



International Organization for Migration

Special Liaison Mission in Vienna



IOM Vienna Activities

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Focus: IOM's Regional Engagement

Editorial from the Director

The recent North African uprisings, particularly in Libya, as well as the tragic earthquake and ensuing tsunami in Japan have highlighted the ongoing significance of migration management in times of crisis.

On the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, at the borders of Libya and in Japan, IOM has been actively assisting migrants in collaboration with partners across the globe. With the support of donors and in cooperation with States, NGOs and UN agencies, IOM has continued to receive asylum seekers on Lampedusa, evacuate migrant workers from Libya, and disseminate multilingual disaster information to non-Japanese speaking migrants in Japan. By offering shelter, food, legal counselling and travel support, IOM and its partners are providing ongoing assistance to channel significant migration flows and diminish individual suffering.

Both political and environmental crises can induce human movement with worldwide repercussions. Through jointly and pragmatically addressing challenges, while heeding the needs of vulnerable individuals such as unaccompanied minors, the sick and the elderly, sustainable responses can be found. As the crises continue and evolve, IOM will remain active in managing related migration flows to meet the needs of both States and individuals.



Andreas Halbach, Chief of Mission of IOM Vienna

Fleeing the Conflict in Libya: IOM and UNHCR evacuate migrants

The continuing rebel conflict in Libya and the international military intervention backed by the UN Security Council have led to the largest international migrant evacuation since the First Gulf War. As of 3 April, IOM, in partnership with UNHCR, had organized the return of nearly 90,498 migrants to their countries of origin and the evacuations continue daily.

At the moment, outflows from Libya remain primarily composed of third country national migrant workers who wish to return to their home countries. With the assistance of donor support – including from Austria – IOM and UNHCR have provided food, shelter and onward travel by sea and air for migrants from over 30 countries, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Tunisia, China, Ghana, Mali and Sudan.

IOM is currently employing more than 100 staff members in the field and in Headquarters to directly deal with the crisis situation in partnership with UNHCR. At Libya's borders, IOM's Operations team is providing ongoing services to migrants on a daily basis. Border teams are on duty twenty-four hours a day to receive migrants and provide shelter, medical assistance and food. Transportation is provided to camps and departure points and bookings are arranged for onward travel. Upon arrival in their country of destination, migrants are met at the airport by IOM personnel. IOM's partner UNHCR is responsible for camp management and identifying individuals in need of international protection.

Due to the large outflows of migrants, sometimes reaching over 7,000 a day, border camps have become congested, as evacuations cannot be carried out at the same rate that migrants arrive at the border. With the assistance of donor support, IOM hopes to increase the rate of evacuations to 6,000 people per day to decrease the number of migrants stranded at the border.

As the crisis continues, IOM and UNHCR are continuing to monitor the situation to ensure that humanitarian assistance remains flexible and capable of meeting unpredictable needs. The immediate priority is to de-congest border and transit camps. If necessary, further operations may need to be carried out within Libyan territory to evacuate migrants unable to reach the border.

Although evacuation flows currently consist of migrant workers, IOM and UNHCR are analysing the composition of cross-border movements to ensure that individuals in need of international protection receive proper assistance and that emerging refugee flows are handled in accordance with international law. With the support of international donors, who have contributed through financial support and the provision of flights and non-food items, IOM and UNHCR will continue assisting migrants fleeing the conflict until the heavy migration outflows have ceased.

Countering Human Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe

Enticed with promises of jobs and a bright future abroad, thousands of Nigerians are trafficked annually to Europe. Victims of forced labour and/or sexual exploitation, they end up in factories, brothels, on the streets or in domestic servitude across the continent, endeavouring to pay back loans of up to \$100,000 imposed on them by their traffickers. Strict control and threats of violence against them and their families are used to subdue any resistance. Once their debts are paid off, many may see no option but to become involved in the trafficking business themselves, and so the vicious cycle continues.*

To counter-act this phenomenon, IOM Vienna, in cooperation with UNODC and the NGO EXIT, is launching a new project to prevent and combat human trafficking from Nigeria. Bringing together countries of origin and destination, the project aims to build cooperation among various stakeholders. Six European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) are participating in the initiative, as is Nigeria. One of the main obstacles in fighting human trafficking from Nigeria to Europe is the fact that transnational collaboration is limited, which makes the problem difficult to tackle. IOM's project therefore focuses on encouraging transnational partnerships and networks. It is also designed to open direct channels of communication and develop standard operational procedures among law enforcement, the judiciary and victim service providers in both regions.

