrolled irregular migration flows have become an ever growing concern for the Mediterranean countries and mostly for Greece, that has welcomed huge irregular migrant flows during the last two decades, through both land and sea borders. Greece used to be country of emigration in the first half of the 20th century and now has become a host country. The Greek society for the first time received massive flows of migrants from neighboring Balkan countries, the Republics of the former Soviet Union, as well as significant numbers of migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The management of the phenomenon of irregular migration and the integration of legal migrant populations are issues of fundamental interest to Greece⁴ and in order to be effective the policies adopted should focus on economic, social and cultural parameters, contributing significantly to the improvement of the demographic and economic profile of the country.

¹ Koser, K. and Kuschminder, K. (2015) *Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration; European Migration Network/European Commission (2012) *The Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies - Factsheet: Greece*. Brussels: European Migration Network/European Commission; Kraniuskauskas, L. (2010) *Return Home Best Practice Study Of Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes in the EU Member States*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration (IOM)/Vilnius Office. International Organization for Migration (IOM)/Mission in Ljubljana (2009) *Programmes and Strategies in Slovenia Fostering Assisted Return and Reintegration to Third Countries*. Ljubljana: Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Slovenia/European Commission. European Commission/European Migration Network (2012) *Practical Measures to Reduce Irregular Migration*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2015) *Practical Approaches and Good Practices in Return and Reintegration to Afghanistan and Pakistan*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2015) *Challenges and Good Practices in the Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants to Western Africa*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2015) *Overview: Incentives to Return to a Third-Country and Support Provided to Migrants for their Reintegration*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. Kanellopoulos, C., Gregou, M. and Petralias, A. (2005) *Illegally Resident Third Country Nationals in Greece*. Athens: Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)/EMN/European Commission; International Organization for Migration (2013) *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook for the North African Region*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration; European Migration Network (2011) *Programmes and Strategies in the EU Member States fostering Assisted Return to and Reintegration in Third Countries*. EMN Synthesis Report: Assisted Return to and Reintegration in Third Countries. Brussels: European Migration Network; International Organization for Migration - Office in Greece (2014) *Newsletter June 2014*. Athens: International Organization for Migration - Office in Greece; International Organization for Migration (2012) *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration 2011*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration; International Organization for Migration (2004) *Return Migration Policies and Practices in Europe*. Geneva: Advisory Committee on Aliens Affairs, The Netherlands/International Organization for Migration. The Greek Ombudsman (2014) *Returns of Immigrants - Special Report 2014 (article 23 par. 6 L. 3907/2011)*. Athens: The Greek Ombudsman (in Greek).

² Fouskas, T. and Tseverenis, V. (eds.) (2014) *Contemporary Immigration in Greece: A Sourcebook*. Athens: European Public Law Organization. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2010) *Practical Guide on Information Provision Regarding Return and Reintegration in Countries of Origin*. Brussels: International Organization for Migration. European Commission/European Migration Network (2012) *Ad-Hoc Query on the Dissemination of Information on Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes (during the Asylum Procedure)*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2012) *Ad-Hoc Query on Return of Unaccompanied Minors (UAM)*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2013) *Ad-Hoc Query on the Control Mechanism on Voluntary Departures of TCN, Counting of the Time Period of Entry Bans*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2013) *Ad-Hoc Query on Voluntary Return Counselling*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2013) *Ad-Hoc Query on Voluntary Return Policy*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. European Commission/European Migration Network (2014) *Ad-Hoc Query on Administrative Proceeding Preceding Voluntary Return*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network. International Organization for Migration/European Migration Network (2014) *Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants: Entry Bans Policy and Use of Readmission Agreements in Lithuania*. EMN Focused Study 2014. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network.

³ Fouskas, T. (2014c) "Social Repercussions of Irregular Immigration in 21st Century Greece", *Review of Migration Law*, 13(2-3):284-297 (in Greek).

⁴ Triandafyllidou, A. (ed.) (2010) *Irregular Migration in Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate; Triandafyllidou, A. and Maroukis, T. (2012) *Migrant Smuggling: Irregular Migration from Asia and Africa to Europe*. Hampshire: Palgrave; Triandafyllidou, A. (ed.) (2013) *Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (2005) *Increasing Refugee Participation in the Field of Voluntary Return*. Brussels: European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). Vranken, J. (2010) *European Cooperation on the Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Asylum Seekers*. Vught: HIT Foundation. Valenta M. and Berg, B. (2010) "User Involvement and Empowerment Among Asylum Seekers in Norwegian Reception Centres", *European Journal of Social Work*, 13(4):483-501. Council of Europe (2005) *Twenty Guidelines on Forced Return*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Bausager, M., Möller, J. and Arditis, S. (2013) *Study on the Situation of Third-Country Nationals Pending Return/Removal in the EU Member States and the Schengen Associated Countries*. Brussels: Ramboll/Eurasyllum/European Commission. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2011) *Fundamental Rights of Migrants in an Irregular Situation in the European Union*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Bendixsen, S., Kjærre, H. and Ytre-Arne, B. (2014) *Out-Reach: Information about Assisted Voluntary Return to Irregular Migrants Living Outside Reception Centres*. Bergen: Uni Research Rokkan Centre/The Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies. International Organization for Migration, the Netherlands IOM (2012) *Focus on Migration: Voluntary Return and Reintegration*. No 3. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, the Netherlands.

In Greece migrants are concentrated in manual labour, farming, construction, crafts, housework, food and cleaning services, personal care, itinerant trade and prostitution⁵. The jobs in which male and female migrants are gathered are not attractive, they offer no social prestige and are socially inferior⁶. Greece comes first among the 21 OECD country-members where 24% of Greek GDP is formed by the underground/shadow economy. The country has one of the highest percentages of uninsured workers (37.3%) and the highest percentage of irregular migrants working (4.4%)⁷. Informal employment can provide a cushion for irregular migrant workers, who cannot find a job in the formal sector due to their irregular status, but it impacts public revenues as they do not contribute to social security funds. What is evident for Greece, as well as internationally, is on the one hand the treatment of the migrants as a scapegoat for the economic and employment crisis in the country, while circumventing their social, labor and political rights, and on the other hand, along with the demand for cheap labor in the irregular economy, there are emerging modern forms of forced labor and slavery. Recent data show that the country has turned into entry and transit point for hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, with significant numbers of migrants from Albania, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Bangladesh. Data on the scale and profile of irregular migrants and Returnees is rather insufficient because of the large number of difficulties in detecting people, who enter and reside in the country.

Official statistical data on migrants' arrests and forced or voluntary departures of returnees are maintained by the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. Moreover, data can be extracted by the publications and the annual reports of the International Organization for Migration. More specifically according to the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction the Hellenic Police and the Port Authorities of Greece arrested 132.524 irregular migrants for irregular entry and residence in 2010; 38.923 of them were coming from Albania, 20.854 from Afghanistan and 5.609 from Somalia. Moreover, in the Authorities detected and arrested 99.368 migrants in 2011; 15.666 of them were coming from Afghanistan, 10.559 from Pakistan and 7.442 from Albania. During the next year the Authorities arrested 76.878 irregular migrants for irregular entry and residence in the country; these migrants were mainly coming from Afghanistan (16.584), Pakistan (11.136), Albania (10.602) and Bangladesh (7.863). In 2013, 43.002 migrants were arrested for entering and residing irregularly in the country; Presenting the nationalities: the majority of them were coming from Albania, 7.665 from Syria and 5.960 from Afghanistan. Last but not least in 2014, the irregular migrants' arrests reached the number of 77.163, including the same nationalities Albania, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Georgia⁸.

The Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction estimates that more than 12% of the population in the territory is consisted of legal and irregular migrants living in the country more than ten years even the irregular ones. The number of irregular migrants entering our country on a daily basis, not identified / arrested and continue to live and / or work without the necessary legal documents cannot be determined⁹. This is an issue has significant impact on the daily life, the social security and cohesion and the national economy. Furthermore, it is stressed that Greece provides health care services to all migrants according to the principles of humanitarianism, respectively, burdening the state budget, despite the adverse financial circumstances which the country is experiencing¹⁰.

Since 2010 IOM as main actor implementing Assisted Voluntary Return programmes for migrants living in Greece, under the financing of the European Return Fund, which was set up under the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows Programme of the European Commission and the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, has helped more than 26.000 irregular migrants to return to their countries of origin. More specifically, in 2010, 337 migrants returned voluntarily to their home country, 760 in 2011, 7.290 in 2012, 9.314 in 2013, 7.221 in 2014 and 1.652 in the first quarter of 2015. The main countries of origin of the returnees during the reference period were Pakistan, Georgia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq and Egypt.

⁵ Fouskas, T. (2012a) "Low-status Work and Decollectivization: The Case of Bangladeshis in Athens, *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*", 10(1): 54-73; Fouskas, T. (2012b) "Immigrant 'Communities' and Work Representation: The Consequences of Low-Status Work of Five Immigrant Groups on the Participation in Their Work Associations. Athens: Papazisi Publishers (in Greek); Fouskas, T. (2013) "Low-status Work Consequences on Immigrant Workers' Organization, *International Review of Sociology*, 23(3):671-698; Fouskas, T. (2014a) "Low-Status Work Repercussions on Egyptians' Collective Organization", *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 34(7/8):418-437.

⁶ Fouskas, T. (2014b) *Nigerian Immigrants in Greece: Low-status Work, Community, and Decollectivization*, New York: Nova Science Publishers.

⁷ Schneider F. and Williams C. (2013) *The Shadow Economy*. London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 52-96.

⁸ http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&lang=%27.%27&perform=view&id=50610&Itemid=1240&lang=

⁹ Bozaninou, T. (2015) "A. Syrigos: We do not Even Approximately Know U the Number of Undocumented Migrants", *To Vima Newspaper*, 18 January, 2015, (accessed: May, 2015, available at: <http://www.tovima.gr/PrintArticle/?aid=668192>) (in Greek).

¹⁰ Hellenic Ministry of Interior (2012) *Parliamentary Control Office: No.565*. Athens: Hellenic Parliament (in Greek).

Q2. Provide any estimates and/or actual for the period 2010-2014 on: a. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals Returning by physical transportation out of the Member State, on the basis of a Return decision¹¹ (forced Return); b. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals Returning voluntarily within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the Return decision (Voluntary departure); c. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals Returning via AVR packages (assisted Voluntary Return); d. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals Returning via AVR packages (assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration – where different from (c)). The purpose of presenting such information would be to provide a picture of the proportion of third-country nationals who Return voluntarily as compared to those Returned by force in each Member State, in order to provide a context to the findings on national approaches to the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return. It is acknowledged that there may be some double-counting between (b) and (c) and (b) and (d). If such information is available, please complete the table in Annex 1.

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| See Table of Annex 1. |
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¹¹ i.e. an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be irregular and imposing or stating an obligation to return.

2.2. SCALE AND NATURE OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS WHO ARE NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORITIES

Q3. As defined in section 2 of the Background section to this Common Template, this study focuses on irregular migrants whose whereabouts/place of residence are no longer or were never known to the Authorities and who, therefore, are not in contact with the Authorities. Please define this group by listing in bullet points the main scenarios in which the Authorities would not have contact with irregular migrants, e.g. migrants who have given false addresses/moved from their address, persons who have entered the Member State irregularly and who are staying there without the Authorities' knowledge, etc. Such information is likely to be available in reports (e.g. annual reports) published by the Authorities responsible for ensuring the Return of irregular migrants (i.e. migration and asylum Authorities) and/or may be obtained by consulting these Authorities directly.

Migrants who reside irregularly in Greece, and cannot come in contact with the Authorities are divided into the following categories:

1. Those who entered irregularly in the country and have never been detected/found
2. Those who entered the country using false documents
3. Those who entered using legal documents, but provide false information in those documents
4. Those who have moved from their declared addresses and regions/cities in which they resided
5. Those who stayed long periods without visas or made prolonged use of the authorization for temporary stay
6. Those who have lost their legal status due to the non-renewal of the residence permit failing to meet residency requirements or breached the conditions of stay
7. Those who are born in irregular status
8. Those who fled during the asylum process or left a host country after the negative decision on their case
9. Those who are victims of human trafficking
10. Those who are undocumented workers, hidden laborers and workers in personal services (e.g. live-in domestic workers, care workers)
11. Those who are unaccompanied minors
12. Those who are trapped in a system of sexual exploitation and prostitution
13. Irregular migrants who suffer from a disability (mental or physical)

Q4. If available, please provide any estimates of the scale of the two groups irregular migrants covered in this study for the period 2010-2014: e. Irregular migrants who were previously known to the Authorities, but whose place of residence is no longer known to the Authorities (absconding). f. Irregular migrants whose residence on the territory has never been known to the Authorities (clandestine entry). Estimates for (a) could be derived from administrative data and may therefore be calculated by public Authorities. Estimates for (b) may have been developed as part of a study. All estimates should be accompanied by a brief footnote describing the method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy. If such information is available, please complete the table in Annex 1.

