



Report of the Panel Meeting on Return, Readmission and Reintegration

21-22 June 2017

Yerevan, Armenia



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 21-22 June 2017, the Panel Meeting on return, readmission and reintegration took place in Yerevan. The meeting organized jointly by Armenia and France with the support of European Commission (EC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Ukraine gathered representatives of Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, European Union (EU) Member States, international organizations, academia and civil society.

The meeting started with welcome statements of Mr. Robert Rybicki (EC Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG Home)), H.E. Mr. Garen Nazarian, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Mr. Gagik Yeganyan, Head of the State Migration Service of Armenia, H.E. Mr. Piotr Antoni Świtalski, Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Armenia and H.E. Mr. Jean-Francois Charpentier, Ambassador of France to Armenia. Following the introduction, Ms. Laura Scorretti from IOM Ukraine presented an overview of the national experiences of EaP countries and EU MS related to return, readmission and reintegration.

The meeting was divided into four sessions, although all sessions were tightly interconnected. The first session devoted to return provided an opportunity to the participants to learn recent updates regarding EU legal basis and policy on return from the presentation of Mr. Tomasz Ostropolski from DG Home; to consider the significance of migration cycles for various return and reintegration patterns during the presentation of Dr. Jean-Pierre Cassarino from the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC) and to get acknowledged with current activities of FRONTEX related to organization of return operations in the course of the presentation of Mr. Antonio Fernández Esteban.

The second session – Readmission – started with presentation of Ms. Berta Fernandez from IOM Brussels who provided the participants with the information on recently launched European Readmission Capacity Building Facility (EUROCAP), funded by EU and implemented by IOM, and those support options, which EUROCAP may offer to the third countries. After that, the representatives of Armenia (Ms. Haykanush Chobanyan, State Migration Service), Czech Republic (Mr. Adam Gazda, Ministry of Interior), Ukraine (Ms. Hanna Taburianska, State Migration Service) and Georgia (Ms. Salome Tardia, Ministry of Interior) shared the national experiences regarding organization of return and readmission in their respective countries, including negotiation, conclusion and implementation of readmission agreements. The final part of the third session was dedicated to the very important aspect of return and readmission process – the human rights. This issue was considered from different perspectives in the course of presentations delivered by Ms. Inna Borisevich from UNHCR Armenia and Mr. Mihai Voda from the Ministry of Interior of Moldova.

At the end of the first day of the meeting, the third session – Reintegration- started with presentations regarding French policy on reintegration and activities of the French Office for Immigration and Reintegration (OFII), in particular the return and reintegration projects implemented in Armenia. The presentations were delivered by Ms. Agathe Winter (OFII France), Mr. Jean Domonique Fabry (OFII Armenia) and Ms. Tigranuhi Tarakhchyan (PRAM project, Armenia). Following this, Mr. Radim Zak from International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) shared the achievements of the “MOBILAZE” (Support to the Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan) project implemented in Azerbaijan with the support of the EU, in particular its 5th Component on Return and Reintegration.

The participants continued to discuss the reintegration issues at the beginning of the second day of the meeting started with two presentations of civil society representatives. Ms. Oksana Shliuser from Ukrainian NGO “Revival of the Nation” and Ms. Tata Topadze from NGO Caritas Georgia shared their respective experiences in relation to reintegration of returning migrants, the activities implemented by the NGOs and the challenges faced by the migrants, including difficulties with receiving communities. These two presentations discovering various sensitive issues of the return and reintegration process followed by the



most intensive discussions between the meeting participants.