Study visits to Nigeria and to Belgium will be organized for law enforcement, judiciary and civil society representatives from the seven participating countries, to be followed by a capacity-building workshop in Austria. These events will increase participants' understanding of the workings of human trafficking and will allow strategies and best practices to be shared. In this way communication and cooperation among countries will be facilitated. In tandem with networking stakeholders, awareness-raising activities are planned. A travelling Film Festival will take place in three regions of Nigeria where human trafficking is endemic. Along with accompanying media workshops, this event will draw public attention to the crime of human trafficking and increase understanding of the complexity of the problem.

IOM Vienna and project partners are currently hard at work on preparations for the June study visit to Nigeria. A questionnaire is being circulated to experts in order to gather input regarding the design of awareness-raising materials. Travel plans and schedules are being drawn up and meetings are being planned. More information on this counter-trafficking project and the upcoming study visit to Nigeria will be available in the next edition of the IOM Vienna newsletter, so stay tuned!

*Carling, Jorgen. Migration, Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe. IOM. 2005



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



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News from the Austrian EMN National Contact Point



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Re-Launch of Website: The National Contact Point (NCP) Austria in the European Migration Network has re-launched its Website www.emn.at with a new user friendly design. The website provides information about EMN's aims, tasks and structure, and offers EMN Reports, EMN Studies as well as the EMN Glossary for download. Current news on migration and the EMN Newsletter are provided, and EMN events and other national events in the area of migration, asylum and integration are announced. Event invitations and announcements sent to ncpaustria@iom.int can also be published online. The website furthermore offers an overview of actors in the field of migration and asylum in Austria via a directory.

Annual Policy Report 2010: The EMN Annual Policy Report 2010 will be available soon. The Annual Policy Report is compiled by each NCP in order to provide an overview of national political and legal developments and debates in the area of migration and asylum as well as the implementation of both the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum and the Stockholm Programme. This approach facilitates the production of the European Commission's Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum, which will be elaborated this year for the second time. The European Commission will report to the European Council in June 2011 on the implementation of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum and the Stockholm Programme, referring to the situation in the EU Member States based on the Annual Policy Reports of the EMN NCPs.



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Further information on the EMN is available at www.emn.at.

Improving Border Cooperation in the Western Balkans

The UK High Commission in Zagreb has pledged funds to IOM Zagreb to carry out an institutional analysis and develop terms of reference for potential follow-up projects for the enhancement of cross-border cooperation in the region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia have each adopted their own Strategies and Action Plans to implement the EU concept of Integrated Border Management (IBM), thus paving the way for improved intra-service, inter-agency and international cooperation and coordination. However, countries are implementing their IBM Strategies and Action Plans independently, not necessarily taking into account cooperation and/or coordination with their neighbours.

This assessment report, which will identify issues that may prevent successful cooperation in border matters, will be elaborated under the lead of the Technical Cooperation Specialist posted at IOM Vienna, who visited and held meetings with all relevant institutions and other key stakeholders in these four countries during March 2011.

International police cooperation, as part of the 3rd pillar ("International Cooperation") of IBM, requires an appropriate legal framework in order to be fully effective. The Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe, often referred to as the Vienna Convention 2006, will provide this framework for cross-border cooperation in the region. The Convention was signed on 5 May 2006 during the Austrian presidency of the EU. After ratification by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, the Convention entered into force on 10 October 2007. Bulgaria acceded to the Convention on 25 September 2008.



Ministers of the Interior signing the Vienna Convention on 5 May 2006.

The Convention envisages modern forms of cooperation among the Contracting Parties, similar to the respective provisions in the Schengen Acquis, such as joint threat analysis, deployment of police liaison officers, witness protection, cross-border surveillance and hot pursuit, controlled delivery, undercover investigations, technical measures for facilitating trans-border cooperation, joint investigation teams, mixed patrols along the state border and cooperation in Joint Police Cooperation Centers.

The full implementation of the Convention will assist those signatory countries currently not members or candidate countries of the EU to accelerate their eventual accession.