N/A

Q5. Provide a short overview of the challenges faced in the Member State in reaching out to the two above-mentioned groups of irregular migrants (i.e. those who are not in contact with the Authorities). The purpose of this question is to investigate the rationale behind the strategies discussed in section 3. Sources of information may include studies/research, policy documents, government communications, media, parliamentary debates and/or may be obtained by consulting relevant stakeholders.

Greece since early 1990s has become a major migratory destination (permanent, or transit, or temporary), because of its geographical position at the crossroads of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa¹². Since then, the problem of irregular migrants, i.e. third country nationals who do not qualify for legal entry, presence or residence in the Greek territory, remains in the front line. The Greek state, has taken measures to tackle the phenomenon, including strengthening of land and sea border controls, full implementation of the Schengen Agreement and agreements with third countries for readmission programmes and bilateral agreements to combat irregular migration with neighboring countries. However, difficulties remain due to the lack of means of detecting and identifying irregular migrants entering or staying in Greece. During the last decade the Greek State was not prepared to welcome the coming migratory flows and provide them with the appropriate conditions of reception; The economic recession the country faces, the lack of the necessary infrastructures and bureaucracy make the situation worse. On a daily basis irregular migrants enter the Greek borders by providing false documents or without ever being detected. Since today, the Greek government has adopted limited legislation procedures regarding the asylum procedures or the legalization criteria of third country nationals almost half of the migrants' population nowadays have irregular status.

Q6. Are there any other specific groups of (irregular) migrant group which are hard to reach? If so, please describe them here. Sources of information may include studies/research, policy documents, government communications, media, parliamentary debates and/or may be obtained by consulting relevant stakeholders.

As it is clear from research data (1995-2015) the prolonged situation of irregularity of migrants in Greece (and throughout Europe) push and trap irregular migrant populations in the social margin of the country¹³. In this context arise:

- (i) *Objectively obstacles*: the non-possession of legal residence documents leads irregular migrant populations to avoid contact with the Authorities due to fear of arrest and deportation.
- (ii) *Subjective obstacles*: the development of self-marginalization behaviors, thus the vast majority of which is familiar with the irregular status, residence and survival (e.g. group housing, employment in unregulated and precarious, low-status/low-wage labor, disregard of health). It has been observed that male and female migrants adopt flexible life patterns, practices and behaviors and values that do not allow contact with Authorities, public services even with migrant communities and associations while seeking individual solutions to social problems. The relations of the migrant population in the host country acquire strong individualized framework and temporary content. Special groups irregular migrants that are difficult to reach are:
 1. Those who are victims of human trafficking
 2. Those who are undocumented workers, hidden laborers and workers in personal services (e.g. live-in domestic workers, care workers, precarious laborers, bonded/unfree/exploited workers)

¹² European Migration Network/Greece (EMN) (2014) *EMN Conference 2014: Irregular Migration and Return: Challenges and Practices*. June 12-13 2014, Athens, Greece – *Conclusions and Summary*. Athens: European Migration Network; European Red Cross (2006) *European Red Cross Return Initiative: A Study on How to Support Sustainable Return in Safety and Dignity*. Brussels: European Red Cross /EU Office/European Community; European Commission Directorate-General Home (2011) *Comparative Study on Practices in the Field of Return of Minors*. Final Report. Brussels: European Commission Directorate/The European Council on Refugees and Exiles/Save the Children (EU Office); Cherti, M. and Szilard, M. (2013) *Returning Irregular Migrants: How Effective Is the EU's Response?* London: Institute for Public Policy Research; Cherti, M. and Balam, B. (2013) *Returning Irregular Migrants: Is Deportation the UK's Only Option?* London: Institute for Public Policy Research; Matrix Insight Ltd, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (2012) *Comparative Study on Best Practices in the Field of Forced Return Monitoring*. Final Report. European Commission/Directorate-General Justice Freedom and Security; Matrix Insight Ltd, ICMPD and ECRE (2012) *Comparative Study on Best Practices to Interlink Pre-Departure Reintegration Measures Carried out in Member States with Short- and Long-Term Reintegration Measures in the Countries of Return*. Final Report. Brussels: European Commission/Directorate-General Home Affairs; Banki, S. and Katz, I. (2009) *Resolving Immigration Status, Part 2: Comparative Case Studies*. Sydney: The Department of Immigration and Citizenship/Social Policy Research Centre/University of New South Wales; Schweitzer, R. (2014) *The Making and Unmaking of Irregular Migration: Migrant "Illegality", Regularisation and Deportation in Spain and the UK*. INTEGRIM Online Papers 4/2014 (FP7/2007-2013). Brighton: SCMR/University of Sussex; International Organization for Migration (2012) *Assisted Voluntary Return from Poland: Principles and Practices*. Warsaw: International Organization for Migration; Kanellopoulos, C. and Gregou, M. (2006) *Greek Contribution to the EMN Research Study III: Return*. Athens: Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)/EMN/European Commission; Esdras, D. (2014) *"Border Management in Greece"*, in: Fouskas, T. and Tseverenis, V. (eds.) *Contemporary Immigration in Greece: A Sourcebook*. Athens: European Public Law Organization: 107-115.

¹³ European Migration Network (2014) *Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in International Protection and Forced Return Procedures*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network; Marouda, D., Saranti, V. and Koutsouraki, E. (2014) *EMN Focused Study 2014: The Use of Detention and Alternatives to Detention in the Context of Immigration Policies: Greece*. Athens: Institute of International Relations (IIR) of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences/Hellenic Ministry of Interior/European Migration Network; European Migration Network (2014) *Synthesis Report for the EMN Focused Study 2014: Good Practices in the Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants: Member States' Entry Bans Policy and Use of Readmission Agreements Between Member States and Third Countries*. Brussels: European Commission/European Migration Network; Marouda, D., Saranti, V., Koutsouraki, E. and Kyrkos, E. (2014) *European Migration Network (EMN) EMN Focused Study 2014: Good Practices in the Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants: Member States' Entry Bans Policy & Use of Readmission Agreements Between Member States and Third Countries*. Athens: Institute of International Relations (IIR) of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences/Hellenic Ministry of Interior/European Migration Network; International Organization for Migration (2010) *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*. Annual Report. Geneva: Migrant Assistance Division/Department of Migration Management/International Organization for Migration; International Organization for Migration (2012) *Counter Trafficking and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants*. Annual Report. Geneva: International Organization for Migration; Marousa, M., Saranti, V., Koutsouraki, E. and Rossidi, M. (2013) *Annual Report 2013 of Migration and Asylum in Greece*. Athens: Institute of International Relations (IIR) of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences/Hellenic Ministry of Interior/European Migration Network; Angeli, D., Dimitriadi, A. and Triandafyllidou, A. (2014) *Assessing the Cost-effectiveness of Irregular Migration Control Policies in Greece*. MIDAS Project. Athens: ELIAMEP/Open Society Foundations; Kontis, A. et al. (2012) *European Migration Network: Greece – Annual Policy Report 2012*. Athens: Laboratory for the Study of Migration and Diaspora (EMMEDIA)/Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the National and Kapodestrian University of Athens/Hellenic Ministry of Interior/European Migration Network.

3. Those who are unaccompanied minors
4. Those who are trapped in a system of sexual exploitation and prostitution
5. The irregular individuals who are disabled (mentally or physically) or have serious health problems

Section 3: National legislation and policy on the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return [Maximum 2 pages]

Q7. Has your Member State set out provisions or rules regarding the dissemination/provision of information on Voluntary Return in legislation or in soft law (e.g. guidelines, policy papers, etc.)? E.g. it may have outlined obligations for certain state Authorities to provide such information in asylum interviews, on issuing a Return decision, or may have introduced obligations to make information available online or in public places, etc.) (Yes/No) If so, please state the name(s) of the legislation/policy(s) and describe what it says about: The actors involved/responsible, The content of the information (i.e. whether it focuses on AVR(R), other Voluntary Return options, or both) The timing of the information provision (e.g. on applying for international protection/for a visa) or only on becoming irregular, Any particular provisions for specific groups (e.g. vulnerable groups), The channels of dissemination (in person (written), in person (oral), via post, via email, in a telephone call, in public spaces, etc.), The language(s) in which the information must be given and any accessibility/quality criteria (visual presentation, style of language to be used, etc.), Confidentiality considerations (i.e. whether the anonymity of the irregular migrant is maintained if they consult an information service). The purpose of this question is to set out the legal/policy framework on which the national practices to be described in section 4, are based.

The Greek legislation¹⁴ does not provide specific regulations/directives/initiatives to disseminate information about the programmes of Assisted Return and Reintegration of migrants to their countries of origin. Information on related actions of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration are provided by IOM. Indirectly state actors and NGOs may be involved in disseminating information. The existing legal provisions determine Return procedures, for both migrants and asylum seekers, as described in Article 76 of the Law 3386/2005. This law regulates matters mainly on conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals in Greece, expulsion conditions, social integration processes, operational issues for better and more effective implementation of the provisions, and also provides the possibility of legal regularization of residence in the country. The Joint Ministerial Decision 4000/4/32-ib of 4.9.2006 regarding the criteria and the procedure for registering and erasing migrants from the National List of Undesirable Aliens (E.K.A.N.A.) in combination with the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement (Law 2514/1997) defines the guidelines regarding the nullification of controls in the internal borders of the state and creates common external borders, where entry controls in the Schengen Area are conducted according to the same procedures. The same Convention established common rules for issuing visas, granting asylum and external border controls in order to allow the free movement of persons within the Schengen area, while not disturbing the public safety. Greece with the Law 2514/1997 ratified the Schengen Agreement, its Implementation Convention and the protocols and accession agreements to the Schengen Agreement of the rest Member States of the European Union. In January 2011, a new Law was adopted (3907/2011) (Adaptation of the Greek Legislation in the provisions of 2008/115/EC Directive, Articles 16-41), to reform the asylum system in Greece. The new law provides the creation of an independent Asylum Service and a system of reception and detection of the "profile" and the needs of those, who enter Greece without legal procedures, including individuals who wish to seek asylum. Finally, the Law 4251/2014 in Article 95 emphasizes the Return-Protection and the conditions under which the state is responsible to issue a Return decision to a third country national.

Q8. Specifically, what information does the national Authority provide to the migrant when it issues a Return decision, and how does it provide this information? Please specify: content of the information (e.g. AVR, rights, obligations), The language(s) in which the information is given How the information is presented visually, style of language used, etc., The channels of dissemination used (in person (written), in person (oral), via post, via email, in a telephone call, etc.). If information on the above is already included in the response to Q7, please just cross-refer here.

Since 2012 the Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police of Athens has distributed information brochures on the Voluntary Return programmes, to third-country nationals residing irregularly in the country¹⁵. This Programme offered the opportunity to migrants to return to their country of origin with safety and dignity and without any charge. The brochure was translated into thirteen (13) languages, English, French, Spanish, Albanian, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Kurdish, Farsi, Urdu, Pashto and Dari, and was reproduced in 1.500.000 copies. The brochure was mentioning: "Now you can return to your home country with safety and dignity. If you do not have a valid passport, visit the Embassy of your country in Athens and apply for a new passport or an emergency travel document (laisser-passer). Then take the passport or the copy of the application that you were given by the Embassy to the Headquarters of Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police. The address of the Directorate is 24 Petrou Ralli Str., Tavros (Office 101, open hours 08.00am-13:00pm).

¹⁴Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic (1997) 2514 – Government Gazette A' 140 27.6.1997 Sanction: 1) the Agreement between the Governments of Member of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at common borders, 2) the Convention implementing the above Agreement between own Member States, 3) Protocols and Accession Agreements to the above agreements: the Italian Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the Republic of Portugal, Greek Republic, the Austrian Republic, Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Denmark and the Kingdom of Sweden, after the final acts, records, statements and joint declarations thereof. Athens: National Printing Office of Greece (in Greek); Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic (2005). Law 3386: Entry, Stay and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory. Athens: National Printing Office of Greece (in Greek); Official Journal of the European Union (2008) Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Common Standards and Procedures in Member States for Returning Illegally Staying Third-Country Nationals. Brussels: European Parliament/Council of the European Union; Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic (2011). Law 3907: On the Establishment of an Asylum Service and a First Reception Service, Transposition into Greek Legislation of Directive 2008/115/EC "on Common Standards and Procedures in Member States for Returning Illegally Staying Third Country Nationals" and Other Provisions. Athens: National Printing Office of Greece (in Greek); Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic (2014a) Joint Ministerial Decision 4000/4/32-ib of 4.9.2006: Determination of the Criteria and Procedure for Writing and Erasing of Foreigners by the National List of Undesirable Aliens. (Government Gazette B 1353/14.9.2006). Athens: National Printing Office of Greece (in Greek); Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic (2014b). Law 4251: Code of Immigration and Social Integration and Other Provisions. Athens: National Printing Office of Greece (in Greek).

¹⁵Available here: <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2012/prokirkseis2012/greece.pdf>

There you will get all the necessary information on your departure. You give a contact number and then you get informed immediately about the date of your departure! You should know that your Return is guaranteed: You will not pay a Return ticket. You will not get arrested until your departure. Choose the best "way" to return to your country of origin and your loved ones. Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction). The Action is funded 75% by the European Return Fund and 25% by National Funds".

