Study on the Situation and Status of Russian Nationals from the Chechen Republic Receiving Basic Welfare Support in Austria

Research Report

This project is co-financed by the European Return Fund and the Austrian Ministry of the Interior.
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Research Report
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The report has been funded through the European Return Fund of the European Commission and through co-funding from the Austrian Ministry of the Interior.

This research report is the result of a study conducted from September 2008 to June 2009 by IOM Vienna in close collaboration with IOM Moscow. The report is based on a survey of more than 200 Russian nationals originating from the Chechen Republic and currently living in Austria. The report is also based on expert interviews and desk research implemented both in Austria and the Russian Federation. In addition to the analysis of the survey results, the report also quotes expert opinions and interviewee comments. While the survey was completely anonymous, experts are quoted with their consent.

The report includes statistical and other readily available background information. While efforts have been made to collect comparable data, the concepts, definitions and data from different sources vary, thus rendering comparisons between them difficult.

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ANNEX: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
Executive Summary

In recent years, persons from the Russian Federation have ranked as the foremost of nationalities to file applications for asylum in Austria. Although many Russian nationals have been granted asylum in the past, the number of Russian nationals who choose the option of assisted voluntary return is simultaneously on the rise (especially those Russian nationals originating from the Chechen Republic). In 2007, only 13 Russian nationals voluntarily returned to the Russian Federation with the help of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), while 417 persons opted for assisted voluntary return in 2008 (most of whom returned to the Chechen Republic). However, little is known about this specific group of people.

For almost 30 years, IOM has been the leading international organization working in the field of assisted voluntary return for different categories of migrants in need. During that time, the organization was able to develop a comprehensive mechanism that effectively addresses the needs of returning migrants. At present, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes represent a multifaceted and complex device that proposes general strategies for return and reintegration as well as a comprehensive set of tools aimed at effective management of all stages of return and reintegration. For IOM, the key concept for effective and sustainable return is integrated return management, which is oriented towards long-term sustainable reintegration.

This report presents the results of a profile survey that was implemented among more than 200 Russian nationals from the Chechen Republic receiving basic welfare support in Vienna and Lower Austria. The survey results were complemented by country-specific information on their region of origin, which together served as the basis for recommendations for the potential development of a voluntary return and reintegration programme for this specific target group.

As the survey results show, many of the participants had only arrived in Austria recently (40% in 2008). At the time of their interview, most of the survey participants were asylum seekers in the asylum procedure; some had only just filed their asylum application, others had already received a negative decision and filed their first appeal or had been notified that another EU member state was responsible for their application.

The majority of the participants were married, although a significant number of widowed women were amongst them. Most participants had children; the birth rate was almost five children per woman. In most cases, the nuclear family of the participants lived with them in Austria, while most of the other family members were still in the Chechen Republic.

The survey participants mainly originated from only five regions of the Chechen Republic: Groznensky, Gudermessky, Shalinsky, Urus-Martanovsky and the City of Grozny. Almost 70 per cent of the participating Chechens indicated that they had previously possessed at least one property in the Chechen Republic: a house, an apartment, a business entity and/or a piece of land. Most of them had worked as manual labourers. Older participants, the survey showed, had received significantly better education than younger participants.

The participants had left the Chechen Republic mainly for security and political reasons. Most of them had left their region of origin with the intention to go to Austria, and the fact that they already knew someone in Austria played an important role in that decision. Almost half of the Chechens interviewed indicated that the favourable reputation of Austrian asylum policy was an important reason for choosing Austria. Most of the participants were maintaining close contacts with their region of origin, and were following developments in the Chechen Republic both through other Chechens living in Austria and through electronic media.

Although a vast majority of the participating Chechens were unemployed in Austria and had an unclear or insecure status, they indicated that they were satisfied with their situation in general, as well as with the political and security situation in Austria. Most of them assessed their stay in Austria as rather positive, and considered language, job opportunities and their financial situation as the main challenges for remaining in the country. With regard to returning to their region of origin, most participants argued that security (especially for the family) and an acceptable political situation were conditions that would be required for such a decision. In the event of returning, participants indicated that they would then require return counselling, assistance with travel costs and help finding employment.
1. Introduction

In recent years, nationals from the Russian Federation have ranked foremost of all the nationalities to file applications for asylum in Austria. Most of these applicants are ethnic Chechens.\(^1\)

For Austria, migration experts estimate that the share of Chechen asylum seekers in all applicants from the Russian Federation is almost 100 per cent. Although there are no official data on the issue, there are no known cases of Russian asylum seekers who had not originated from Chechnya. (Hofmann/Reichel 2008: 18)

In 2008, Russian nationals in Austria who applied for asylum numbered 3,435 applicants. Prior to 2008, many Russian nationals were granted asylum, however for that year, only 44 per cent of applicants received a positive decision on their asylum application. From January to April 2009, the figure dropped to 28 per cent of the applicants being granted asylum, with 57 per cent receiving negative decisions on their asylum application.\(^2\) However, during the same period, there was an increase in the percentage of Russian nationals opting for assisted voluntary return.

According to IOM Vienna statistics, the Russian Federation is among the most significant voluntary return destinations since 2005 and the number of people who return voluntarily from Austria to the Russian Federation is increasing steadily. In 2007, only 13 people returned voluntarily with assistance from IOM, whereas 417 people opted for assisted voluntary return in 2008 (most of whom returned to the Chechen Republic). From January 2009 to April 2009, returnees to the Russian Federation numbered 379 people, indicating that by the end of 2009 the number of returnees will be three times the number of the previous year, should this momentum continue. In general, the majority who seek to return to their country of origin, and request return assistance, are asylum seekers or rejected asylum seekers. In 2008, voluntary returnees from Austria to their country of origin or to third countries who were supported by IOM numbered 2,649 people. In comparison, only 194 persons chose this option when the voluntary return programme began in 2000. As such, a continuous demand for voluntary return is expected for the future.

Nevertheless, voluntary return to the region of origin is often complicated. Experts note that returnees are not supported adequately in their region of origin and in order to facilitate a successful “return in dignity”, programmes that assist returnees in re-building their lives are required (cf. Langthaler 2009b:2ff). In Austria, there are few programmes that provide reintegration assistance and support and these programmes are offered to a limited number of target groups, such as the assistance provided by IOM to returnees from Moldova and Kosovo/UNSC 1244. However, other groups do not have access to reintegration assistance, despite the fact that reintegration measures provide opportunities that contribute to the sustainability of return to the region of origin. The development of such return and reintegration measures is only possible with comprehensive information about the target group; above all, the demographic and socio-economic composition and circumstances (for example, gender, age, education and job qualifications), as well as information on the needs and preferences regarding reintegration support after the voluntary return.

IOM Vienna has implemented a comprehensive study on the profile of Russian nationals from the Chechen Republic by means of a survey among those who receive basic welfare support in Vienna and Lower Austria (including those in the asylum process and under refoulement protection). The survey analysed information on their demographic and socio-economic situation, as well as on their motivation for leaving Chechnya and for coming to Austria. In addition, the survey assessed the demand for voluntary return and reintegration measures, and was complemented by a compilation of country-specific information researched by IOM Moscow (for example, the state of the economy, the infrastructure of the region, local authorities, partner organizations, etc.). The project was implemented in Austria and in the Russian Federation in close collaboration with local, national and international partners.

1.1. Overview

Current information and data are scarce on Chechens who receive basic welfare support in Austria. Therefore, this research report analyses information on their demographic, socio-economic situation and motivation for coming to Austria and examines information pertaining to the demand for voluntary return and reintegration measures.

This research report outlines the following information:

- demographic and socio-economic data (for example, sex, age, region of origin, education, work experience, family status, income, living situation in region of origin, etc.)

- information on migration to Austria and investigation of so-called “pull-factors” which encourage migration to Austria (for example, travel routes, reasons for leaving Chechnya, family residing in Austria, support of third parties involved in migration/entry, etc.)

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\(^1\) Throughout this text, Russian nationals from the Chechen Republic will be referred to as “Chechens”, meaning ethnic Chechens.

- factors that could influence the decision to return (for example, change in circumstances)

- specific needs of the target group to be taken into account for any development of a specialized reintegration project in terms of measures to be offered to facilitate successful and sustainable return and reintegration.

The report is divided into six major chapters:

Chapter 1 will describe the qualitative and quantitative methods applied at various stages of the project to ensure quality results.

Chapter 2 will outline the general situation of Chechen asylum seekers in Austria. The results of the profile survey will be presented following a general introduction on the asylum procedures in Austria.

In Chapter 3, these results will be interpreted and discussed in detail. Also in Chapter 3, implications for future measures aimed at the target group will be outlined, in terms of integration of Chechens into Austrian society.

Chapter 4 will provide information on the current social and economic situation in the Chechen Republic, in terms of the influence that this information has on Chechens in Austria, especially those considering a permanent return to their region of origin.

Chapter 5 will relate experiences and best practices in return and reintegration measures in order to facilitate sound conclusions on the situation of Chechens in Austria with regard to their potential return to their region of origin.

Chapter 6 will conclude with recommendations for the potential development of return and reintegration measures in the future.

The aim of this research report is to provide more information on the profile of Chechens who receive basic welfare support in Austria, including information on their motives for migrating to Austria, for choosing to remain in Austria, or for choosing to return to the Chechen Republic. As such, the report can act as a resource for potential projects that focus on this specific target group, such as the possible development of integration measures or of sustainable return and reintegration projects to the Russian Federation.

1.2. Methodology

A multi-methodological approach was applied to this research report that utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to ensure high quality and thorough results. Specialized literature, data, statistics, information and experiences from previous profile surveys implemented by IOM in other countries were identified and processed as the basis for the survey. The qualitative instruments include expert interviews that were applied at several stages of the project. This approach facilitated the development of quantitative instruments and the interpretation of results. Interviewer feedback provided at an exchange meeting reflects information gained in the field and was also included in this report. As a quantitative instrument, a comprehensive questionnaire was applied to a sample of 208 Chechens who were currently living in facilities providing basic welfare support in Vienna or Lower Austria. As persons receiving basic welfare support are not distributed systematically among the provinces of Austria, it can be assumed that this spatial restriction of the profile survey does not affect its representative value. However, it is not possible to translate the survey results to the entire population of Chechens receiving basic welfare support in Austria without restrictions, as it must be taken into account that out of the 208 survey participants, 106 persons were interviewed in the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen (Lower Austria), where asylum seekers usually are accommodated once they file their application (upon their first arrival in Austria in most cases). Thus, the situation of Chechens interviewed at the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen differs significantly from the situation of those interviewed at other locations, especially in view of their length of stay in Austria at the time of the interview as well as in terms of status security.

All instruments were developed and applied after sound desk research; the outcomes of literature review, media research and analysis of existing data in this field are also presented in this report.

1.2.1. Research specific to country

IOM Moscow collected information on the region of origin in the Chechen Republic during the course of the project, and undertook the empirical quantitative survey and statistical evaluation of data. This material included information and data on the social and economic situation, the existing infrastructure, institutions and organizations active in this area (for example, local authorities, NGOs, international organizations, etc.). The involvement of IOM Moscow ensured that current information as verified by experts was made available during the project and was incorporated into the research report. The methodology applied to this section is outlined in Chapter 4: “Social and Economic Situation in the Chechen Republic”.

3 Asylum seekers stay at the Initial Reception Centre until the end of the admission phase at which they are either admitted to the actual asylum procedure or not. Once asylum seekers are admitted to the actual asylum procedure, they are transferred to the different provinces. For further information on the asylum system in Austria, see Chapter 2.
1.2.2. Expert interviews

The first expert interviews were held with three Austrian experts who had extensive experience with Chechens living in Austria: one expert worked as head of an Integration House, and two were return counsellors. The expert interviews were conducted in person with the help of a questionnaire with open questions. These expert interviews provided additional background information to the literary resources that were used to develop a relevant questionnaire in terms of the specific customs and characteristics of the target group. This approach provided an atmosphere of trust and cooperation during interviews with the participating Chechens, which in turn resulted in very high participation rates and honest answers.

Another group of experts was consulted subsequent to analysis of the outcomes of the survey among Chechen participants. Experts were chosen based on their work experience with Chechens living in Austria, especially those providing social assistance (for example, social workers in the institutional and NGO context). The second round of expert interviews analysed and discussed the survey results, for which another open questionnaire was created. This questionnaire was discussed with two experts via telephone interviews, and completed and submitted in written form by two other experts. The expert input was used to interpret the survey results, as well as to explain and to clarify certain outcomes (for more information, see Chapter 3).

1.2.3. Questionnaire

The research focused on preparing a comprehensive questionnaire on various fields of interest. In view of the potentially sensitive situation for interviewees, questions were prepared within a framework that facilitated the collection of sensitive information. Attention was also paid to the formulation of question and response alternatives that were adjusted for cultural considerations.

The questionnaire was divided into five parts in order to provide a profile of the population and achieve insights into their background, living situation in the Chechen Republic, migration period, living conditions in Austria and future plans. After desk research and consultation with experts, a first draft of the questionnaire was produced, taking into account the principles of questionnaire formulation of a high standard. The main goal was to create a questionnaire structure which allowed participants to tell their story in a chronological order according to the biographical duct. Due to the comprehensive nature of the data gathered through the questionnaire, most issues were addressed in closed questions, which in turn allowed for the application of more complex statistical methods of analysis, and more statistically valid and significant results.

Empirical research activities based on questionnaires usually face the risk of incorrect answers. To address this issue, the voluntary nature of the survey in terms of participation and the response to questions was continually stressed. The questionnaire offered response options such as “I don’t know” or “The question is not applicable” in order to enhance the willingness of the participant to provide true answers to certain questions. Additionally, the interviewers were asked to assess the honesty of the participants after each interview: no participant was rated as dishonest. The interviewers reported that they were surprised at the openness of the participants, and that generally the Chechens were willing to tell their story. Due to the inclusion of “don’t know” or “not applicable” options, the response rate was high, and valuable information could be gathered on sensitive questions as well.

The first draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested on 15 Chechens receiving basic welfare support in Austria, to verify the appropriateness and usefulness of the questions before applying the questionnaire to the entire sample. The results of the pre-tests led to additional changes in the content and structure of the questionnaire. For example, a question concerning travel documents was removed as participants in the pre-test reacted with suspicion to the question. The draft questionnaire also included “honesty questions” whereby questions were asked twice in a reformulated form in order to identify potentially disingenuous responses. In the pre-test, the participants who recognized this objective became suspicious: therefore these questions were removed.

The final version of the questionnaire was limited to 84 questions and had a completion time of 50 minutes on average.

1.2.4. Interviewer recruitment and training

The interviews with the Chechens who currently live in Austria and receive basic welfare support were conducted by carefully selected interviewers. One prerequisite was that the interviewers not be from the Chechen Republic, or have Russian nationality, as this was expected to create suspicion from some participants. Due to the high improbability of recruiting interviewers with a command of Chechen who had not originated from the Chechen Republic, interviewers were recruited who had a fluency in Russian - a language that most Chechens speak and understand well. With regard to gender balance, the project team followed the advice of the experts to recruit more women than men as interviewers, since female participants were likely to prefer talking to women and male participants were expected to be more indifferent towards the sex of the interviewer. Ultimately, six women and one man were recruited as interviewers.

Once the questionnaire was finalized, the selected interviewers were trained and provided with information on the project, on Chechen culture, the history and current situation in the Chechen Republic, the situation of Chechen asylum seekers in Austria, and on interview techniques. They were also trained in the appropriate application of the questionnaire in the interview situation. Training focussed on
interviewer responsibility vis-à-vis interviewee response during situations which were expected to be emotionally challenging as a result of the nature of the questionnaire (for example, reasons to flee and flight details, etc.). Further training emphasized respect for the right to terminate the interview at any moment, as well as the voluntary spirit of participation in the project.

Interview situations were expected to be very demanding for the interviewers; therefore they were given ongoing guidance and the opportunity to provide feedback on a regular basis. One specific challenge was the potential expectations of the participants regarding the role of the interviewer. In general, the role of an interviewer can be perceived in very different ways: for example, he/she can be regarded as a journalist, or a spy, which inhibits the maintenance of a trusting atmosphere and complicates the interview situation. Therefore, the perception of the interviewer was crucial to the success of the survey. Asylum seekers in particular are very familiar with interview situations as they form an important part of the asylum procedure. The project coordinators anticipated that interviewees would hope that their participation in the survey could have positive effects on their asylum procedures. As a result, interviewers were made aware of possible expectations and perceptions, and guidance was provided in how to address such a situation during the interview, that would avoid raising false hopes and/or fears.

1.2.5. Interviewer experiences

After the survey was completed, all interviewers were invited for an “interviewer exchange meeting” where they were presented with the first results of the survey analysis. This step allowed the interviewers and the project coordinators to recount their experiences, and the meeting provided a valuable opportunity to identify significant issues that were not addressed by the questionnaire, but were discussed during the interviews. This meeting also allowed questions to be posed concerning the first results of the data analysis, and was an opportunity to gather inside information on the specific situation of the refugees (for example, their living conditions), as well as information on the general impressions of the interviewers. The views of the interviewers, who had very close and intensive contact with the target group during their work, were also taken into consideration in the further analysis of the data. This input allowed for a larger picture to be drawn of the situation of the Chechens who receive basic welfare support in Austria.

1.2.6. Interviews with the target group

In order to guarantee anonymity for the selection of participants while taking into consideration the methods of random sampling, basic welfare support centres were drawn upon and not individuals, with potential participants being selected on the spot by the interviewers. IOM personnel were present at selected interviews to ensure that they were conducted correctly and that the interviewers acted in an appropriate and effective manner in accordance with the training provided.

Interview situations with the target group (for example, interviewer behaviour and possible expectations from the participants, etc.) were determined by information provided by experts regarding the background of Chechens who seek asylum in Austria. Upon their recommendation, every participant received a gift that was equivalent in value to ten Euros to thank him/her for his/her participation. This gift was given in lieu of a remuneration of ten Euros, as was originally envisaged. According to the experts, the comparatively small amount of money could have been regarded as an offense, or a bribe. The experts suggested that a gift would demonstrate respect and acknowledgement, and in all likelihood be better received by the Chechen participants. The gift, which consisted of a mug and high-quality black tea, was given to participants after the interview and was greatly appreciated in general.

The combined efforts to create an atmosphere of trust and respect during the interview were reflected in a very good participation rate: of the 208 interviews, only one interview was not completed due to the emotional stress of the (female) participant. In this instance, the interviewer made the decision to break off the interview. However, as this interviewee had already completed 26 questions, the data was included in the analysis.

1.2.7. Verification Mission

A Verification Mission to the North Caucasus was set for June 2009 in order to contextualize the research results and gain additional insight into the region of origin. An international staff from IOM Vienna and two national staff from IOM Moscow met in Grozny (Chechen Republic) and Vladikavkaz (North Ossetia) with local authorities, NGOs and international organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, Swiss Development Cooperation, etc. The meetings addressed the structural settings and limitations in the Chechen Republic, as well as recommendations and best practices for a sustainable return and reintegration programme. The knowledge of the region of the institutions and organizations was included in this research report.

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4 “Refugee” in this text refers to someone who has fled his/her country of origin, regardless of his/her legal status. “Refugee” is a broader term and thus clearly separated from the term “asylum seeker” (someone who has fled an application for asylum) as well as “recognized refugee” (someone who has been granted asylum because he/she was recognized to fulfil the criteria of the Geneva Convention). Therefore, the term “refugee” encompasses both of these groups.

5 Six of the interviews were not included in the statistical analysis because the interviewees, although from Chechen origin, had not lived in the Chechen Republic prior to their departure from the region, but in Dagestan.