Migration and Health in the EU

IOM Vienna was recently granted the opportunity to network with various stakeholders in the field of health and migration at the *Crossing Borders: Medizin im Spannungsfeld der Migration* conference that took place on the 11-12th of March. Held by the Austrian Medical Students' Association at the AKH Vienna, it brought together researchers covering a diverse range of topics including Female Genital Mutilation, Brain Drain/Gain/Circulation, and Linguistic and Cultural Barriers in Healthcare, with an overriding emphasis on healthcare for all within the EU.

IOM Vienna managed an info stand over the two-day conference, handing out relevant background reports and policy briefs produced by IOM. Mainly, these reports and policy papers reflected strategies resulting from the Analysis of Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities project that focused on maternal and child healthcare, research in migration health, capacity building for health professionals, and developing a legal and policy framework to address health inequalities. Another major project was presented, the Mobility of Health Professionals project, which collected qualitative data on the professions, motivations and social contexts of mobile

healthcare workers in the EU; those data were then combined with already existing data and statistics from healthcare institutions to facilitate a new understanding of healthcare professionals' movements.

IOM colleagues successfully networked with several speakers and stakeholders and explored future partnerships. After the symposium, IOM Vienna followed up with a number of institutes conducting research on migration and health, with the aim to link their findings with IOM research to develop concrete projects in this field.



Success Story: Voluntary Return to Kosovo

IOM Vienna's three Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) projects under the 2010 Return Fund Programme are approaching the end of the implementation phase. The focus is currently on the completion of the reintegration measures for returnees in Kosovo, Nigeria and Chechnya, the three country of return. These reintegration measures include small business start-ups vocational training, and special assistance to vulnerable groups.



To increase the sustainability of the return and reintegration assistance and to support the Kosovar returnees who wish to work in the agricultural sector, IOM Vienna introduced an innovative project component in the third project phase, which focuses on developing supportive structures and networks in the field of agriculture.

Experiences with this new component were very positive throughout the project. Returnees were particularly interested in the meetings organized by the Kosovar agronomist Dr. Salih Salihu in the cities of Peja, Mitrovica and Gjilan. During these meetings, participants received and exchanged information on cooperation opportunities, development of farming and marketing techniques and possible applications for government subsidies and microloans.

One of the beneficiaries of the Kosovo project and its newly established emphasis on the agricultural sector is Mr. H.,

who returned in February 2011 with the wish to start a business in the agricultural sector, in which he has worked before his departure to Austria.

Mr. H's family owns 2.5 hectares of productive land, which he plans to cultivate. Prior to his departure from Kosovo, Mr. H. had to borrow the necessary farming equipment from his neighbours. However, with the support of the AVRR project, he will be able to purchase a new motor cultivator and a plough. Mr. H.'s business will guarantee his family stable employment, a regular income and the basis to build a new life in Kosovo.

All three AVRR projects are co-funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. Additional funding for the Kosovo project is provided by Lower Austria, Carinthia and Tirol.



Current Activities of the IOM Vienna Operations Department

IOM Vienna's Operations Department serves the needs of ever-changing clients travelling from, to or via Austria. Apart from the implementation of the General Voluntary Return Program, which remains a major activity of the unit with over 3,000 returnees in 2010, the Operations department deals with activities such as resettlement and family reunification, in collaboration with the Austrian Red Cross and IOM Missions in the respective countries.

IOM organizes the logistics of migration movements from and via Austria, including all travel arrangements and airport assistance at Vienna International Airport. Special needs of vulnerable clients are taken into consideration, such as unaccompanied minors, who always travel with the consent of a legal guardian and are escorted to their final destination when necessary.

The Operations Department also organizes medical escorts and special medical support in airport transit areas for passengers with medical needs, e.g. supply with oxygen in transit and on board, assistance for pregnant women, etc.

Clients being resettled to the U.S., Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, are offered reasonably priced one-way tickets with special conditions such as increased baggage allowance. In order to enable the movement of refugees who have been approved to join their relatives abroad, IOM collaborates with the Austrian Red Cross in attaining necessary travel documents and visas.



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Refugees under the family reunification category may undergo a health assessment and pre-departure cultural orientation. In 2010, 37 family members mainly from African and Asian countries could be reunited with their relatives in Austria with the help of IOM Vienna.