The final, fourth, session of the meeting was organized by IOM in accordance with the recently updated format of the Panel operation envisaging the interactive follow-up activity directed to in-depth consideration of the issues discussed during the plenary part of the meeting. The interactive session called “Voluntary return vs. forced return: the way of sustainable reintegration” facilitated by Ms. Natasha Walker (NWA) and Ms. Iryna Rozka (IOM Ukraine) provided the participants, while working in the small groups on two different case studies, with the opportunity to consider and discuss the return and reintegration process from different perspectives: migrant’s, hosting and home governments’. This included the most significant challenges experienced by all parties, pros and cons of the voluntary and forced return, the benefits of the voluntary return, stakeholders to be involved etc. At the end, each group had an opportunity to develop and present a joint strategy considering the interests of all parties of return and reintegration process. All strategies presented confirmed the significance of the reintegration for the sustainability of return and importance of the cooperation between various stakeholders to achieve the goal of sustainability.

The Panel meeting was closed by the final remarks and the words of appreciation from EC, OFII and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia. The next Panel meeting devoted to preventing facilitation of irregular migration to be held in October 2017 in Kiev, and will be co-hosted by Ukraine and Lithuania.



21 June 2017 – Day 1

Welcome and opening

Mr. Robert Rybicki, DG Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) of European Commission, welcomed the meeting participants and thanked the hosting states – Armenia and France – for making arrangements for the event and their contribution into preparation of the materials. Mr. Rybicki briefly outlined the scope and the agenda of the current meeting devoted to return, readmission and reintegration. He noted that since this meeting the new formula to be introduced under which the second day of the meeting will be dedicated to interactive session for in-depth discussion of the meeting topic. Mr. Rybicki also invited the participants to have an active discussion during the event as well as to make useful contacts for the future.

H.E. Mr. Garen Nazarian, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, in his welcoming speech underlined importance of effective readmission policy in promotion of human mobility. Deputy Minister also noted that EU and Armenia have successful cooperation in such fields as integrated border management, reintegration of migrants and security of documents. In addition, Mr. Nazarian greeted Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine with introduction of visa-free regime with EU and mentioned the joint working document of European Commission and European Union External Action “20 deliverables 2020” which provides for the commencement of visa liberalization dialog between EU and Armenia in 2017.

Mr. Gagik Yeganyan, Head of the State Migration Service of Armenia, mentioned the number of successful projects in migration field implemented jointly with EU upon launching of Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum in 2011 as well as progress of Armenia in conclusion of readmission agreements during the last years. He expressed his hope that the meeting would give the participants a great opportunity to share their achievements in return, readmission and reintegration in order to improve further their respective national policies.

H.E. Mr. Piotr Antoni Świtalski, Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Armenia, congratulated Armenia and France with the hosting of the Panel meeting and noted the important commitment of Armenia to Eastern Partnership. He mentioned that return policy is one of the priority topics of the European Migration Agenda. The work of the Panel could give the participants opportunity to discuss their challenges and suggested solutions but the most important aspect of the Panel’s work is possibility to build the network for future effective cooperation.

H.E. Mr. Jean-Francois Charpentier, Ambassador of France to Armenia, highlighted very successful and long-lasting cooperation between France and Armenia, in particular in migration field. He welcomed the participants of the Panel meeting and invited them to use this opportunity for strengthening contacts for further improvement of migration policies.

Ms. Laura Scorretti, IOM Mission in Ukraine, presented [the discussion paper](#) providing: (i) an overview of the legal frameworks on forced return, including policies on detention and entry bans; (ii) developments on negotiation of readmission agreement and implementing protocols; and (iii) an overview of voluntary return and reintegration policy, including best practices of international cooperation in implementation of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes. The paper was prepared based on the answers received from nine EU MS and five EaP countries to a questionnaire specifically designed for this purpose. [See the presentation “Return, readmission and reintegration Overview of the national experiences of the EU MS and EaP countries”](#).