6 Vladikavkaz is the capital city of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, where many organizations working in the region have their office.
1.3. Additional remarks

On 13 January 2009, a young Chechen man was shot and killed in Vienna. The victim had filed a complaint against the Chechen Republic's president Ramzan Kadyrov with the European Court of Human Rights, and the media assumed that there was a political motive for the murder. This situation complicated the arrangement of interviews as many institutions were reluctant to expose their clients to any interview process under these particular circumstances. There was also the assumption that the Chechens would be reluctant to participate in the survey, resulting in some of the institutions withdrawing their support for the survey by disallowing the interviewers to enter the institutions. Whether hesitation to participate in the survey was due to this incident and the subsequent media attention, as was encountered in Vienna especially, cannot be clearly stated. However, many participants did not show any reluctance or fear in the interview process, and though this issue was frequently discussed, the goal of attaining 200 participants was not jeopardized.
2. Profile of Chechens Receiving Basic Welfare Support in Austria

2.1. The situation of Chechen refugees in Austria

Prior to 2002, few Chechens lived in Austria, however, a well-functioning migration network has developed since then (cf. Langthaler 2009a: 165). Statistics indicate that Austria was not originally an important destination for Chechen refugees. While a sharp increase in asylum applications filed by Russian citizens was registered in European countries between the years 1999 and 2000 (plus 79.2% in total applications; cf. Hofmann/Reichel 2008: 13), in Austria applications by Russian citizens only rose significantly in 2002, amounting to 2,221 (compared to 365 in 2001). This trend would be the beginning of what soon came to be an important movement of Chechens to Europe:

The total size of the Chechen refugee population residing in European countries in 2006 amounted to a total of 37,132 with a total of 29,151 Chechen refugees being hosted by five receiving countries, Austria, Poland, France, Belgium, and Norway. (Hofmann/Reichel 2008: 22)

As the number of Chechen refugees in Europe increased, so too did figures in Austria; in 2003, as many as 6,706 Russian citizens from Austria filed an application for asylum.

Table 1: Applications for asylum in Austria:

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,129</td>
<td>18,284</td>
<td>30,127</td>
<td>39,354</td>
<td>32,359</td>
<td>24,634</td>
<td>22,461</td>
<td>13,349</td>
<td>11,921</td>
<td>12,841</td>
<td>3,695</td>
<td>4,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>6,706</td>
<td>6,172</td>
<td>4,355</td>
<td>2,441</td>
<td>2,676</td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>1,125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these applications were successful. In 2002, only 36 Russian citizens were granted asylum according to the Geneva Convention, however the number increased in 2003 to 788. By 2004, positive applications from Russian citizens numbered 2,987. By 2006, Austria hosted the largest Chechen refugee population in Europe, with a total of 8,723 recognized refugees, according to Hofmann and Reichel (cf. ibid: 22). From 2003 to 2007, a very high percentage of applicants were granted asylum (see Table 2).

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7 cf. footnote no. 4.
8 Note that: “Chechens usually figure as Russian nationals in asylum statistics, therefore their movements and characteristics are difficult to grasp by these numbers.” Szczepanikova 2008: 94.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
One reason for the high recognition rate of Chechen refugees in Austria was that in contrast to other countries, Austria does not limit the definition of the term "prosecution" to prosecution by the state (a prerequisite for being granted asylum according to the Geneva Refugee Convention), but also recognizes danger from other prosecuting actors. Presumably, the assessment of the option to resort to "internal flight alternatives" is another reason, which was assumed to be unavailable to Chechens in Austria, in contrast with other European countries (cf. Langthaler 2009a: 173ff). However, the importance of a country as a destination does not only depend on successful applications for asylum, as Hofmann and Reichel explain:

In a first step, a small number of European countries developed into main target countries of Chechen asylum migration not because for having close ties to Chechen communities before but because of being in reach of Chechen flight migrants and for offering protection to them. Austria serves as an example for this pattern. In a second step, social networks started to build around the first arrivals and the traditionally strong role for kinship and shared identity among Chechens strengthened the concentration trend in the primary target countries of Chechen asylum migration.

(Hofmann/Reichel 2008: 23)

In May 2004, the Austrian asylum regime underwent important changes. After the European Union (EU) enlargement, Austria’s Eastern neighbours Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic became EU member states. Thereafter, Austria was surrounded by EU member states and no longer had external EU borders. According to the EU Dublin II Regulation21 (343/2003/EC),22 Austria is only responsible for asylum applications of those refugees who came directly to Austria without prior entry to another EU member state (i.e. via airplane). As most Chechens travel to Austria by land (the majority of them arrive via Slovakia and the Czech Republic, cf. Roschger 2009: 181), they enter another EU member state prior, which is then responsible for their applications for asylum.

Therefore, many of the Chechens who currently come to Austria are returned to another EU member state. Many are sent to Poland, which is an important country of first reception and transit, but which grants asylum to a very limited number of Chechen asylum seekers (cf. Langthaler 2009a: 172). As a result, the recognition rate of filed asylum applications has dropped significantly: In 2008, only 46 per cent of Russian citizens were granted asylum (compared to 72% in 2007). Only 28 per cent of decisions regarding Russian citizens from January to April 2009 were positive.

2.1.1. Asylum procedures in Austria

According to the Austrian Asylum Act, an application for asylum can be filed exclusively in Austria where the asylum process is divided into two phases. During the “admission procedure”, the authorities examine whether Austria is responsible for the asylum application or not. An application for asylum can be inadmissible (Zurückweisung) according to the Dublin II Regulation or in accordance with the principle of safe third country.23 During the second phase, which constitutes the actual asylum procedure, the Federal Asylum Office examines whether the applicant should be granted asylum according to the Geneva Convention on Refugees, or subsidiary protection status.

An application for asylum can be filed24 informally by simply notifying an organ of the public security service of one’s intention to seek protection in Austria against persecution. However, formal submission of the application is only possible at one of the Initial Reception Centres, to which all asylum seekers are transferred after filing an application for asylum. There are three Initial Reception

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>2,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>2,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2,788</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>1,633</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>2,300</td>
<td>3,123</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,419</td>
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<td>3,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Decisions in asylum processes (according to Geneva Convention) for Russian citizens from 2002 to 2008, and January to April 2009

30 Other decisions include withdrawals, etc.
31 The Dublin II Regulation determines the EU member state responsible for considering application for refugee status lodged in one of the member states by a third-country national. According to the Regulation’s provisions, an asylum applicant may be transferred to the member state where that applicant had previously filed application for international protection. The country of first application and contact (in practice, the country where the asylum seeker was first fingerprinted) is responsible for examining his/her application for refugee status.
32 Asylum Act, Art. 5 (1) AsylG.
33 Asylum Act, Art. 4 (1) AsylG.
34 A peculiarity of the admission procedure is that a distinction is made between filing and submission of the asylum application.
Centres in Austria: the Initial Reception Centre East (in Traiskirchen, Lower Austria), the Initial Reception Centre West (in Thalham, Upper Austria), and the Airport Reception Centre (Vienna Airport in Schwechat, Lower Austria). During the admission procedure, the applicant's identity is established (by scanning finger prints, age assessment, the inspection of clothing and belongings in order to secure documents or objects which could indicate identity, motivation for escape and travel route). Asylum seekers are mainly interrogated on their identity and their travel route. Within 20 days, the asylum seeker receives a notification whether he/she is admitted to the actual asylum procedure. If there is evidence that another EU member state, not Austria, is responsible for the application, according to the Dublin II Regulation, a consultation procedure with the country in question is opened. In this case, the admission procedure can be extended for up to six months. If during the consultation procedure, the other country accepts responsibility for the application, the asylum seeker is referred to that country.

As stated above, during the second part of the asylum process, the Federal Asylum Office examines whether the applicant should be granted asylum according to the Geneva Convention, or whether the applicant is entitled to subsidiary protection. A negative decision is always combined with an expulsion order. Additionally, an expulsion procedure can be introduced before the final decision on the asylum status, provided that a negative decision is very likely and specific public interests demand an acceleration of the procedure. Since 1 July 2008, appeals against decisions of the Federal Asylum Office can be filed at the Asylum Court (Asylgerichtshof).

### 2.1.2. Basic welfare support

Asylum seekers, persons entitled to asylum, displaced persons and persons who may not be deported can be granted temporary basic welfare support in Austria. According to the Basic Welfare Support Agreement between the Federal State and the provinces, the competencies on providing basic welfare support are shared between the State and the provinces. During the admission procedure, the costs of basic care are borne by the Federal State, while in later stages of the asylum procedure the provinces are the competent authorities to provide housing, pocket money, medical insurance, etc. The Federal Government provides welfare support at the Initial Reception Centres, where the asylum seekers are accommodated upon their arrival until acceptance of the asylum application. This accommodation period can last from 20 days to several months. Upon admission to the asylum procedure, the asylum seekers are transferred to accommodation facilities in the provinces. Here, the provincial authorities may make use of humanitarian, ecclesiastical or private establishments; such establishments act on behalf of the provincial authorities, to whom they report upon request or if otherwise required, and are obliged to comply with the instructions of the provincial authorities.

Apart from the distribution of competencies, the Basic Welfare Agreement regulates the scope of support and services provided to the beneficiaries: accommodation, pocket money (usually EUR 40/month) and financial support for clothing, schooling, health insurance, medical treatments, information, counselling, assistance, public transport for appointments with authorities, etc. Financial resources for food are also provided, but may be paid directly to the asylum seekers’ host/pension (who is responsible for providing food). More detailed provisions can be found in the Federal Basic Welfare Support Act as well as in and Basic Welfare Support Acts and the Care Acts of the Provinces. As provincial legislations are not identical, the definition of the beneficiaries who are entitled to basic welfare support and services can vary in the different provinces. Recognized refugees are entitled to basic welfare support for up to four months after the final (positive) decision.

### 2.1.3. Right to work

According to the aforementioned Basic Welfare Support Agreement, asylum seekers are generally prohibited from working during the first three months after filing the asylum application. After the expiry of the three month period, the asylum seeker can apply for a work permit according to the general conditions set out in the Aliens Employment Act. In practice, however, it is very difficult for an asylum applicant to receive a work permit, as the issuance of work permits for foreigners depends on a number of factors which cannot be influenced by the applicant nor the potential employer (for example, a work permit can only be issued when no Austrian citizen or other foreigner who is already integrated into the Austrian labour market is available). The same applies for self-employment. Asylum seekers who are accommodated at a care facility can be employed in auxiliary activities that are directly connected to their accommodation (for example, house-cleaning, kitchen work, transport and maintenance) and auxiliary activities

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35 The Initial Reception Centres are managed by the Federal Asylum Office, which is part of the Ministry of Interior. In 2003, the Austrian Ministry of Interior signed a service provider contract with a private company called European Homecare which is responsible for the care of asylum seekers in the Initial Reception Centres.
36 Additionally, since 1 April 2009 the authorities have had to examine whether Art. 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Right to private and family life) would prohibit an expulsion in the long run. This is the case when the asylum applicant has a family life with an Austrian national or with a third-country national with a long-term settlement permit in Austria, for example. In such cases, the asylum authorities have to inform the immigration authorities, the Governor of the respective province or the mandated regional district authority, who must issue a “settlement permit – restricted” or a “settlement permit – unrestricted”.
37 AsylG, Art. 27 AsyG.
38 Additionally, the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgerichtshof) has the competence to review decisions of the Asylum Court if fundamental rights of the applicant are potentially violated. Beyond that, the Ministry of Interior or the Asylum Court can call upon the Federal Administrative Court (Verwaltungsgerichtshof) to decide on issues of basic principle.
40 The Basic Welfare Support Agreement is an agreement between the Federal State and the provinces and therefore does not constitute a legitimate claim for the asylum seekers.
41 Basic Welfare Support Agreement, Art. 3 and 4 GVGV.
43 Basic Welfare Support Agreement, Art. 6 GVGV.
44 Basic Welfare Support Agreement, Art. 7 GVGV.
45 Aliens Employment Act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz); Art. 4ff AusBG.


for the public benefit (for example, landscape conservation and layout work, upkeep of parks or sports facilities or assistance in the administration of the care facility).

### 2.1.4. Implications of lengthy asylum procedures

Recognized refugees and persons with subsidiary protection status are exempt from the Aliens Employment Act

46 and have free access to the Austrian labour market. This distinction is one of the significant differences between the situation of asylum seekers and that of recognized refugees. While recognized refugees can start a “normal” life, the life of asylum seekers is mainly characterized by the insecurity of their status. The psychological burden of anticipating a negative decision on their asylum application is worsened by the lack of employment, and while many female applicants maintain their self-esteem by pursuing their traditional roles of taking care of the children and the household, male applicants tend to suffer from what they perceive to be a devaluation of self worth or “worthlessness”. This attitude can result in serious psycho-social health problems, especially in applicants that have been exposed to traumatic events.

Many Chechens (and other ethnic groups seeking asylum in Austria) also suffer from integration problems stemming from the often lengthy period of waiting for the final decision. Not only are the usual means for “easy” integration closed to them (for example, employment) in many cases, integration efforts are deferred for fear they may prove to be in vain. Only when positive notification is received are attempts to integrate into the new society reinforced (cf. Schmidinger 2009: 294). This situation is also compounded by the fact that many integration measures are open only to recognized refugees (for example, language classes, etc.).

### 2.2. Profile Survey among Chechens living in Austria

Although Chechens are the largest group of asylum seekers in Austria, very little is known about them. To close this information gap, a comprehensive quantitative survey was conducted to provide insight into the profile of Russian citizens from the Chechen Republic who receive basic welfare support in Vienna and Lower Austria (i.e. persons in the asylum process as well as persons with refoulement protection). The survey aimed to obtain information on their demographic and socio-economic situation, as well as on the motivation for coming to Austria. In addition, the survey examined a possible demand for voluntary return and reintegration measures.

#### 2.2.1. Data collection and analysis

Data collection by means of a questionnaire took place in accommodation facilities that provide basic welfare support to asylum seekers in Vienna and Lower Austria. The questionnaire consisted of 84 questions and was divided into five sections: General profile, Pre-migration situation, Migration period, Stay in Austria and Future prospects (see Annex). The questionnaire offered a variety of answers for each question. Apart from factual questions (on age, number of children, length of stay, etc.), participants were asked to assess a number of aspects in their past and current lives (for example, satisfaction with economical issues in the Chechen Republic). In these cases, participants were asked to rank their satisfaction from 1 - very good, to 7 - very bad (i.e. 1= very good; 2= good; 3= rather good; 4= regular; 5= rather bad; 6= bad; 7= very bad). Alternatively, participants were asked to choose from among a given list of factors (for example, economical issues, political issues, etc.) that influence a specific aspect of their lives, and rank the three most important factors (for example, 1- economical issues most important factor; 2- political issues second most important factor; 3- social issues third most important factor).

Overall, 208 people participated in the interviews. Of the 208 interviews, only one interview was not completed though the data was included in the survey, as the participant had answered most of the questions. Six interviews were excluded from the data analysis because the participants, though of Chechen origin, were from other parts of the Russian Federation (Dagestan). Therefore, the data of 202 people were used for the data analysis. Of these 202 participants, 106 had been interviewed in the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen, 75 had been interviewed in smaller accommodation facilities in Lower Austria and 21 had been interviewed in accommodation facilities in Vienna.

In the following chapter, different response patterns based on sex and age were given special attention. Statistically significant differences in responses from male and female participants, and from younger and older participants, are highlighted in the text.

46 Aliens Employment Act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz); Art. 1 (2) b AuslBG.
47 Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
48 Statistical significance tests were applied for the analysis of the data. Statistically significant results, i.e. results that are unlikely to have occurred by chance, are described in footnotes, which identify the level of significance by indicating probability (p). In general, a lower p-value indicates a more significant result. In these tests, p-values lower than 5 per cent (p<0.05) or 1 per cent (p<0.01) have been indicated. Therefore, significant results are considered to be those of a probability of difference by chance of a variable lower than 5 per cent or 1 per cent. For questions with a 7 point scale (i.e. 1 = very good; 2 = good; 3 = rather good; 4 = regular; 5 = rather bad; 6 = bad; 7 = very bad), the mean (M) and standard derivation (SD) are outlined in the footnotes. The mean is the sum of the observations divided by the number of observations. The mean describes the central location of the data, and the standard deviation describes the spread.
2.2.2. Socio-demographic data

Summary:

The socio-demographic data of the survey indicates that the largest group of the participating Chechens who had come to Austria were between 26 and 35 years old and mainly originated from only five regions.

The Chechens who participated in the survey constituted a high number of married adults and a statistically significant number of widowed women. Also noticeable was a high birth rate with 4.84 children per woman. In terms of education, participants above 36 years of age had achieved a higher level of education (vocational training and university) than younger participants.

The participants described their economic situation in the Chechen Republic as dominated by high unemployment rates with long periods of unemployment – especially for women. Most people had worked as manual labourers, especially those who were younger than 25 years of age.

Half of the participants indicated that their family income in the Chechen Republic had not been higher than 250 Euros. Women indicated a lower family income of maximum 175 Euros. The income situation in the Chechen Republic, for the participants, was characterized by contributions of many family members: 43 per cent of the participants indicated that apart from their own contribution, at least two other family members were contributing to the family income. This trend is reflected by the living situation whereby 52 per cent of the participants lived with at least three family members in the same accommodation. Although most lived with their extended family, some participants did live only with their “nuclear family” in the Chechen Republic: 33 per cent lived with only their partner and children and 54 per cent of the participants indicated that the family income was allocated either by themselves and/or another person (the partner).

Of the participating Chechens, 68 per cent indicated that they had previously possessed property in the Chechen Republic: In 51 per cent of the cases the property was a house; the remainder were apartments, businesses and land. Significantly, most of the buildings (houses, apartments and businesses) were no longer accessible by the owners; in contrast, land owned by the participants was still accessible in most cases.

2.2.2.1. Sex and age

The first part of the questionnaire addressed the general profile of the participants. In the survey, sex distribution was almost equal: 49 per cent of the participants were men and 51 per cent were women. As far as the distribution of age was concerned, the largest group of participants, constituting 80 persons (39.6%, N=202), was between 26 and 35 years old. Persons between 18 and 21 years old numbered 13 (6.44%), 27 persons (13.37%) were between 22 and 25 years old, 47 persons (23.26%) were between 36 and 45 years old, 26 persons (12.87%) were between 46 and 55 years old, eight persons (3.96%) were between 56 and 65 years old and one person (0.5%) was above 66 years old (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Age distribution
2.2.2.2. Participants' region of origin

The overwhelming majority of the participants (72.78%) came from five regions/districts in the Chechen Republic: Groznensky, Gudermessky, Shalinsky, Urus-Martanovskiy and the City of Grozny. Participants from the mountain areas of the Chechen Republic constituted 23.78 per cent of those surveyed, 31.19 per cent were from the plains and 44.57 per cent came from the areas with mountains and plains. For details, see Chart 2. None of the participants indicated Itum-Kalinsky district of the Chechen Republic as his/her region of origin, and one participant did not answer this question.

Chart 2: Region of origin

2.2.2.3. Civil status and children of the participants

The majority of the participants were married (73.27%). Participants who were single constituted 13.37 per cent of those surveyed, 4.95 per cent were divorced, 16 women were widowed (15.53% of all female participants; 81.25% of these widowed women were younger than 55 years) and one person indicated that she had “other” civil status.

Participants in the survey who indicated that they had children constituted 88.56 per cent (94.44% of participants over the age of 25 had children). The birth rate per woman was 4.84 children (499 children/103 women). On average, 2.47 children were indicated per adult. Participants with two children constituted 25.25 per cent of those surveyed, 19.31 per cent had one child, 17.33 per cent had three children, 13.86 per cent had four children, 11.39 per cent had no child, 8.42 per cent had five children, and 3.96 per cent had six and more children (see Chart 3). The majority of the children were minors.

Chart 3: Children of participants as indicated
2.2.2.4. Education level, years spent in the educational system and language skills

Notably, the younger participants displayed a lower level of education than the older generation. As Chart 4 shows, the largest group of participants (89 persons or 44.28%) completed high school (10 levels). Most participants (69 persons or 34.16%) spent 11 to 15 years in school. Three participants (1.49%) spent one to three years in school, 43 persons (21.29%) spent four to eight years in school, 65 persons (32.18%) spent nine to ten years in school, and 22 persons (10.89%) spent more than 15 years in school. Participants who completed a maximum of eight years in school constituted 22.8 per cent of all 202 participants. The difference between education level and total years spent in school could be explained by repeat attendance of some school levels.

