

We hope that this finds you and your colleagues, families and loved ones in good health. This newsletter will provide you an insight into the work of IOM in Austria, as well as some information about IOM's activities in Tunisia. We wish you an interesting read and a peaceful holiday season!

Austrian Return Day 2022

On 6 December 2022, return counsellors from all over Austria met in Vienna with central stakeholders of the Austrian return system to exchange on voluntary return and reintegration. Besides the Ministry of the Interior (Mol) and IOM, representatives of Caritas, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA), LEFÖ-IBF and UNHCR also joined this year's Return Day.


During this event, the Mol provided the audience with relevant information on current strategies and measures to further strengthen voluntary return from Austria. Also, representatives of the BFA took the opportunity to present its Austrian-wide network on voluntary return which among other things aims at improving knowledge transfer and coordination to further promote voluntary return.

Certainly, one of the highlights of this event were three case studies on vulnerable returnees presented by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services' (BBU) return counsellors. These stories on the return counselling process put the focus on the returning individuals and provided the audience with vivid insights into the complexity of return counselling case management. Mr. Achraimer, BBU's Chief Executive Officer and Austria's Coordinator for Ukrainian Refugees, took the opportunity to once more express his appreciation for the return counsellors' high dedication and commitment in the assistance of migrants in need.

All stakeholders are looking forward to continuing discussions and exchange with return counsellors on Return Day 2023.

The project RESTART III - Support for the Austrian return system and the reintegration of voluntary returnees is co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.



 **Federal Ministry
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Key stakeholders on voluntary return in Austria (from left to right): Clemens Lederer (Mol), Edith Vasilyev (IOM), Alois Mühlbacher (BFA), Andreas Achraimer (BBU), Marian Benbow Pfisterer (IOM), Michael Hajek (BBU). © IOM

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ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN & REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

IOM Austria visits voluntary returnees in Tunisia

In October 2022, the AVRR team conducted a monitoring visit to Tunisia in the framework of the project *RESTART III - Support for the Austrian return system and the reintegration of voluntary returnees*. Staff members from IOM Austria and Tunisia met voluntary returnees from Austria to hear their personal reintegration stories. The over 1,200 km long-round trip through the country to the beneficiaries' return locations offered rich impressions about the diversity of the returnees' situation as well as the socio-economic circumstances in Tunisia.

With the help of a semi-structured survey, IOM Austria staff assessed the economic, social and psychosocial situation of the returnees who had implemented their reintegration plans with the assistance of the project. A total of ten interviews with beneficiaries who voluntarily returned to Tunisia between February 2021 and July 2022 were held.

On a general note, IOM Austria was impressed by the stories of the returnees, who faced various challenges after their return. Due to high inflation and unemployment rates, returnees highly depend on the financial support of their families and friends. The income generated through the investment of the reintegration assistance in businesses such as a grocery store, a mobile phone shop, a tailor's shop, a business for renting decorations and objects for weddings, or a farm serves as an additional income for the family in many cases.



Tunisian flag in Sousse © IOM

INTEGRATION

Asyl-TRAIN II - Training on successful communication with asylum seekers and migrants

The project [Asyl-Train II](#) aims to enhance the overall management of migration and asylum in Austria by providing trainings on human trafficking and on intercultural competence to actors in the migration and asylum system. This year, the project team developed a new training on successful communication with asylum seekers and migrants. A great number of factors influence communication and may lead to day-to-day challenges in interactions in the context of asylum and migration, often exacerbated by high levels of stress and perhaps frustration on both sides. In the new training, participants are invited to reflect on communication barriers they experience and to identify work-arounds. They then receive a short introduction on tools for nonviolent communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg. A part of the training with expert Nora Ramirez Castillo is dedicated to trauma-informed communication, i.e. a communication that allows asylum seekers to feel safe to engage in conversation and feel they have control on what is happening. In this block, underlying dynamics when interacting in the fields of migration and asylum with people who experienced traumatic events are made visible and reflected.

The project Asyl-Train II is co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.



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Training participants discuss communication challenges in their work with migrants and asylum seekers. © IOM

INTEGRATION

What's new in the project WIR IV - Workshops on Integration and Encounters

In autumn, our WIR IV workshop series took place in Vienna and Graz. In Vienna, we held joint workshops with young women and men from the Chechen community for the first time.

Getting a taste of journalism competence in Vienna

"How did our parents live in Chechnya back then?"

"How does our life today differ from that of our parents, and what do we have in common?"

In two interviews with a Chechen historian and a Chechen woman living in Austria, our young participants in Vienna explored these questions. The young people slipped into the role of journalists. The produced film was screened at our closing event in Vienna on 16 December 2022.