Session I. Return

Moderator: Mr. Robert Rybicki, DG HOME of European Commission

Mr. Tomasz Ostropolski, Irregular Migration and Return Policy Unit, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, presented an overview of current EU legislation regulating issues of return and readmission. In particular, the following key documents are covering most aspects of EU return policy: Return Directive (2008/115/EC), Action Plan on Return (COM (2015) 453), Handbook on return (C (2015) 6250), as well as the recently adopted Renewed Action Plan on Return (COM (2017) 200), and Recommendation on Return (C (2017) 1600). As it was mentioned by Mr. Ostropolski, EU return policy is an integral and necessary part of a comprehensive EU Migration Policy. An effectively implemented and credible return policy is no contradiction to a generous asylum policy or a more open legal migration policy. It is rather meant to enhance these policies by making sure that admission channels and admission capacities are not unduly blocked by those who clearly don't qualify for a stay in EU. Specific attention was given to EU readmission agreements, which are considered to be a key element of the overall EU immigration policy and define the horizontal relation between EU and a third country vs. vertical relation between the returning state and the returnee provided by the return directive).

[See the presentation "Return and Readmission".](#)

Dr. Jean-Pierre Cassarino, Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC), discovered correlation between various types of migration cycles (completed, incomplete and interrupted) and returnees' reintegration patterns. The key findings of the research conducted by Dr. Cassarino clearly show that individual motivations for emigration and return impact on the completeness of the migration cycle. The impact lies at the intersection of individual and contextual/structural factors before and after return. Complete migration cycles are positively correlated with: the participation in labour markets, across the three migration stages; access to entrepreneurship; access to job stability. While interrupted and incomplete migration cycles seem to generate: more unemployment; more dependence on family back home; job precariousness; jobs in the black market after return. More details and statistics of the research please see [the presentation "Why do returnees' patterns of reintegration vary so much? The significance of migration cycles".](#)

Mr. Antonio Fernández Esteban, Return Support Unit, FRONTEX, presented activities of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCG) in the field of return and the support options, which could be provided to EU Member States (EU MS). It was mentioned that after the adoption of new regulation on the EBCG in 2016 the competence of the Agency was extended significantly both in return support and in pre-return assistance. In particular, currently EBSG is responsible for: rolling operational plan (FAR); hub for operational information exchange on return (IRMA/FAR); technical and operational assistance to MS; building return capacity in MS; establishment of pools & return intervention teams: forced return escorts, forced return monitors, return specialists. The presentation of Mr. Esteban also showed some statistics regarding return operations conducted in 2006-2017 and readmission operations in 2016-2017 under EU-Turkey statement. For more detailed information please see [the presentation "Return support to MS by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency \(Frontex\)".](#)

Session II. Readmission

Moderator: Mrs. Irina Davtyan, Deputy Head of State Migration Service of Armenia

Ms. Berta Fernandez from IOM Brussels provided participants with information regarding the operation of European Readmission Capacity Building Facility (EURCAP). It is a first EU-funded Facility dedicated to



capacity building of partner countries on readmission. The EURCAP which started in April 2016 (with duration 36 months) is funded by DG HOME with the budget EUR 5,000,000. EURCAP provides a dedicated and flexible mechanism to respond quickly to requests for assistance to partner countries. EURCAP will engage with Partner countries to support: on-going negotiations of EU readmission agreements (EURAs); implementation of EURAs in force; cooperation with countries, which – even if no EURA is in place or discussed – are prioritized by DG HOME for cooperation on return and readmission. In order to access EURCAP Facility the invitation by DG Home to partner country is required, in coordination with EUD and IOM missions global network. Among the EaP states eligible for support are Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. More information regarding operation of EURCAP and its areas of intervention can be found in [the presentation “EURCAP: Building Capacity for Return Management”](#).