Chart 4: Highest level of education

The data suggests that the older generation had a better educational background than the younger generation: significantly more participants over 36 years of age completed vocational training (25.53%; N=47, compared to 10%; N=80) or university (14.89% compared to 7.5%) than did younger participants, and also spent more time in school.

The native language of nearly all of the Chechens interviewed (196 persons or 97%) was Chechen. Five participants (2.48%) indicated Ingush and one person (0.49%) indicated Kumyk as their native language. All of the Chechens interviewed had at least a minor command of Russian. As expected, participants interviewed at the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen (7.55%, N=106) spoke less German than other participants (58.33%, N=96), as they had arrived in Austria more recently.

2.2.2.5. Work situation in the Chechen Republic

Regarding the work situation in the Chechen Republic, the answers of the participating Chechens reflected high rates of unemployment and a predominant role of manual labour. As Chart 5 indicates, most participants (50.5%) indicated that they had been unemployed in the Chechen Republic before they departed the region: 30.2 per cent of those surveyed had been employed full-time, 4.95 per cent had been employed part-time, 8.42 per cent had been employed on an irregular basis and 5.94 per cent indicated “other” as their employment situation. Statistically, men were employed full-time significantly more often than women (44.44% compared to 16.5%). Of those who had been unemployed (102 participants), all but 29 persons had been unemployed for more than four years. Participants that had been unemployed for more than four years constituted 71.57 per cent of those surveyed. In general, women had been unemployed longer than men: 82.09 per cent of the women surveyed (N=67) and 51.43 per cent of the men (N=35) had been unemployed more than four years.
An overwhelming majority of the participants (76.40%; N=178) were manual workers in the Chechen Republic, while 23.6 per cent of the participants had office work. Of the 190 participants who indicated a main occupation field, most of the female participants indicated that they worked at home as housewives and mothers (29.47%) or in shops (12.63%). Most of the male participants worked in the construction sector (30.53%) or as a driver (18.95%). Participants who were entrepreneurs constituted 4.2 per cent of those surveyed, 2.11 per cent were accountants, 6.32 per cent were teachers, 4.21 per cent worked in agriculture, 3.16 per cent worked as nurses, 2.63 per cent worked as seamstresses, and 28.95 per cent indicated other professions. Participants who worked in the construction sector constituted 17.37 per cent of the survey (see Chart 6).

In terms of the level of expertise, the largest group of Chechens interviewed (43.98%; N=166) indicated that they had an intermediate level of expertise. Participants that had a beginner level of expertise constituted 17.47 per cent of the survey and 38.55 per cent indicated an expert level. Significantly more participants under the age of 25 years than participants older than 25 years of age had worked as manual labourers\textsuperscript{56} (92.31% compared to 73.68%). As expected, younger employed persons\textsuperscript{57} displayed a lower level of expertise\textsuperscript{58} than that of older participants.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} \chi^2(3)= 14.13; p< 0.01.

\textsuperscript{57} M= 1.62; SD= 0.70.

\textsuperscript{58} \chi^2(6)= 29.32; p< 0.01.

\textsuperscript{59} M= 2.32; SD= 0.66.
2.2.2.6. Income situation in the Chechen Republic

The participants were asked to indicate whether or not they were the only contributor to the family income. In most cases, many individuals were contributing to a family income, especially from among the male's relatives. Of the participants in the survey, 18.5 per cent indicated that their family income in the Chechen Republic was between 2,000 to 5,000 rubles (around 50 to 125 Euros)[60]. Of the participants, 50 per cent had between RUB 7,001 and RUB 10,000 (around 175 to 250 Euros) of family income, or less. Male participants indicated that their families had a significantly higher income than female participants.[61] Very few indicated that they were the only ones who contributed to the family income in the Chechen Republic (14.36%; N=195). More often, many family members were responsible for the income: in 75 cases (38.48%), the partner contributed to the family income, in 57 cases (29.23%), the mother contributed to the family income and in 53 cases (27.18%), the father contributed to the family income. Participants who indicated at least two family members were contributing to the family income constituted 42.86 per cent of the survey. On average, two additional persons contributed to the family income apart from the participant.

Analysis of the data reveals that the female participants were financially supported more often[62] by the family of their partner than the other way round: women (58%; N=100) received financial support more often than men (17.89%; N=95) from their partner and their partner’s mother (19% to 1.05%) and partner’s father (17% to 3.16%). Male participants (24.21%) were the sole contributor to the family income, more often than female participants (5%).

2.2.2.7. Living situation in the Chechen Republic

More than half of the cases of the participating Chechens indicated that they had lived in extended family structures in the Chechen Republic, although some had also lived in nuclear families. As the data below shows, women tended to stay with their husbands’ family. The majority of the participants (65.35%) lived in the Chechen Republic with their partner and/or their children (62.38%), and often with other family members in the same household. Some lived together with their mother (39.60%), with their siblings (35.64%), with their father (31.68%), with the father of their partner (7.43%), with the mother of their partner (7.92%), with the siblings of their partner (8.91%), with the grandparents from the mother’s side (1.98%), with the grandparents from the father’s side (1.48%), with the grandparents of the partner’s mother’s side (3.96%) and with the grandparents of the partner’s father’s side (1.49%). Participants that lived alone constituted 1.49 per cent of the survey, while 1.98 per cent of the participants indicated that they had been in hiding and lived in other parts of the Chechen Republic or outside of the Chechen Republic, and 3.96 per cent of the participants indicated living situations as “other”.

Significantly more women (70.87%) than men (53.54%) lived with children.[63] More male participants lived with their mother (51.51%, compared to 28.16% of the female participants), with their father (43.43%, compared to 20.39% of the female participants) and with siblings (43.43%, compared to 28.16% of the female participants). Overall, most participants (33.17%) lived with two or three family members (25.74%). Participants who lived with four or more members of their family amounted to 53 persons (26.24%). Participants who lived with only one other family member amounted to 22 persons (10.89%). On average, participants lived with 2.68[64] members of their family.

2.2.2.8. Property owned in the Chechen Republic and its current state

When asked about property in the Chechen Republic, more than half of the participants indicated that their property was no longer accessible to them. The situation seemed to be more favourable in terms of land ownership and access. Out of 202 participants, 68.16 per cent indicated that they used to have property in the Chechen Republic. Those who did not have any property in their region of origin amounted to 31.84 per cent and one person did not answer this question. Of those who had property, 42.22 per cent indicated that they had more than one type of property. There was a significantly higher rate of participants older than 36 years of age (82.93%) who owned property than did younger participants[65] (57.98%). Most of the participants owned one property (57.78% out of 135), 33.33 per cent owned two properties, 5.93 per cent owned three properties and 2.96 per cent owned four properties.

Of the 207 properties owned by the survey participants, 43 per cent were accessible to their owners at the time of the interview, including all types of property. In 37.68 per cent of the cases, the property had been destroyed, in 6.28 per cent of the cases the property was occupied by other tenants and in 13.04 per cent of the cases the status was “other” or the participants did not know the current status of their property. Two people did not answer the question on the status of their property. In most cases, buildings such as houses, apartments and businesses (N=158) were destroyed (48.10%) or occupied (5.69%). Only in 34.18 per cent of the cases did owners believe their property was still accessible to them. In contrast, responses from the land owners (N=48) indicated that the majority of them (72.92%) still had access (see Chart 7).

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60 Exchange rate as of June 2009.
61 U=3922.00; z=-2.65, p<0.01. Fifty per cent of the men indicated that their family income was between RUB 10,001 and RUB 15,000 (around 250 to 375 Euros) and less; whereas fifty per cent of the women indicated that their family income was between RUB 5,001 and RUB 7,000 (around 125 to 175 Euros) or less.
62 χ²(1)= 65.13; p< 0.01.
63 χ²(3)= 15.48; p<0.01.
64 SD= 1.25.
65 χ²(1)= 13.92; p<0.01.
In detail, 50.5 per cent of the participating persons owned a house in the Chechen Republic. In 37.25 per cent of the cases, the house existed and was accessible, in 50.98 per cent of the cases the house had been destroyed, in four cases (3.92%) the house was occupied by other tenants and in eight cases the participants indicated “other” status or did not know the status. Participants who owned an apartment in the Chechen Republic constituted 44 per cent of the study. In 27.91 per cent of the cases the apartment existed and accessible, in 41.86 per cent of the cases the apartment had been destroyed, in three cases (6.98%) the apartment was still in existence but occupied by other tenants, in eight cases (18.60%) the apartment had been sold, one participant had given their apartment to their daughter and one person did not know the status of their apartment.

Participants who owned a business in the Chechen Republic constituted 44 per cent of the study. In 30.77 per cent of the cases, the business was still in existence and accessible, in 46.15 per cent of the cases the business had been destroyed, in two cases (15.38%) the business was occupied by other tenants, and in one case the participant indicated the status as “other”.

Participants who indicated that they owned a land plot in the Chechen Republic constituted 23.76 per cent. In 72.92 per cent of the cases, the land was still in existence and accessible, in one case the land had been destroyed, in 8.33 per cent of the cases the land was occupied by other tenants and in 8.33 per cent of the cases the participants indicated the status as “other” or the participant did not know the status of their land.

Of the 137 participants who owned property in the Chechen Republic, only four had their property located in two or more regions. Participants owned property in the City of Grozny (25.17%), in Groznensky district (11.68%), in Gudermessky district (17.48%), in Kurchaloy district (4.90%), in Shalinsky district (15.38%), in Achkhoy-Martanovsky district (8.39%), in Urus-Martanovsky district (6.99%), in Shelkovskoy (2.80%), in Vedensky district (2.10%) in Shatosky (one case), in Nozhay-Yurtovsky district (one case), in Sunzhensky (one case), in Nadterechny (1.40%), and in Naursky (one case). None of the participants had property in Sharoysky or Ilum-Kalinsky districts, and two participants indicated location of their property as “other”.

**2.2.3. Evaluation of the situation in the Chechen Republic**

**Summary:**

*Participants in the survey reported to have had rather good experiences with family members, neighbours, colleagues, employers, legal counsellors, religion and culture in the Chechen Republic before they left the region.*

*Among those experiences that were reported to have been “rather unsatisfactory” or “very unsatisfactory” were law enforcement, economics, politics and security. Male participants especially, as well as those who left the Chechen Republic before 2008, perceived their security situation there as very bad.*

*Significantly, around 171 participants indicated that the question concerning their experiences with legal counsellors was “not applicable”. Also the high rates of “not applicable” answers to the questions concerning local authorities, government authorities and law enforcement were notable, indicating that these questions addressed sensitive issues.*
2.2.3.1. Experiences with members of society in the Chechen Republic

In the survey, participants were asked to assess a variety of aspects of the situation in the Chechen Republic before they left the region. They were asked to assess their experiences with different members of society in the Chechen Republic, grading them from 1 - very good, to 7 - very bad (i.e. 1= very good; 2= good; 3= rather good; 4= regular; 5= rather bad; 6= bad; 7= very bad).

On average, participants indicated that their relationship with family members, neighbours, colleagues, employers and other ethnicities was “good”. However, male participants\(^66\) tended to have a better relationship with their families\(^67\) than did female participants.\(^68\) Male participants\(^69\) also indicated a better relationship with their colleagues\(^70\) than did female participants.\(^71\) Furthermore, people younger than 25\(^72\) years of age tended to indicate significantly fewer good experiences with other ethnicities\(^73\) than did older participants.\(^74\)

The experiences with legal counsellors, local authorities and housing authorities in the Chechen Republic were indicated, on average, as “rather good” by the survey participants. However, a considerable number of participants indicated that the questions referring to their experiences with these groups were “not applicable”. This response option was chosen by 171 persons for the question on legal counsellors, by 104 persons for the question on local authorities, and by 121 persons for the question on housing authorities.

The experiences with government authorities in the Chechen Republic was indicated, on average, as “regular”, while the experiences with law enforcement were mostly described as quite bad (37.81% of the participants indicated that their experiences with law enforcement in the Chechen Republic were “rather bad” or “bad”). The male participants\(^75\) indicated that their experiences with law enforcement\(^76\) were worse than the experiences of the female participants.\(^77\) The questions on experiences with government authorities and law enforcement were “not applicable” for 142 participants. Chart 8 gives a brief summary of the experiences with different members of society in the Chechen Republic, outlining differences between men and women, while Chart 9 outlines differences between younger and older participants.

**Chart 8: Experiences of men and women with members of society in the Chechen Republic**

\[^{66}\] M= 1.43; SD= 0.85.  
\[^{67}\] T(199)= -2.40; p< 0.05.  
\[^{68}\] M=1.75; SD=0.88.  
\[^{69}\] M= 1.81; SD=0.87.  
\[^{70}\] T(175)= -2.39; p< 0.05.  
\[^{71}\] M= 2.14; SD=1.  
\[^{72}\] M= 2.55; SD= 1.61.  
\[^{73}\] U= 1417.50; z= -2.25; p< 0.05.  
\[^{74}\] M= 1.96; SD= 1.18.  
\[^{75}\] M= 5.86; SD= 1.71.  
\[^{76}\] U= 1130.00; z= -2.59; p< 0.01.  
\[^{77}\] M=4.78; SD=2.14.
2.2.3.2. Satisfaction with different aspects of life in the Chechen Republic

In the survey, participants were asked to assess different aspects of life in the Chechen Republic such as health, economy, politics, security, education, social life, religion and culture. They were asked to grade their satisfaction with these aspects from 1 - very satisfied, to 7 - very unsatisfied (i.e. 1= very satisfied; 2= satisfied; 3= rather satisfied; 4= regular; 5= rather unsatisfied; 6= unsatisfied; 7= very unsatisfied). Most of the Chechens participating in the survey were “unsatisfied” with economic and political issues and “very unsatisfied” with the security situation in the Chechen Republic.

On average, participants were “rather satisfied” with religious and cultural issues and “rather unsatisfied” with health, educational and social issues. On average, they were “unsatisfied” with economic and political issues. Participants under the age of 25 tended to rate the economic situation as better than did participants who were between 36 and 45 years old. Furthermore, participants were “very unsatisfied” with security issues. Interestingly, male participants were less satisfied with security issues than were female participants. Chart 10 summarizes the levels of satisfaction with different aspects in the Chechen Republic according to differences between men and women, while Chart 11 compares the answers of participants between 18 to 25 years old with those of participants between 36 and 45 years old.
2.2.3. Security

Participants were asked to assess security aspects in the Chechen Republic by grading the situation in accordance with different groups in society (women, young women, men, young men, children, and the elderly as well as their own group). Grades were allocated from 1- very safe, to 7- very unsafe (i.e. 1= very safe; 2= safe; 3= rather safe; 4= regular; 5= rather unsafe; 6= unsafe; 7= very unsafe).

The participants mostly indicated that the situation in the Chechen Republic was “unsafe”, especially for young men. In general, the safety of elderly people in the Chechen Republic was seen as “regular”, but the situation for children and women was considered to be, on average, “rather unsafe”. The situation for men and young women was indicated as “unsafe” on average; the situation for young men was described as “very unsafe”.

The average personal security situation was indicated as “unsafe”, but male participants tended to see their own security situation as significantly worse than did the female participants. Chart 12 gives a brief overview of the assessment of the security situation for different groups in the Chechen Republic according to differences between men and women. Significantly, participants who left the Chechen Republic before 2008 indicated that they had felt considerably less safe in the Chechen Republic than those who had left the region since the beginning of 2008.

Chart 12: Security in the Chechen Republic
2.2.4. Migration Period

**Summary:**

The survey participants left the Chechen Republic mainly because of security and political issues. Most of them left the Chechen Republic with the intention to go to Austria, and the fact that they already knew family members there played an important role in that decision. However, 47 per cent of the Chechens interviewed indicated that the favourable reputation of the asylum policy in Austria was an important reason for choosing to go there.

Most participants left the Chechen Republic with a family member. They came to Austria mainly by train and/or taxi. On their way from the Chechen Republic to Austria, many participants crossed Poland, Belarus, other regions of the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic.

When they arrived in Austria, 89 per cent of the participants intended to settle in Austria and 49 per cent of the participants intended to stay forever.

2.2.4.1. Reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic

In order to investigate which push factors induced Chechens to leave their region of origin, survey participants were asked to indicate their personal reasons for leaving, as well as “general reasons” (reasons they believed to be valid for Chechens in general). During the interview, participants were presented with a choice of reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic (security, politics, health, education, economy, social issues, religion, culture, and “other reasons”). They were asked to identify the three most important reasons that applied to their own case and to rank them from one to three (one indicating the most important reason). Many survey participants stated that their personal decision for leaving the Chechen Republic was driven by security and political concerns. The most important individual reasons (N=200) given for leaving the Chechen Republic ranked as “security” (65%) before “political issues” (20.5%) and “health” (4%). “Political issues” (36.17%) were ranked before “security” (20.74%), and “health issues” (15.96%) ranked as the second most important reason (N=188) for leaving. Participants ranked “education issues” (19.25%) before “health issues” (16.77%) and “social issues” (14.46%) as the third most important reason (N=161) for leaving.

Weighing all answers resulted in the following ranking: “Security” before “political issues”, then “health”, “education”, “economy”, “social issues”, “religion”, “culture” and “other issues” in that order. Chart 13 indicates the weighted ranking for the most important reasons to leave the Chechen Republic. Participants with a university degree indicated security (90%; N=22) significantly\(^\text{90}\) more often as the most important reason for leaving the Chechen Republic than did other participants (62%; N=175).

*Chart 13: Personal reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic*

\(^{90}\) \(\chi^2(1)= 7.32; p< 0.01.\)
When asked to identify "general reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic", (as opposed to "individual reasons"), participants considered security and politics as the most important push factors. As most important general reasons (N=192) for leaving the Chechen Republic, participants ranked “security” (35.42%), before “political issues” (14.06%), then “economic issues” (4.69%) and “health” (4.69%) in that order. Participants ranked “political issues” (49.15%), “health issues” (14.69%) and “security” (14.12%) as the second most important general reason (N=177) for leaving. “Health issues” (26.51%) were ranked before “economic issues” (24.7%) and “political issues” (13.86%) were ranked as the third most important general reason (N=166) for leaving the Chechen Republic.

Weighing all answers resulted in the following ranking: “security” before “political issues”, then “health”, “economy”, “social issues”, “religion”, “education” and “culture” in that order. Chart 14 illustrates the weighted answers on "General reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic".

Chart 14: General reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic

2.2.4.2. Planning and course of the flight

Participants in the survey were asked to indicate how and why they came to Austria. They were asked whether they had always intended to come to Austria, or were headed somewhere else, and by which means they arrived in Austria. The interview process indicated that after their departure from the Chechen Republic most of the participating Chechens headed directly to Austria, especially those who arrived after 2005. The most important reason for them to choose Austria as a destination was the presence of family members in Austria and the favourable reputation of the asylum policy there.

Two thirds of the participants (66.83%) intended to go to Austria to apply for asylum when they left the Chechen Republic (see Chart 15). Most of those who had not intended to go to Austria (N=66) wanted to go to another country in Central Europe (28.79%) or in Western Europe (25.76%). Participants who only wanted to leave the Russian Federation constituted 13.64 per cent of the survey, 6.06 per cent were heading for Northern Europe, 7.58 per cent for Azerbaijan, 3.03 per cent for Turkey and 1.52 per cent for Georgia. Participants who listed “other countries” as their intended country of destination constituted 7.58 per cent of the survey. Significantly, fewer participants who arrived before 2005 (N=48) had the intention of going to Austria (54.17%) compared to those participants who arrived later (70.67%).

\[ \chi^2(1) = 4.48; p < 0.05. \]
Of the survey participants, 46.84 per cent indicated the favourable reputation of the asylum policy in Austria as the reason why they chose to come to Austria. Contact with residents from the Chechen Republic currently living in Austria was the reason to choose Austria for 22.1 per cent of the participants, while joining family was the reason for 19.47 per cent of participants, especially for female participants (28.87%).