Video-Blogs: Life realities of young Chechen women in Graz

A girl begins to wear a headscarf and experiences everyday racism...


A young woman wants to go her own way and seeks advice in an online forum...

And then there is everyday life as a Muslim girl in Graz: school, hobbies, meeting friends, etc. With their smartphones, our participants in Graz film their everyday lives and reflect on topics that affect them.

The video blogs will be presented at our closing event in Graz on 21 January 2023!



Young workshop participants prepare for their interview. © IOM

 **Federal Chancellery**
Republic of Austria



ERSTE
Stiftung

The WIR IV project is funded by the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria and supported by ERSTE Foundation.

Donation by ERSTE Foundation

In October 2022, the project WIR IV received a generous donation by ERSTE Foundation. During the official handover, we had the chance to exchange with the board members on how to empower young migrants and how multiple identities can be an opportunity.

With this support, we will continue to empower young people with a migration background.

Thank you so much, ERSTE Foundation!

Board Members of ERSTE Foundation hand over a 10.000 EUR donation to IOM Austria representatives.

© Marcel Billaudet



Addressing Structural Vulnerabilities in Migration and Asylum Processes

The **Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings**, the annual event of the Austrian Task Force on Combatting Human Trafficking, took place on 13 October 2022 under the title “No Future for Trafficking”. The event aims to sensitize the public to the issue of human trafficking and to provide a platform for exchange on current trends and strategies to prevent and reduce human trafficking. As in previous years, IOM Austria supported the Task Force in organizing the hybrid event.

Together with the LEFÖ Intervention Center for Trafficked Women and Girls (LEFÖ-IBF), IOM organized the workshop “Smuggled, Trafficked, Persecuted? Structural Vulnerabilities in Migration and Asylum Processes”, which examined structural factors in the context of migration and asylum that can foster human trafficking and exploitation. Experts on asylum and human trafficking from the Council of Europe, the European Migration Network (EMN), the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) as well as IOM and LEFÖ-IBF provided insight into practical challenges to protecting migrants from human trafficking and potential to increase resilience.

Based on the story of a Nigerian woman, participants accompanied a fictional trafficked person through several stages of her migration journey to experience the impact that a lack of protection structures had on a personal level. The complexity of a migration story – with possible junctions, circles, or return movements – was visually represented.

The experts gave the following recommendations to reduce structural vulnerabilities:

- Further strengthen **cooperation** on the national as well as on the European and international level between state agencies and non-governmental actors to facilitate mutual understanding and identify common ground to address human trafficking;
- **Raise awareness** of actors that may come into contact with trafficked persons in order to place victim protection at the center of all actions;
- Incorporate **proactive screening** into asylum and migration systems to better and more quickly identify exploitation and trafficking;
- Establish **coherent referral mechanism** between the asylum system and national victim protection organizations to enable sufficient and appropriate protection for trafficked persons; and
- Incorporate **threat assessments** into Dublin transfer decisions to prevent revictimization.

Links:

[Video recording of conference opening, keynote speech and panel discussion “No Future for Trafficking”](#)

[IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance to Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse](#)

Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

**NO FUTURE
FOR TRAFFICKING**

13 October 2022



EU Migration Talks: Trendbarometer Migration and Asylum 2022

On 21 October, EMN Austria organized an event discussing the integration of displaced persons from Ukraine in the context of the Temporary Protection Directive. The aim of this event was to provide food for thought on the development of integration measures in Austria.



EU MIGRATION TALKS

Trendbarometer Migration und Asyl 2022 –
Integration im Rahmen des temporären Schutzes
für vertriebene Personen aus der Ukraine

By bringing together seven experts and academics from different disciplines the complexity of the topic, the importance of academic exchange and evidence-based policy-making was highlighted. The speakers discussed the current political situation as well as the latest research findings in the field of integration. They also discussed the interaction between temporary protection, integration processes and return perspectives.

A summary of the event, the program, and the presentations can be found [here](#).

EMN Steering Committee

On 25 November 2022, the [Members of the Steering Committee](#) of the National Contact Point Austria met for their 15th annual meeting in Vienna. The National Steering Committee was established in 2008 to embed the National Contact Point Austria in the research and policy community working on migration and asylum.



EMN Steering Committee Meeting © IOM

The Steering Committee is composed of representatives from various ministries, interest groups and research institutions. During the meeting the National Contact Point Austria presented work completed in 2022, the EMN Work Program 2023-2025 as well as the study topics for the year 2023. At the same time, members of the Steering Committee presented their institutional priorities regarding migration and asylum for the coming year.



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