



International Organization for Migration

Country Office Austria

Editorial

2014 will be a very interesting year for IOM in Austria. For many stakeholders in the field of migration, including IOM, the new institutional setting – namely integration agendas moving from the Federal Ministry of the Interior to the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs plus the newly created Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the Federal Administrative Court absorbing the former Asylum Court – brings new challenges and opportunities.

On 27 December 2013 at a noontime ceremony, the Director General of IOM, William Lacy Swing, and newly-appointed Minister Sebastian Kurz signed the long-pending Seat Agreement between IOM and the Republic of Austria, which is a major achievement for the organization in Austria. The Seat Agreement regulates the status of the organization. The content is oriented on standards for such agreements and includes the inviolability of the seat premises, immunity from legal process, inviolability of archives and freedom from taxation and customs duties. The privileges and immunities of IOM staff are also lined out. The provisions of the agreement will enter into force retrospectively from the opening of the IOM Regional Office Vienna for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia on 1 July 2011. The conclusion of the Seat Agreement mirrors the continuous excellent relations between IOM and Austria. We are very proud that we have established the adjustment of our status to those of comparable organizations in Austria with the Seat Agreement and we are looking forward to continue the excellent relationship with old and new counterparts during the coming years on the basis of this agreement.

CulTrain will continue in 2014

Due to a steady demand and the enthusiastic feedback during the project implementation in 2012 and 2013, CulTrain will continue to be implemented as of February 2014. IOM Vienna will again be offering cultural orientation trainings to (former) unaccompanied minors as in 2012 and 2013. Within the trainings, comprehensive information regarding Austria and its people will be provided. The aim of the project is to provide the target group with information about Austria's culture and social customs in order to assist them to successfully integrate into Austrian society.

In 2013, a demand was identified to make cultural orientation trainings accessible to young refugees in general – and not only to unaccompanied minors. Therefore the target group was broadened and young refugees or persons with subsidiary protection status aged 15 to 27 with a speaking level of German corresponding to A1 and above are now eligible for the project. As unaccompanied minors are still included and constitute an especially vulnerable group, their specific needs will of course be taken into account and addressed during the trainings.

IOM Vienna will conduct the cultural orientation trainings for young refugees to support their integration at an early stage, supplemented with intercultural events and a new component, namely extra-curricular activities. The intercultural events will be organized together with different local Austrian youth organizations. These events aim to improve the exchange between the target group and Austrian youth and to reduce fears of contact on both sides. The overall long-term goal is to positively shape the interaction process with the host community and to ease integration. The extra-curricular activities, such as visits to museums or workshops in cooperation with relevant institutions, will be organized in Vienna as a pilot measure and aim at empowering the beneficiaries to participate in their daily lives to a greater extent.

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Katerina Kratzmann,
Head of Office



Join us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/pages/CulTrain/136540089819199>



IOM management team, IOM Focal points and project partners at the first coordination meeting in Budapest on 13 February 2014.



IOM Nepal conducting a cultural orientation class.



Overseas jobseekers prepare/get the required pre-departure orientation at the POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration).

Start of HEADSTART – Fostering integration before departure

Migrant integration policy approaches across the EU have increasingly recognized the role of countries of origin in fostering successful integration of newly arriving migrants. The importance of integration measures from the very beginning of each migrant's stay was highlighted also in Austria with the establishment of the state secretary of integration in 2011. Nevertheless, the provision of integration support measures should ideally already start in the respective country of origin, for example by sharing information on admission regulations as well as by offering language or vocational tuition. Such activities are already implemented occasionally in some EU member states. Hence, a clear need has emerged to consolidate the lessons learnt from existing practices by various actors, as well as to explore pathways to a stronger link between pre-departure and post-arrival immigrant integration services.

In 2014, IOM Vienna started the project "HEADSTART – Fostering integration before departure". HEADSTART is an international project, which is implemented in nine EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, The Netherlands, Italy and Portugal) by IOM Missions and their respective partner organizations. The partners in Austria are the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Integration Fund. The first coordination meeting took place on 13 February in Budapest, where all participating IOM Missions and their partners discussed the upcoming project activities.