Other reasons for choosing Austria as a country of destination were given as German language proficiency (for 3.68% of participants), Austria’s reputation for offering favourable social assistance to asylum seekers (for 13.68% of participants) and the favourable reputation of the country’s health care system (for 13.16% of participants). Participants who only followed the instructions from the person who assisted them in leaving the Chechen Republic constituted 5.79 per cent of the survey. For 13.68 per cent of the participants, coming to Austria was a pure coincidence; 10 per cent of the participants indicated “other reasons” for coming to Austria; and 2.63 per cent of the participants indicated that they “did not know” their reasons for coming to Austria (see Chart 16).

Participants who knew someone in Austria before they left the Chechen Republic constituted 65.15 per cent of the survey (N=198), and this factor played a significant role in their decision to go to Austria. Most participants had family members (73.08%; N=130) and/or acquaintances (20%). 13.08 per cent had friends, two persons had friends of friends and four persons knew “someone else” in Austria.

Most of the survey participants had left the Chechen Republic shortly before the survey took place: 50 per cent had left the Chechen Republic at the beginning of 2008. Participants who had left the Chechen Republic during the year 2008 constituted 41.2 per cent of the survey (82 out of 199 participants). Of those participants who had left the Chechen Republic prior to 2008, the largest group left in the year 2004: 17 participants (8.5%) had left in 2007, 16 persons (8.04%) had left in 2006, 14 persons (7.04%) had left in 2005, 12 persons (6.04%) had left in 2005, 11 persons (5.52%) had left in 2004, 9 persons (4.52%) had left in 2003, 8 persons (4.04%) had left in 2002, 7 persons (3.52%) had left in 2001, 6 persons (3.04%) had left in 2000, 5 persons (2.52%) had left in 1999, 4 persons (2.04%) had left in 1998, 3 persons (1.52%) had left in 1997, 2 persons (1.04%) had left in 1996, 2 persons (1.04%) had left in 1995, and 1 person (0.52%) had left in 1994.

\[ \chi^2(1) = 5.28; p < 0.05. \]
29 persons (14.57%) had left in 2004, four persons had left in 2003, five persons had left in 2002, seven persons had left in 2001 and four participants had left in the year 2000.

Of the participating Chechens, 52 per cent had never lived outside the Chechen Republic before. Of those 48 per cent who had already lived outside the Chechen Republic for some time (N=96), 75.8 per cent had been to other parts of the Russian Federation, 27.3 per cent had been to other parts of the former Soviet Union, 8.1 per cent had been to the European Union, three per cent had been to other parts of Europe, and three per cent had been in the Middle East. Of those participants who had lived outside the Chechen Republic before, 2.5 per cent indicated that they had lived in a country other than those listed. The majority of the participants (85.57%) had left the Chechen Republic with a member of their family. However, significantly more male participants (19.19% of the participating males in the survey) had left on their own, as compared to female participants (6.86%). Eight participants left with a member of the partner’s family, two with friends, one with an acquaintance, two with a group of people and one indicated to have left in “other” company.

Many arrived by train (89.5%) and/or a taxi (60.5%) from the Chechen Republic. Others used the public bus (20.5%), a private car (19%), a goods transporter (19%), an airplane (6%) or another means (two persons), or arrived on foot (11.5%). Male participants used private cars more often (26.26% of all males interviewed) than female participants (11.76%). Also, male participants used goods transporters more often (23.23%) than female participants (14.71%). Also, fewer male participants (86.87%) used the train than did female participants (92.08%).

Participants were also asked about the cost of their journey. Participants who answered the question on transportation costs amounted to 170 persons, and 50 persons answered the question about the cost of the middleman who helped them leave the region. Of those who answered the relevant question, 27.65 per cent indicated that their transportation costs ranged from 501 to 1000 Euros, while costs for the middleman ranged from 501 to 1000 Euros. However, these numbers need to be considered with some reservation, as, in many cases, one person may have paid for the entire family or the participants paid a middleman to cover all costs.

Participants who answered the question on their travel route from the Chechen Republic to Austria amounted to 198 persons. As Chart 18 illustrates, most participants entered Poland (79.8%), and/or Belarus (77.27%), territories of the Russian Federation (59.6%) and/or the Czech Republic (50%) on their way to Austria. Some of the participants entered Georgia (1.51%), Turkey (1.51%), a country in the Middle East (2.02%), the Ukraine (26.77%), Moldova (one person; 0.5%), a Baltic State (1%), Slovakia (37.37%), Greece (one person; 0.5%), and/or another country (2.02%). Participants who indicated that they did not know which countries they had entered on their way to Austria constituted 6.57 per cent of the survey.

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93 Please note that for the question “In which other places have you lived before?”, multiple replies were possible.
94 $\chi^2(1)=6.95; p<0.01$.
95 See Chart 17.
96 $\chi^2(2)=6.26; p<0.05$. 

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There are several significant differences between the travel routes of male participants and those of female participants: more women (84.16%) than men (70.1%) went through Belarus, more women (88.12%) than men (7.13%) went through Poland, more men (47.42%) than women (27.72%) went through Slovakia and more men (32.99%) than women (2.79%) went through the Ukraine. Before 2008, significantly more participants (66.22%) arrived via Slovakia than since the beginning of 2008 (33.78%).

Chart 18: Territories entered on the way to Austria

As Chart 19 shows, almost every one of the participants (89.39%) had the intention to settle in Austria upon his/her arrival. Only 3.54 per cent of the participants intended to return to the Chechen Republic; 1.51 per cent of the participants were planning to relocate to another country in the European Union, and 5.56 per cent did not have any concrete plans in this regard. Participants who had the intention to stay forever in Austria constituted 49.49 per cent of the survey (N=196), 28.06 per cent did not know their intentions, 7.65 per cent intended to stay for more than ten years, 6.12 per cent intended to stay for five to ten years and 3.06 per cent intended to stay for three to five years. Participants who intended to stay for two to three years constituted 2.52 per cent of the survey, while 1.51 per cent intended to stay for half a year to one year and one per cent of the participants intended to stay for a maximum of half of a year.

Chart 19: Plans upon arrival in Austria

97 \( \chi^2(23) = 10.94; p < 0.01. \)
98 \( \chi^2(1) = 15.1; p < 0.01. \)
2.2.5. Stay in Austria

Summary:

At the time of their interview, most of the participants in the survey were asylum seekers in the asylum procedure; many had only filed their asylum application, some had received a negative decision and had filed their first appeal or had been notified that another EU member state was responsible for their application. Participants who had filed their application in the month of their arrival constituted 84 per cent of the survey. Many of the participants had only arrived in Austria in 2008.

Ninety-two per cent of the participating Chechens were unemployed in Austria; female participants were less often unemployed, as some worked as cleaners in the accommodation facilities.

Eighty-one per cent of the participants had an income of less than 250 Euros per month; and only four per cent of them were sending money back to the Chechen Republic.

The participating Chechens indicated that they were “satisfied” in general with their civil situation as well as with the political and security situation in Austria. They were also “rather satisfied” with NGOs, legal counsellors, government authorities and the economic situation. Noticeably, participants younger than 35 years of age indicated to be less satisfied (although still at a very high level) concerning their experiences with other ethnicities and religious issues than did those who were older.

Participants from the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen indicated less satisfaction with the situation with neighbours, colleagues, other ethnicities and local authorities, than did participants from other accommodation facilities in Lower Austria. They also indicated more often that these questions were “not applicable”.

When the participants responded to general questions, most of them assessed their stay in Austria as “rather positive”, however, when asked more direct questions about their experiences with authorities (for example, law enforcement, housing, etc.), a majority of the respondents preferred to state that the question was not applicable to them.

2.2.5.1. Current status

Most of the survey participants had only been in Austria for some months when they were interviewed. At that time, the majority of these Chechens were in the middle of the asylum procedure. Out of 202 participants, most had arrived in the year 2008 (40.09%). Two persons (1%) had arrived in Austria in 2002, two other persons (1%) in 2003, 22 persons (10.89%) had arrived in 2004, 24 persons (11.88%) in 2005, 15 persons (7.43%) in 2006, 16 persons (7.92%) had arrived in 2007, and 40 persons (19.8%) had arrived in the year 2009. The average time frame for Chechens staying in Austria was 17.6 months (SD 20.68). The median time frame was four months, indicating that 50 per cent of the participants were in Austria for four months or less.

For 50 per cent of the participants, the time difference between leaving the Chechen Republic and arriving in Austria was one month or less. However, of those participants who had left the Chechen Republic with the clear intention to go to Austria, about two thirds managed to arrive in Austria within one month or less. Participants who left the Chechen Republic and arrived in Austria within the same month constituted 32.99 per cent of the survey. However, some participants arrived a considerable time after their departure, with varying time differences but ranging up to a difference of almost nine years.

As Chart 20 shows, 58.5 per cent of the participants were asylum seekers in the asylum procedure at the time of the interview; 26 per cent of the participants were in the admission procedure. Participants who were rejected asylum seekers constituted 6.5 per cent of the survey.

Eight participants (2.5%) were recognized refugees (two had received this status in 2005, one in 2007 and five in 2008), three per cent had subsidiary protection status, one per cent indicated to have “other” status and 2.5 per cent (five female participants) did not know their status.
The bigger part of the participants (41.94%; N=186) had filed their application for asylum in the year 2008. The majority of the participants (83.78%) had filed their application within the month of their arrival. However, 15.68 per cent of the participants had not filed their application for asylum immediately, taking from one to 12 months before applying (one participant did not file his/her application for 20 months after his/her arrival).

The biggest group of participants (23.47%; N=196) had recently filed their asylum application. Some participants had received a negative decision at the first instance (17.86%), or had been notified that another EU member state was responsible for their application for asylum according to the Dublin II Regulation (21.43%). Some had filed the first appeal after a negative decision (23.47%), 2.04 per cent of the participants had received a negative decision at the second instance (i.e. from the Federal Asylum Review Board / Unabhängiger Bundesasylsenat, UBAS). 2.55 per cent of the participants had filed an appeal against the negative decision of the second instance. Participants who had not filed any application for asylum constituted 1.53 per cent of the survey. Participants who indicated “other” to be their stage of the asylum process constituted 4.59 per cent of the survey and 3.06 per cent of the participants did not know their stage in the asylum application process.

2.2.5.2. Work and income in Austria

As it is almost impossible for asylum seekers to find employment in Austria (see Chapter 2), almost all of the interviewed Chechens indicated that they were not employed at the time the survey took place. As a result, their income was quite small, so almost none of them were able to send back money to the Chechen Republic. The majority of the 200 participants who answered the relevant question did not work in Austria (91.5%). Male participants (96.94%) were more often unemployed than were female participants (86.27%). Most participants had been unemployed for three months (33.72%) or more than four years (31.98%). Of those who were employed, the majority (one man and nine women) were employed part-time, four had irregular jobs and one female participant was employed full-time. Out of a total of 16 employed participants, most had been employed for half a year or less (87.5%); one man had been employed for six to twelve months, and one woman had been employed for three to five years. 13 women worked as cleaners and one man worked as a non-skilled worker.

2.2.5.3. Experiences with members of society in Austria

In the survey, participants were asked to assess their experiences with different members of society in Austria, grading them from 1 - very good, to 7 - very bad (i.e. 1= very good; 2= good; 3= rather good; 4= regular; 5= rather bad; 6= bad; 7= very bad).The interviewed Chechens indicated that in general, their experiences with members of the Austrian society were quite good. At the same time, certain questions such as those concerning authorities in their accommodation arrangements were regarded as “not applicable”. People accommodated at the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen appeared to be less satisfied than people living in other parts of Austria.

The participants indicated that they had “good experiences” with neighbours, colleagues, other ethnicities, law enforcement, local authorities and housing authorities in Austria, on average. Forty-three participants replied to the question on “experiences with colleagues” as “not applicable”. The same response pattern was prominent regarding questions about experiences with law enforcement (97 persons answered “not applicable”) and with housing authorities (114 persons answered “not applicable”).
Participants from Lower Austria indicated more often (33.33%) than did the others (8.99%) that the question about experiences with neighbours was “not applicable”. Participants from Vienna (82.67%) indicated more often than did the others (57.26%) that the question concerning their experiences with local authorities was “not applicable”. Participants between 26 and 35 years of age had significantly fewer positive experiences with other ethnicities than did those between 36 and 45 years of age.

The experiences with NGOs, legal counsellors and government authorities were perceived as “rather good” on average. However, the questions about experiences with these groups were “not applicable” for many. This response option was chosen with regard to experiences with NGOs by 109 persons, with legal counsellors by 86 persons and with government authorities by 120 participants.

Participants from the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen indicated more often than did the others that the question concerning their experiences with NGOs (85.44% compared to 22.58%) and legal counsellors (57.84% compared to 28.13%) was “not applicable”. As far as the rating is concerned, male participants rated the experiences with government authorities significantly worse than did female participants. Participants from the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen indicated worse experiences with neighbours, colleagues, other ethnicities and local authorities than did those participants from other accommodation facilities in Lower Austria (see Chart 21).

Chart 21: Experiences of participants from the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen and the rest of Lower Austria with members of society in Austria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience with</th>
<th>Traiskirchen</th>
<th>Lower Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Counsellors</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing authorities</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government authorities</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.5.4. Satisfaction with different aspects in Austria

Participants in the survey were also asked to assess different aspects of their life in Austria, such as health, economy, politics, security, education, social life, religion and culture. They were required to grade their satisfaction with these aspects from 1- very satisfied, to 7- very unsatisfied (i.e. 1= very satisfied; 2= satisfied; 3= rather satisfied; 4= regular; 5= rather unsatisfied; 6= unsatisfied; 7= very unsatisfied). The satisfaction with different aspects in Austria of the interviewed Chechens was quite good in general; again, participants accommodated at the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen rated certain circumstances worse than participants accommodated elsewhere.

As Chart 22 shows, an average number of the participants were “satisfied” with the political, security, health, education, social, religious and cultural situation in Austria. Participants between 26 and 35 years of age were not as satisfied with the religious
situation in Austria as those between 36 and 45 years of age. Participants were "rather satisfied" with the economic situation and the services of civil society organizations in Austria. Notably, the participants who were interviewed at the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen (N=96) were significantly less satisfied with their health situation and social situation than those living in other accommodation facilities (N=94).

Chart 22: Satisfaction with different aspects of life in Austria

As far as services of civil society organizations were concerned, 47 per cent of the participants (N=198) had already applied for them; those above 46 years of age had applied significantly less often for such services (24.24%; N=33) than younger participants (52.12%; N=165). When asked to balance the advantages and disadvantages of life in Austria, the survey participants considered their stay in Austria to be "rather positive".

2.2.6. Ties with the Chechen Republic

Summary:

Nearly all survey participants indicated that they were following developments in the Chechen Republic, and most of them were getting their information through other people from the Chechen Republic living in Austria and through electronic media. Around 91 per cent of the Chechens were contacting their family on a regular basis, mostly via telephone, and indicated no other relevant contacts. In most cases, the nuclear family of the participants lived with them in Austria, while most of the other family members were still in the Chechen Republic.

2.2.6.1. Keeping up with developments in the Chechen Republic

The survey also attempted to discover more about the ties between Chechens living in Austria and their region of origin. Interestingly, almost all of the participants indicated that they followed current developments in the Chechen Republic, mainly through information from other Chechens. Almost all the participants (87.5%; N=200) indicated that they followed current developments in the Chechen Republic, although more male participants (94.9%; N=98) indicated to be interested in following developments than did female participants (80%; N=102). In general, participants followed the developments in their region of origin rather frequently. Participants between 26 and 35 years of age followed the developments more frequently than did those above 46 years of age.

115 M= 1.45; SD= 0.5.
116 F(3/196) = 4.14; p< 0.01.
117 U= 3189.00; z= -3.95; p< 0.01; M= 2.11; SD= 1.47 compared to M=1.43; SD= 0.74.
118 U= 3506.50; z= -2.27; p< 0.05; M= 2.6; SD= 1.28 compared to M= 2.19; SD= 1.09.
119 \( \chi^2(3)= 10.53; p< 0.05 \).
120 \( \chi^2(1)= 9.62; p< 0.01 \).
121 M= 2.93; SD= 1.68
122 M= 4.03; SD= 2.3
None of the participants referred to the government, the Russian embassy, or the civil society organizations as sources of information on developments in the Chechen Republic. Most participants (83.42%; N=187) gathered their information from other people in the Chechen Republic, 55.08 per cent used electronic media (Internet, radio, TV), 12.83 per cent used print media (newspaper, magazines), 11.23 per cent used information provided by other Chechens living in Austria and one per cent used “other” sources.

2.2.6.2. Contacts to the Chechen Republic

Around 91.41 per cent of the survey participants (N=198) indicated that they were in contact with people in the Chechen Republic. All of these participants used the telephone for contacting people in the Chechen Republic, while 8.3 per cent used email, 1.67 per cent used mail and 2.78 per cent used advanced techniques such as Skype, msn messenger, etc. Family was contacted by 50 per cent of the survey participants (N=180) monthly or more frequently. Most of the participants did not have contact with friends, former colleagues, peers or neighbours; however, of those who did have contact with these groups of people, 50 per cent contacted them once quarterly or more frequently. Only two participants indicated that they stayed in contact with their spiritual leader, community leaders or doctors in the Chechen Republic, while most of the other participants (178 persons) indicated that this question was “not applicable”.

Only seven male participants (3.68%) were sending money to the Chechen Republic (more or less frequently). Two participants were sending less than 100 Euros and one was sending between 300 and 400 Euros once quarterly.

2.2.6.3. Location of family members

In most cases, the interviewed Chechens lived in Austria with the nuclear family; the extended family was usually left behind in the Chechen Republic. In 69 per cent of the cases, the partner of the participant was with the family in Austria, in 6.5 per cent of the cases, the partner was in the Chechen Republic, in one case the partner was in another part of Austria, in four cases the partner was in other parts of the Russian Federation, in one case he/she was somewhere else and four participants did not know the location of their partner. 19.5 per cent of the participants indicated that the question about the current residence of the partner was “not applicable”.

Male participants were significantly more often with their partner in Austria (81.82%) than were female participants (56.44%); and more female participants (26.73%) than male participants (12.12%) indicated that this question was “not applicable”. Participants between 26 and 35 years of age indicated significantly less often (8.75%) that the question on the location of their partner was “not applicable” than did older participants (23.46%).

In most cases (79.08%), the survey participants were accompanied by their children, in 6.12 per cent of the cases, the children were in the Chechen Republic, in four cases they were in other parts of Austria, in one case they were in other parts of the Russian Federation and in one case the participant did not know the location of his/her child. 11.73 per cent of the participants indicated that the question on the residence of their children was “not applicable”.

Of the participants, 8.12 per cent were with their mothers and 3.54 per cent were with their in Austria; in most cases the mothers (60%) and the fathers (40%) were still in the Chechen Republic, in two cases the parents were in other parts of Austria, in two cases they were in other member states of the European Union and in five cases they were in other parts of the Russian Federation. In many cases, however, participants indicated that the question of the location of their father (51%) and mother (26%) was “not applicable”.

For a brief overview of the current location of family members at the time of the interview, see Chart 23.

\[ \chi^2(2)= 11.79; p< 0.01. \]
\[ \chi^2(3)= 29.83; p< 0.01. \]
In Austria, participants lived more frequently in the nuclear family, whereas in the Chechen Republic, they had lived with their extended family. Compared to the living situation in the Chechen Republic, fewer people were with their mother or father in Austria (39.6% and 31.68% compared to 8.12% and 3.54%). On average, participants lived with 1.63 members of their family in Austria, compared to an average of 2.68 family members in the Chechen Republic. While in the Chechen Republic, 51.98 per cent of the participants had lived together with three family members or more, only 4.32 per cent of the participants lived with three family members in Austria.

### 2.2.7. Plans for the future

**Summary:**

At the time of the interview, the overwhelming majority of the survey participants intended to settle in Austria. Only six per cent of the participants wanted to return to the Chechen Republic. Those 11 people who considered going back to the Chechen Republic perceived their future prospects in the Chechen Republic to be "regular" with regards to economic issues, and to be "unsatisfactory" with regards to political or security issues.

