



# International Organization for Migration

## Special Liaison Mission in Vienna



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### IOM Activities in Austria

#### Focus: Unaccompanied Minors

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### Raising Awareness about UAM's Rights in the European Union

In recent years, several European Union Member States (EU MS) have experienced an increased arrival and reception of unaccompanied minors\* (UAMs), entering either legally or irregularly. This is due to several reasons. Some UAMs are seeking asylum or protection based on the fear of persecution or because of human rights violations, armed conflict or disturbance in their own country, some are victims of human trafficking for sexual or other types of exploitation. Others have travelled to Europe to escape conditions of serious deprivation or to look for new opportunities or a better life; and some are in transit, passing through the EU to a final destination.

This situation has resulted in a need to develop and implement an appropriate policy response as well as to raise awareness among the affected group: UAMs across the EU. In order to raise awareness among UAMs on their rights, IOM is currently implementing a project in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania with the financial support of the European Commission. The project aims to increase the awareness of UAMs about the rights they are entitled to within the EU as well as their awareness of the risks they face by migrating alone and leaving the reception centres hosting them.

This elevated level of rights awareness is being achieved through several activities in the participating countries. Interviews with UAMs as well as with experts and practitioners were conducted by IOM missions in order to identify the needs of UAMs, their constraints and possible solutions as well as to research the characters of the awareness raising movie, which is the main outcome of the project.

Following a discussion of the results of each country report based on the conducted interviews, the content and the structure of the six short stories of the movie were decided upon. These characters cover the rights and responsibilities of UAMs as well as the risks they face when they leave the reception centres.

The one hour fictional movie "My Name Is" depicts six different characters and demonstrates the rights granted to UAMs in the European Union. It shows how they can exercise these rights in the reception centres as well as the risks linked to disappearing from the centres, such as falling victim to human trafficking or being re-trafficked or becoming involved in other criminal networks.

One of the six short stories was filmed in Vienna. It portrays the story of Wali, a 17 year old boy from Afghanistan who has escaped war and was smuggled into the EU where he is seeking asylum and would like to trace his family. In order to reach as many people as possible, the movie will be screened not only in UAMs reception centres but also at film festivals throughout Austria and Europe, at interested institutions and other relevant stakeholders as well as at trainings and workshops on this topic. The movie was shot in English, dubbed in 12 languages and subtitled in 14 other languages.

For further information on this project: [www.belgium.iom.int](http://www.belgium.iom.int) / [www.iomvienna.at](http://www.iomvienna.at)



\*a third-country national or stateless person below the age of eighteen, who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them. (Council Directive 2001/55/EC)

Photos from the movie „My Name Is“  
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## Unaccompanied minors travelling under the auspices of IOM

For over 10 years, IOM Vienna has assisted migrants in need to return home through the General Humanitarian Return Programme, in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. The IOM Vienna Operations Department organizes the return journey on request of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public authorities and ensures the safe return of the people concerned to their home country.

The basis of this assistance is the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2000 by representatives of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the International Organization for Migration. Since then, thousands of voluntary returnees have been successfully assisted in their return to their home countries. Members of the Programme's target group are indigent asylum applicants whose asylum claims have been rejected, persons who do not have the right to residence in Austria as well as persons who have filed an asylum application and have decided to withdraw their application.

Operations staff members place particular focus on the special needs of vulnerable returnees such as the elderly, single parent families or unaccompanied minors.



Passengers at Vienna International Airport  
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In Austria, the term "unaccompanied minor" is defined by the Settlement and Residence Act as a foreign national under 18 years old who is not accompanied by his or her legally responsible adult. Children travelling alone via air with the permission of their parents also fall under this category.

Through their work assisting migrants travelling to, from and through Vienna International Airport, the IOM Vienna Operations Department is responsible for assisting unaccompanied minors travelling under IOM auspices. In such cases, additional measures are undertaken to provide for the well-being of the minor at hand.