Q9. Did the above-described legislation and policy change at all as a result of the adoption and transposition of the Return Directive?

N/A

Q10. Are any changes to legislation/policy having an impact on the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return planned for the future? If yes, please describe here.

According to statements of the Chief of Mission at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mr. Daniel Esdras¹⁶, the management system of irregular migration of the country is vulnerable due to the economic recession in which the country is found. Negotiations between Greece and the European Commission on the new financial programme for the period 2014-2020, have been stopped and is likely to stop the flow of EU funds after June 30, 2015; the date when the AVRR programme expires. Indicatively, the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office in Greece implements at the present time, is about to be discontinued on June 30, 2015, as the funds for its continuation from July 1 onwards are not secured. This IOM Programme funded with €13 million from the European Return Fund and the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (for the current year) aims to support 6.000 Voluntary Returns of migrants to their countries of origin. According to official statements by the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, the legislative backlog relating to the establishment of the new management Authority must be settled with special regulations.

¹⁶ According to data from the in-depth interview that Mr. Daniel Esdras gave in the context of the research on April 15, 2015 to Dr. Theodoros Fouskas and Mrs. Fotini Mine at the Headquarters of IOM Greece.

Section 4: Overall national approach to disseminating information on Voluntary Return [Max. 12 pages]

4.1. ACTORS INVOLVED IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON VOLUNTARY RETURN

Q11. Which national Authorities responsible for the Return of irregular migrants¹⁷ play a role in disseminating information on Voluntary Return, either as part of the processes outlined in section 3 or otherwise? Please consider the role that migration and asylum Authorities, law enforcement Authorities, local/municipal Authorities play in disseminating information on Return. For each Authority playing a role in disseminating information in your Member State, please briefly describe the role and the circumstances under which they provide the information. Please cover the period in the last five years (from 2010 – 2014), as well as future/planned activities in this area if relevant/available.

Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police

As it is already mentioned above, the Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police representing the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction is the main national actor on the dissemination of information on Voluntary Return and on the implementation of the programme. The Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police of Athens in order to support the return of third country nationals living in Greece, has implemented since 2010 a series of actions, including:

- The installment of an information “kiosk”, located at the headquarters of the Directorate (24 Petrou Ralli Ave., Tavros, Athens), where police officers and interpreters inform/discuss with interested foreigners on the benefits of the Programme, on workdays during the hours from 08:00am to 14:00pm.
- Provision of information to representative bodies and community associations of migrants, that legally operate in Attica and provision of printed material for distribution to their members.
- Information and provision of printed material to diplomatic Authorities of third countries operating in Athens.
- Contact with the Municipal Authorities in Attica Prefecture and distribution of printed information material to foreigners, who approach the municipalities.
- Information and distribution of printed material, by police officers of the Aliens Directorate and interpreters (inside a mobile unit-van) at selected locations at the center of Athens.
- Distribution of printed materials in shops where foreigners are operating legally and usually are points of congregation.
- The Hellenic Police implemented training seminars on migration flows, in which officers of the Hellenic Police from across the country participated. They in turn informed irregular migrants residing in the territorial areas of the responsibility of their Agency, about the Voluntary Return Programme¹⁸.

The cost for the design, creation and reproduction of these leaflets was funded mainly by the European Return Fund. The above information as well as the brochure translated into thirteen (13) languages were published via press releases on the website of the Hellenic Police (http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&lang=%27..%27&perform=view&id=22448&Itemid=989&lang=). Current activities conducted at national level in the field of Voluntary Return by the Hellenic Police, described below:

- The name of the Programmes/projects: Support of Voluntary Returns from the Hellenic Police.
- Period covered: January 2012-June 2014.
- Main partners: Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police / Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction).
- Target group:
Category (i): Migrants who do not qualify for residence in the Greek territory and are eager to return voluntarily to their home country.
Category (ii): Migrants who are in detention and decide to cooperate fully with the police Authorities in order to return as soon as possible to their home country
- Brief description of activity: The Voluntary Return concerns the cases of migrants who are willing to co-operate in order to fulfill the terms of their departure from the Greek territory.

The following costs are covered in this category:

- Tickets to commercial flights for the returnees and in exceptional cases, the cost of leased aircrafts (charter flights), if necessary (no response commercial flight, etc.).
- Costs for issuing travel documents.
- Financial incentive/Economic aid.

In category (ii) migrants should complete a declaration form for their voluntary departure.

The establishment of new Return procedures and rules is one of the main pillars of the Hellenic Policy on the contemporary and effective management process of migration. As mentioned above, the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes for irregular migrants to return to their countries of origin, is co-funded by the European Return Fund and the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction.

¹⁷ See Section 2.1 of the Background to this Common Template for a definition of these Authorities.

¹⁸ Route Document of the Department of Returns of the Aliens Directorate of Attica, General Police Division of Attica on: Dissemination of information on the voluntary return (May 11, 2015).

Today, approximately fifteen to twenty irregular migrants return to their countries of origin, using the Voluntary Return Programme of the Hellenic Police.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Office in Greece

The International Migration for Organization having offices in over 155 countries around the world, cooperates with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners, in order to manage migration and provide humanitarian aid to migrants from third countries irregularly residing in Greece, including refugees and internally displaced persons. One of the main activities of IOM is the implementation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for migrants who cannot or do not want to remain in the host country and wish to return to their country of origin. The successful implementation of the Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme has been achieved with the cooperation and the involvement of bodies active in the field of migration and humanitarian aid, including representatives of migrant communities, civil society and governments of the host and home countries and the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction/ Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police. These partnerships achieved by IOM and possibly other supporting partners, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Office in Greece, at national and international levels, have contributed to the effective dissemination of information to migrants and the implementation of the return operations at all stages of the process from the preparation up to the final stages of reintegration in the countries of origin. Since 2010, under the funding of the European Return Fund and in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction), IOM Greece implements actions of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Third Country Nationals to their country of origin. Through these programmes, IOM undertakes all the necessary procedures to facilitate the safe and dignified return of these populations. In particular, IOM undertakes the registration and identification of those wishing to return to their country, the issuing of the travel documents and tickets, the provision of financial allowances before departure from Greece, escort to the airport during departure and reception both at the transit country and at the final destination. Based on specific criteria for selecting beneficiaries, reintegration assistance in the country of return is provided. The International Organization for Migration is addressed to individuals who want or are in need to return to their country of origin but do not have the necessary means, providing socio-economic support, in order to ensure self-preservation and their contribution to the local community. The beneficiaries of these Programmes include the following categories of persons:

1. Irregular residents in the country, who do not have the necessary residence permit
2. Individuals whose asylum application is rejected or withdrawn
3. Migrants without legal movement possibility
4. Nationals of third countries, who are under international protection status, but nevertheless wish to return to their country
5. Victims of human trafficking
6. Other vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, persons facing health problems

At this point, it should be noted that the IOM Programme can be characterized as more compound than the programme of Voluntary Returns implemented by the Hellenic Police, because IOM provides substantial support to the smooth reintegration of migrants to their countries of origin by providing financial assistance to cover travel expenses and for starting a small business as a new beginning or coverage of studies for anyone who wishes to do that¹⁹.

Awareness campaign and dissemination of information

In order to disseminate information on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes, IOM released campaigns to all the partners and the beneficiaries of the Programme. Interventions entitled “street work” were also implemented, with the contribution of the representatives from nine migrant communities in various areas of Athens and the surrounding areas in order to inform third country nationals about the process. The executive staff of IOM – Office in Greece and intercultural mediators through visits to congregation areas and work spaces of migrants, informed the latter for the voluntary resettlement opportunities in their home countries. By the end of June 2014, IOM Greece made thirty-four (34) «street work» interventions and nine (9) informative meetings with migrant communities.

¹⁹ Route Document of the Department of Returns of the Aliens Directorate of Attica, General Police Division of Attica on: Dissemination of information on the voluntary return (May 11, 2015).

Informative television (TV) spot

From 2014 until today, an informative television (TV) spot on IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return Programme is broadcasted on national and local, public and private TV stations as well as satellite channels available to third country nationals. The video message aims to inform migrants, asylum seekers and the Greek society for the benefits of the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme. The television message states: *"You have travelled. Wandered. Yesterday there. Today here. Tomorrow? Tomorrow should not need to be unknown to you. The next seal means home. The International Organization for Migration assists you to return to your country of origin in safety and dignity. Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for third country nationals. Learn more now. International Organization for Migration. Co-funded by the European Union and the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection"(current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction).* The duration of the TV spot is 00:00:43 seconds, with narration and text in Greek, accompanied with subtitles in English.

Informative leaflets

Information leaflets translated into sixteen (16) languages were distributed to hospitals, municipalities, migrant stores and areas where migrants are gathered. The leaflets include data on the return options and contact details of IOM in order to offer more details about the Assisted Voluntary Return and Repatriation Programmes to those concerned.

Awareness Campaigns

The personnel of IOM carries out visits to known entry and exit points of the country in order to inform irregular migrants, migrant communities, local NGOs and local Authorities.

Informative Meetings

Informative visits to province areas have been also carried out. Due to the increased presence of migrants in rural areas, IOM has implemented information meetings with local Authorities and NGOs in the cities of Kalamata, Pyrgos, Patras and Corinth. In order to diffuse the information to irregular migrants who are under administrative detention, IOM also visits pre-departure detention centers and first reception centers in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The staff of IOM cooperates with government officials and representatives involved in local Authorities and exchanges information on the prerequisite administrative and operational procedures relating to the departure of migrants, and disseminate information to newcomer migrants from the land borders of the region. The IOM executive staff has visited first reception centers in the main sea entry points of migrants on the islands of Lesbos, Samos and Chios, in order to disseminate information there too. The Municipalities of Thessaloniki and Patras actively support the implementation of the Programme, offering offices in their respective Town Halls for the International Organization for Migration.

IOM Regional Officials

During the implementation of the Programme, IOM established nine (9) regional officials in points of border entry and exit of the country, and in rural areas throughout the Greek territory. More specifically officials of IOM work today in Orestiada, Alexandroupolis, Drama, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Mytilene, Samos, Crete, Corinth and Patras, areas where large congregation of irregular migrants is observed. The regional offices of IOM are responsible to provide information for the advantages of IOM's work to those who choose to return voluntarily to their country of origin and also collect data on the profiles and the trends of the migrants.

Visits of Officials and Informative visits

In 2014, IOM Office in Norway in collaboration with IOM Office in Greece, organized meetings and a presentation for the successful implementation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme in the country. During the meetings, the staff of both Offices of IOM had the opportunity to exchange experiences on the implementation of the Programme. The Greek representatives also visited reception centers in Oslo in order to understand more comprehensively the migration management in the country. The Managing Authority of the National Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and the Service Management of European and Development Projects of the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) visited the headquarters of IOM in Geneva, where they exchanged information and experiences of good practices with the experts of IOM on issues such as the International Migration Law, health migrants' issues and about the benefits of migration for countries of destination and countries of origin and for the migrants themselves.

Co-operation with Embassies

The International Organization for Migration Office in Greece (IOM) hosted on April 10, 2014 a round table with the participation of Ambassadors, Consuls, Honorary Consuls and Head of Consular Services. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the co-operation between the Office of IOM in Greece, the Greek Ministries, the Embassies and the Consulates in the framework of the Greek Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, funded by the European Union-European Return Fund (75%) and the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (25%) (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction). For those migrants wishing to Return through the Programme, assistance and help of the Regional IOM staff, to complete both the written and prerequisite procedures for their Return was provided. Migrants wishing to benefit from the Programme were provided with detailed information so as the decision to Return home to be based on factual information. With the assistance of specialized cultural mediators and interpreters is ensured the certainty that migrants fully understand the necessary procedures in order to Return to their homelands. Special care for vulnerable groups, including those in need of medical assistance, single parent families, elderly and unaccompanied minors is taken. These services are compatible both with international law and with the mission of IOM and take into account the special needs of migrants. The majority of migrants who want to Return have no residence permit or identification papers or travel documents. In these cases, IOM works closely with Greek Consulates, Honorary Consulates and Embassies for issuing travel documents. The Office of the IOM in Greece cooperates with 52 Consulates, Honorary Consulates and Embassies in Greece and elsewhere in Europe. Before the day of departure, all migrants who will be traveling participate in a meeting at the IOM Office in Greece. The purpose of this meeting is to provide them necessary information for their journey. As many migrants have not traveled before by air, they are given the opportunity to express their queries and make sure that they will receive help during the Return, both at the airport of the country of transit and at their final destination.