Mrs. Haykanush Chobanyan, State Migration Service of Armenia, presented Armenian experience in implementation of readmission agreements. It was mentioned that Armenia expressed its readiness to conclude readmission agreements as one of the effective tools in order to combat irregular migration, and since 2003 it has been actively involved in the process. Currently Armenia is a party to 11 agreements with 13 countries, 12 of which are EU MS. Currently Armenia continues to negotiate new readmission agreements and implementing protocols to them. Among the challenges related to readmission were mentioned the following: readmission process may be protracted, because some EU countries have more than one agency responsible for readmission; language barrier with some EU countries; difficulties with senior citizens or minors who don't not have relatives/caretakers or a place to live in Armenia. Mrs. Chobanyan also informed that in the nearest future Armenia is to develop the Readmission Case Management Electronic System in the framework of MIBMA project (ICMPD). For further information, including statistics on readmission, please [see the presentation “Implementation of Readmission Agreements as an Effective Tool for Combating Irregular Migration: Case of Armenia”](#).

Mr. Adam Gazda, Ministry of Interior, Czech Republic, spoke about Czech return policy, including approach to forced return; detention of irregular migrants and detention centers; policy on entry ban for irregular migrants; readmission co-operation and assisted voluntary return programmes. Mr. Gazda mentioned, in particular, that that 2 of 3 detention centers in Czech Republic were opened in summer 2015 as a result of migration wave. Regarding the voluntary return, it was emphasized that most of the voluntary returns are realized to Ukraine and the implemented measures reflect needs of Ukrainian returnees – particularly guaranteed transportation to the place of residence in Ukraine. Also, in order to make voluntary returns more attractive other options are considered, e.g. shorter entry ban in case of co-operation on assisted voluntary return. [Please see the presentation “Case study of Czech return policy”](#).

Ms. Hanna Taburianska, State Migration Service of Ukraine, presented a case study of Ukrainian approach to implementation of readmission procedure. It was mentioned that State Migration Service of Ukraine is responsible for implementation of readmission agreements while the State Border Guard Service enforces the “fast” readmission procedure. The presentation also covered recent legislative developments and initiatives in the field of return and readmission as well as achievements of the pilot project “Monitor” funded by EU and implemented by IOM. The project provided an opportunity to conduct monitoring of readmitted nationals; develop the compilation of Ukrainian legal acts on readmission for the migration and border guard officers; conduct trainings for officials of territorial bodies of State Migration Service. Further information on readmission procedure in Ukrainian, including readmission statistics available in [the presentation “Readmission. Practical Implementation of Standard Procedure. Monitor”](#).

Ms. Salome Tardia, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, continued the session with an overview of Georgian experience in implementation of readmission agreements. The presentation of Ms. Tardia covered the legal basis, the readmission process (including its institutional aspect), the key provisions of



the readmission agreements signed by Georgia; the process of identification; the time limits; as well as specific consequences of readmission in error. Special attention was paid to the Readmission Case Management Electronic System, implemented in Georgia since 2014 with support of EU and IOM. Currently Georgia is the only EaP country operating such electronic system. More information can be found in [the presentation “Implementation of Readmission Agreements”](#).

Ms. Inna Borisevich, UNHCR Armenia, touched on sensitive topic of human rights dimension of return, readmission and reintegration. The presentation discovered international legal framework protecting human rights in the process of return, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The voluntary return was emphasized as the durable solution for sustainable return. Also, the particular importance was given to support and cooperation in implementation of return policies of states, including: allocation of resources for voluntary return; proper documentation; proper planning and long-standing commitments; equal access to rights and services; special treatment for persons with specific needs; effective re-integration programmes (participatory approach); government support to international organization and NGOs providing assistance to returnees. Please see [the presentation “Human Rights Dimension of Return, Readmission and Reintegration”](#).

Mr. Mihai Vodă from Bureau for Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Interior of Moldova, continued the human rights topic. In his presentation Mr. Vodă discovered differences in scope of rights of regular and irregular migrants according to legislation of Moldova. Specific attention was given to such issues as applicable standards and principles of return in accordance with national and EU legislation, including non-refoulement; prohibition of removal of some categories of migrants; as well as the rights of migrants in detention. For more details please see [the presentation “Human Rights Aspects in Return and Readmission Process”](#).