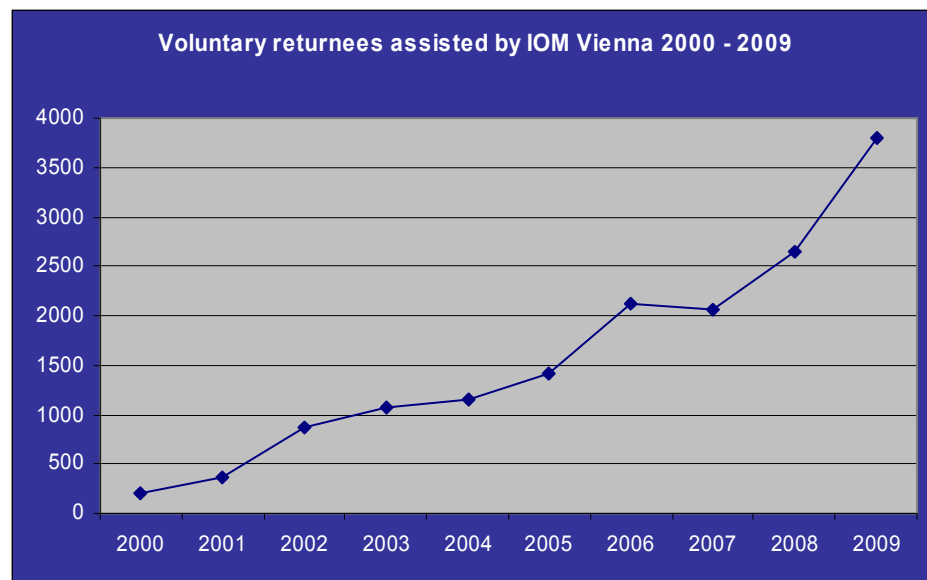
Airlines generally provide supervision services to minors aged 5-11 and 12-18, at the request of the parent. According to airline regulations, it is not possible for children under the age of five to fly unaccompanied.

Parents need to inform the airline in advance, as a service fee is charged for accompanying the minor. Parents are also required to inform the airline beforehand of who will be bringing the child to the airport and picking him or her up at the destination and the relevant adults are required to provide identification to airline personnel. Such regulations prevent unknown individuals from picking up the child in question. The airline assumes responsibility for the child until he or she has been picked up by the indicated individual.

If the child is travelling through IOM family reunification, resettlement or assisted voluntary return programmes, IOM staff meets the child at the arrival gate. In order for the child to recognize the IOM staff member picking him or her up, Operations personnel carry bags with a large IOM logo printed on them to make themselves more visible.

In June 2010, the IOM Vienna Operations Department assisted a twelve-year-old boy travelling from Adis Abeba, Ethiopia to be reunited with his mother in Vienna. The journey took a total of 10 hours, including a stop-over in Frankfurt. During the layover, the airline personnel brought the boy to the children's lounge where he could relax after the long flight and have a bite to eat. Upon his arrival in Vienna, the boy was picked up by IOM Vienna Operations staff and brought to his mother, who was waiting in the arrival area.

## Statistics



The IOM Vienna Operations Department regularly assists migrants to return home voluntarily through the General Humanitarian Return Programme.

During this process, IOM Vienna organizes the return journey, provides support at the airport, and ensures the safe return of the people concerned to their specific home country.

Between 2000 and 2009 over **15,000** returnees were assisted by IOM Vienna's Operations Department.



## IOM Vienna provides reintegration assistance to Kosovar, Nigerian and Chechen returnees

Three country-specific assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) projects complementing the General Humanitarian Return Programme are currently being implemented by IOM Vienna. The projects offer non-cash measures such as reception assistance at the airport in the country of origin, transportation to the final destination, reintegration counselling, in-kind support for small business start-ups and business trainings, purchase of professional tools and equipment necessary for the returnee's occupation, vocational and on-the-job training and job placements. Furthermore, IOM provides special assistance to vulnerable returnees with special needs such as medical assistance, housing support or "cash for care" (financial support for family members taking the care of elderly/ill/disabled returnees).

The reintegration assistance offered in the framework of these projects is at present open to voluntary returnees to Kosovo, Nigeria and the Russian Federation/Chechen Republic. The amount of the reintegration assistance varies depending on the country of return and its socio-economic conditions.



Peja, March 2010. This Kosovar returnee (left) helped his family to expand their agricultural business by buying livestock and renovating the barn with the assistance of the IOM reintegration project.  
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Lagos, June 2010. This Nigerian returnee used the reintegration assistance provided by IOM to set up a boutique in downtown Lagos. ©IOM 2010 all rights reserved

maintaining a good personal relationship with the returnees.