Comic Strip Contest

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office in Greece under framework of actions of the informative campaign of the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme organized a design competition entitled: Comic Strip on "Voluntary repatriation and Reintegration of third country nationals to their country of origin". The competition addressed mainly to youths, students of art and graphic design schools, but also employees in this area and realized in order on the one hand, to generate broad dissemination of information on the implementation of the Programme and on the other hand, to create awareness for youths in relation to the measure of Voluntary Repatriation, as a process that ensures the safe and dignified Return of nationals to their country, while helping to manage migratory flows in Greece. The information entailed in the competition mentioned:

"The Voluntary Repatriation Programme carried out by the Office of IOM in Greece concerns Voluntary Return to their country of origin for third country nationals and priority is given to nationals originating from the following countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Bangladesh Morocco and Sudan, including vulnerable groups from third countries, such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors and people with disabilities or health problems". The Organization, through this particular programme, undertook the preparation and implementation of a wider range of measures to facilitate the Assisted Voluntary Return and reception in their home country, of at least 2.200 third country nationals, as well as pilot implementation of measures of Reintegration in the country of Return for a limited number of nationals who comprise vulnerable cases. For selected cases of nationals where Reintegration measures in the country of Return are also applied, IOM provides services such as: support to start independent economic activity, support for finding a job/work placement, assistance in participation in educational or vocational training programmes, support for ensuring housing/hosting and support to meet the particular needs of nationals when they are part of vulnerable groups".

Photo Exhibition "Kinesis & Taxis"

IOM organized and implemented a photo exhibition entitled "Kinesis & Taxis"²⁰. The aim of the exhibition was the promotion of IOM's mission to migration management, under the auspices of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki, from October 20 until November 10, 2014, at the City Hall of the Municipality of Thessaloniki. The exhibition "Kinesis & Taxis" was repeated in 2015 under the auspices of the Cultural Organization of the Municipality of Patras from 17 February to 2 March.

Website of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection)

Information, on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes for individuals who reside irregularly in the country, is available on the official website of the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction²¹ (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection). The website is referred to the procedures of the return supported by the Hellenic Police. There is also a link from which one can download the informative leaflet in digital form and which contains information in many languages²².

Website of the Asylum Service/Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction

Regarding the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes of IOM, information is also provided on the homepage of the Asylum Service of the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, with an image (banner) at the bottom of the page (in Greek) which leads to another page in Greek. There are provided a brief description of the Voluntary Repatriation Programme, information on the eligibility requirements and benefits. The page of the Asylum Service of the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction does not lead further, with another link, to the page of IOM. On the page the telephone number and the operating hours²³ of IOM for the Programme are mentioned and there is also a link from which one can download the informative leaflet of IOM in digital form and which contains information in many languages²⁴. The page also provides a link that leads to the page of the Hellenic Police that contains the press release of the Police about the programme of the Assisted Voluntary Returns²⁵ in Greek, and from where one can download the brochure of the Hellenic Police (in Greek) in digital form²⁶.

Main procedures before the Departure, at Transit Stations and at Arrival

An important factor for the successful implementation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme is the close co-operation of IOM with the Hellenic Police, and particularly with the Aliens Directorate of Attica and the Police Authorities of the airport of Athens. The professionalism and the experience of the staff have contributed in achieving the operational goals of IOM. On the day of the departure the IOM staff meets the migrants at the airport, helps them to check in and escorts them on the way to their flight. IOM staff accompanies the departing migrants to their boarding gate to the aircraft. Just before boarding, each migrant receives a block grant economic allowance of six hundred euro (€600) by IOM. Before the departure, all the details of the route that migrants will follow have already been transferred to the appropriate offices of IOM in the transit countries. On their arrival to the country of transit migrants encounter IOM staff, which helps in everything needed and in their transfer to connecting flights. Where care for medical cases is required, IOM staff follows the necessary procedures required for the safe and convenient transportation of the migrants, such as a wheelchair use, transportation by ambulance to the airport in the country of departure and in the country of final destination. In many airports the staff of IOM works 24h per day in order to ensure the smooth arrival of the returnees. The communication between the staff of IOM and the returnees continues for a long time after their repatriation, in order the effectiveness of the process of their social reintegration to be ensured.

Pre-departure centers

Migrants under administrative detention benefit equally from the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme. The specialized staff of IOM visits the reception centers in Attica and the pre-departure centers in the territory, providing information and registering those who wish to return to their home country.

²⁰ See: <http://www.inthessaloniki.com/en/thessaloniki-calendar/print/32-kinesis-taxis> and http://greece.iom.int/sites/default/files/photo_exib_gr.pdf

²¹ See: http://www.yptp.gr/asylo.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=3469&Itemid=465&lang=&lang=&lang=GR

²² See <http://www.yptp.gr/images/stories/2011/AVR%20Project%20Leaflet.pdf>

²³ See http://asylo.gov.gr/?page_id=392

²⁴ See http://asylo.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/AVR_Project_Leaflet.pdf

²⁵ See http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&lang=%27.%27&perform=view&id=22448&Itemid=989&lang=

²⁶ See <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2012/prokirikseis2012/greece.pdf>

Q12. Which other actors do national Authorities work with to disseminate information on Voluntary Return; what roles to these actors have and what is the rationale for the national Authorities' collaboration with them or for the actors' involvement in disseminating information on Voluntary Return? Please complete Table 1. Please describe the role briefly using bullet points making sure to only include information on their role in disseminating information – i.e. “publishing information on a dedicated website, making leaflets available, hosting drop-in information clinics, acting as a community contact point for information on Voluntary Return, etc.” rather than “implements AVR Programmes”, or “holds meetings with community members”. Under ‘nature of/rationale for involvement’, please describe any contracts that the actor has with the national Authorities – e.g. if they have been subcontracted to provide information and advice services to irregular migrants, and any partnerships between national Authorities and (e.g.) specific community, diaspora or faith-based groups to promote Voluntary Return. You may be able to find information on the rationale for involvement on the websites of the national Authorities, on the websites of the actors (where these exist), in annual reports of the organizations (again, where these exist), or by consulting the actors directly. Please cover the period in the last five years (from 2010 – 2014), as well as future/planned activities in this area if relevant/available.

EEA GRANTS/IOM

The site (<http://eeagrants.org>) provides information on the results of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme of IOM for migrants from third countries funded by EEA Grants²⁷ of the year 2013. Specifically, the programme assisted the voluntary return of 850 migrants of 36 different nationalities in 23 European countries, who are victims of human trafficking. The beneficiaries received assistance on practical issues related to their return journey, such as issuing travel documents and tickets. The support included assistance both in the transit country and in the country of destination but also one short-term resettlement. This project is a part of the Return Programmes implemented in Greece funded by 2009-2014 EEA Grants, in support of the Greek National Action Plan for the reform of the management of asylum and migration in Greece. The plan was first published in 2010, but ratified in 2013 by the Hellenic Government. With the amount of €21.000.000 the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was strengthened, in order to support the Greek Authorities in the establishment of a new asylum service and to ensure that asylum services in the country are offered in accordance with the international standards. Funding was also given to NGOs, which support asylum seekers, as well as for the operation of the first center of detection and congregation of asylum seekers in Evros.

THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

On the website of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees – Office in Greece²⁸ the Law 3907/2011, on the adjustment of Greek legislation to the Directive 200/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 16th December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for Returning irregularly staying nationals from third countries, is available.

METAdrasi

Since the year of 2012, the voluntary provision of supporting services of the NGO Metadrasi²⁹ (counseling, interpretation and learning of the Greek language) to interested irregular migrants residing irregularly in the country is one of the most important statutory aims of the Organization. Because of the increasing number of third country nationals who wish to return to their home countries, but fail to do so due to financial and other difficulties, METAdrasi with own resources carries out the following actions:

- Personalized legal support of potential asylum seekers on the islands of the northeastern Aegean (Samos, Lesbos, Chios).
- Advisory provision of legal nature in the asylum process.
- Collection and provision of staple commodities (clothing, blankets etc.).
- Referral of foreigners to the competent Organizations and/or to Services for social welfare: housing, food, etc.

THE GREEK OMBUDSMAN

According to the special report of 2014 of the Greek Ombudsman for the return of Aliens, the Greek Ombudsman is required to contribute and to consider the transparency of the Return procedures of foreigners in their countries of origin, by the Greek state. With the Law No 3907/2011 an external audit system during removal procedures of third country nationals was provided, which operates under the responsibility of the Greek Ombudsman, in cooperation with international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The law also provided that a joint decision of the Ministers of Interior and Public Order, issued on a proposal by the Ombudsman, regulates the organization and operation of the above control system. This arrangement follows the relevant provision of Directive 2008/115/EC which, by establishing common standards and procedures in Member States for the “Return” of irregularly residing foreigners to their countries of origin (Return Directive), provides, inter alia, and an effective external control system (monitoring), aiming at making the procedures of voluntary removal of foreigners, fair and transparent.

²⁷ See: <http://eeagrants.org/>

²⁸ See: <http://www.unhcr.gr/>

²⁹ See: <http://www.metadrasi.org/>

GREEK COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES (GCR)

On the website of the Greek Council for Refugees³⁰ the Law 3907/2011, on the adjustment of Greek legislation to the Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 16th December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for the return of third country nationals irregularly living in Greece, is available.

PRAKSIS

NGO PRAKSIS has contributed to the implementation of the IOM programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration for unaccompanied minors who wish to return to their families in countries of origin. The organization PRAKSIS as project partner, had undertaken actions to identify and inform the unaccompanied minors about the programme in the cities of Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras. The action entitled: "ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS (UAMS) IN GREECE", was realized under the co-financing of the European Union, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark and lasted from 01/03/2013 until 31/12/2013. Information about the programme is published on the website of the NGO PRAKSIS³¹.

THE RADIO PROGRAMME FOR NON EU CITIZENS "CITIZENS OF THE WORLD"

The aim of the Programme "Citizens of the World" is the production of radio Programmes with themes that directly concern third country nationals. Through the implementation of this Programme, an effort to familiarize migrants in radio broadcasting issues and broader of technical production in the media, is made. Through the Programme is attempted:

- The reliable and comprehensive provision of information to third country nationals on issues that concern them.
- Information and awareness of the indigenous population in cases of social exclusion that large numbers of third country nationals face in our country.
- Familiarization of third country nationals with radio broadcasting issues and with broader technical production in the media in order, to undertake their own emissions/productions.
- Update through emissions on issues related to health, work, education, housing, public administration, legal and administrative information, advocating and psychological counseling, issues of diversity and racism, Greek history, system of governing, etc.
- Exchange of information and experiences between third country nationals and Greeks, through their active participation during the implementation of the radio Programmes.

The radio shows "Citizens of the World" are broadcasted by the radio station "Red 105,5 FM", Monday to Friday between 19:00pm-19:30pm and aim not only at informing the migrants residing in our country on issues that concern them (such as health, work, education, accomodation, public services, legal and administrative support, customs and traditions of the host country, geography, etc.) but also raising awareness of the host society to diversity issues. In addition in the framework of the project were implemented:

- An informative Multi-Guide in eight languages with themes interconnected to the radio emissions.
- A specialized internet platform in which the submission of questions and topics for discussion during the radio emissions³², is possible. A Facebook page of the Programme "Citizens of the World" has been created as well.

³⁰ See: <https://www.gcr.gr>

³¹ See: <http://www.praksis.gr/>

³² See: <http://www.politestoukosmou.gr>

TABLE 1. OTHER ACTORS DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON VOLUNTARY RETURN, THEIR ROLE AND THE RATIONALE FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENT

| Actor | Y/N | Role that the actor plays in disseminating information on Voluntary Return | Nature of/ rationale for involvement |
|--|-----|--|--|
| NGOs/IOs dealing with Return counseling and/or implementing AVR schemes | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of flyers Information on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Hellenic Police | Indirect Supportive action/assistance to the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Police regarding the information to potential beneficiaries. |
| Other NGO's/civil society organizations (e.g. migrants groups and other advocacy groups) | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information of migrants on the legislation in force Distribution relevant of flyers Information of migrants regarding their rights and obligations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indirect Supportive action/assistance to the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) regarding information. Supportive action/assistance to work of the Police regarding information to potential beneficiaries. |
| Diaspora groups | No | N/A | N/A |
| Faith-based groups | No | N/A | N/A |
| Other community groups | Yes | Information and distribution of information of the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Hellenic Police | Indirect Supportive action/assistance to the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Police regarding the information to potential beneficiaries. |
| Libraries | No | N/A | N/A |
| Social/health/ education services | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of flyers Information on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Hellenic Police | Indirect Supportive action/assistance to the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Police regarding the information to potential beneficiaries. |
| Case workers/legal advisors | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information of migrants regarding their rights and obligations | Protection of foreign workers from exploitation of all kinds |
| Ombudsman/citizens advice bureaus | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of flyers Information on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Hellenic Police | Indirect Supportive action/assistance to the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Police regarding the information to potential beneficiaries. |
| (Advisory services)trade unions/employer associations | No | N/A | N/A |
| Embassies (third-country and EU) | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of flyers Information on the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Hellenic Police | Indirect Supportive action/assistance to the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Police regarding the information to potential beneficiaries. |
| Other Actors (specify) | No | N/A | N/A |

4.2. CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH INFORMATION IS PROVIDED

Q13. Covering the period in the last five years (from 2010 – 2014), as well as future/planned activities in this area if relevant/available, provide information on the channels through which information on Voluntary Return is made available in your Member State. For each channel listed, please state Yes/No, then – if the channel is used in your Member State – briefly describe what the information source is (e.g. website on AVR(R), leaflet on Voluntary Return, Facebook page on AVR(R) Programmes, discussion forum for members of the Nigerian diaspora to discuss Return, etc.) then list the actor(s) responsible for (a) funding/developing the channel (e.g. this may be the national migration Authority), (b) managing/delivering the information and a link to further information.

