

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 Bosnia and Herzegovina. We wish you an interesting read!

IOM together with UNHCR and UNICEF advocates for Guardianship for Unaccompanied Minors from Day 1

A recent response from the Austrian Minister of the Interior to a parliamentary enquiry revealed that from January to July 2022, over 5,000 unaccompanied minors have disappeared from state care. While it is hoped that the children who have disappeared have found their ways to family members and safe environments in other countries, this is by no means guaranteed, as there are currently no reliable mechanisms to follow their traces, and data and evidence is therefore scarce. At the same time, children travelling on their own, without any protection, face severe risks of violence, exploitation and abuse, and in trying to find a way to family members and friends in other countries, they are vulnerable to child trafficking.

There are currently more than 1,000 unaccompanied children in Austrian federal shelters, but one important gap in protection puts them at heightened risk: Currently, children and young people between the ages of 14 and 18 who come to Austria without parents are largely on their own at the beginning of their asylum procedure. They have no support whatsoever with legal questions beyond the asylum procedure. Only when they are admitted to a care facility in a federal state do child and youth welfare authorities take over the responsibilities of full guardianship. At the moment, this often takes months – and until then, children are left with very little support and guidance, and are more likely to take risky decisions such as the one to continue their travel alone.

For this reason, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are advocating for "Guardianship from Day 1" to make sure that unaccompanied children who arrive in Austria receive adequate protection immediately after their arrival. On the occasion of the conference of Children and Youth Focal Points of the Provincial Governments on 6-7 October 2022 in Graz, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM sent out a press release to appeal once again for establishing legal provisions to ensure quick guardianship of all unaccompanied children. As this is also foreseen in the Government Program, and a requirement highlighted by all experts in the field, we are hopeful that Austrian stakeholders will soon implement all necessary steps to make sure that the rights of children are safeguarded.

Find the entire press release [here](#).

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Unaccompanied Minors
- ◆ BiH Resilience Initiative
- ◆ AVRR Reintegration Day
- ◆ Conference:
No Future For Trafficking
- ◆ EMN Migration Talks
- ◆ EMN Annual Policy Report & Conferences



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Unaccompanied minors © IOM

IOM's Resilience Initiative works to empower youth in advocating and campaigning for youth issues

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), low civic engagement, high unemployment, and a lack of social opportunities outside of religious and political groups contributed to a general feeling of hopelessness and marginalization across society, and particularly among youth. Divisive and escalatory rhetoric has been commonplace in the political discourse, enabling ethno-nationalist narratives and hate-speech to proliferate in the media landscape, and preventing youth's exposure to alternative narratives about BiH.

As a response, IOM has started implementing the [Bosnia Herzegovina Resilience Initiative \(BHRI\)](#) in late 2017, with the overall objective to foster youth and community engagement, exchanges, and networking for increased resilience and social cohesion. Since 2021, the [Austrian Development Agency \(ADA\)](#) has been funding the initiative, supporting public dialogues, advocacy and youth-led initiatives and activities, providing capacity building and networking events for youth leaders, facilitating networking between local government institutions for needs-based tailoring and service delivery for youth; and strengthening young community media journalists through capacity building and networking events.

Since December 2021 these efforts have resulted in two capacity building and networking events, three public dialogues between local governments and youth, and 52 youth-led advocacy initiatives where 600 youth took part; all focused at improving local policies and services for youth in 28 local communities across the Country.

In June 2022, the initiative supported the three umbrella bodies of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Youth Council of Republika Srpska, the Youth Council of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council/Council of Youth of the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina – to hold a press conference titled "For BiH according to the youth!", calling on state authorities to take concrete steps of improvements. In August 2022, the initiative featured Studio Teatar's show "Theatre on the square" in Zavidovići, which addressed some of the problems that affect the entire society in Bosnia from the perspective of youth. More than 1,000 people watched the performance in four towns and heard the message of young people inviting them to participate in creating a brighter future for everyone.

These examples demonstrate how IOM's Resilience Initiative works to empower youth in advocating and campaigning for youth issues, to strengthen youth involvement in local decision-making processes and citizen engagement with authorities and bolsters credible voices to develop and disseminate messages that present an alternative to extremist and divisive rhetoric and thought. We look forward to many more events to come!



Studio Teatar © IOM

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN & REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

IOM Austria holds a Reintegration Day with return counsellors and stakeholders from the AVRR field

On 23 June 2022, IOM Austria organized a 'Reintegration Day' together with the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior (Mol) and the return counselling from the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU).

This event aimed at informing on new developments in the field of AVRR and providing an exchange platform for return counsellors with other involved partners. It included different organizations which support beneficiaries returning from Austria pre-departure and post-return. Among them were Caritas and LEFÖ IBF – the Intervention Center for Trafficked Women in Austria – as well as the implementation partner for reintegration assistance in Iraq and Syria, the European Technology and Training Center (ETTC).

Iraq was chosen as priority country for the Reintegration Day since it is one of the top 3 countries with the highest number of returns from Austria. At the event, return counsellors were able to discuss their questions about voluntary return and reintegration in Iraq directly and personally with the ETTC reintegration staff.