During a pilot phase from March to June 2010, twelve Chechen families were supported after their return to the Russian Federation/the Chechen Republic in their reintegration efforts with business courses, professional tools, construction material and assistance for business start-ups. The efficient structures for the administration and implementation of reintegration assistance that have been established in the framework of the pilot phase constitute a good basis for the successful continuation of the project, which started in July 2010.

Since all three projects have been selected for continuation under the European Return Fund 2010, more returnees to Kosovo, Nigeria and the Russian Federation/Chechen Republic will be provided with reintegration assistance in the following months in order to be able to build up a new life in their country of origin.

These projects are funded by the European Return Fund and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

Between September 2008 and June 2010, almost 250 voluntary returnees to Kosovo plus over 100 family members received reintegration support from IOM. Most returnees used this support to set up their own micro-business. These businesses were mostly located in the agricultural sector where the returnees already had previous experience. Monitoring shows that although the current socio-economic situation in Kosovo is still difficult, most returnees look ahead confidently.

In Nigeria, almost 60 voluntary returnees from Austria received assistance in their reintegration process between January and August 2010. All of them set up their own small businesses in areas such as transport, retail or services with the assistance of IOM reintegration support. The majority of the returnees are in close contact with IOM Lagos and the IOM staff members are very engaged in



Groznensky District, June 2010. This experienced Chechen pastry chef bought a professional electronic oven and mixer for pastry production with the assistance of reintegration measures provided by IOM.  
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## Africa's Dimension in Western Media International Symposium

The FIFA World Cup in South Africa and the numerous reports from and about Africa following the event motivated Vienna-based Radio Africa TV to organize an International Symposium dedicated to Africa and media. The event, sponsored and co-organized by diverse partners such as the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, Austrian Broadcasting (ORF), the University of Vienna, Afrikanet.info, VIDC, the US Embassy, the Renner Institut, die Presse, AVP and IOM Vienna, sought to analyze the presence of African migrants in the national media and compare Austrian reporting to the coverage of other western national media.

The symposium covered four thematic areas: a) concept development of the media politics, b) reporting on Africa in the western media, c) media politics and its backgrounds, and d) migrants and/or diaspora in the western media landscape. Each panel discussion will be composed of relevant experts and followed by a roundtable discussion.

Tanja Dedovic, Liaison und Special Programme Coordinator at IOM Vienna, moderated the panel discussion "Migrants and/or African Diaspora in the western media landscape: Applicability of positive experiences to the Austrian reality"

Representatives from French TV and radio stations as well as from a German-African news magazine provided insight and input to the discussion. Conclusion was reached on the necessity to enhance intercultural media integration.

Further information in the German language as well as the agenda can be found at [www.iomvienna.at](http://www.iomvienna.at).

## News from the Austrian National Contact Point to the European Migration Network



E. Petzl (Researcher), M. Temesvári (Legal Advisor), A. Dederichs (NCP LU) and K. Kratzmann (Head of Research) at the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. ©IOM 2010 all rights reserved

The European Migration Network (EMN) was formally established by Council Decision 2008/381/EC in May 2008. Its objective is to provide up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum in order to support policymaking in the European Union and on the national level as well as to provide the wider public with information in these areas. The EMN presently consists of 26 National Contact Points (NCPs), which are established in EU Member States and are designated by the government of their respective Member State. In Austria, the EMN NCP is based at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Vienna. Norway recently joined the EMN and is in the process of establishing an NCP.

To further foster its national network, the Austrian EMN Contact Point presented its objectives and tasks to the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior on 21 June 2010. During the presentation, the team of the Austrian NCP introduced itself and outlined its various activities.

Each year, the EMN undertakes 2-3 studies covering specific migration and asylum-related issues. Each NCP produces a national report, which are then combined in a synthesis report. As such the recent publication of the EMN "Unaccompanied minors – an EU comparative study" influenced the Commission's "Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors", both the national and synthesis studies are available on <http://emn.sarenet.es>.

This year's EMN study focus lies on labour migration. Within this context, the Austrian EMN Contact Point is hosting the National EMN Conference on "Labour Migration and its Challenges in the EU – Perspectives in the EU Member States", which will take place on 21 October 2010 at the House of the European Union in Vienna from 9:30am to 5:00 pm.



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