The low rate of participants in this survey who expressed their wish to return to their region of origin is notable, as many Chechens do decide to return voluntarily (see Chapter 1). An explanation for this discrepancy could be the fact that at the time of the interview, many of the participants had only been in Austria for a very short period and did not want to consider going back, while others were still in the asylum process and reluctant to say anything that they thought could render their application pointless or jeopardize the outcome of the asylum process.

Some participants reacted with suspicion to the question on potential return to the Chechen Republic, and so did not want to consider returning (as one interviewer stated) in case the survey was to be used for reasons other than those indicated by the interviewer. The majority of the survey participants did not see any opportunities for returnees in the Chechen Republic.

The participants argued that security for the family, security in general and an acceptable political situation were conditions that would be required to return to the Chechen Republic. For returning, the participants said they would need assistance with travel costs and job seeking as well as return counselling. Some of the Chechens had already used return counselling services, but were unsatisfied with them.

The survey participants considered language, job opportunities and the financial situation as the main challenges to remaining in Austria. Accordingly, they indicated that language courses, job placement and health assistance would be required if they were to stay.

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125 SD= 0.75.
126 SD= 1.25.
2.2.7.1. Current plans

When the survey participants were asked about their plans for the future, most of them indicated their inclination to settle in Austria. The current plan for the majority of the participants (91.5%; N=200) was to settle in Austria; only 11 participants (5.5%) wanted to return to the Chechen Republic – all of them were above 22 years old (i.e. of the participants between the age of 18 years and 21 years, no one wanted to return to the Chechen Republic). Two participants declared their intention to relocate to another country in the European Union, and four participants did not know about their future plans (see Chart 24). Out of the 11 participants who wanted to return to the Chechen Republic, eight were accommodated at the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen and three were living in other accommodation facilities.

Those participants who had voiced their intention to return to the Chechen Republic were asked whether they wanted to return “very soon”, “soon”, “rather soon”, “sometime”, “in a long while”, or “in a very long while”. On average, they wanted to go back to the Chechen Republic “rather soon”\(^\text{127}\). One person from the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen wanted to return “very soon”, five wanted to return “soon” and two other participants from Traiskirchen wanted to return “sometime”. Two persons from other accommodation facilities wanted to return “sometime” and one “in a very long while”. These participants wanted to go back with their children (seven) and partners (six); two indicated they would go back alone.

Chart 24: Current plans for the future

\[\text{Percentage N= 200} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>N= 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To settle down in Austria</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To return to the Chechen Republic</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To relocate to another EU member state</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.7.2. Future prospects for going back to the Chechen Republic

Those survey participants who considered going back to the Chechen Republic were asked about their expectations for their future situation. In general, they viewed the situation there as quite pessimistic (only ten out of the 11 persons responded to the relevant questions). Out of the ten persons who responded to the question on the “expected economic situation”, two participants said this question was “not applicable” and one said she did not know. On average, the economic situation in the Chechen Republic was expected to be “regular”.\(^\text{128}\)

However, the majority of the participants (52.74%; N=201) indicated that they saw no opportunities for returnees to sustain themselves in the Chechen Republic. Participants who indicated that they believed there would be opportunities for returnees to sustain themselves in the Chechen Republic constituted 13.93 per cent of the survey (26 participants, however, were of the opinion that there would be “rather few opportunities”),\(^\text{129}\) and the rest did not know if there would be any opportunities.

In response to the question on the expected political situation in the Chechen Republic, seven persons indicated that they “did not know”, and one participant said this question was “not applicable”. One male participant said he expected it to be “very unsatisfactory” and one female participant said she expected it to be “unsatisfactory”.

\(^{127}\) M= 3.09; SD= 1.70.
\(^{128}\) M= 4.30; SD= 1.11.
\(^{129}\) M= 4.54; SD= 1.92.
In response to the question on the expected security situation in the Chechen Republic, six persons indicated that they “did not know”, one female participant said this question was “not applicable”, and three female participants said they expected it to be “unsatisfactory”.

In response to the question on the expected health situation in the Chechen Republic, one female participant indicated that she “did not know”, one male participant said this question was “not applicable”, and eight participants said they expected it to be “regular”.

In response to the question on the expected educational situation in the Chechen Republic, two persons indicated that they “did not know”, one female participant said this question was “not applicable”, and seven participants said they expected it to be “regular”.

In response to the question on the expected social situation in the Chechen Republic, one male participant indicated that he “did not know”, one female participant said this question was “not applicable”, and eight participants said they expected it to be “regular”.

In response to the question on the expected religious situation in the Chechen Republic, one male participant indicated that he “did not know”, two participants said this question was “not applicable”, and seven participants said they expected it to be “regular”.

In response to the question on the expected cultural situation in the Chechen Republic, one male participant indicated that he “did not know”, one female participant said this question was “not applicable”, and eight participants said they expected it to be “regular”.

Those participants who considered going back to the Chechen Republic were asked about their expectations for their future work situation. Out of the 11 participants who wanted to return to the Chechen Republic, only two young men (ages 22 to 25) wanted to work in another sector than the one in which they had worked before they had left the region. The rest of the participants wanted to find employment in the same work sector. When asked to assess their experiences in that sector (1- very experienced; 2 – experienced; 3- rather experienced; 4- regular; 5- rather inexperienced; 6- inexperienced; 7- very inexperienced), five participants considered themselves to be “experienced”, while the other six participants considered they had “regular” experience or less. Of the 11 participants, six younger participants aged 22 to 35 declared their intention to start up a small business.

### Conditions required for return to the Chechen Republic

In order to identify which conditions were required for return to the Chechen Republic, participants were presented with a choice of factors (secure employment, acceptable living standards, acceptable level of security, acceptable political situation, security for the family, acceptable educational system, acceptable medical services, acceptable economic conditions, or “other conditions”). They were asked to identify the three most important conditions they considered necessary for returning to the Chechen Republic, and to rank them from one to three (one indicating the most important condition). Participants ranked “security for the family” (40.1%; N=192) as the most important condition required for return to the Chechen Republic, before “acceptable level of security” (38.54%) and “acceptable political situation” (6.77%).

Weighing all answers resulted in the following ranking: “security for the family” was ranked before “acceptable level of security”, then “acceptable political situation”, “acceptable living standards”, “secured employment”, “acceptable medical services” and “acceptable educational system” in that order (see Chart 25).
Significantly\textsuperscript{136} more male participants (47%, N=94) considered an “acceptable level of security” as an important factor, than did female participants (31%; N=98), while more female participants (50%) considered security for the family as an important factor, than did male participants (30%).

\textbf{2.2.7.4. Assistance required for return to the Chechen Republic}

In order to identify the kind of assistance that could be helpful to returnees to the Chechen Republic, participants were presented with a choice of services (return counselling, coverage of travel costs, transportation of belongings, assistance in obtaining travel documents, grants for start up of a small enterprise, housing allowances, job placement, job-seeking assistance, educational assistance, vocational training, assistance in social reintegration, psycho-social assistance and “other assistance”). Participants were asked to identify the three most important assistance services they considered to be needed by returnees to the Chechen Republic, and to rank them from one to three (one indicating the most important service).

Participants ranked “covering of travel costs” (22.08%; N=163) as the most important assistance for return to the Chechen Republic, before “job seeking assistance” (12.88%) and “return counselling” (12.27%). Weighing all answers resulted in the following ranking: “Covering of travel costs” before “job seeking assistance”, followed by “assistance in obtaining travel documents”, “psycho-social assistance”, “return counselling”, “housing allowances”, “grants for start up a small enterprise”, “vocational training”, “educational assistance”, “assistance in social reintegration”, “job placement”, “other”, “transportation of belongings” and “medical help” in that order (see Chart 26).

\textsuperscript{136} \chi^2(1)= 8.07; p< 0.01.
Significantly more female participants (16%; N=87) than male participants (5%; N=76) considered psycho-social assistance as important. Participants with a university degree ranked return counselling (38%; N=16) significantly more often as one of the most important services required for returning to the Chechen Republic than did other participants (10%; N=146).

2.2.7.5. Challenges in case of remaining in Austria

Participants in the survey were also asked to identify the most important challenges for Chechens remaining in Austria. They were presented with a choice of factors (financial challenges, job opportunities for themselves, job opportunities for their children, cultural differences, and attitude of the local population, housing conditions, language, and “other challenges”). They were asked to identify what they considered to be the three most important challenges for staying in Austria and to rank them from one to three (one indicating the most important factor).

Participants ranked “language” (37.88%; N=198) as the most important challenge to remaining in Austria, before “job opportunities for oneself” (23.23%) and “financial challenges” (19.7%).

Weighing all answers resulted in the following ranking: “Language” before “personal job opportunities”, then “housing condition”, “attitude of local population”, “job opportunities for children”, “other” and “cultural differences” in that order (see Chart 27).
2.2.7.6. Assistance in case of remaining in Austria

Participants were also asked to identify the most important services needed by those Chechens remaining in Austria. They were presented with a choice of services (grants for start up of a small enterprise, housing allowances, job placement, job-seeking assistance, language courses, other educational assistance, vocational training, assistance in social integration, psycho-social assistance, health assistance, and “other services”). They were asked to identify the three most important assistance services they considered necessary for remaining in Austria, and to rank them from one to three (one indicating the most important service).

Participants ranked “language courses” (42%; N=200) as the most important assistance for remaining in Austria, before “job placement” (13.5%) and “health assistance” (10.5%).

Weighing all answers resulted in the following ranking: “language courses” before “job placement”, then “health assistance”, “housing allowance”, “other educational assistance”, “psycho-social assistance”, “grants for start up of a small enterprise”, “vocational training”, “assistance in social integration”, and “other” in that order as assistance needed for remaining in Austria (see Chart 28).

Chart 28: Assistance needed for remaining in Austria
Significantly more participants with a university degree (14%; N=22) considered grants for starting up a business as important, than did other participants (3%; N=175).

### 2.2.2.7. Return counselling

Participants in the survey were also asked whether they had already been given return counselling, and if so, had they been satisfied with the services. Of the 197 participants who responded to the relevant question, 13.71 per cent had already been given return counselling. Most of these participants were living in small accommodation facilities in Lower Austria, five were from the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen and one person was from Vienna. Of those who had already used return counselling, 23 participants were unsatisfied with the service.

\[ \chi^2(1) = 5.2; p < 0.05. \]
3. Interpretation of the Survey and Desk Research Results

The aim of the following chapter is to place the results of the data analysis in a wider context to allow a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the situation of Chechens currently receiving basic welfare support in Austria. In the chapter, background information from literature\textsuperscript{140} and media\textsuperscript{141} as well as additional informal information gathered by the interviewers during the survey will be used to interpret the survey results. Additionally, four experts were consulted in order to explain and discuss the gathered information. We are very thankful for the input and support from Edith Vasilyev and Philippa Wolke from the Austrian Integration Fund, from Thomas Schmidinger from the Institute for Political Science of the University of Vienna and from Siegfried Stupnig from the NGO Aspis.

Special attention will be given to the research results on the future plans of the survey participants. For this reason, aspects of integration into Austrian society shall also be discussed in this chapter. Drawing on the IOM-specific expertise in the field, the aspects of assisted voluntary return and reintegration in the Chechen Republic shall be addressed in the subsequent chapters.

3.1. Socio-demographic profile

According to the data analysis, almost 60 per cent of the interviewed participants were aged up to 35 years. As the survey data shows, more than half of the participants were living in an extended family structure, a pattern that is common in the Chechen Republic (cf. Jaimoukha 2005). The wife and children traditionally live with the husband’s parents, sometimes with his brothers and their families as well. This structure is usually broken up in Austria, as the survey indicates: most survey participants were living in a nuclear family setting. As many Chechen men were killed in past conflicts, those with wives and children left them without a paternal head of the household. In the survey, 16 per cent of the female participants indicated widowhood status.

Vasilyev describes young families with three or four children, or single men, as typical for those Chechens who came to Austria,\textsuperscript{142} which is confirmed by the survey results that indicate a very high birth-rate of almost five children per female participant, and very high rates of marriage in general. Some experts interpret the high birth rate as a strategy for survival among the Chechen people.\textsuperscript{143} Also, children can be very important for integration, as they can help to enhance the integration of the whole family (cf. Szczepanikova 2008, cf. Vogl 2009; see below). One survey interviewer reported that survey participants appreciated the warm welcome their children were given in Austrian schools, for example, when they were invited to birthday parties.

Excursus: social structure

Jaimoukha (2005) suggests that the clan structure is an important factor in the Chechen Republic. However, almost all survey participants (except for two) refused to answer the question on their contact with community leaders. There are multiple explanations for such a response pattern:

First, Chechen society is understood as a very “closed” society with people who are not very open toward “outsiders”. Therefore, it may not be regarded as appropriate for a Chechen to discuss clan issues with a foreigner (cf. Jaimoukha 2005).

Second, it is likely that clans are currently undergoing social transformations – the conflict in the Chechen Republic may have led to the formation of different groups within one clan and subsequent disintegration, as Schmidinger pointed out.\textsuperscript{144}

During the interviews, survey participants also mentioned that the different parties in the conflict in the Chechen Republic are also active in Austria; rumours prevail that Russian authorities have sent Chechens to spy on other Chechens living in Austria. Experts have confirmed awareness of these rumours; however, it is not possible to provide proof of their validity.\textsuperscript{145} Notably, there is a significant degree of distrust among the Chechens living in Austria, which is displayed in interview situations (for example, by terminating a conversation when another Chechen enters the room; cf. Vogl 2009: 196).

\textsuperscript{140} In general, literature on the Chechen Republic and the Chechens is scarce. As a main source of information, authors have drawn on Jaimoukha 2005: The Chechens: a handbook; Schmidinger/ Schinnerl 2009: Dem Krieg entkommen? Tschetschenien und TschetschenInnen in Österreich, and Janda/Leitner/Vogl 2008: Chechens in the European Union.

\textsuperscript{141} Media research focused on reports in Austrian, Russian and international newspapers as well as in online sources.

\textsuperscript{142} Written questionnaire filled out by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.

\textsuperscript{143} Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{145} Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
Most of the survey participants originated from five regions in the Chechen Republic (Groznensky, Gudermessky, Shalinsky, Urus-Martanovsky and the City of Grozny). During the survey, an interviewee mentioned that in the past, it was quite common for Chechens to own several properties. Owning an apartment in Grozny and a house in the countryside with a piece of land was not a prerogative of wealthy individuals only. The survey data show that around 60 per cent of the participants owned property in the Chechen Republic and amongst them, around 40 per cent owned two kinds of property. However, more than half of the property that was owned in the Chechen Republic, especially buildings (over 70%), no longer existed, as the survey data reveals.

Both expert interviews and the survey data indicated that lack of education remains a problem for the younger generation of Chechens, namely those who started their education in the 1990s. During the 1990s, the post-Soviet education system collapsed, and many teachers left the region. For many young Chechens, regular school attendance was not possible. Currently, while the general situation is improving, the education system needs to be addressed as there is a lack of qualified teachers and schools are understaffed.

Currently, the situation in the labour market in the Chechen Republic is characterized by high unemployment rates (cf. Bundesasylamt 2008: 29; see also Chapter 4). The official figures are above 50 per cent, which is also reflected in the responses from survey participants. Therefore, participants can claim little or no work experience. In general, the labour market is limited to manual work. As a result, many of the older Chechens who have a university degree in addition to work experience in different professional areas are currently working as manual labourers (cf. Bundesasylamt 2008: 29).

As the survey revealed, most of the Chechens currently residing in Austria had an income of maximum 10,000 rubles (approximately 250 Euros) in the Chechen Republic, with the income of female participants being lower than that of male participants. Due to these low income rates, many family members were contributing to the family budget in the Chechen Republic. In Austria, most of the Chechen asylum seekers do not work, but live off of basic welfare support. The lack of employment and the subsequent dependence on money from others can have a negative effect on the self-esteem of the individual (a factor which is also valid for those emancipated women who had been educated in the Soviet system, as one of the interviewees pointed out during the interview).

### 3.2. Push factors

In the survey, the participants indicated security and political issues as primary reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic. Schmidinger voiced his opinion that those who left some years ago left due to security issues and those who left more recently did so for political reasons. The participants of the survey regarded their personal situation and those of young men as very unsafe in the Chechen Republic. Some of them reported that young men were prime targets for recruitment to the separatist movement to replenish their ranks as new fighters. Therefore, interviewees claimed, law enforcement officials considered young men to be primary “suspects”. As a result, if a family is suspected of sympathizing with rebels, or worse, has a member involved with the rebel movement, the entire family and neighbours of the family may be punished (cf. Kemoklidze 2009). Also, the survey data reveals that almost 40 per cent of the participants indicated that they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with law enforcement. Interestingly, many survey participants indicated that the questions concerning this topic were “not applicable”.

Health and other social reasons were also important factors for the participants in leaving their home region. In the Chechen Republic, military activities have resulted in environmental damage such as water and soil contamination (cf. Bundesasylamt 2008; Gaschajewa 2008: 15). The population has had to survive in a ravaged physical environment compounded by lack of a balanced diet and poor food quality (cf. Bundesasylamt 2008). As a consequence, illnesses such as tuberculosis, cancer, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS are widespread (cf. Gaschajewa 2008: 15). Furthermore, the population was subjected to various human rights abuses (cf. Memorial Report 2009). Therefore, many of the Chechens who left for European countries have been traumatized. In the survey, health issues were mentioned as the third most important factor for leaving the Chechen Republic. Wotke mentioned a high prevalence of psychosomatic illnesses, especially strong headaches and depression, among the Chechen asylum seekers. The most common post-traumatic diseases include, but are not limited to, heart problems, strokes, and nervous breakdowns. Stupnig explained that in his opinion, up to 100 per cent of Chechen refugees currently living in Austria may suffer from various forms of psycho-social distress. These traumas are hardly ever treated in Austria by adequate psycho-social assistance; nor are helpful activities encouraged.

Due to the high unemployment rate, many survey participants reported discontent with the economy in the Chechen Republic. The participants were also dissatisfied with the educational and social situations. As mentioned before, the level of education steadily decreased in the region; the generation that benefitted from the Soviet school system has a benchmark with which to compare the current state of the education system in the Chechen Republic.

Security, politics, health, education and career reasons can be seen as the most important push factors for leaving the Chechen Republic. Other reasons, such as a negative experience with specific members of Chechen society or religion, were influenced by

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146 Written questionnaire completed by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
147 Ibid.
148 Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
149 Written questionnaire filled out by P. Wotke on 03.06.2009.
150 Ibid.
151 Telephone interview with S. Stupnig on 22.05.2009.
security or political issues, or in the case of experiences with other family members, were rated as good by the survey participants.

With regards to housing and local authorities, the survey participants ranked their experiences as somewhat better than “medium”. The participants told the interviewers that they had experienced corruption and bureaucracy in dealing with these authorities. However, the same survey participants indicated that their relationship with other non-governmental associated structures, for example family, neighbours, colleagues, employers, etc. was positive in general. Notably, despite the fact that female participants indicated that they were quite satisfied with their relations with other family members, this level of satisfaction was not as high as that for male participants.

In addition, the survey exposed the fact that the younger the participant, the more challenging interrelations with other ethnic groups was to him/her in general. While the generation older than 25 years of age ranked their experiences with other ethnicities as “good”, the younger generation perceived these experiences as “rather good”. This open-mindedness on the part of the relatively older generation could be explained by their experience of living in a multicultural and multiethnic Soviet environment. The post-Soviet-era age group was brought up in a more nationalistic atmosphere, with very few, if any, representatives of other ethnic groups, as indicated by one of the interviewees during the survey.

According to the survey data, religion and culture were not among the important reasons for leaving the region. While all of the participants indicated Islam as their religion, no relationship to current political use of religion could be deduced. As some media sources suggest, the current political leadership is using religion as a pretext to include or exclude people by promoting certain branches of Islam and prosecuting others. As stated during the interviews, some Chechens who wear beards or headscarves are immediately classified as Wahhabi separatists, and could be persecuted as a result.