The aim of the project is to enhance the capacity of service providers in countries of origin to deliver relevant and cost effective pre-departure integration services to third-country nationals migrating to the EU. Hence, it aims to improve labour market integration outcomes for third-country nationals in countries of destination by means of adequate information and training provision prior to departure.

We will keep you updated on future project activities and outcomes!

What outcomes can you expect from the project? For example a handbook which will pay special attention to the role of Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) as a specific instrument for pre-departure information and training provision, including recommendations on the standard operating procedures, design, institutional set-up, training, competences, data collection and evaluation. The handbook and the outcomes of the project will be presented at the final conference which will be organized in Vienna in May 2015.

The project is co-financed by the European Integration Fund, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Italian Ministry of the Interior.



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Julia Rutz,
Head of Research

Meet Julia Rutz from IOM Vienna

As of 1 January 2014, the Research and Migration Law Department, which is mainly implementing the National Contact Point Austria in the European Migration Network, is headed by Julia Rutz. Ms. Rutz is aided by a team of three staff and two interns with specializations in the broad area of migration and asylum on national and European level. Before assuming her duties with IOM in Vienna, Ms. Rutz worked as Defence Counsel Expert of EUPOL COPPS (EU Common Security and Defence Policy Mission) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, supporting the Palestinian Authorities in building up a state based on Rule of Law. Based on her experience as Human Rights Lawyer, she also was seconded as Human Rights Officer to the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and lectured at The Hague University of Applied Sciences in the program International and European Law.

International Workshop for Return Counsellors in Vienna, December 2013

The main annual event of the Department for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR), the "International Workshop for Return Counsellors", took place in Vienna on 3 – 4 December 2013. As in previous years, it was hosted on the premises of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and featured the reintegration projects co-funded by the Ministry and the European Return Fund.

As the opening speakers pointed out, the workshop served as an indicator of the constructive and open working relationship between the Ministry, the organization and return counselling organizations in Austria. IOM colleagues from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan and the Russian Federation as well as representatives of our implementing partner in the Chechen Republic, the NGO "Vesta", gave an overview of the general socio-economic conditions returnees experience in these countries, as well as of the implemented reintegration support activities. Additional country-specific and topical working groups (on "vulnerable returnees", "families, women, children", "medical issues" and "sustainable reintegration") provided further opportunities for constructive in-depth discussions among all participants.

Once again, the workshop proved to be an excellent forum for exchange with return counselling organizations and other stakeholders from Austria and abroad, with more than 50 persons participating on each of both days.

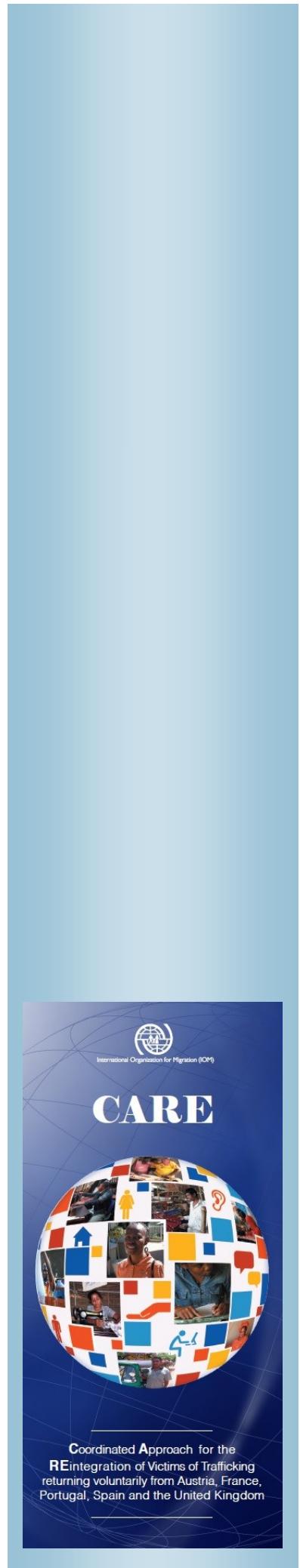


CARE: Coordinated Approach for the REintegration of Victims of Trafficking

The CARE project provides targeted assistance measures to trafficked persons who voluntarily return to their country of origin in order to jump-start their reintegration. Based on the needs of the individuals and the resources available in the country of origin, this assistance could take the form of medical or psychological support, professional training, education, job placement and/or business start-ups.