Discussion

*Upon the session participants had a discussion covering some important issues related to readmission practices in their respective countries. In particular, the question was raised by the representative of **DG Home** about reasons for high rates of refusal of readmission requests. The representative of **Armenia** noted that in most cases the refusal is caused by the confirmation of citizenship. Another question from **DG Home** to **Armenia** was about introduction of the Electronic Readmission Case Management System. As it was informed by **Armenia**, the Georgian system will be taken as an example (basis) for development of Armenian one, with some specific features, e.g. institutional organization.*

***IOM** asked about states’ approach to taking a decision on mechanism of return to be applied in case of availability of readmission agreements. **Czech** and **Netherlands** noted that application of readmission agreements is preferable as it provides for more clear mechanism and rules for return decisions enforcement.*

***Armenia** also referred to all states with the question on responsible side for proving that readmission request was wrong. **Moldova** informed that there were no cases of wrong readmission. In case of such, the Bureau for Migration and Asylum would be responsible. **Ukraine** also noted that no cases of wrong readmission were recorded while **Georgia** experienced only one such case.*

Session III. Reintegration

Moderator: Ms. Agathe Winter, OFII France

Ms. Agathe Winter from French Office for Immigration and Reintegration (OFII) started the third session with the presentation of French policy regarding assisted return and reintegration. The presentation



contained an overview of existing programmes providing return and reintegration assistance as well as information on eligibility of the beneficiaries and description of support activities. In addition, some examples of good practices were presented. Currently, 28 countries are covered by OFFI's programmes implemented by its different offices, including office in Armenia. Please see [the presentation "Assisted voluntary returns and reintegration – OFFI"](#).

Mr. Jean Dominique Fabry, OFFI, continued describing OFFI activities, in particular, in Armenia and Georgia. The programmes implemented in these countries include: social support to returnees; assistance in for the resumption of paid employment and/or professional training; reintegration through business start-ups. In Armenia 78 reintegration projects were approved in 2016 for the total budget 357.000 Euro. In Georgia 181.000 Euro was allocated for 51 reintegration projects. The OFFI's experience showed that conditions for successful reintegration are the following: establishing a strong bond of trust between the beneficiary and OFFI; the quality of the partner chosen by OFFI responsible for accompanying the project; compliance with the beneficiary's commitments; constant communication between the beneficiary and OFFI. More details on the implemented activities are in [the presentation "OFFI's action in Armenia and Georgia in 2016"](#).

Ms. Tigranuhi Tarakhchyan from OFFI Office in Armenia provided the information on the project Reintegration Policy for Returning Armenian Migrants (PRAM). The action is co-financed by the European Union through Mobility Partnership Facility (MPF), implemented by International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and carried out by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFFI). The project is aimed at strengthening capacities of competent authorities and civil society in Armenia to actively support dignified sustainable return and reintegration. Among the specific objectives are: reinforcing capacities of responsible authorities to actively support dignified sustainable return and reintegration; support to the social and economic reintegration of Armenian nationals who return voluntarily or involuntarily from EU member states; informing target group of potential migrants on the possibilities of legal migration including labour and circular migration and the risks of irregular migration. For further information of the project activities and results achieved please see [the presentation "Reintegration Policy for Returning Armenian Migrants"](#).

Mr. Radim Zak, International Center for Migration Development (ICMPD) introduced the results of the Analysis Report on Readmission and Reintegration in Azerbaijan, the 5th Component of the project "Support to Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan (MOBILAZE)". This component aims to strengthen the capacities of central and regional state and non-governmental actors in Azerbaijan to implement sustainable reintegration of returned nationals (voluntary returnees and readmitted irregular migrants). The report identified challenges related to readmission and reintegration, such as: issues related to medical situation and/or disability; possible violations of human rights before and/or during readmission from the EU MS to Azerbaijan; access and reintegration into national labour market; issues related to education (including language education, and vocational training); possibility for support in temporary accommodation for persons without relatives in Azerbaijan; ID/registration issues. In addition, some recommendations were provided, including on coordination, information sharing and reintegration framework in Azerbaijan. Please see the [presentation "Readmission and Reintegration in Azerbaijan"](#) and [Analysis Report](#).