During the interviews, participants emphasized that they were very proud of their Chechen culture and traditions; however, many of them also indicated that the current interpretation of culture and traditions in the Chechen Republic was not to their preference. Participants of the survey were critical of the official definition of “Chechen culture”, as well as of Chechen television. Alternatively, museums, theatres and other so-called “haute culture” are no longer very vibrant as most of the prominent and promising actors and artists have fled the region (cf. Gewertz 2003).

3.3. Austria as a country of destination

In the survey, two thirds of the participants indicated that they had intended to go to Austria when they left the Chechen Republic. For half of the participants who had left the Chechen Republic before 2005, Austria was the prime destination. However, from 2005 onwards, the number of participants who had regarded Austria as their final destination increased. These participants chose Austria because they knew someone in the country, usually family members. The nuclear family often came to Austria together; however, in many cases documented in the survey, the male participants had arrived first and were later joined by their wives and children and, ultimately, the rest of the family. Some of the participants also highlighted that the favourable reputation of the Austrian asylum policy was the reason why they chose Austria as a country of destination. More than two thirds of the Chechens who had come to Austria before 2007 had received a positive decision on their asylum application (see also Chapter 2). Presumably, word was spread among Chechens leaving their region of origin and this news reinforced their decision to come to Austria. This factor may still be valid. As more than 90 per cent of the Chechens in Austria are in contact with people in the Chechen Republic on a regular basis, as the survey data revealed, changes in asylum procedures become immediately known there.

Those survey participants who had made the decision to go to Austria arrived within one month of their departure from the Chechen Republic. Once in Austria, they immediately filed their asylum application. More than 50 per cent of the survey participants came to Austria in 2008, whereas the rest had a high variance in their dates of arrival. The survey data reveal that at present, most of the participants are in the admission process or in the asylum procedure (see Chapter 2). The survey indicated that in general, the Chechens see their living experience in Austria as rather positive.

Excursus: Changing roles in a new environment

Presumably, the new social situation for the Chechens in Austria redefines their social relationships and self-understanding, especially with regards to gender and age roles. The situation for female refugees can be easier than the situation for their male counterparts. On one hand, Chechen women can maintain their traditionally assigned status and recognition as mothers and wives within their community. On the other hand, access to the Austrian labour market can be easier for Chechen women than for Chechen men. Moreover, the traditional role of women also serves as a resource to redefine their role in Austria as they can work, for example as cleaners, in contrast to men who often lose their role and status as the main bread winner. The survey data indicate that of those participants who work in Austria, most of them are women.

152 Written questionnaire filled out by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
154 Written questionnaire filled out by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
155 Ibid.
For men, it can be much harder to define a new role. Experts have observed that some Chechen women experience enhanced opportunities and more freedom in Austria. Thus, gender relations can be re-negotiated in the new context. The situation of Chechen men and women also changes because of the loss of the extended family structure. Many Chechen men and women were accustomed to support and advice from older family members (cf. Moderbacher 2009). This institution of elderly council and other family members’ involvement is not that powerful in Austria.

Being separated from their extended family networks, refugees also experience an unprecedented shift towards exclusive reliance on members of the immediate nuclear family. This represents a major rupture to the classic patriarchal arrangement of Chechen families. It also increases the feeling of insecurity and isolation because refugees can no longer draw from the support of kinship networks which was vital in Chechnya.

Vasilyev states that Chechen women cannot consult the family on matters concerning violent partners and Chechen men often remain unmarried because fathers/brothers/uncles cannot help them find a wife. The role of the older generation, which is highly respected in the Chechen Republic, is therefore changing as well.

Respect for elder is an important aspect of Chechen life, based on the system of self-governance in the village. The Chechen exile will often lack the opportunity to talk to a respected elder who would give guidance on ethics and behaviour and help resolve and defuse life’s problems, especially in a strange society.

Vasilyev notes that the wide-spread knowledge and experience of older people may also become less important, as the adaptability and flexibility of the younger generation of Chechens is much more essential, especially with regard to learning a foreign language and the new rules and patterns of society in Austria.

3.4. Experiences in Austria

In general, the survey participants consider their new life in Austria to be positive. However, questions about their experiences with NGOs, legal counsellors, law enforcement bodies, local officials, housing authorities and government authorities were often answered as “not applicable”. One possible explanation for this response pattern may be the low level of trust towards the aforementioned groups; however, another explanation may also be a low level of trust towards the interviewer (who may appear to survey participants to be a representative of one of these groups). Those who gave a response to these questions indicated that their experiences with neighbours, other ethnicities, government, and local and housing authorities were good. Interestingly, the experiences of survey participants living in the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen were not as good as those of participants accommodated in other parts of Lower Austria. Moreover, the participants from Traiskirchen also chose the answer “not applicable” more often with regard to their experiences with NGOs and legal counsellors than survey participants from other places.

The Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen received the lowest ranking of all accommodation facilities in Austria. Indications of the highest living standards depended on the family situation of the interviewee; therefore young, single individuals preferred living in cities such as Vienna, which can offer more cultural and social activities, while couples with children preferred the stability and peace of the countryside for themselves and their children. Many participants preferred living in the Austrian countryside as the landscape reminded them of their homeland in the Chechen Republic. As one of the survey participants mentioned, “if it was not for the war and destruction, the Chechen Republic would have looked like Austria”. This perspective refers to clean rivers, forests, mountains and the generally healthy environment. Participant satisfaction with living conditions in Austria also depended heavily on the ability to prepare their own meals. The daily meals provided by many care facilities often did not meet their traditional norms and preferences. The prescribed dining schedule was perceived as a loss of control as well, especially with regard to making decisions on the food provided for the children (cf. Moderbacher 2009: 274; Olszewska/Maciejko 200). These reactions are quite typical for refugees:

[…] Chechens as well as other groups of refugees felt humiliated by “being fed” three times a day with food they were not accustomed to in the centre’s canteen without the possibility of consuming their food in the privacy […].

As observed by experts and interviewers, the most satisfied survey participants were those housed in private accommodation, where they can prepare their own meals and their children can attend local schools.
The younger generation of Chechens (between 26 and 35 years of age) indicated fewer positive experiences with other ethnicities in Austria. Wolke explained that relationships between Chechens, the local population and other migrant groups are rather poor as there is a level of mistrust toward outsiders on the part of the Chechens. Wolke elaborates “they are not very open and not very willing to make friends with people from other countries or to consider other points of view”. The older generation (between 35 and 40 years of age) seems to be more open toward other points of view and other people, and more moderate in their opinion. They tend to be better educated than the younger Chechens, as Vasilyev points out. This tendency was confirmed by the survey results.

The younger generation was also less satisfied with the situation regarding religion in Austria. Experts agree that religion becomes more important to Chechens living in Austria than it had been in the Chechen Republic, a well-known phenomenon among other ethnic groups living abroad. Religion provides the Chechens living in Austria with a means to preserve their values, which they perceive as being threatened by the comparatively liberal Austrian way of life. Religion also provides a sense of security and (divine) protection. As a result, some Chechens in Austria turn to a stricter practice of Islam, in an attempt to maintain a sense of identity and belonging, as was pointed out by some of the survey participants. During the interview, some participants, both male and female, indicated that liberal dress codes and the perceived disregard for religious values in Austria did not conform to their own values. However, they accepted this as a reality of life in Austria.

In general, the interviewees indicated that they were satisfied with the political, security, health, social, religious and cultural situations in Austria. At the same time, they indicated that they were less satisfied with their economic conditions and the services provided by the civil society organizations. Again, the results from interviews held in the Initial Reception Centre Traiskirchen had a slightly different pattern. Health and social situations there are perceived as less favourable than in other accommodation facilities.

### 3.5. Ties with the Chechen Republic

Almost all the survey participants (90%) follow developments in the Chechen Republic closely and maintain links to their region of origin through different channels. The most common link was indicated to be telephone communication with people in the Chechen Republic (83%). Internet, radio and television ranked second, with more than half the interviewees utilizing these channels. Printed media and other sources of communication, such as newspapers and information from other Chechens living in Austria, were not as frequently utilized. As for official sources such as the Russian Embassy or Austrian governmental and non-governmental organizations, they were not indicated on the list of contacts at all. A low level of trust towards authority and civil society could be one explanation, and a lack of knowledge of Austrian institutions could be another. Many Chechen asylum seekers are accustomed to relying on themselves and their own connections. As one of the interviewees indicated, he did not trust anyone but himself and his family.

Many of the survey participants have close relatives residing in the Chechen Republic. Despite some cases in which the entire family was outside the homeland, the nuclear family usually stayed together in Austria while the rest of the extended family remained in the Chechen Republic.

### 3.6. Return to the Chechen Republic

Only eleven survey participants indicated that they wanted to return to the Chechen Republic. In general, survey participants were critical of the economic, political, security, health, education, social, religious and cultural situations in the Chechen Republic, at present as well as for the future. Any comment made on these aspects gave an assessment of “medium” at best. More than half of the survey participants were of the opinion that returning refugees have no opportunities in the Chechen Republic. However, as IOM data show (see Chapter 1), assistance in voluntary return is sought more frequently each year. According to experts, the main reason for this tendency is that people do not want to be subject to transfer to Poland under the Dublin II Regulations. Other reasons for return to the Chechen Republic include pressure from other family members or from the Chechen Government, as well as a strong emotional connection to the region and people. Another reason may include the perception of “helplessness” by Chechens when trying to adapt to Austrian society.

An acceptable level of security and a stable political situation constitute major conditions for returning to the Chechen Republic. As one interviewee indicated, “You cannot help us, all we need is security and the rest we could take care of by ourselves”. Still, some participants specified certain types of assistance required in case of return. Among such assistance, the most significant included the coverage of travel expenses, return counselling and help with securing employment. The survey also revealed gender and education factors in the analysis of requirements for return to the Chechen Republic, for example female participants asked for psycho-social

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161 Written questionnaire filled out by P. Wolke on 03.06.2009.
162 Written questionnaire filled out by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
163 Ibid. Written questionnaire filled out by P. Wolke on 03.06.2009; Telephone Interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
164 Among those participants with the intention to return to the Chechen Republic, two had just filed their application for asylum, four had been notified that another EU member state was responsible for their application, two had received a negative decision in the first instance, and three had filed the first appeal after a negative decision in the first instance.
165 Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
166 Ibid.
167 Written questionnaire filled out by P. Wolke on 03.06.2009.

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assistance more frequently, and those with a university degree regarded return counselling as the most important form of assistance that could be provided. Only 14 per cent of the survey participants had already received return counselling, which corresponds with the fact that many of them had arrived in Austria very recently. However, those who did access this option were unsatisfied with the service, which suggests that most Chechens had expectations of certain results from return counselling that cannot be fulfilled by existing institutions. This tendency is notable as participants often asked for assistance in returning to the Chechen Republic, which should be provided through the General Voluntary Return Programme. However, as Vasilyev points out, the situation may be that Chechens mistrust the information given them by the return counsellors.

3.7. Remaining in Austria

The majority of the survey participants (90%) intended to remain in Austria. Although some do not want to remain for the rest of their lives, they would prefer to stay in Austria for at least several years. More than 25 per cent of the participants were not certain how long they will be in Austria. Many experts agree that the desire to return to the Chechen Republic exists for almost all Chechens, as they are very connected to their region of origin. Reasons given for wanting to return include “missing the rest of the family, who stayed in the Chechen Republic”, and “frustration about the unsatisfactory situation in Austria” (unemployment, problems finding accommodation, lack of money, difficulty to adapt to Austrian culture/society, etc.).

Older participants, as well as those who lived in unstable family situations, were more willing to return. However, due to the uncertain political situation at home, many of the participants preferred to be in Austria where they are able to live peacefully, with the benefits of education and medical support. Schmidinger is convinced that some Chechens may want to remain in Austria because they prefer the more liberal society. Experts report that some Chechens may travel to their region of origin for a visit, but then return to Austria. However, most experts agree that the current situation in the Chechen Republic is too insecure to allow for a safe return.

The participants in the survey regarded their German language deficiency to be their major challenge in Austria, ranking assistance in German language education as a top priority. Another challenge remains the limited job opportunities, which could be explained by their legal status as well as lack of language proficiency. Financial constraints were identified as the third most important challenge, corresponding with the absence of employment, and prompting many requests for assistance with job placement. Assistance with health issues was emphasized by participants, as well as the preference for grants for starting a business, which was expressed mainly by those participants with a university degree (should they remain in Austria).

**Excursus: Integration of Chechens into the Austrian society**

According to the Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, 20,000 Russian citizens from the Chechen Republic were living in Austria by the end of 2007 (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution 2008). Although many prefer to return to their region of origin, many will remain in Austria permanently and eventually become integrated into Austrian society. Such integration has been successful, but depends on a variety of external factors. Lengthy asylum procedures, difficult living conditions and a general indifference toward integration by the receiving society and the migrants can jeopardize these efforts (cf. Schinnerl 2009: 314).

**a) Integration**

Integration today is an essential aspect of effective migration management:

> It addresses the challenges of how migrants settle into their new host community, how that community receives them, how they can contribute to the community and how they can maintain links to their home culture, if desired.

(IOM 2004: 4)

While integration can “happen” in an unconscious manner, more often than not integration is seen as a conscious process that requires special effort by both the newcomer and the receiving society, and which has an effect on a variety of areas:

Integration is a two-way process of adaption by migrants and receiving societies at a number of levels: economic, social, cultural, religious and political. The success for integration depends on the willingness and commitment of foreigners to adapt to their new environment, as well as on the preparedness of host communities to accept newcomers and their families.

(IOM 2004: 4)
Integration in Austria is a cross-sectional matter, involving different areas and actors, for example, housing, health, education, work, etc. As far as the integration process is concerned, there is a significant difference between the situation of recognized refugees and that of migrants with a less stable legal status (for example, asylum seekers). While recognized refugees benefit from a wide range of assistance in their integration efforts (language courses, orientation assistance, etc.) and can participate in the labour market, those applicants who are still in the asylum process endure a variety of difficulties. The nagging insecurity of their legal status is only one of these difficulties:

While waiting in the asylum procedure, asylum seekers cannot officially work, and working in an informal labour market, they are likely to be exploited and cheated due to their low-rights foreigner status. If living in refugee accommodation, the protection of their families is no longer their essential task as everything “essential” from accommodation to food is provided in the centre. However, sources of dignity and self-esteem are in short supply in this environment of imposed passivity.

(Szczepanikova 2008: 113)

Due to the insecurity of their status, many Chechen asylum seekers initially do not regard integration as an issue of primary importance, despite living in Austria for several years before they are granted asylum. Many of them put off integration efforts until asylum is granted and stay is secured, as Thomas Schmidinger reports (Schmidinger 2009: 294). However, deferring integration efforts to a later stage does not imply that they are unwilling to integrate: as the participants in the survey demonstrated, integration efforts such as learning the German language are very important to them, and most of them would welcome assistance with language courses, job placement and health issues (see Chapter 2).

Unfortunately, many measures that provide integration assistance are only offered to recognized refugees (for example, language classes, etc.). Employment assistance, which represents a very important integration factor, is not available to most asylum seekers. Integration efforts are further complicated by the rather negative reputation of Chechens in Austria. In Austrian media and public discourse, Chechens are often represented as “violent” and “criminal”, an image that is as persistent as it is devastating. While Chechens suffer extensively as a result of a reputation the majority do not deserve, the possibility for a life of peace and prosperity is greatly diminished when Austrians believe that reputation applies to all Chechens. The basis for a negative reputation often stems from actual incidents of violence or criminal activity committed by individuals, but is applied to the entire group. In addition, such a reputation can result from a lack of mutual understanding between the receiving society and the newcomers with regard to different cultures, traditions and values. Such misunderstanding can be perpetuated and exaggerated over time and can impede successful integration. This report seeks to provide background information on Chechens living in Austria in order to enhance mutual understanding. This chapter shall examine those aspects that are considered to be of relevance for integration in general.

a.1. Chechens living in Austria

Obstacles to understanding persons from another country include the assumption that these persons form a homogenous group that shares the same beliefs, values, traditions and history. While most Chechens do share a common background, the assumption that such a background is all-encompassing is very misleading. The socialization of Chechens currently living in Austria is quite diverse. Although they come from the same region of origin – the Chechen Republic – their lifestyles in the Chechen Republic varied; some lived in the countryside, others in cities; some had academic careers, others were blue-collar workers; some Chechen women had led an emancipated life within a demanding social context, while other Chechen women had known a traditional life as mother and wife. Chechens differ in their religious beliefs, education levels, ideologies, political convictions as well as their interpretations of events in the Chechen Republic and in Austria. The Chechen reaction to their new living situation in Austria is as diverse as their background situation: As Schmidinger notes, “Different people act differently in a Diaspora situation”. For some Chechens, for example, traditions grow in importance in Austria, while for others, traditions become less decisive.

The perception of Chechen refugees as a homogenous group (by media, civil society and society in general), especially with regard to reports of criminal offenses, is a strong source of frustration and may result in a subsequent reluctance to make an effort to integrate. Very often, Chechens are confronted with prejudices that are not relevant to their real lives, but which have a direct effect on them (cf. Chapkhanov 2009: 285ff.). As a result, some Chechens tend to limit their social interactions to members of their own community; thus avoiding any interaction with Austrian society. This tendency can create a vicious cycle, with some members of the receiving society growing more suspicious and more hostile toward all Chechens, causing Chechens in turn to retreat even more into their own community.

Close adherence to their native community has been noted among the Chechens living in Austria. However, designation of the term “Chechen Community” is misleading: although there is a certain level of solidarity that can usually be called upon for specific purposes (for example, joint action against perceived discrimination), most Chechens are not institutionally

176 Telephone Interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
177 Telephone Interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009; telephone Interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
178 Telephone Interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
179 Ibid.
180 Written questionnaire completed by E. Vasilev on 12.06.2009.
181 Telephone Interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009; written questionnaire completed by P. Wolke on 03.06.2009.
organized in associations or lobby organizations. Furthermore, many experts report that the number of Chechens who deliberately avoid other Chechens is significant. There are many possible explanations for this behaviour; some Chechens simply prefer to avoid the social pressures they experience within the community. Another reason for this tendency may be the fact that Chechen society is quite fragmented. The previous conflicts in the Chechen Republic had disintegrating effects on social cohesion, a symptom that persists in the receiving society. Experts suggest that many of the political tensions expressed during the conflict in the Chechen Republic are also felt in Austria. Whether this is valid or not, the idea of such tension is sufficient to provoke uneasiness or a perceived threat in many families or individuals. General suspicion that results from negative experiences in the past within the region of origin may, in some cases, also extend toward NGOs and other institutions; experts report a "deep mistrust of politics, authorities, and other ethnic groups in general". These reactions do not foster a spirit of integration into Austrian society.

a.2. Family structure

The family is of very high importance to Chechens in the Diaspora, as Stupnig explains, despite the fact that the family structure changes for most Chechens when they arrive in Austria. Wotke further elaborates:

Traditionally, Chechens live in a larger family setting: husband, wife and children live together with the husbands’ parents, sometimes also his brothers and their families. These structures are lost in Austria, as grandparents usually did not come to Austria but stayed behind in Chechnya. That’s why many families find themselves in a smaller setting than would be the case in Chechnya (which sometimes makes it more difficult for parents to manage the family).

Although traditional family roles continue to be of relevance in the receiving society, they can sometimes be challenged in the new social environment – with important implications for integration success. Traditional patriarchal structures of family life are especially challenged in Austria – by the role of women in Austrian society and by shifting responsibilities as demanded by the new living situation.

Notably, Chechen men and women experience their new lives in Austria differently. While Chechen women are likely to maintain their role as mothers and housewives, with clear responsibilities often involving interaction with the receiving society (for example, at kindergarten, school, etc.), and sometimes through work, the traditional role of Chechen men changes dramatically, especially when under asylum seeker status. The male role as main breadwinner is jeopardized in a setting where access to the labour market is denied, and others have the responsibility of caring for the family (for example, the state):

Displaced and dispossessed Chechen men can no longer offer economic security to their wives and children, and attempts to reconstitute their manly honour are sometimes directed through highly disruptive means.