TABLE 2. CHANNELS USED IN THE MEMBER STATE FOR DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON VOLUNTARY RETURN

| | Y/N | Description (please be brief, using bullet points) | Actor designing/funding | Actor managing/delivering | Link to further information |
|--|-----|--|---|--|--|
| Leaflets/brochures | Yes | Provision of information on the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns Contact details of the associated actors | Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police/75% EU funds and 25% from National | Ministry of Interior and the Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police | http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2012/prokirkseis2012/greece.pdf http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=4883&Itemid=1024&lang= |
| | | Provision of information on the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns Contact information with IOM in sixteen languages | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://greece.iom.int/sites/default/files/avrr_booklet_gr.pdf https://www.flickr.com/photos/iomgreece/ http://greece.iom.int/el/ |
| Advertising Posters | Yes | Provision of information on the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns Contact information with IOM in sixteen languages (different type of posters) | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | https://www.flickr.com/photos/iomgreece/14109579220/ |
| Advertisements in the media | Yes | Provide information about the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns In Greek language with English subtitles | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjLMYFXR_sI |
| Photo exhibition “Kinesis &Taxis” | Yes | Promotion of the mission of IOM and provide information on issues that concern the migrants | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | Municipality of Thessaloniki, Municipality of Patras, International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://www.inthessaloniki.com/en/thessaloniki-calendar/print/32-kinesis-taxis http://greece.iom.int/sites/default/files/photo_exib_gr.pdf |
| Advertisements on Public Transport (Public Transports) [displays in metro and ISAP (suburban train) and on the sides of buses and trolley buses] | Yes | Provide information about the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns In Greek language with English subtitles | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://greece.iom.int/ ka http://greece.iom.int/node/26 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---|---|--|---|
| TV Spot | Yes | Provision of information on the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns (possibilities, rights, obligations, details concerning the Return process) In Greek language with English subtitles | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://greece.iom.int/ και http://greece.iom.int/node/26 |
| Radio spot | Yes | Provision of information on the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns In Greek language with English subtitles | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://greece.iom.int/ και http://greece.iom.int/node/26 |
| Online news channels of global reach | Yes | Provision of information on the procedure of the Assisted Voluntary Returns In Greek language with English subtitles | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://greece.iom.int/ και http://greece.iom.int/node/26 |
| Websites | Yes | No specific page for Voluntary Returns. Provision of information via a link (banner) on the site of the IOM on the Assisted Voluntary Returns procedure In Greek and English | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | http://greece.iom.int/ και http://greece.iom.int/node/26 |
| Referral links in other sites | Yes | Referral links (signposting) in other sites to the IOM site, indicating the Assisted Voluntary Returns | N/A | Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) Asylum Service/Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction | http://www.yptp.gr/asylo.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=3474&Itemid=465%20&lang=&lang=GR http://www.yptp.gr/asylo.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=3469&Itemid=465&lang=&lang=&lang=EN http://asylo.gov.gr/?page_id=392 |
| Social Media (e.g. Facebook) | Yes | No specified Medium of Social Networking for the Assisted Voluntary Returns. Provision of information through social media of IOM regarding the Assisted Voluntary Returns procedure | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | https://twitter.com/IOMGREECE http://www.youtube.com/user/iomgreece https://www.flickr.com/photos/iomgreece/ https://www.facebook.com/pages/IOMGreece |
| Online Discussion Forum | No | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|--|---|--|---|
| Help Lines/Information Lines | Yes | Information for the Assisted Voluntary Returns Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), guidance and counseling services | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | Office in Athens tel: +30 210 99 19 040 Office in Thessaloniki tel: +30 2313 317 349 Office in Patras tel: +30 2610 240 196 Specialized personnel in Orestiada, Alexandroupolis, Samos, Ioannina, Mytilini, Crete. |
| Counseling points (face-to-face) | Yes | Information for the Assisted Voluntary Returns Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at on-site meetings | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | Office in Athens tel: +30 210 99 19 040 Office in Thessaloniki tel: +30 2313 317 349 Office in Patras tel: +30 2610 240 196 Specialized personnel in Orestiada, Alexandroupolis, Samos, Ioannina, Mytilini, Crete, Corinth, Xanthi. |
| | | On-site meetings (street work) face-to-face and via the mobile unit (van) to inform interested individuals and distribution of leaflets | | | N/A |
| Visits to communities | Yes | Information for the Assisted Voluntary Returns Programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to migrant community organizations/associations through on-site meetings/visits (street work) face-to-face | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | N/A |
| Mobile Information Unit | Yes | Information of the interested third countries nationals on the options of Return and repatriation to their countries of origin, local Authorities and civil society actors, covering all regions of the country (in the capital city and the province). In the meantime, data on the profile of migrants and migration trends are collected. If potential beneficiaries expressed their willingness to join the programme the registration is made on-site | International Organization for Migration (IOM)/75% EU funds and 25% from National | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | N/A |

4.3. SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS AND STRATEGIES

Q14. Did any of the channels listed in Q13 above form part of a specific strategy or campaign implemented in your Member State to better disseminate information on Voluntary Return? If yes, please state: a. The name of the strategy/campaign, b. The date it was launched and its duration, c. The rationale for its launch, d. The specific objectives/aims, e. Any target groups, f. Its components (e.g. website, poster campaign and hotline), g. The actors involved, h. Any specific results (e.g. in terms of users accessing the information, number of irregular migrants Returned, etc.). Please note that further evaluative information on campaigns and strategies can be included in section 5 and 6.

The Greek Government represented by the Greek Ministry of Citizen Protection/Hellenic Police Headquarters in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office in Greece, has created a coherent approach to the dissemination of information through the distribution of printed material and through in personal meetings with potentially interested individuals, on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes for irregular migrants living in the country, based on common standards and procedures without discrimination. Programmes of Assisted voluntary Returns and Reintegration are implemented and considered important to be mentioned, are:

- "Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration AVR(R) for third country nationals", funded by the European Return Fund and the Greek Government (2013-2014).
- Assistance for the "Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Returnees from Greece" funded by the UK Home Office (2014-2016).
- "Addressing the Needs of Unaccompanied Minors in Greece", co-funded by the European Union, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
- "Programme of Voluntary Returns" funded by the UK Border Agency (2012-2013).
- "Supporting Organizations that Assist Migrant Asylum Seeking Population in Greece (SOAM)", funded by EEA Grants (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway) .
- "Assisted Voluntary Return Programme", funded by the EEA Grants (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway) (2012).
- "Voluntary Return of asylum seekers and refugees", through joint funding by the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and the Greek Government (implemented during the years 2006, 2007, 2008)

IOM – Office in Greece in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) is implementing, a project co-funded by the European Commission and the Greek Government. The project "Open Center for Migrants registered for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (OCAVRR)". This project provides shelter and other necessary services (first aid) for the return of the migrants. Under this programme priority is given to vulnerable groups including single parent families, pregnant women, migrants with medical needs, victims of human trafficking and unaccompanied minors. Specifically the actions related to the preparation and implementation of voluntary return actions for third country nationals and the reception into their countries of origin. This Programme is addressed to:

- Third country nationals who do not fulfill the conditions of entry and stay in the country.
- Third country nationals whose request for asylum is still pending or has been rejected.
- Third country nationals, who enjoy international protection, but nonetheless wish to return to their countries.

4.4. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE INFORMATION

Q15. Please consider the accessibility of the information on Voluntary Return disseminated to irregular migrants. Please provide information on: a. The language(s) in which the information is provided. b. Visual presentation of the information. c. For posters/leaflets, the location of the information: where were these placed – in transport hubs, in libraries, in health centers, in areas known to be frequented by irregular migrants – e.g. malls, supermarkets, etc. d. For websites/help lines: extent to which the URL is easy to find through online search engines³³ and whether there is signposting to the website through other channels. e. For help lines and drop-in clinics: i. The location of the services (if a drop-in clinic), ii. The opening hours / hours of access, iii. Awareness about the service, including where the telephone number/address is advertised, iv. Cost of the service/calling the hotline (or whether free). f. Confidentiality considerations (i.e. whether the anonymity of the irregular migrant is maintained if they consult an information service). g. Other factors that might enhance/reduce accessibility.

As a summary of the information presented above, both IOM as the main actor and the Hellenic Police, have implemented awareness raising informative campaigns for irregular migrants, who live in Greece and wish to return to their country of origin. These campaigns include the production and dissemination of informative leaflets translated into sixteen (16) languages, which include the necessary information and contact details of IOM, for the return procedure in the framework of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme implemented for third country nationals irregularly residing in Greece. IOM has also published information posters providing information on the return stages, at key congregation points such as in subway stations, bus stops etc. IOM's TV spot for the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Returns is broadcasted by both national private and satellite channels of Greece, as well as by satellite TV stations of third countries which broadcast their programme in our country.

³³ Member States may wish to draw conclusions about this third bullet point by using a 'mystery shopper' method and searching for the information using different search terms.

4.5. CONTENT OF THE INFORMATION

Q16. What is the content of the information made available in Member States. Specifically, where can irregular migrants go to find information on different aspects of Voluntary Return? Please complete the table below, by marking whether the actors listed horizontally provide the information listed vertically. Where they do, please specify through which channel listed in Q13 this information is made available – i.e. state “website of the migration Authority”, “leaflet on AVR(R) published by IOM”, etc. Where this information is not disseminated through any national sources, please state N/A.

| | National Authorities responsible for Return | Organizations with an official role in implementing and/or promoting AVR(R) Programmes | Other actors |
|---|--|--|--|
| Their legal obligations | Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | Indirect auxiliary role in the action of IOM – UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) |
| Information on AVR(R) Programmes available in the Member State | Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | Indirect auxiliary role in the action of IOM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detention Centers/First Reception Centers • Citizens' Service Centres (KEP) • Municipalities Services • Municipal Health Clinics • UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), • Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) • NGOs • Embassies and Consulates of countries of origin, • Migrant Community Associations |
| Information on how irregular migrants can access AVR(R) Programmes (eligibility conditions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) • Detention Centers/First Reception Centers | International Organization for Migration (IOM) | Indirect auxiliary role in the action of IOM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detention Centers/First Reception Centers • Citizens' Service Centres (KEP) • Municipalities Services • Municipal Health Clinics • UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), • Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) • NGOs • Embassies and Consulates of countries of origin, • Migrant Community Associations |
| Where the irregular migrant should go for more information (signposting) | Establishment of special Citizens' Service Centres (KEP) exclusively for migrants, so that migrants do not feel the fear of arrest | N/A | IOM |
| Other Voluntary Return options (i.e. options for Voluntary Return without assistance) | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| | | | |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| What the irregular migrants can expect at the airport on Returning | N/A | International Organization for Migration (IOM): Reception and meeting with third country nationals upon their arrival at the transit and final destination countries. Establishing liaison offices in third countries from where the largest proportion of migrants originates. | N/A |
| What the irregular migrant can expect in their third country on Returning | N/A | International Organization for Migration (IOM): Financial support for social and occupational inclusion (e.g. setting up a business, education, vocational training), temporary accommodation, material assistance for the purchase of household goods, healthcare. | N/A |
| Personal tailored information ³⁴ | N/A | International Organization for Migration (IOM): Initial Information International Organization for Migration (IOM): Before the departure | N/A |
| Other information (specify) | N/A | N/A | N/A |

³⁴Note that tailored is most likely to be available through helplines and drop-in clinics, although it may be possible to tailor information to some extent through online services.

4.6. TARGETING OF THE INFORMATION

Q17. Please specify which (if any) of the approaches described in Q13 – Q16 above have been used to target irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities. What was the rationale for using this approach to target this particular group?

One of the most effective and targeted practices of approaching irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, are the face-to-face contacts/meetings with the executive staff of IOM in both Organization's Headquarters in Athens and the regional IOM offices in the province, as well as the Organization's Mobile Information Unit, which covers many areas of the territory, and enables third-country nationals, who reside illegally and work in different regions of the country, to be informed about the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes of IOM.

Q18. Do any of the approaches described in Q13 - Q16 above target any other groups (e.g. specific types of irregular migrant, e.g. vulnerable groups, failed asylum applicants, particular nationalities, etc.?) If so, please describe below through what methods/approaches they target these groups, and also discuss the rationale for targeting these particular groups.

Unaccompanied Minors

In 2013 IOM facilitated the return of three unaccompanied minors to their families in Pakistan. The mission of IOM in Pakistan after having been informed by the IOM – Office in Greece, participated in the process of the detection/identification of the families and their necessary evaluation before minors' return. The IOM Office in Pakistan assisted the parents of the minors to travel to the airport and receive their repatriated children. On their arrival IOM received the children and gave them to their families.³⁵

Pre removal centers – Detained Third Country Nationals

In the framework of the same reintegration programme, IOM undertook the movement of third country nationals, who were in custody due to their residence in Greece without the legal documents and wished to return to their country of origin. The Organization provided information about the Programme and moved a total of 270 prisoners from Pre-departure Centers of Attica and other areas. For the registration of these migrants to the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, IOM worked closely with diplomatic Authorities for the identification of the migrants and the police Authorities in order to be moved from the places of detention to the airport the day of their departure. At the airport specialized IOM staff received the prisoners, who were integrated with other beneficiaries of the Organization.