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Session III. Reintegration (continuation)

Moderator: Ms. Agathe Winter, OFFI France



Ms. Oksana Shliusar, NGO “Revival of the Nation”, Ukraine, presented the experience of the NGO in the field of assistance to returning migrants. This covers, in particular, conducting trainings for returning migrants and for the government authorities, operation of the hot-line, organization of information campaigns and cooperation with Media. The analysis of the work done by the NGO shows that it is important to ensure integrated approach to information sharing on return, readmission and reintegration as well as difficulties faced by migrants. The solution of problems of the returnees requires comprehensive approach, coordinated and professional work of the Government, local authorities, NGOs, Media and communities. The success in reintegration can be achieved only through the provision to returning migrants of complex package of services and access to reintegration programmes. More information, including statistics, is available in [the presentation “Comprehensive approach to the reintegration of migrants: case study of NGO Revival of the Nation”](#).

Ms. Tata Topadze, NGO “Caritas Georgia” closed the third session with presentation of NGO activities, in particular in implementation of Reintegration Project for Returnees. The project was launched in 2007 and covering the following types of support: small business; village activities (agriculture, domestic animals); re-qualification courses for future job opportunities; partial support for temporary accommodation; medical assistance in acute need. Among donors supporting the project activities are “Caritas International”, “Caritas Austria”, “Micado-Migration”, “Fedasil Belgium”. For further details please see [the presentation “Voluntary return and reintegration in Georgia: Caritas experience”](#).

Discussion

The Reintegration session was followed by the intensive discussion with comments and questions of the participants. NGO “Europe without Borders” noted that in Ukraine the higher rate of women referring for reintegration assistance is caused by the demographic situation in the Western region of the state.

“Caritas Georgia” while replying to the question on ‘sources’ of beneficiaries informed that most beneficiaries are referred to the NGO from refugees camps, in particular from Austria, by the Caritas network organizations.

ICMPD raised a question on the approach to design of reintegration packages in order to make them not motivating migrants to go abroad.

Dr. Cassarino from IRMC noted that one of the challenges of return policy is a balance between of psycho-social aspects of return and finding the solution for the question ‘How to compensate the ‘drama’?’

UNHCR also emphasized the importance of community participation in reintegration process as well as need of capacity building for receiving community.

NGO “Revival of the Nation” mentioned the problem of stigmatization of returning migrants. The lack of trust to NGOs and state authorities leads to low rate of applications for assistance. The role of NGOs in the process of return and reintegration is the due motivation of returning migrants.

Session IV. Interactive session organized by IOM “Voluntary return vs. forced return: the way to efficient reintegration”

Moderators: Ms. Natasha Walker, NWA/Ms. Iryna Rozka, IOM Ukraine

The interactive session “**Voluntary return vs. forced return: the way to efficient reintegration**” was organized by IOM in accordance with the recently updated format of the Panel operation envisaging the interactive follow up activity directed to in-depth consideration of the issued discussed during the plenary part of the meeting.

The Interactive Session set the following objectives for participants:

- Evaluate the pros and cons of voluntary vs. forced return for all stakeholders.



- Develop a strategy along all stages of the return, readmission and reintegration process to the mutual satisfaction of the affected migrants, home and host governments, identifying potential stakeholders, measures and support required.
- Start to evaluate how learning during the interactive session can be transferred to participants' own realities and professional activity.

The Agenda and Methodology of the Interactive session:

The agenda revolved around two realistic case studies, developed by IOM, which enabled participants to view the migration cycle from migrants' and governments' (home and host) perspectives, negotiate strategies and develop recommendations while working in small groups.