(Szczepanikova 2008: 112)

Confronted with a loss of status within the family in the Diaspora, many Chechen men fail to find new satisfactory roles and resort to strategies of coping with their new circumstances in ways that can be problematic. The difficult situation for asylum seekers, especially with regard to the lack of employment, which impacts male self-esteem, can result in criminal activities, as the following description demonstrates:

Chechen men in refugee centres employed various coping strategies as they were trying to (re) construct their self-esteem and dignity under these difficult conditions. Some participated more in their family life, spent more time with their wives and children. Others preferred to spend money on alcohol or drugs, started dating other (usually non-Chechen) women or/and occasionally also resorted to physical violence toward their wives and children. Some Chechen men [are] employing what could be called a “strategy of quick money”: bistrie dengi. These were the men who engaged in various criminal activities that became readily available in their position as asylum seekers: smuggling people through the borders with Austria or Germany, taking advantage of other asylum seekers in the centre – usually single men from Ukraine and Belarus – and demanding money from them under the threat of violence; providing the so-called krysha (Russian word for “roof”), i.e. criminal protection racket to other migrants, etc.:

(Szczepanikova 2008: 114ff.)
a.3. Younger generations

The situation of Chechen children and teenagers who have come to Austria is a very special one in view of integration. Most of them are provided with the means for integration by facilitated contact with the receiving society in kindergarten and school:

The school system provides a foundation for enhancing integration prospects of immigrants’ children into society. This is achieved not only through formal education but also through the opportunities for interaction between all the children in the school. (IOM 2004: 19)

However, many Chechen children have left behind an emotionally difficult past, which can manifest as a serious obstacle for peaceful cohabitation in their new environment. Experts frequently observe that older generations (aged 35 years and older) seem to be more open-minded and outgoing, display moderation in opinions and a stronger sense of identity due to a deep connection with Chechen culture, tradition and history. This tendency is also reflected in the results of the survey, which showed that participants between 26 and 35 years of age have significantly fewer positive experiences with other ethnicities than do those between 36 and 45 years of age.

Compared to the older generation, many younger Chechens suffered from a lack of education in their region of origin. The younger generation have lived in an environment shaped by conflict and violence, and were witness to terrifying events. In a world where traditional values were being destroyed, with no alternatives other than violence, survival often was the only goal. As a consequence, many young Chechens are very inexperienced in solving conflicts, as Stupnig points out.

In Austria, the struggle for survival loses its severity, and the resulting lack of orientation for Chechen youth becomes apparent. The absence of a stable life experience may result in the display of aggressive behaviour, especially in Chechen men. Violence is an important issue, among others, when working with male Chechen youths, explains Vasilyev (2008: 132). In her opinion, there are multiple possible causes for this phenomenon that stem from the diverse aspects of Chechen culture, such as the historical development of the mountainous Caucasus region and the social and socio-political situation in Austria (cf. Vasilyev 2008: 132). Young Chechens may experience a feeling of disorientation, as they are more directly exposed to Austrian culture than their elders, without any strong connections to their region of origin.

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Often, religion promises the stability that cannot be found in other aspects of the life of an asylum seeker. In this regard, religion can suggest that there is a larger context and a divine power that will eventually render negative experiences into positive ones, which gives young Chechens a sense of protection. Young Chechen women and men with traumatized parents struggle to cope with their new surroundings, and very often fail. The strength and guidance of the group represents an anchor for many young Chechen women and men (cf. Vasilyev 2008: 133). In this regard, experts have often observed that religion can become a more important part of identity for younger Chechens than it is for the older generation. This observation may serve as an explanation for the dissatisfaction expressed by survey participants between 26 and 35 years of age, which was stronger than that expressed by survey participants between 36 and 45 years of age, with regard to the religious situation in Austria.

a.4. Employment

As Schmidinger explained, a stable work environment is very positive for integration. While many young Chechens have little or no work experience as a result of the unemployment situation in their region of origin, recognized refugees find it comparatively easy to gain employment. However, asylum seekers generally have no access to the labour market and suffer from (involuntary) inactivity. This situation has severe psychological effects, and many asylum seekers who cannot work for three or more years suffer from a sense of worthlessness.

105 Written questionnaire completed by P. Wotke on 03.06.2009; written questionnaire completed by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
106 Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
107 Ibid.
108 Written questionnaire completed by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
109 Written questionnaire completed by P. Wotke on 03.06.2009.
110 Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
111 Written questionnaire completed by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
112 Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
Those who are able to work are faced with another challenge: recognition of qualifications acquired in the Chechen Republic.

Given that many migrants are employed, disproportionately, in low-skill and high-risk jobs, recognition of their qualifications is of great importance if they are to benefit, not only themselves and their families, but also their host countries. (IOM 2004: 13)

a.5. Housing

Integration is also rendered difficult when Chechens are not afforded many opportunities to interact with the receiving community. Isolation, often caused by accommodation in facilities that are difficult to access, is a major problem not only with regard to enjoying a normal social life (especially when transportation is not provided or financially viable), but also in creating relationships with Austrians living in the village or city centres (for example, lack of possibilities to participate in social events, no access to language classes, etc.; cf. Roschger 2009:183, Dietrich 2009: 234, Schmidinger 2009: 298ff). Isolation is also one of the major contributing factors to the high incidence of depression among migrants (cf. IOM 2004: 15).

a.6. Education

A key element to integration for newcomers is education, in particular knowledge of the language of the receiving country (IOM 2004: 18). While most Chechens show an aptitude for learning German quickly204 a special problem arises when insufficient writing skills in the mother tongue prevents effective learning of German.205 Furthermore, the starting point for young Chechens at schooling age presents a challenge: An absence of a regular schooling system since the beginning of the 1990s, and regular school attendance in the region of origin hardly possible, results in a level of education of most young Chechens that is much lower in comparison to that of older Chechens.206 These drawbacks can be perpetuated in Austria:

Youngsters that first arrive in Austria at the ages of 12 or 13 have few chances to catch up on their deficits, which besides poor language abilities are also due to school absence in their homeland as a consequence of the war. Youngsters, no longer eligible for compulsory schooling, are often unable to deal with the requirements needed for external courses, which are built on self-discipline and responsibility, and accordingly the drop-out rate is high.

(Vasilyev 2008: 134)

a.7. Health

Based on interviews with Poles and Chechens in Poland, Olszewska and Maciejko describe another important obstacle for the integration of Chechens in their new society: serious health problems, both mental and physical, as a result of warfare and trauma.

We often heard from people who could not concentrate on their language studies, since they were overwhelmed by a constant “hum” of thoughts and problems in their minds; others said they suffered memory problems after their wartime experiences.

(Olszewska/Maciejko 2008:156)

According to many experts, the percentage of Chechens in Austria who are traumatized due to experiences during the conflict is very high.207 The number of tortured persons is assumed to be also very high.208 As a result, many Chechens display a high level of psychosomatic illnesses, especially strong headaches and depression.209 These issues need to be addressed in view of integration as well, as the IOM points out:

Good mental health is often the key to a successful integration into society including the ability of a person to cope properly with a new work environment and family life. The importance of culturally appropriate approaches to mental health care cannot be understated. (IOM 2004: 15)

204 Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
205 Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
206 Ibid. Written questionnaire filled out by E. Vasilyev on 12.06.2009.
207 Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009, Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
208 Ibid.
209 Written questionnaire completed by P. Wotke on 03.06.2009.
a.8. Culture, traditions and values

That different culture, tradition and values form a strong basis for misunderstandings between a receiving society and immigrants has been well documented. However, culture is also a very important resource for integration. In this regard, an immigrant who is deeply rooted in culture, traditions and values can be better prepared for a new environment, as these qualities provide a sense of security and a means to assess and interpret unfamiliar situations. Persons who are well equipped in this regard appear to be more open-minded than those who are not as well rooted (for example, young people who have grown up in a very unstable environment) and are more likely to adapt gradually to the new society (cf. Treibel 2003: 220).

In the case of the Chechens living in Austria, traditional values retain a high importance. Although such a characteristic is not altogether unfamiliar to Austrian society, usually it is not of great significance in the receiving society. For integration purposes, both sides would benefit to know the different values that may influence a seemingly incomprehensible action. The following example is an illustration of this approach:

The main challenge in working with Chechens is to understand their different set of values and their traditional concept of society. For example, I may try to convince all inhabitants of the integration hostel to clean the front area of the house. The result, realistically, will be that maybe 1-2 people would do it. If, however, I contact the “elder” within the Chechen community in the house and ask for his support, immediately almost the whole community will work together and help.210

Different concepts of “pride” and “honour”, which are very important to many Chechens, can prove to be very irritating to Austrians – even in benevolent settings, such as interactions with NGOs. Many social workers, for example, perceive Chechens (especially men) to be very proud, heedless and arrogant – “difficult to deal with”.211 These experiences are not limited to the Austrian context, as Szczepanikova reports from the Czech Republic:

Both in refugee centres and in NGOs, Chechen men have a reputation of claiming services and support in a forceful and demanding manner which is disliked by social workers. This is partly due to the fact that many refugees, especially in the early stages of their stay in the country, do not entirely understand what the capacities of NGOs are, and therefore have unrealistic expectations about what kind of help they can receive from them. On the other hand, Chechens’ proud and uncompromising behaviour often irritates social workers who prefer to deal with more submissive and grateful refugee clients. Thus Chechen women appear to be better integrated into these (highly feminized) servicing organizations and thus also able to direct vital resources toward their families.212

(Szczepanikova 2008: 118)

While most Chechens do not deny that they are proud, they do not see this as a particularly problematic feature. In their opinion, being a petitioner, or being treated as inferior, seriously challenges their concept of “pride” and “honour”. While Chechen asylum seekers are appreciative for the assistance they receive in Austria, they do not want to be pitied, and they try to maintain their pride even under difficult circumstances. The experiences of the interviewers during the survey demonstrate that a respectful approach was essential to the successful interaction with the Chechens living in Austria.

Traditionally based roles of different members of society have been reported as another cause of irritation on both sides of the integration issue. As a result, some Chechens, especially among the older generation, are irritated by what they perceive to be a lack of respect from young people toward their elders.213 Notably, not all Chechen concepts of traditions and values necessarily contradict traditional Austrian values, and in some cases are admired and interpreted as moral courage.214

b) Recommendations for integration measures

As stated in the European Commission’s Handbook on Integration, “two processes are critical to improving immigrants’ outcomes: the elimination of inequalities, and the acquisition of competences” (Niessen/Schibel 2007: 8). Both Austrians and Chechens are disposed to facilitate integration:

Chechens are quick to learn about their host countries, hard working and capable of both making ends meet and building up capital. There is a Chechen custom that it is a universal manly obligation to assist his extended family which in exile includes the entire community.

(Chenciner 2008: 69)

There are a number of measures that can be instrumental in integration processes and some have already been – implicitly or explicitly – mentioned herein.

210 Ibid.
211 Telephone interview S. Stupnig, 22.05.2009.
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.
b.1. Changes at the institutional level

There are a number of institutional variables that have a severe impact on the ability for Chechens to integrate into Austrian society. The establishment of Integration Houses, in which recognized refugees can participate in a comprehensive but temporary integration programme with housing, integration support, German courses, and job search assistance, can serve as an excellent example of “good practice”. One very important factor for integration is the asylum process itself, which can be very long and disadvantageous in view of integration. This is not only true for the “newcomers”: in some cases when Austrians make the effort to try to help Chechens participate in the local community, they are overwhelmed by the difficulties presented by the asylum system. Establishing contacts with foreigners is not always easy from the outset and is made more frustrating when these contacts are disrupted because asylum seekers are relocated, or leave the country altogether (cf. Schmidinger 2009: 297). Such frustrations naturally deter Austrians from making any effort to meet their new neighbours who may relocate at any time, rendering such efforts pointless. Therefore, a speedy and predictable asylum system could be crucial to enhancing integration efforts, as noted by Schmidinger.\(^\text{214}\)

The integration of Chechens into the labour market is another important aspect; such integration can be facilitated by assistance in language learning and the recognition of qualifications and vocational training, as recommended both by the IOM and Austrian experts (IOM 2004: 13).\(^\text{215}\) In view of the needs of Chechens regarding health issues, experts recommend the enhancement of psycho-social assistance: \(^\text{216}\)

\begin{quote}
The provision of mental health care support can take various forms and should not be limited to formal psychiatric services addressing mentally ill individuals, but should include psychosocial services addressing communities at large. (IOM 2004: 15)
\end{quote}

b.2. Fostering contact

Experts agree that the avoidance of contact between Chechens and the receiving society is not advisable in view of healthy cohabitation. Creating distance between communities by isolating asylum seekers and thereby preventing the establishment of contacts between them and the new receiving society mitigates only surface problems. Potentially problematic encounters cannot be altogether avoided, and other measures have proven far more effective in solving conflict situations. Allowing and fostering contact between the Chechens living in Austria and Austrian society should be enhanced by a variety of measures that help to make this contact successful, for example, by supporting encounters in everyday life (through education, city planning, working space, etc.),\(^\text{217}\) and creating new spaces of contact (such as joint sport and cultural activities that include football tournaments, cooking events, etc.).\(^\text{218}\) The employment of asylum seekers in small tasks for the good of the community has proven to be beneficial to both the community and the Chechen asylum seekers, and has enhanced understanding between both sides.

b.3. Enhance knowledge and mutual understanding

As the examples mentioned above illustrate, there are some differences between the historical, cultural, and traditional background of Chechens and Austrians that may result in mutual misunderstanding and subsequent conflict. In order to avoid these conflicts, the enhancement of knowledge about both the newcomers and the receiving society, as well as the fostering of mutual understanding, is necessary. Acceptance and a respectful approach toward each other enhance the sense of security on both sides and thus support the integration process. This approach can be achieved through information activities and public awareness campaigns, for example, special events to enhance knowledge on the background of both the Chechens and Austrian society.\(^\text{219}\) For some groups in society (for example, security and police forces), special training may be advisable.\(^\text{220}\) Potentially difficult situations could be avoided with the help of “cultural translators”, persons who have knowledge of both Austrian and Chechen culture and traditions, and who are able to act as mediators in kindergartens, school, or other institutions.\(^\text{221}\) In order to enhance mutual understanding, a “Buddy system” that matches people of the same age and gender that fosters joint activities could be created, as Wotke suggests.\(^\text{222}\)

Another important aspect is the general promotion of diversity:

Discrimination or xenophobia has no barriers and in all countries one cannot underestimate the importance of tolerance, respect and understanding of difference can play in the integration process. Actions that combat discrimination and racism and promote diversity and
tolerance should have as their focus different groups in the society, including those in the education system, the labour market, youth, etc. (IOM 2004: 20)

b.4. Measures specific to the target group

Many valuable integration measures that are already implemented in Austria are very successful. Their scope could be broadened along with other best practices. Experts advise that measures should focus on special target groups, such as single Chechen women or young men.223 As Philippa Wotke explains:

In my opinion integration measures would work best if Chechen men and women would be considered as two different target groups – their needs are different as well as their way to deal with certain situations. Women open up when in the company of women, whereas men and women both are equally shy when approached in a “mixed” (male / female) setting.224

As has been observed by many beneficiaries, integration measures are especially designed to attract specific target groups, such as women or young persons. While these specific measures serve a very important purpose (for example, empowerment of vulnerable groups), very often, the living situation of men is completely ignored, and the potential positive effect of these measures on this target group is not fully acknowledged. Due to a lack of useful employment, and the resulting lack of self-esteem that many male asylum seekers face (potentially resulting in many problems for the whole society), the development of integration measures targeting this special group should also be given due consideration.

For younger Chechens, integration measures should always take into account their specific living conditions and experiences, as social worker Vasilyev explains:

Apart from this structural stabilization of some aspects of the Chechen social order, basic conditions for young people can be created, which makes it easier for them to master challenges in their host countries. The creation of realizable perspectives and possibilities must therefore be a basic requirement for an honest approach to the topic of integration. Particularly within the field of education, to compensate for the deficits in school performances brought about by the war in their homeland, and to further the standard of knowledge, possibilities are needed. […] In the case of young Chechen besides a tight structure, the courses should offer social and psychological support. (Vasilyev 2008: 140)

Broadening of some integration measures which are currently only available to recognized refugees should also be considered (for example, language classes), to include those applicants who are still in the asylum process. Regardless of the final decision (positive or negative), the waiting time is considered to be a “waste of time” by most applicants, with potentially disastrous effects on the individuals.

However, the effect of many of the so-called integration measures is not limited to facilitating integration: in most cases, beneficiaries acquire valuable qualifications that can be useful if they return to their region of origin. Skills that are acquired in short-term courses (instant language classes, or courses building on skills that already exist) could open many opportunities for asylum seekers; especially if they are not limited to learning German. As a result, improved reading skills or other language abilities (such as English) could contribute to a successful return by adding to the sustainability of his/her return decision. If the asylum seeker receives a negative decision and has to leave Austria, his/her time in Austria will not have been wasted, and a “return in dignity” is facilitated. This in turn may reduce repeated migration to Europe. As the education level of younger Chechens is not very high, according to the survey results, their chances in the labour market in Austria as well as in the Chechen Republic will be positively affected by additional training. In addition, many problems stemming from the difficult situation faced by Chechens due to a lack of employment (feelings of uselessness, lack of self-esteem, involuntary inactivity, etc.) could be avoided if persons who are expected to have only limited stay in Austria are given opportunities to engage in useful activities. The survey participants also mentioned the possibility of attending language courses or engaging in work as an important prerequisite to remaining in Austria. Therefore, an active participation in learning German and finding work can be expected from Chechens, if the opportunity is afforded them.

Regardless of which measures are adopted to enhance the integration of Chechens into Austrian society, it should always be kept in mind that:

Integration is not easy to plan: it is a long-term process, and it is non-linear. An international political event or a criminal act can set back the integration process significantly. Integration is also multi-faceted, demanding a capacity for adaptation from a wide variety of actors including immigrants themselves. European societies need to become ‘learning societies’, familiarising themselves with new types of interaction and communication and with new and diverse groups of people, including immigrants and refugees.

(Niessen/Schibel 2007: 8)

223 Telephone interview T. Schmidinger, 16.06.2009.
224 Written questionnaire completed by P. Wotke on 03.06.2009.
4. Social and Economic Situation in the Chechen Republic

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse the present-day demographic, social and economic situation in the Chechen Republic in order to develop practical recommendations for a comprehensive Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme for the potential returnees to the region.

4.1. Research methodology

Methodologically, data collection and analysis was organized on three levels. The first level comprises statistical data of the Russian Federation Federal State Statistical Service (FSSS), as well as analytical information and databases of various departmental services and regional (republican) subdivisions of the Ministries (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Customs Service, FMS, and others). Analytical reports from major international agencies also have been used as additional sources of basic-level information on major developmental trends in the region (such as the World Bank, UN agency reports, USAID, etc.).

Formalized expert polls and expert interviews have been applied as the tools of medium-level analysis. Overall, the period from 2000 was characterized by the significant presence of international organizations in the region, implementing a number of humanitarian assistance and developmental projects, as well as providing direct assistance to socially vulnerable groups of the population (such as IDPs, refugees, the poor, handicapped, children, orphans, etc.). Such activities in the region have yielded invaluable experience in the field. Professionals working either in an international governmental organization or international non-governmental agency who have been working in the region have been identified as experts. The main quality of an expert is the ability to provide independent evaluation of the present-day situation in the Chechen Republic, which is based on his/her professional work experience. Initially, international experts were approached by expert poll questionnaires, which subsequently developed into personal in-depth interview sessions, depending on their availability and interest. These interviews were conducted in Moscow between April and May 2009, and in Vladikavkaz and Grozny during the Verification Mission in June 2009.

Lastly, essential information from the grassroots level was collected through personal communication and comprehensive survey studies with local NGOs. Though the representation of opinions and experiences of the local population was subjective, this resource proved to be highly important for understanding internal aspects of the region’s dynamics.

The main methods of analysis consisted of horizontal (time) analysis and comparative (spatial) analysis. In the first case, changes of the meaning of statistical indicators were tracked over the time period between 2000 and 2008, and compared to the meaning of statistical indicators from 1990 (as the status quo). Comparative analysis presupposed comparison of main indicators of socio-economic development with regional and country average meanings.