³⁵ IOM Programmes: "Open Center for Migrants registered for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (OCAVRR)", "Addressing the Needs of Unaccompanied Minors in Greece", co-funded by the European Union, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Section 5: Case studies on information provision to irregular migrants with whom the Authorities do not have contact [Max. 4 pages]

The purpose of this section is to look at TWO or more selected practices employed in the Member State to disseminate information on Voluntary Return in order to identify promising practices in dissemination of information to irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities and to learn lessons about what has and has not worked. Member States are requested to identify at least one "successful" approach and one "less successful" approach, stating the criteria they apply to define "successful".

Q19. Cross-referring to the approaches outlined in section 4, please describe in further detail at least TWO practices or approaches employed in your Member State since 2010 to disseminate information on Voluntary Return:

- one practice/approach that has proven particularly effective in reaching out to irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities; and
- one practice/approach that has not been (very) effective in reaching out to irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities.

Please provide your rationale for describing these practices as successful/less successful. In doing so, please provide any evidence – or counter-evidence – of: a. The effectiveness of the practice/approach at increasing awareness amongst irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities about their options regarding Voluntary Return and/or at providing such migrants with a comprehensive understanding of their options so as to be able to make a balanced, well-informed decision about Voluntary Return. b. Specific challenges associated with the approach to disseminating information implemented by the national Authorities directly in raising awareness of irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities? c. Factors that made the approach a successful/not-so-successful channel for disseminating information on Voluntary Return to irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities. Please consider the following possible factors that may contribute to the success/challenges of the approach: the actors providing the information (and the level of trust that the actor engenders in the applicant/migrant), the 'tone' of the information being provided (i.e. whether it is threatening/supportive/factual/etc.), the extent to which the approach allows the recipient to remain anonymous, accessibility to the information, location of the information, the timing, etc.) Possible sources of evidence for questions 19a – 19c include: i) Statistics on use of the information channels (e.g. users of hotline number, webpage visits, Facebook page hits/likes³⁶, leaflets distributed, number of leaflets downloaded/requested, etc.), ii) Evaluations/research, iii) Personal testimonies from Returnees/irregular migrants who made use of the services (where identified in secondary sources), iv) Opinions/perspectives of stakeholders on the effectiveness of their resources - you may gather this information through primary research (i.e. interviews with the Authorities, with NGOs supporting irregular migrants accessing the services, etc.). Please also describe any evidence of particular groups (e.g. diaspora, NGOs, individuals) accessing the information.

1. First practice that has been proved to be particularly effective in approaching irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities.

The method of approach and the detailed information of migrants irregularly residing in the country, regarding the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in their countries of origin, are crucial to the success of the action for the effective management of the phenomenon of the increased irregular migratory flows in Greece. As really effective practice of dissemination of information to irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, according to the Chief of the Office in Greece of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mr. Daniel Esdras, are considered the informative face-to-face interventions through on-site information by the specialized staff of IOM and the mobile unit, which covers large distances across the country; these practices were implemented between the years 2010 and 2014 in areas of increased congregation of migrants. The Programme entitled "street work" with the participation of the specialized personnel of IOM and interpreters in various neighborhoods of Athens and other cities of Greece aimed at informing citizens of third countries and especially irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities about the IOM's Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. Critical point in approaching this marginalized, mobile and changing population of irregular migrants, was the handling on behalf of the intercultural mediators and the representatives of migrant community associations, during the face-to-face meetings³⁶. This approach was complex, difficult and time consuming but achieved by informal or indirect methods of approach of irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities, by the IOM employees, intercultural mediators and representatives of migrant community associations³⁷, through the assessment of the particularities of each group and via the effort of elimination of any possible prejudices by the irregular migrants. The particular success of the action lies in the fact that the appropriate strategies to identify migrants and to minimize difficulties in their approach, were followed:

1. Sufficiently trained IOM officials, who have extended their personal contacts within the migrant communities and associations
2. The implementation of preparatory research in nine migrant communities and in their community associations
3. The representatives of migrant community associations, who acted as key informants as known to irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities
4. The information within migrant communities in areas and places with high congregation of migrants, such as workplaces, spaces socialization, for example:
 - (i) Ethnic businesses like cafes, restaurants, bars and grocery stores,
 - (ii) Squares,
 - (iii) Open stadiums, parks,
 - (iv) Place of worship, churches, Bible study groups,

³⁶ This particular action was described as very important and necessary as the specific features of irregular migrants, who avoid or hide from the authorities and therefore do not come into contact with them, require special attention. Taking in consideration that these populations being in irregular status in the country, do not know the purpose of the co-operating agencies and have shaped the image of the official state exclusively on prosecuting authorities (e.g. Police, Coast Guard) and as a result they do not trust or have large percentages of disbelief when someone, who is outside their enclosed environment, approaches them. Therefore, proper/accurate information for both the details of the Programme as well as for the approaching ways (e.g. language problems, fear of arrest, difficulty to approach/come in contact) of irregular migrants who are not in contact with the authorities, is imperative. It should be noted that in Greece a significant number of irregular immigrants, especially in issues of: health care, housing, clothing and food are turning to NGOs because of the informal, casual/unofficial nature of these organizations. The detailed information on the program and on how to approach these groups, was crucial to the success of the action.

³⁷ The Chief of Mission at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Office in Greece stressed that due to intra-community disputes and the existence of multiple associations in immigrant communities of the same origin there were often difficulties of understanding between the representatives of immigrants. For this reason, he stressed, that the face-to-face contact and the mobile unit was the most effective medium of information.

- (v) Local clinics serving the migrant population,
- (vi) Workplaces,
- (vii) Apartments where large numbers of migrants live
- (viii) Schools where the Greek language is taught
- (ix) Social/cultural events of migrants
- (x) Friendly and relative networks of contacts of NGO employees/researchers
- (xi) Charities
- (xii) Embassies and Consulates
- (xiii) NGOs offering services/aid to migrants
- (xiv) First Reception Centers
- (xv) Detention Facilities
- (xvi) etc.

Through informal meetings, migrants had the opportunity to be informed adequately about the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme, the process and their benefits in order to make/take a balanced and coherent choice/decision³⁸. The face-to-face contacts/meetings have been proved to be extremely effective practice to inform irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities as the information is easily spread "mouth-to-mouth". In this way, the necessary information about the Programmes reached all populations, even marginalized individuals by the IOM staff. Moreover, the local IOM Offices in various cities of Greece enhanced the above information in order to facilitate the provision of effective support to irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities.

2. Second Practice that has been proved to be particularly effective in approaching irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities

In the framework of the approach and the dissemination of information of irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, about the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme—the *second practice*, which was particularly effective, was the distribution of information leaflets. The information leaflets were translated into sixteen (16) languages and were distributed during the above mentioned raising awareness campaigns. The great success of this practice was due to the fact, that emphasis was given on crucial points, in order to minimize the difficulties:

- (i) Translation in the mother tongue of the migrants
- (ii) Comprehensive information
- (iii) User-friendly printed form
- (iv) Easily accessible material

Both leaflets and posters were translated into sixteen (16) languages, distributed to Hospitals, Social Services of Municipalities, Bus stops/Train Stations, migrant businesses/stores, migrant communities and associations, migrant stores and spaces, where third country nationals are congregated. The printed material was also distributed to Citizens' Service Centres (KEP), so as the interested foreigners to be informed and then transfer the information about the benefits of the Programme to other compatriots and, especially to irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities. Moreover, the Mobile Unit of Information of IOM has been proved particularly effective medium of approach and of dissemination of information to migrants. The Mobile Unit of Information of IOM was equipped with highly trained personnel in detailed information provision regarding the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration to the local Authorities, the institutions involved, organizations of the civil society and the potential beneficiaries of the Programme in various areas of Greece, where IOM has not a permanent presence. Last but not least, the interested individuals were given the opportunity to be registered on-site to the Programme.

³⁸ Thus establishing their credibility as individuals who wanted to contact and inform irregular migrants who are not in contact with the authorities, gaining their trust and sympathy, confirming confidentiality, maintaining the anonymity of immigrants and after repeated assurances, the staff of IOM and the intercultural mediators, who visited these places informed the irregular migrants who are not in contact with the authorities about the Program.

3. Practice that needs further improvement in approaching irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities

In the framework of approaching and informing irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, about the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, the *practice* which needs further improvement, was the promotion of the Programme in Greece via electronic and social media. More specifically, according to our research and according to the statements of the representatives of the migrants' communities in Greece, some points that may need further improvement are:

- (i) The broadcasting of IOM's television spot needs further improvement as it is shown in not fixed frequency/in Greek with English subtitles.
- (ii) The absence of a specific website for the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme³⁹. Someone can find information about the Programme on the website of IOM. The description is mainly given in Greek and in English.
- (iii) There are only two referral links for other sites on the website of IOM⁴⁰.
- (iv) Absence of specific page for the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme on Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).
- (v) The information about the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme on the website of the Hellenic Police is in Greek.
- (vi) Absence of online discussion forum.

According to the statements of the representatives of the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Afghani communities in Greece, the below conclusions are presented:

Abedin Zinul [Engr., Dr., President of Bangladesh Community in Greece and President of All European Bangladesh Association (AEBA)]⁴¹ mentioned that the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes can be regarded as particularly valuable to those migrants, who did not find the opportunity they were seeking in Greece and they want or need to return back to their country of origin. Many migrants from Bangladesh have returned to their country of origin supported by the specialized staff of IOM - Office for Greece, which was very supportive throughout the return journey. He also suggested that the financial incentive should be improved and the migrants who are in detention centers should be approached and get information on early stage. Particularly, the detained person should receive information on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme on time, in order the dissemination of the information to be sufficient. What emerges from the in-depth interview with the representative, is that the most effective method of disseminating information to irregular migrants from Bangladesh, who are not in contact with the authorities, is the face-to-face contact of the IOM staff and the members of the Migrant Community Association (the representative and his staff) and the distribution of the leaflets translated into their language. He said: "One talks to ten and ten talk to one hundred, etc." Last but not least, according to him the less effective practice was the dissemination of information through the internet.

Syed Jamil [President of the Pak Hellenic Cultural and Welfare Society (PHCWS/PEPE)]⁴² noted that there are hundreds of migrants from Pakistan, who have returned to their country of origin through the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes of IOM and the Hellenic Police. He mentioned that the actions implemented by both IOM and the Hellenic Police are really important for those, who wish to return back to their families and do not have the means to do so. The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme of IOM should not stop on 30 June 2015. Moreover what comes as a result of the in-depth interview with the representative, is that the most effective practice of informing Pakistani irregular migrants, who do not come in contact with the authorities, is the face-to-face meetings with the IOM staff and the members Community Association (the representative and his colleagues). However, as less effective practice can be characterized the distribution of printed material (brochures, posters), because the migrants do not spend time to read them carefully. Important practice of information provision to Pakistani migrants is the information promoted in their own language through the Pakistani satellite TV shows broadcasted in Greece (ie PAK HELLENIC URDU TV).⁴³ These TV emissions are then uploaded to YouTube and anyone can watch them. Additionally, Pakistani migrants, who have access to internet, can get informed through the publications on the Cultural Association Greece Pakistan (FIFO) on Facebook page. Last but not least, the provision of information is more difficult to people, who are in exploitative / forced and precarious work conditions by their employers.

³⁹Therefore, since a specific website and URL do not exist, one cannot easily find information online via search engines in his/her mother tongue, as concluded after a search that was conducted in the frames of the research, using the entries "AVR(R) Greece" or "voluntary return Greece". If somehow one is directed at the IOM's site the information there is also provided in Greek and in English. Moreover, there are external links (banners) for the Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme only in two other websites where there is the logo of the "IOM Greece: Voluntary Return" that lead in the IOM website.

⁴⁰ See Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (current Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) (in Greek and in English): http://www.yptp.gr/asylo.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=3474&Itemid=465%20&lang=&lang=GR, http://www.yptp.gr/asylo.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=3469&Itemid=465&lang=&lang=&lang=EN, and Asylum Service/Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (in Greek only): http://asylo.gov.gr/?page_id=392

⁴¹ According to the results excluded by the in depth interview with Dr. Fouskas Theodoros and Mrs. Mine Foteini Maria the 21st of May 2015

⁴² According to the results excluded by the in depth interview with Dr. Fouskas Theodoros and Mrs. Mine Foteini Maria the 22nd of May 2015

⁴³ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkE3a5aVBcdpCKKuEzf06xg>

Alizadeh Taher [President, Afghan Community of Migrants and Refugees in Greece]⁴⁴ said that IOM programme has helped many migrants from Afghanistan who were living in Greece and did not find a job or shelter, and desire to return to their families and make a new beginning there. He said that as an effective practice of information provision to irregular migrants from Afghanistan, who are not in contact with the authorities, is the mouth-to-mouth and through telephone information provision of information about the voluntary return possibilities offered by IOM. Furthermore, it was stressed that the Afghani migrants get informed about the programme during meetings and events carried out by the Community Association. According to the speaker, the information provision practice, that needs further improvement, is the campaigns, promoted through the social media, due to the general unstable living conditions (e.g. precarious employment, health) of migrants from Afghanistan living in Greece. Lastly, what should be stressed is that due to the war in Afghanistan safe living conditions for those who wish to return to their homeland should be ensured.