Furthermore, the participants had the opportunity to work on three Iraqi vulnerable case studies while going through different steps of the voluntary return and reintegration process and directly consulting with involved actors. In each group, a return counselling situation was simulated based on three Iraqi case studies - a family with children, a person with medical needs and a victim of human trafficking. The aim was to identify relevant information and to take preparatory steps for the reintegration process. The working groups were supported by the present stakeholders: Caritas, ETTC, LEFÖ-IBF, IOM and the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

Return counsellors play a key role as migrants' first contact persons. They are crucial actors when it comes to providing information and preparing for a successful return and reintegration process. IOM Austria will therefore plan further events to promote and facilitate this exchange.

You can find more information on IOM Austria's AVRR activities on our [website](#).



Key AVRR stakeholders in Austria met on Reintegration Day 2022

Front (from left to right): Zsuzsanna Fodor (Caritas), Andreas AchRAINER (BBU), Michael Hajek (BBU), Simon Gruber (Mol), Caroline Hutter (Mol)

Back (from left to right): Clemens Lederer (Mol), Angelina Musger (Mol), Edith Vasilyev (IOM)

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Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

NO FUTURE FOR TRAFFICKING

13 October 2022



Since 2009, IOM Austria has co-organized the annual event of the Austrian Task Force on Combatting Human Trafficking on the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day. The purpose of the event is to raise public awareness of human trafficking and bring multidisciplinary stakeholders together to discuss concrete means of addressing this grave human rights violation.

This year, the Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings will be held on 13 October under the heading “No Future for Trafficking”. Participants can attend at the Vienna School of International Studies or online. The event will explore how human trafficking may develop in the future and how it can be prevented. Renowned national and international experts will speak at the morning panel discussion as well as in five parallel workshops taking place in the afternoon.

In the framework of the conference, IOM Austria and the LEFÖ Intervention Center for Trafficked Women are co-hosting a workshop titled “Smuggled, Trafficked Persecuted? Structural Vulnerabilities and Protection Gaps in Migration and Asylum Processes”. Expert speakers include representatives of the Council of Europe, the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the European Migration Network as well as from IOM and LEFÖ.

Find more information on the website of the [Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs](#).

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

EU MIGRATION TALKS on 21 October 2022



As part of the event series „EU Migration Talks“, EMN Austria organizes the upcoming event “Trendbarometer Migration und Asyl 2022: Integration im Rahmen des temporären Schutzes für vertriebene Personen aus der Ukraine”. The event will take place online on 21 October 2022 from 09:30 to 12:15 am.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, more than 7 million displaced persons from Ukraine have already been registered in Europe, including approximately 80,000 persons in Austria. It is difficult to estimate how many displaced persons from Ukraine will apply for protection in Austria in the future, how long the already resident displaced persons will stay or whether a timely return will be possible at all. The need for integration and the demands on state institutions and civil society organizations are enormous. For the reception of displaced persons from Ukraine, it is central to quickly enable effective and efficient integration. For this purpose, it is urgently necessary to bring together the available experiences and data. Against this background, EMN Austria invites experts from different relevant disciplines to a joint discussion.

More information on the event and on the registration can be found [here](#).

EMN (EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK)

EMN Annual Policy Report

The EMN Annual Policy Report 2021 provides an overview of migration and asylum-related developments and debates in Austria between January and December 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in (temporary) measures being introduced in a number of areas including aliens law, social and educational support, labour market integration, border controls, and removals. In addition, various legislative amendments relating to labour migration were implemented. Furthermore, the topic of migration also played a key role in the country's media reporting, for example the child's best interest in asylum procedures. The national report can be downloaded [here](#). All European results are compiled in the [Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2021](#).

An [EMN Inform](#) and [EMN Flash](#) summarize the results of the report.

EMN Austria at international conferences

[A comparative study on the integration of migrant women](#) conducted by the European Migration Network (EMN) in 2021 found that out of 24 EMN Member States, 15 implement gender mainstreaming in their national integration policies, eight of which pursue a dual approach (i.e. combining gender mainstreaming with targeted policies). Based on this study, EMN Austria, EMN Germany and EMN Luxembourg organized two joint sessions in which they presented the cases of their respective EU Member States and compared the policy approaches taken towards the integration of migrant women. The Austrian national report can be downloaded [here](#).

On 8 September 2022, EMN Austria participated in the 25th International Metropolis Conference in Berlin with a workshop entitled "Integration of Migrant Women: What Policy Approach to Take?" EMN Austria also participated in the 7th Biennial Conference on Migration and Integration Research in Austria with the panel "Integration von Migrantinnen: Eine vergleichende Betrachtung politischer Ansätze und aktueller Herausforderungen angesichts der COVID-19-Pandemie." The event took place from 26-29 September 2022 in Krems and was organized by the Austrian Academy of Sciences.



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Further publications of EMN Austria can be found under www.emn.at.



 **Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Interior**

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