The project adopts a victim-centred approach whereby each beneficiary will receive individual assistance according to his/her specific condition and recovery needs. The project is open to men, women and minors in Austria, France, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom who have been trafficked and wish to return to their country of origin outside of the EU. Altogether, the project will assist up to 130 trafficked persons, including 10 minors.

The two-year project is headed by IOM Paris and is financed by the EU Return Fund (90%) and co-funded by the project partners (10%).



THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RECEPTION SYSTEM IN AUSTRIA

Saskia Koppenberg

Co-financed by the European Union
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The European Migration Network (EMN) is co-ordinated by the European Commission with National Contact Points (NCPs) established in all EU Member States and Norway. The National Contact Point Austria in the EMN is financially supported by the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

The study, synthesis report and EMN Inform are available at www.emn.at.

EMN Study: The Organization of the Reception System in Austria

The National Contact Point Austria in the European Migration Network (EMN) recently published a study on the reception system for asylum-seekers and other beneficiaries in Austria. The study explains the roles and responsibilities of the actors of the Austrian reception system and describes reception conditions in the different reception facilities in Austria as foreseen by federal and provincial legislation. The study does not provide an assessment of the quality of reception conditions but does refer to external assessments and related media reports. It also investigates recent trends in the number of applicants for international protection and related challenges for the reception system, as well as the availability of mechanisms to address these.

The study is one of 23 national reports of EU Member States and Norway, conducted in the framework of the EMN. The background for the study provides the realization that despite introduction of harmonized reception standards at EU level, i.e. through the Reception Conditions Directive of 27 January 2003 (2003/9/EC), Member States have difficulties to ensure similar reception conditions. In this regard, the study identified some legislative gaps in the distribution of competencies between the federal and provincial levels, as well as divergences in the access to reception conditions and their quality throughout Austria. Also, constraints to deal in a flexible manner with fluctuating numbers of asylum-seekers were identified.

The results of the study were incorporated into a comparative synthesis report that seeks to analyze similarities and differences in the reception systems and to identify good practices that provide flexible and efficient reception facilities while ensuring the quality of reception conditions. Furthermore, an EMN Inform summarizing the synthesis report was also published.

TRAFFICKED PERSONS AS ASYLUM-SEEKERS

The Process of Identification and Access to Residence Rights in Austria



Adel-Naim Reyhani

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EMN Study: Trafficked persons as asylum-seekers – the process of identification and access to residence rights in Austria

The EMN National Contact Point for Austria also recently published a study on trafficked persons as asylum seekers in Austria. The study addresses two issues: the process of identifying asylum-seeking trafficked persons, and their access to residence rights. The study focuses on asylum procedures, but also covers forced return procedures, since asylum-seeking trafficked persons can be subject to return measures. Furthermore, the authority deciding on asylum matters is also responsible for the administration of forced return procedures.

Efforts to combat human trafficking in Austria have gained momentum in recent years; identifying and protecting trafficked persons are key elements of the national counter-trafficking strategy. The effective identification of victims makes the phenomenon visible, and is necessary to prosecute traffickers and protect trafficked persons. Access to residence rights for trafficked persons serves both the aims of protecting trafficked persons and of effective prosecution.

This study shows that improving the identification and protection of trafficked persons who apply for international protection in Austria can be a “piece of the puzzle” in the fight against trafficking. The study evaluates the options provided in Austria for this purpose by analyzing case law and providing a comparison of the available schemes. As with the previous study, the results were incorporated into a comparative synthesis report of contributions from 23 EU Member States and Norway. An EMN Inform summarizing the synthesis report was also published.

The National Contact Point Austria in the EMN is financially supported by the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

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