Q20. Are there any good practices that can be identified from these practices/approaches that could be transferred to other Member States?

Good practices that could be followed are:

1. Timely provision of information/instructions before the return procedure, as assistance in the decision for return of the interested individuals, contributing in this way to the development of the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. Through face-to-face contacts with irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, the importance of information for the preparation of the prospective returnees so as to choose consciously the Voluntary Return, is stressed.
2. Intensification of the information and awareness of migrants, via the increase of the points/booths of information both in Athens and other large urban centers as well as in provincial areas of Greece, in spaces such as First Reception Centers/Detention Centers and entry and exit points at the country's borders, at migration and asylum services, at migrant communities and associations, and finally increase of the visits by the specialized IOM officials and personnel of other relevant institutions in congregation spaces of migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities. It should also be made known to those concerned, that an arrest or a negative decision on an application for asylum, may lead to deportation or forced Return.
3. Multiple mobile units of information and information offices in every city of the country, in spaces of congregation of large numbers of migrants, such as ports, city centers etc. More specialized personnel for face-to-face contacts (e.g. IOM personnel, mediators, translators) and more materials (e.g. leaflets).
4. Effective cooperation between relevant ministries, NGOs and migrant community associations so as to inform and approach sooner migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities
5. Close cooperation between the country of origin and country of destination and development of common policies and approaches for the management of Returns /repatriations of irregular migrants.
6. Data collection on the profiles of irregular migrants in the country. It is necessary so as to understand better the profile of the potential returnees in order to design and adapt the procedures of Voluntary Returns to a more sustainable model. Moreover, the conduction of targeted researches for specific migrant communities are necessary, as well as additional studies, in the country of origin of migrants too, in order to ensure more realistic Return strategies tailored to individual needs of the interested individuals and according to the available options of Reintegration in the country of origin.
7. Provision of motives that concern long-term investments in sustainable Reintegration Programmes for the promotion of employment opportunities, vocational training and insurance for at least one year in the country of origin.
8. Hiring of personnel/special scientists whose origin and the connections will help the Authorities to come in contact directly and more easily with irregular migrants so as to inform them.
9. During the implementation of the Programme it must be taken into account, that even if when migrants come in contact with a competent Service, the language barriers often lead to partial or inability of comprehension of critical issues. The situation with irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities becomes even more difficult, as they are isolated from relative, friendly, community and other solidarity networks, while are entrapped in precarious, low-status/low wage employment, in informal/undeclared work and in unstable/provisional lifestyle. To the above the fear of arrest, the distrust and the limited available time by irregular migrants, are added. Therefore, the adjustment of the operating hours of the services/institutions of the Programme, the constant update of information and texts in the languages of the migrants as well as the direct contact (face-to face)

⁴⁴ According to the results excluded by the in depth interview with Dr. Fouskas Theodoros and Mrs. Mine Foteini Maria the 22nd of May 2015

with specialized personnel in their language in permanent basis and at certain meeting points, are necessary provisions.

10. The motives take a variety of forms, with mixed results. The financial motives, especially at the end of the Return process serve a dual purpose: (a) to ensure that the Returnee collects the amount and (b) monitoring by the government that this is actually happen. However, there are cases where the Returnee did not remain in the country of Return. There is evidence that that the economic support, alone, is often not regarded by migrants as reason enough to opt for Voluntary Return⁴⁵.
11. Assisted Voluntary Return is likely to be more sustainable where there is supplementary long-term Reintegration assistance at the end of the Return. Assisted Voluntary Return should be offered to a broader migrant group of beneficiaries and not exclusively in cases of unsuccessful asylum applicants or specific ethnic groups. Given the social and employment situation of irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, it is necessary to include in the Programmes individuals who are in need of humanitarian assistance (e.g. unaccompanied minors, victims of human trafficking, persons trapped in prostitution and sexual exploitation conditions and individuals who are pushed into forced/unfree labor, undeclared and precarious employment), as well as other migrants who wish to return home. Reintegration contributes in the viability of migrant's Return in his/her country and in the development of the local society in the country of origin.

Q21. *Are there any lessons to be extracted from the findings presented above that could be taken on board by other Member States?*

Irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, often ignore the existence of actions proving aid for their reintegration in the countries of origin. Therefore, the dissemination of information should be strengthened through mass media campaigns using multimedia, websites in several languages, with direct-real time communication with specialized personnel, even via radio Programmes. The involvement of scientifically trained personnel, such as sociologists, social workers and psychologists must be strengthened, in order: to eliminate any doubts and fears on behalf of the marginalized migrant populations, to make the stages of the Voluntary Return procedure comprehensible, to prepare the returnees psychologically and guide them until the end of the process. Regarding the preparation for the return, in order to gain the trust of irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, it is necessary to implement a training Programme of the competent personnel for providing advice, on how to approach irregular migrants, on building contacts and relation with migrant communities, on counseling methods, and for the personal behavior and attitude of the personnel towards interested individuals. The achievement of trust/confidence of migrants is based on the fact that the same case must be handled throughout the return procedure by the same employee/worker. Sufficient time, that will allow an individual or a family to get prepared appropriately for the departure and the arrival in the country of return, should be given. The dignity of migrants during the return process should be strengthened by focusing on the increase of the participation of the returnee in the planning and preparation for the departure. Return and Reintegration Counseling and support should be given on this issue. Furthermore, to ensure the respect towards the returnees, the personnel responsible for the preparation and implementation of the return should be effectively trained and sensitized in return issues and to be equipped with the appropriate relevant skills and competencies.

Furthermore, systems of guidance and support for the development of a network of recipients in the process of reintegration must be established. The success of the Return and Reintegration depends largely on the willingness of those, who have returned, to share their experiences. Therefore activities that encourage former returnees to deal with the dissemination and the evaluation of the information could be included, so that the experience, skills and knowledge they acquired to benefit new or potential returnees. A further good practice is to strengthen the relationship between returnees and migrant communities in the EU, in order to exchange knowledge and policies and build dynamic channels for job opportunities and integration in the country of return. It is necessary to inform irregular migrants that Return and Reintegration assistance providers are independent from the police Authorities or the border security services, and the receipt of information about the Voluntary Return does not put them at risk. Furthermore, the development of an electronic platform is necessary for the exchange of information and experience. Because of the different objectives, that exist behind the Return and Reintegration programmes in all countries, with different actors involved in Return and Reintegration, such as security, migration, social policy, development, etc., it would be unrealistic and impractical to propose the writing of a single manual of instructions for Reintegration activities. However, creating an accessible electronic/online tool, where the actors involved in return and reintegration could exchange information and share experiences, it will enable other interested individuals to learn from the experiences of others. The platform could also speed up and increase the amount of information they share. Given the experience gained by the European Migration Network in the Return and Reintegration sector, EMN could be itself in the central role of coordinating these efforts. For this reason the strengthening of the awareness campaign regarding the activities of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, is required. Irregular migrants should be better aware of the Voluntary Return opportunities and should be updated frequently, while their

⁴⁵The voluntary return is seriously examined as an option by irregular immigrants, after spending some time in the country, and when there are no other options available. Also, it is considered as the last resort/option by newcomers.

application is still pending and not only after a negative decision of their case is given. Information campaigns, brochures and face-to-face information, should encourage potential returnees to consider the voluntary return and hence they might come in contact, at a later stage, with the relevant bodies on their own initiative. The information regarding the supported Programmes of Assisted Voluntary Return should be available by some national websites of the project, in the countries of origin too. In addition, promotion by the social media (e.g. with a Facebook page) should be made in direct communication (anonymously for the interested individual) in real-time with the competent personnel in the migrants mother language, as the information must not be limited to a certain number of languages. The Programme of the Assisted Voluntary Return must be extended in length and adjust/improve its framework of operation, taking into account past experience, aiming at a maximum outcome.

Section 6: Effectiveness of different approaches to disseminating information on Voluntary Return [Max. 4 pages]

6.1. EVIDENCE FROM THE TESTIMONIES OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS AND RETURNEES

Q22. Does your Member State collect any information from those Returning voluntarily (e.g. at airports, when participating in AVR Programmes, after they have Returned) about the information they received prior to Return and/or how useful they found this information (yes/no)? If yes, please describe: a. who collects/collected this data, b. Who the data is/was collected from (e.g. those participating in AVR, those Returning to specific countries), c. The situation in which the data is/was collected (e.g. on Return, on considering Return, at the airport), and d. The method used (e.g. survey, interviews, etc.), as well as e. The date/frequency of the data collection (e.g. is this done monthly, annually, or was it part of a one-off project).

IOM collects information from individuals who participate in the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme before their departure, about the usefulness and the effectiveness of the procedures followed. The process takes place during the return process, at the airport before the journey and the destination country. The data arising from statements, individual meetings and interviews with the returnees. Official data are published on the website of IOM and in the annual editions of the magazine for the Programme "Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Third Country Nationals in their Home Country", the official site of the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (former Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) through press releases and the official page of IOM in social media. The data are collected case by case and are published on an annual frequency, for the provision of information to all those interested.

Q23. If the above-mentioned information is available, please present the results, in particular any information on: a. the most common channel through which the Returnee accessed information (e.g. through friends, via the Internet, via a leaflet), b. The extent to which they understood the information (e.g. was it presented in a user-friendly format, was it in their own language), c. The extent to which the information was comprehensive. Did they have to seek further information elsewhere and if so, why, d. The extent to which they trusted the information and whether there was anything about the way in which the information was provided that acted as an obstacle to their trusting it, e. The timing of the information provision and whether it would have been of any use if the information had been provided at an earlier stage, f. Whether the information influenced their decision to Return home or not.

The most widespread medium of information diffusion about the Assisted Voluntary Return procedures according to IOM is the face-to-face (in person) exchange of information through the contacts of migrant communities with the specialized personnel of the Organization. During the application of voluntary return programmes, IOM – Office in Greece conducts individual counseling sessions with the interested individuals, at the stage before their departure to their destination, at the Headquarters of IOM in Greece. Moreover, counseling sessions take place during the journey to the final destination of the beneficiaries and also in his arrival there, for the successful implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the reintegration. Thus, through the above mentioned initial personal meetings, interested individuals and beneficiaries have the opportunity to learn in detail, about the means (e.g. provisions, dignity, safety) and prospects to return to their home country, in their mother tongue by professional interpreters, in order to fully understand the instructions given. These data result from the testimonies of the beneficiaries themselves of the Return Programmes. As documented by the Chief of Mission at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Office in Greece, Mr. Daniel Esdras⁴⁶, it is necessary to give this information at earlier stage of the process. The appropriate information and the provision of motivations play an important role in shaping a coherent choice and decision of irregular migrants to return to their country of origin, as evidenced by the testimonies of migrants themselves.

6.2. OTHER EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

This sub-section should not repeat information already included in section 5. Please only include new information here.

Q24. Is there any other evidence available of the effectiveness of the different practices/approaches described in section 4 at increasing awareness amongst irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities about their options regarding Voluntary Return and/or at providing such migrants with a comprehensive understanding of their options so as to be able to make a balanced, well-informed decision about Voluntary Return. Possible sources of evidence include: i. Statistics on use of the information channels (e.g. users of hotline number, webpage visits, Facebook page hits/'likes', leaflets distributed, number of leaflets downloaded/requested, etc.), ii. Evaluations /research, iii. Personal testimonies from Returnees/irregular migrants who made use of the services (where identified in secondary sources), iv. Opinions/perspectives of stakeholders on the effectiveness of their resources - you may gather this information through primary research (i.e. interviews with the Authorities, with NGOs supporting irregular migrants accessing the services, etc.).

Testimonies of migrants as resulting from the annual report of the IOM for 2014⁴⁷ mention:

"In October 2013, we were notified by police officers from the pre-removal centre that Mr. F. A., a 24 year Pakistani national, who was at the centre, was suffering from cancer in the terminal stages. In cooperation with the Police Divisions, within 5 days we registered and organized Mr. F. A.'s Return so that his wish to be home with his mother could be fulfilled". – L. K., IOM Greece.

"My name is M. G. I am from Iraq. Please I want to go back to my home. Please help me. The traffickers deceived me. Europe isn't so as they presented me. God bless you miss. Thank you so much you for your help. Yes I really want go back to my home. Please". – L. Ch., IOM Greece.