Results of the initial "water-testing"

The initial "water-testing" was designed to engage participants from the start of the session and establish the base-line for the discussion. All participants have been asked to answer to the following questions (using scale from 1 to 10):

Question 1) "How successful are we currently at reintegrating returning migrants?"

The result was very diverse, ranging from "2" to "8". Whereas some participants pointed to positive experience in both supporting returning migrants and working with communities and families to increase communities' readiness to integrate them, others suggested that there is a great room for improvement in this field. The need for political will to positively and proactively facilitate migrants' reintegration was mentioned as well as collaborating with NGOs in the countries who are able to showcase many examples of successful reintegration.

Question 2) "To what extent do your governments support voluntary as opposed to forced return?"

Participants were far more aligned in their answer to this question and grouped around the positive side of the scale. In the discussion, some participants suggested that although almost all countries theoretically favour voluntary return as opposed to forced return, the practical support given does not always reflect this. The need for information sharing on the migrant before return between the "host" and "home" countries was stressed, for example in order to understand how the migrant's social and economic reintegration could be prepared.

Group work

In the following part of the Interactive session, the participants have been divided into 2 groups and provided with 2 different case studies. Each group further have been divided into 3 sub-groups worked on different perspectives: migrant's; home and host state's. Upon this, new subgroups were created for preparation of joint strategies including representatives of each initial subgroup. Below are provided main outlines of joint strategies elaborated by the participants for both case studies.

Summary of the joint strategies

Joint goal for the migrant, home and host states:

- Benefits for both governments and for the migrant and his family (win-win-win-win). These include demographic, economic and social benefits, but also exchange of know-how.
- Safety: peaceful and smooth integration.
- Avoid negative impacts and conflicts related to return and reintegration process (ethnic, social, economic).
- Safe and effective process of return and reintegration.
- Opportunities for the migrant to live self-reliantly.



- Demographic development of the origin country (avoiding “brain-drain”).
- Win-win-win of the (sometimes widely) different interests of the different governments and the migrant including the contentious question of “who pays?”

How can the return and reintegration process be prepared?

- The **host** government can inform itself on the demands coming from the migrant’s home economy and invest and prepare the migrant by offering training and professional skills. The migrant can also receive psychological and medical support. This will satisfy the migrant’s main needs.
- The **host** government can also ensure that the migrant has access to knowledge and information on his rights and which medical/psychological programmes are available. This leads to trust and encourages the migrant to take responsibility for the choices available to him. The information must be well “marketed”, making it easy and comprehensible
- The **host** government can invest in the country of origin.
- The **host** government shall ensure that the migrant is informed on his legal and other choices regarding return and reintegration and provided with complete and reliable information that is regularly updated.
- The **host** government shall provide the migrant with social and psychological support and counselling in order for the migrant to a) understand his needs and b) formulate concrete plans for reintegration after his return. The **host** government can also consider how to support the implementation of these plans after the migrant has returned to his country of origin.

How can this process (return and reintegration) be supported? Who needs to do what? How can the home country be involved?

- The **host** government can work with the **home** government to explore opportunities to develop economic ties and create jobs in both countries.
- The **host** government needs to reach out to the consulate and government agencies, diaspora and religious organisations to facilitate the voluntary return process and subsequent reintegration.
- **European Commission (EC)** should support the investment in migrants’ effective return (preparation) and reintegration to address the issue of “who pays?”
- The **host** government should work with NGOs, diaspora and the consulate of the country of origin to increase the migrant’s trust and active engagement in the process of voluntary return.

How should/can the home country support the migrant after return?