"I came to Greece many years before, I found help and protection. I was granted the asylum status that I needed so much. Now the situation in my country is good, I could Return and live with my family. Here I am homeless and the money I earn are not enough even for my food and medication... I heard about IOM and the assistance it provides. I found help when I entered the country and so I find now that I want to leave, you. And I am sure that Returning back, I will find help also there, Insha' Allah.A. K.

⁴⁶ In-depth interview conducted in the frame of the study on April 15, 2015, in the Headquarters of the IOM – Office in Greece.

⁴⁷ International Organization for Migration – Office in Greece (2014) Annual Report: IOM Greece: Assisted Voluntary Return And Reintegration for Third Country Nationals. Athens: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 28-30.

National from Iraq.” – R. S., IOM Greece.

“Hi dear IOM, I am R. M. from Iran. I want to thanks miss C. and miss E. from IOM, about every think that they did for us(for me and my cousin). Now I am at home, like you. Thank you so much. My best wishes for you. Bye R. M.”. – I. G., IOM Greece.

“27 years old Z. K. was homeless for approximately two months before being arrested and detained for not having a valid residence permit. Mr. Z. K. claimed that even before his arrest he had decided that he wanted to Return to his country of origin but didn't know how since he did not have the resources for the Return trip. With the assistance of IOM Greece he was able to Return to Nigeria where he was reunited with his brother who will help him start a new life.” – F. G., IOM Greece.

“Marouan S. A., irregular migrant from Egypt, was detained in the pre-removal centre in Greece. He was registered in the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return of IOM because he had to Return urgently to take care of his young son, because his mother died during labour. He was calling us daily to be informed of the progress of his Return. When he was informed after one of his phone calls that he would depart in two days, the relief and his joy was evident in his voice and his thanks towards IOM could not stop. A few days after his departure, he made a call to us from his country that filled us with joy and satisfaction.” – F. H., IOM Greece.

“Respected Madam Sh., I am M. A. from Gujranwala, Pakistan. I am in my country now and i am very happy with my family I am very grateful and thankful to you for your cooperation and help. it was possible all due to ur sincere efforts that you did for me. Not only for me but i saw that you are very cooperative and helpful to every detained. you are a very good and efficient officer and a great asset for IOM. I am also very thankful to IOM. I was very impressed by your efficiency and the way you help everybody. I once again thank you and IOM. May God bless you. M. A. Pakistan”. – Sh. Sh., IOM Greece.

On December 2014 we announced the collaboration of the Secretariat for Migration of the Sector of Justice and Police of Switzerland with the International Organization of Migration – Office in Greece. The Government of Switzerland is funding the provision of in-kind assistance for the Reintegration of 100 migrants who are enrolled in the Programme of the Assisted Voluntary Return of IOM – Office in Greece. #CH Restart by IOM Greece is the online message that links the Reintegration stories, hoping to serve as source of information, inspiration and courage to all those who have doubts about the decision of Return⁴⁸.

“Moving on means Return. Means Restart. For Lakhtam time at work has a specific value. Either you are paid for the work you do, or you are moving on. This is how he ended up in Greece. In Morocco he worked 10 years as a farmer. After a year of poor production, he waited no longer. He moved on. He decided to migrate to any country where his efforts would pay his living. 10 years ago he arrived in Greece, and not much time passed until he found his first job: the cleaning of the pool at a quite popular hotel. I learned to speak French, Filipino, Italian, Albanian. I practically lived in the hotel. After 10 years and they still called me “the pool-boy”, he recalls. The money he earned were quite enough for his stay in Greece and also for supporting the small family he created in Morocco. “My wife would wait for me, my child would wait for me”. But during the years of the crisis though in Greece, the hotel business met financial difficulties and many employees were fired. “Spending all these years in the hotel, I could not actually understand the complete situation of the country. I believed that I could easily find another job. I found myself homeless for 2 years. It was pointless”. As soon as he heard from a friend, about IOM services and the Reintegration assistance given by the Swiss Government at the beginning of 2015, he registered for the programme. “1350 Euros in Morocco are serious money. I would buy sheeps; I would work constantly and never risk again the nutrition of my family. My wife doesn't have to wait now. My child doesn't have to wait. Moving on, moving forward for me meant Returning to my family. This financial assistance made that a reality”. – IOM Greece⁴⁹.

According to IOM data, the total traffic of the official website of the Organization is set at five hundred (500) unique visits per post upload and five hundred (500) unique visits the IOM page on the social networking space Facebook, per day and in each medium. The total of the received calls to the communication line of IOM are counted in approximately twenty (20) calls per hour on a daily basis. These data are integrated into a time period of five (5) years from 2010 until 2014, the period of the implementation of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes of IOM.

⁴⁸ Funded by Swiss Confederation and the State Secretariat for Migration Implemented by IOM Greece. See https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/chrestartbyiomgreece?source=feed_text&story_id=1569504989995016

⁴⁹ See: <http://greece.iom.int/reintegration-stories>

Q25. Please also describe the factors that make these approaches successful/not-so-successful channels for disseminating information on Voluntary Return to irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities. Possible sources of evidence include evaluations/research, personal testimonies from Returnees/irregular migrants who made use of the services (where identified in secondary sources), opinions/perspectives of stakeholders (you may use primary research for this).

The approaches of information provision on Voluntary Return to irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities and want or need to return to their countries of origin, which have been identified as successful as we have already mentioned, are the face-to face contacts of the IOM executive personnel with migrants, during contact meetings at the offices of the Organization and the dissemination of information throughout the country through the Mobile Information Unit. The instruments used were the specialist personnel of IOM and professional interpreters, who provided the information in the mother tongue of the interested individuals and erased any fear while approaching them, ensuring a frame of trust and friendliness to the migrants. Also, the distribution of printed material translated into sixteen (16) languages in simple and readable form, was an important medium of informing migrants about the returning options. A key concern of the competent personnel of the IOM is to make the information directly from the beginning of the programme, so its implementation to be as efficient as possible. Finally, in many cases the information on the opportunities, the migrants are given, to be able to integrate to their countries of origin, contributed decisively to their choice to return to their country of origin. Means of information that they may need further improvement, are the informative campaigns through electronic media, such as the websites of the competent institutions and social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), due to the lack of accessibility of irregular migrants to the Internet and to social media. It should be noted that the information available to the aforementioned electronic means, are provided in Greek and English, making it difficult to be found by individuals who speak another language.

Q26. Please describe any specific challenges associated with the approach to disseminating information implemented by the national Authorities directly in raising awareness of irregular migrants not in contact with the Authorities? Possible sources of evidence include evaluations/research, media reports, reports of government, policy papers, opinions/perspectives of stakeholders (you may use primary research for this).

The challenges encountered by the Greek Authorities during the information provision to migrants, and especially to those who reside irregularly in the country, lie in the lack of data for them (the migrants), information that is not available to the Authorities, such as contact details and addresses, that have changed over the time or given as false, because of the fear of imminent apprehension if detected by the Authorities. Moreover, victims of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and prostitution, unaccompanied minors, undocumented workers, hidden laborers and workers in personal services (e.g. live-in domestic workers, care workers, precarious laborers, bonded/unfree/exploited workers) and individuals who are disabled (mentally or physically) or face health problems, are groups of people difficult to be approached by the Authorities.

6.3. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

Q27. Based on evidence discussed in sections 5 and 6, can any conclusions be drawn about the most effective approach/method to disseminating information in terms of: **a.** accessing those irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities, and **b.** providing such migrants with sufficient comprehensive information to enable them to make a balanced, well-informed decision. If yes, please provide the conclusions here.⁵⁰

According to data excluded from sections 5 and 6, the most effective method of approaching and disseminating information to irregular migrants, with whom the Authorities are not in contact, is the face-to-face meetings with these populations organized by the executive staff of the International Organization for Migration (IOM); IOM staff can approach them with discretion and integrity and disseminate the information to the spoken language of the migrants. To improve the dissemination procedures to irregular migrants, who are not in contact with the Authorities, it is necessary to strengthen the relevant information structures with financial and material means (e.g. a more efficient system of management of human resources, more information offices, multiple mobile units), actions that are essential for better coordination of the dissemination of information. The method of informing migrants about the IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme by personal contacts/meetings (person-to-person/face-to-face/mouth-to-mouth) and through mobile information unit, medium that provides the ability to cover long distances throughout the country, has brought evidently significant results by signing up thousands of migrants in the Programmes of Assisted Voluntary Return of IOM. Finally, two additional processes are proposed: (i) the dissemination of leaflets to religious places of worship, places where there is high congregation of migrants by specialized personnel (face-to-face, with interpreters and community representatives) and (ii) the increase of the financial incentive, which is indicated in the information brochures and is given as an aid, in order to attract the interest of more potential beneficiaries for the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in greater extend.

⁵⁰Sources of information for this assessment are discussed in section 2.3 "Criteria for assessing effectiveness" of the Background to this Common Template.

Annex 1 National statistics on return and number of irregular third-country nationals

Table A.1.a: National Statistics on the number of third-country nationals returning, by year and by type of migrant

| | Year | | | | | Source | Method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| | 2010 (total) | 2011 (total) | 2012 (total) | 2013 (total) | 2014 (total) | | |
| a. Third-country nationals returning by physical transportation out of the Member State, on the basis of a return decision (forced return) ⁵¹ | N/A | 8.741 | 6.798 | 8.780 | 12.818 | Hellenic Police | Official Statistical Data of the Hellenic Police |
| b. Number of third-country nationals returning voluntarily within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision ⁵² (voluntary departure) | N/A | 1.847 | 4.236 | 648 | 162 | Hellenic Police | Official Statistical Data of the Hellenic Police |
| c. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals Returning via AVR packages (Assisted Voluntary Return) | 337 | 249 | 966 | 186 | N/A | Hellenic Police | Official Statistical Data of the Hellenic Police |
| d. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals Returning via AVRR packages (Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration – where different from (c)) | N/A | 511 | 6.324 | 9.157 | 7.357 | IOM | Official Statistical Data of IOM |

Table A.1.b: National Statistics on the number of third-country nationals not in contact with the national authorities, by year and by type of migrant

| | Year | | | | | Source | Method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------|--|
| | 2010 (total) | 2011 (total) | 2012 (total) | 2013 (total) | 2014 (total) | | |
| a. Number of irregular migrants who were previously known to the authorities, but whose place of residence is no longer known to the authorities (absconding). | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| b. Number of irregular migrants whose residence on the territory has never been known to the authorities (clandestine entry) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

⁵¹ i.e. an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return.

⁵² In accordance with the provisions of Directive 2008/52/EC (Return Directive) the time-limit shall be of 30 days. Ireland and United Kingdom do not take part in the Directive, are not bound by its rules and therefore may apply different time limits on voluntary departure.

Annex 2 Description of data-collection methods used

| Sources of info/method | Used? (Y/N) | List the sources: for secondary sources, cross-refer to bibliography; for primary sources list the stakeholders involved | Type of information provided (refer to question numbers/sections if useful) |
|---|-------------|--|---|
| Evaluations | No | N/A | N/A |
| Studies | Yes | Multiple studies | Information from the results of international and Greek qualitative and quantitative researches |
| Other reports | Yes | Multiple reports | Information from the results of international and Greek qualitative and quantitative researches |
| Legislation | Yes | Law 3386/2005 Joint Ministerial Decision 4000/4/32-ib of 4.9.2006 Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement Law. 2514/1997 Return Directive 2008/115/EC Law 3907/2011 Law 4251/2014 | National legislation framework and migration policy on Voluntary Return |
| Policy documents | Yes | N/A | N/A |
| 'Mystery shopper' | Yes | Internet search (search engines and websites) | How easily could a migrant find information about the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme? |
| Interviews with stakeholders (list the stakeholders) | Yes | Abedin Zinul, Engr., Dr., <i>President of Bangladesh Community in Greece, and President of All European Bangladesh Association (AEBA)</i> , on May 21, 2015 Alizadeh Taher, <i>President, Afghan Community of Migrants and Refugees in Greece</i> , on May 22, 2015 Esdras Daniel, <i>Chief of Mission at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Office in Greece</i> , on April 15, 2015 Syed Jamil, <i>President of the Pak Hellenic Cultural and Welfare Society (PHCWS/PEPE)</i> , on May 22, 2015 Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police | Two interview guides (one for IOM and the Hellenic Police and one for the representatives of migrant communities) were designed, with emphasis on how to reach and disseminate information for the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes the irregular migrants who are not in contact with the Authorities. In the first case (IOM and Hellenic Police), the interviews provided in-depth details of the dissemination of information regarding the Programmes. In the second case (migrant communities representatives), the interviews provided in-depth details for the use and dissemination of information regarding the Programmes. |
| Consultation with national stakeholder (list them) | Yes | Hellenic Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and Aliens Directorate of the Hellenic Police | Collection of data, information, figures (descriptive, qualitative and quantitative/statistical data) |
| Consultation with national network | Yes | European Migration Network/Hellenic Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction | Recommendations for the Study and for Draft 1 and Draft 2 |
| Other (specify) | Yes | Greek Police, International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Office for Greece, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), METAdrasi | Collection of data, information, figures (descriptive, qualitative and quantitative/statistical data) |