- The **home** government needs to make sure the migrant feels that there is a place for him in the community and that he is needed. The migrant might also need psychological counselling – preferably in close coordination with any counselling he received in the **host** country.
- The **home** government should work closely together with local authorities, NGOs and churches in the migrant’s community and with donors to assess and understand the bigger picture.
- The **home** government should show an active interest in migrants and their destinies back home and advocate for their interests, conducting public campaigns to influence communities’ attitudes and acceptance towards returning migrants.
- The **migrant** should also be responsible for contributing to his successful reintegration and be an active part of shaping his own future.



- The **home** government should work with **EC** and the **host** government to monitor whether the activities undertaken to effectively reintegrate the migrant and prevent repeated attempts of irregular migration have made sense.
- The **home** government should work closely with IOM, Caritas and other NGOs to facilitate the migrant's reintegration and provide opportunities and perspectives for other members of the community at risk of irregularly emigrating.
- The **home** government should work with banks and business associations to make returnees bankable (providing money, skills and know-how).

Measures on prevention of repeated attempts of irregular migration:

- The **home** government should work with donors and other partners to address and tackle the root causes of emigration, including unemployment and poverty (lack of perspective).
- The **home** government should ensure that returning migrants have access to social safeguards and psychological counselling services.
- The **home** government needs to provide objective and comprehensive information to migrants on their rights and opportunities, making sure that these are realistic so as not to cause disappointment.
- The **home** government should provide people with information on legal migration opportunities and work together with other countries to establish more mutually benefitting opportunities (e.g. for economic migration).
- The **home** government needs to understand the most important root causes of emigration and provide education and security and create opportunities for target groups for example of traffickers to build sustainable livelihoods.
- The **home** and **host** governments should develop realistic readmission agreements.
- There is a need for a global approach to migration management, also resulting in package deals.
- **All parties** need to understand the psychology of the migration cycle: a migrant will have trouble reintegrating if he/she feels that he/she has not yet accomplished what he/she set out to do (and thus risks repeating irregular migration).
- Caution is due to avoid perverse incentives towards irregular migration and/or encourage those members of the community who have not attempted irregular migration to feel disadvantaged, as this will not improve the chances of reintegration.

Feedback on the interactive session

In general the Interactive session was positively evaluated by the participants who voiced their appreciation of having had the opportunity to take on different perspectives (e.g. of the migrant), which can help assess the situation more holistically. They also appreciated the networking in the small groups and the active participation of the session.

The material of the Interactive session, including cases studies, handouts and more outcomes of group discussion are available in [here](#).

Summary and closure

Mr. Robert Rybicki, DG HOME of European Commission, in his closing speech expressed gratitude to the hosting states for their great hospitality. He noted that the new format of meeting allowed the participants to be more engaged in the active discussion. The most difficult thing discovered by the interactive session was changing the roles while discussing return strategies and need to consider the issue from different perspective. Such approach could be very beneficial for the policy development as it gives the chance for policy makers to step out of the "comfort zone" and to see whether their



expectations meet the reality. Mr. Rybicki also informed that the next Panel meeting will be conducted in October 2017 in Kiev and the topic is "Preventing Facilitation of Irregular Migration".

Mr. Jean-Dominique Fabry, OFII, appreciated efforts made by Armenia in organization of the meeting. He noted that during the two days participants had an opportunity to extensively discuss and tackle issues of return, readmission and reintegration. Mr. Fabry also suggested that during the future meetings issue of budgets allocated for implementation of migration programmes could be discussed. In addition, he noted that OFFI would continue to support migration initiatives in the region, in particular in Armenia and Georgia

H.E. Mr. Vladimir Karmirshalyan, Head of Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Republic of Armenia, emphasized that for Armenia it was a great pleasure and privilege to host the Panel meeting. He noted that the Panel succeeded to discuss all issues included into agenda with active participation of Government representatives, academia, international organizations and civil society. He expressed gratitude to all organizers and participants for their input into a great dialog.

All the presentations mentioned in this report as well as all the materials related to the meeting can be found on [the Panel website](#). The presentations are accessible to logged-in users only.