Several limitations were applied to the data gathered during the research; all of them are related to the validity of the data. There are a number of measures for broadly verifying the validity of data. The first measure includes comparison of consistency across sources, and the second measure consists of verification across related indicators (looking for consistency in the message and findings among related indicators). With regard to these measures, data that was not consistent with the main flow of information and not confirmed by alternative sources was not regarded as trustworthy and was excluded from analysis. As a general rule of study, statistical data served as a foundation for analysis, while expert opinions (either in the forms of interviews, polls or analytical articles) were used as points for judgments.

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225 As an official Russian statistical service unit, FSSS collects information on a regular basis, using the methodology consistent with international standards. In addition, FSSS periodically conducts specific single-issue surveys, such as household budget surveys, agricultural census, and surveys on employment opportunities in the regions. At present, FSSS statistical data collection represents the most comprehensive statistical database on major indicators of demographic, social and economic developmental trends of the regions. The FSSS data collection is based on the national territorial units’ data providers. Beginning in 2008, FSSS divisions resumed their activities in the Chechen Republic.
4.2. Current social situation in the Chechen Republic

4.2.1. Labour market and employment opportunities in the Chechen Republic

According to statistical data from the Federal Service on Labour and Employment, between 2007 and 2008 the number of economically active population\(^{226}\) in the Chechen Republic comprised 462,000 persons (of these, 158,000 lived in cities and 304,000 were rural dwellers). Another important source of statistical information, the FSSS, reports the average number of economically active persons as 460,000 in 2006, and 485,000 in 2007.\(^{227}\) The number of economically non-active persons amounted to 333,000 for the period between November 2007 and August 2008, resulting in a level of economic activity for the Chechen Republic equal to 57.95 per cent for that period. In comparison with average country-level economic activity rates, such figures constitute a rather low level of economic involvement. For the Russian Federation, this index comprises 67.5 per cent of overall economic activity, for the Central Federal district, the index comprises 68.3 per cent, and for the Southern Federal district 64.4 per cent.

Periodical sample studies on employment patterns of households conducted by the Labour Division of the FSSS can provide more detailed information on economic activity rates in the Chechen Republic. According to statistical data from sample surveys of households in the Chechen Republic, the average level of economic activity was 60.05 per cent in 2006, and 62.15 per cent in 2007\(^{228}\) (which is also lower than the country level). However, differentiation by gender indicates higher rates of economic activity for men than that for women in the Chechen Republic (74.1% for Chechen men versus 51.15% for Chechen women). However, segmentation by settlement pattern indicates no difference in economic activity between rural and urban populations.

Table 3: Level of economic activity by settlement and gender pattern in 2007 (in %)\(^{229}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Federal District</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Federal district</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adygea</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestan</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingushetia</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabardino-Balkarya</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalmykia</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachaevo-Cherkessiya</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ossetia-Alaniya</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechen Republic</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasnodarskiy kray</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavropol'skiy kray</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrahanskiy kray</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volgogradskaya oblast'</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostovskaya oblast'</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age structure of the employed population (as presented by FSSS sources) shows that 83.75 per cent of the employed population are younger than 49 years of age. Of these, 31.7 per cent of those employed are between 40 and 49 years old, 25.8 per cent are between 30 and 39 years old, and 24 per cent of those employed are between 20 and 29 years old. Distribution of employed persons by education shows that the largest group of those employed (50.1%) have completed only general secondary education. The second largest group, 17.4 per cent, have secondary professional education. The group of those employed with higher education comprises 30 and 39 years old, and 24 per cent of those employed are between 20 and 29 years old. Distribution of employed persons by education shows that the largest group of those employed (50.1%) have completed only general secondary education. The second largest group, 17.4 per cent, have secondary professional education. The group of those employed with higher education comprises 30 and 39 years old, and 24 per cent of those employed are between 20 and 29 years old.

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\(^{226}\) Methodological specifications of the Federal Labor and Employment Service and the FSSS provide different statistical categories for the analysis of economic activity of the population. The Federal Labor & Employment Service refers to “economically active population” which is defined as the currently residing population within the age group of 15 to 72 years old. The FSSS employs the category of “population in the active working age” which is defined as men between the ages of 16 and 59 and women the ages of 16 and 54. Correspondingly, the category of “younger than working age” refers to the group of children and teenagers younger than 16, whereas the group of “older than working age” is represented by men over 59 years old and women over 54 years old. Such definitions slightly differ from standard classifications of population in and out of active working age. Such differences in definitions lead to slightly different numbers from these two statistical sources. The FSSS reports 712,191 persons in the active working age for 2007, while the Federal Labor and Employment Service estimates for mid-2007 to mid-2008 indicate 792,000 of the total economically active and non-active population.

\(^{227}\) “Economically active population” is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed persons for a given period of time.

\(^{228}\) The index of economic activity reported in the household sample study is higher than the index reported by the FSSS. Discrepancies in estimates of economic activity index result from different methodologies used in calculations by the FSSS. For calculating aggregated indices on country and district levels, FSSS uses a combination approach that utilizes information from organizations, administrative bodies, as well as sample studies.


Distribution of employees by sectors of economy reveals that there is no definite leader in the economic sector that generates the largest number of job places. Among the different sectors of economy, agriculture, education, construction, trade (wholesale and retail) and services employ about the same proportion of the workforce, ranging from 16 to 10 per cent of total employed.

Table 4: Employed persons in different economic sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector of Economy</th>
<th>Number of employed, in thou.</th>
<th>% OF total employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, hunting and fishing</td>
<td>37,100</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing industries</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water production and distribution</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>24,600</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; retail trade, repairs</td>
<td>30,300</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and communication</td>
<td>17,800</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of previous - communications only</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social Services</td>
<td>23,300</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Activities</td>
<td>32,300</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another important indicator of the situation in the labour market is the proportion of the employed to the unemployed, or unemployment rate. For a significant period of time, the Chechen Republic has been the leader in high unemployment rates in the Russian Federation, having registered unemployment rates as high as 66 per cent in 2007. The number of the unemployed who sought assistance from state employment agencies was 298,900 persons by the end of December 2008. The vast majority of those applying for unemployed status exceed registration. Almost half of the registered unemployed receive unemployment compensation payments. The number of declared vacancies in state employment agencies is extremely low; therefore, by the end of December 2008 only 87 vacancies were announced in all state employment agencies in the Chechen Republic. As a result, there are 3,435.9 persons registered as unemployed per vacancy, which indicates that state unemployment agencies do not provide adequate vacancies to satisfy registered labour demand.

Surveys on employment issues as periodically conducted by the FSSS clearly demonstrate that in the Chechen Republic registered unemployment rates in the rural areas are significantly higher than urban unemployment rates (61,000 urban unemployed versus 107,000 rural unemployed for the period of February to November 2008). On the regional level, similar trends of higher unemployment for rural areas can be observed in all Republics of the Northern Caucasus. For the Russian Federation, unemployment rates in the cities are higher than in the rural areas, on average.

Table 5 summarizes the major indicators of tensions in the labour market in different territorial units of the Southern Federal District, such as unemployment rate, average time spent searching for a job and the percentage of those unemployed for more than 12 months. The figures can provide a comparative perspective on the situation in the labour market in the Chechen Republic and in other Republics of the North Caucasus and the Southern Federal District. As the table indicates, the Chechen Republic ranks lowest of all districts in the country in most categories, with the highest unemployment rate and the longest period of time spent searching for a job in 2008. Other indicators of tension also have high values, thus characterizing the labour market in the Chechen Republic as highly tense compared to the country level.

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231 In contrast, unemployment rates in the Russian Federation in February 2009 amounted to 8.5 per cent of the country’s labour force, or 6.4 million people, using the International Labor Organization (ILO) methodology, as reported by the FSSS. According to the estimates of World Bank economists, unemployment rates can reach as high as 12 per cent by the end of 2009.

232 The upper limit for unemployment benefits was elevated to 4,900 rubles from 3,124 rubles per month from January 2009, while the lower limit for unemployment benefits comprise 850 rubles per month at present.


234 Ingushetia ranks lower than the Chechen Republic as the lowest employment rate 27.4 per cent, while Karachaevo-Cherkessia has a higher ranking of those unemployed more than 12 months than those in the Chechen Republic.
Table 5: Major indicators of tensions in the labour market

In the table, indicators of tension are marked as: 1 - level of employment (in %), 2 - level of unemployment (in %), 3 - average time spent searching for a job (in months), 4 - the per cent of those unemployed more than 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Rank in the RF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Federal district</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2 1 4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Federal District</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>7 7 6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adigeya</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>75 76 83 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestan</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>81 83 75 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingushetia</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>85 84 78 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabardino-Balkaria</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>82 81 81 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalmikya</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>73 79 70 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachevo-Cherkessiya</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>80 82 84 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ossetia-Alaniya</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>79 72 71 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechen Republic</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>84 85 85 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasnodarskiy kray</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>64 47 37 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavropol'skiy kray</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>60 43 18 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrahan' region</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>51 69 67 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volgograd region</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>49 42 31 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostov region</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>61 51 16 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with high rates of unemployment, the Chechen Republic also experiences a shortage of highly qualified professionals in almost all areas of the economy and the public sector. There is a high demand for experienced, skilled workers in areas of education, health, technology, construction as well as production and processing sectors of the economy. Rates of under-staffing of highly qualified personnel range from 40 to 75 per cent for different sectors.

However, high rates of officially registered unemployment do not necessarily indicate low levels of involvement in the productive activity of the region. Rather, these rates can be regarded as a result of general under-estimation of the level of employment in the informal and semi-formal sectors of the economy, as well as involvement in economic activity in individual households. Analysis of the regional North Caucasian labour markets reveals that along with high levels of official unemployment, the Republics of the North Caucasus are characterized by a high degree of involvement in semi-formal and informal sectors, in addition to micro-entrepreneurship, seasonal or irregular activities. Due to the unstable economic situation and search for better income-generating opportunities at the beginning of the 2000s, spontaneous, semi-illegal forms of employment appeared to be widespread. However, from the mid-2000s, the stabilization of the economic situation in the region, and better governmental control, resulted in the shift of new forms of employment to the legal economy. For the period from 2006 to 2008, the Chechen Republic exhibits a trend of increasingly formalized entrepreneurship activity, with growing numbers of micro- and small enterprises, mainly in the sectors of farming, services, trade and construction.

The table below provides statistical data on employment in the informal sector of the economy in all territorial subjects of the Russian Federation during the period from February to November 2008 (materials of the periodical surveys on employment issued by the FSSS). As the table illustrates, the share of those employed in the informal sector of the economy comprises 46.9 per cent of total employed population (which is significantly higher than the country average of 19.6%). The second important observation is that for the vast majority of those employed in the informal sector, such employment is the main income-generating activity.

237 The majority of researchers on the labour market in the North Caucasus agree that the standard methodology (which is in fact adopted ILO methodology) that is used by the official statistical sources and employment agencies omit data on economic activity in semi-formal and irregular employment, as well as economic activities in individual households. For the North Caucasian region, these forms of economic activities are substantial. If excluded, the result will be high unemployment rates for the region.
238 For detailed statistics, please, refer to the database at http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b08_30/Main.htm.
Table 6: Employed in the informal sector of the economy in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country, Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Only in informal sector</th>
<th>In and out of informal sector</th>
<th>Out of them,</th>
<th>Employed in informal sector in % to total employed population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>13,950,601</td>
<td>12,104,102</td>
<td>1,846,498</td>
<td>24,298</td>
<td>1,822,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFD</td>
<td>3,055,231</td>
<td>2,734,986</td>
<td>320,245</td>
<td>5,624</td>
<td>314,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adigeya</td>
<td>52,866</td>
<td>44,354</td>
<td>8,512</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>6,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestan</td>
<td>566,352</td>
<td>530,162</td>
<td>26,190</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>25,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingushetia</td>
<td>23,889</td>
<td>20,832</td>
<td>3,057</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>2,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabardino-Balkariya</td>
<td>109,554</td>
<td>100,586</td>
<td>8,968</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>8,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalmikiya</td>
<td>31,424</td>
<td>28,297</td>
<td>3,127</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachaevo-Cherkessiya</td>
<td>63,534</td>
<td>57,659</td>
<td>5,874</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>5,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ossetia-Alaniya</td>
<td>71,039</td>
<td>67,379</td>
<td>3,660</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechen Republic</td>
<td>143,013</td>
<td>141,167</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasnodarskiy kray</td>
<td>631,650</td>
<td>546,703</td>
<td>84,947</td>
<td>1,925</td>
<td>83,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavropol’skiy kray</td>
<td>370,263</td>
<td>319,444</td>
<td>50,819</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>49,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrahanskiy kray</td>
<td>122,114</td>
<td>110,534</td>
<td>11,580</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>11,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volgodgradskaya oblast’</td>
<td>257,199</td>
<td>230,110</td>
<td>27,089</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>26,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostovskaya oblast’</td>
<td>622,334</td>
<td>537,028</td>
<td>85,307</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>84,756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gainful employment in the individual households ranks as the third most widespread type of employment in the Chechen Republic. As the table below indicates, among all of those employed in individual households, the proportional share of production for personal consumption is twice as high as the share of production for market. This activity is the only means of generating income for the absolute majority of individual households in production for market, (while production for personal consumption is not a main income-generating activity).

Table 7: Employed in individual households in 2008, in thousands of persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country, Region</th>
<th>Occupation rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production for market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>3,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Federal District</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adigeya</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestan</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingushetia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabardino-Balkariya</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalmikiya</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachaevo-Cherkessiya</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ossetia-Alaniya</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechen Republic</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasnodarskiy kray</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavropol’skiy kray</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrahanskiy kray</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volgodgradskaya oblast’</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostovskaya oblast’</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b08_30tsWWW.exe/Stg/0201lab0610.htm
In conclusion, three main characteristics of the labour market in the Chechen Republic can be identified:

- The labour force in the Chechen Republic can be characterized by the predominance of youth in the active working age group, as well as in the economically active population with general or professional secondary education and main sectors of employment, i.e. agriculture, construction, trade and services;
- Stable high rates of registered unemployment (especially in the rural areas), and higher average of major labour market tensions on the average regional and country levels;
- High level of employment in the informal sector of the economy (about 40%), as well as a high degree of involvement in income-generating activities in the individual households (either for personal consumption or agricultural production for market).

4.2.2. Household incomes, main sources and the share of social assistance state programmes

Household income is usually calculated as an aggregated index of incomes from different sources: official wages, social compensation and state allowances, income from semi-formal and informal activities (such as rent and selling food items grown privately), as well as income in non-monetary (natural) form for the purpose of personal consumption or sale. Analysis of household income in the Chechen Republic reveals several significant features of the dynamics of the income of the households, which shall be discussed further.

Firstly, monthly salaries and earnings from formal employment do not constitute the single source or the most substantial source of income for the majority of households in the Chechen Republic. At the same time, the share of social compensation benefits and state allowances as a source of household income has grown substantially in the past years, from 18 to 32 per cent of the contribution to household income, depending on the social status, employment status and settlement of the family. The remaining household income is gained from semi-formal, informal or non-regular employment, or from natural resources for internal consumption or sale.240 Traditionally, family households in the North Caucasus (along with rural households from the south of the Russian Federation) have a higher share of income from natural, non-monetary resources which are produced either for internal consumption or for sale for additional money,241 therefore, up to 30 per cent of household income in rural areas results from non-monetary resources and constitutes a significant source of income for families.

The following paragraphs provide brief descriptions of the main sources of household income and discuss their dynamics in a comparative manner.

In 2008, the average monthly wages comprised 12,273 rubles, which was higher than average wages for the Southern Federal District, or SFD, (RUB 11,783). For the years between 2005 and 2007, the same trend was evident: average monthly wages in the Chechen Republic was higher than average monthly wages for SFD.242 However, the average size of assigned pensions is lower than the average for the both SFD and the country level. Therefore, according to the data of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, the average size of monthly assigned pensions in the Chechen Republic for the first quarter of 2009 comprised RUB 4,159, while the average for the SFD was RUB 4,649, and the average for the Russian Federation was RUB 5,144.243 Generally, the average size of the pensions is lower in the republics of the North Caucasus than in the regions of non-Caucasian SFD.244 The number of pensioners residing in the Chechen Republic in 2008 comprised 268,000 persons, (a rate of 221.7 per 1,000 persons). Therefore, the number of pensioners per 1,000 persons is not high; the average for both the SFD and the country level. Therefore, according to the data of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, the average size of assigned pensions in the Chechen Republic for the first quarter of 2009 comprised RUB 4,159, while the average for the SFD was RUB 4,649, and the average for the Russian Federation was RUB 5,144.243 Generally, the average size of the pensions is lower in the republics of the North Caucasus than in the regions of non-Caucasian SFD.244

Notably, for the period between 2001 and 2008, the nominal average income and average monthly wages in the SFD grew faster than the monthly pensions in the Chechen Republic: incomes grew from RUB 2,200 to RUB 12,867; wages grew from RUB 1,590 to RUB 9,917; whereas pensions grew from RUB 845 to RUB 2,984 in the Chechen Republic. Therefore, even though poverty has been diminishing on country and regional levels, the number of the pensioners in the poverty group has been growing (the share of the population living below the poverty line was 32.5% in 2001 and 17.9% in 2007).245

240 Also, the share of salaries has dropped significantly compared to the pre-war period of the 1990s, while the proportional size of state allowances and social compensation benefits grew from 15 to 32 per cent. Sources: Krichchenko I. Neo-Caucasian Economy. Nastre Vremya, 8. 159, 2007; Ladinchenko E. "Unidentified Objects of Trade Seized our Streets". Cuban News, 153: 120-121.
242 Thus, in 2005, the size of wages was RUB 6,715; in 2006 wages were RUB 8,078; in 2007 wages were RUB 9,917. The numbers for SFD amounted to RUB 5,800 for 2005; RUB 6,414 for 2006; RUB 9,219 for 2008.
243 In 2008, the average monthly assigned pensions in Chechen Republic were RUB 3,691, while the average for the SFD was RUB 4,119, and the average for the Russian Federation was RUB 4,546.
244 Notably, the pension system in the Russian Federation does not hold any regional differentiations. The real size of the pension depends on such factors as the length of job record, the nature of the work performed, qualifications of the worker as well as specific achievements/distinctions obtained during employment. Lower levels of pensions in the Chechen Republic mean that most of the pensioners living in the region are eligible for minimum base line pensions.
As previously stated, social compensation and state allowance benefits constitute a significant source of income for households in the region, especially for the most vulnerable social groups. In the Russian Federation, about 80 per cent of social protection spending is directed towards social insurance. Social insurance consists of pensions for former employees or farmers (for old age or disability) and their dependents, while other programmes provide benefits for contributors in case of sickness, maternity or unemployment. In addition to social insurance, there are non-contributory social assistance programmes that cover:

- subsidies for the vulnerable citizens (l’goty); merit-based benefits to the selected beneficiaries, such as the disabled, war invalids, dependents of war victims, groups based on occupational status;
- income-tested social assistance programmes, implemented by regional authorities;
- other programmes: such as programmes for youth development, protection against homelessness, institutionalized care, migration facilitation and applied research.\(^{247}\)

While federal authorities regulate the social insurance system, most of the non-contributory social assistance programmes are being implemented on the regional level. In the Chechen Republic, local authorities are responsible for implementing non-contributory social support programmes on child allowances, allowances for housing and utility services as well as regional programmes for the poor. The main direction of social assistance programmes on the regional level is the wide inclusion of the population under the coverage.

As the statistics indicate, the percentage of families that receive subsidies for housing and communal services is higher than average for regional and country levels. The total size of subsidies spent on housing/utility services grew between 2006 and 2008 from RUB 75 million to RUB 514 million in 2008. Also, the number of families receiving state subsidies grew from 26,500 to 54,000 (12.8% to 26.3% of the total number of families). At the same time, broader inclusion rates lowered the size of the subsidy to some extent on the regional level. The Ministry of Housing and Communal Services reports that different social assistance programmes granted subsidies on housing payments and utility services to 45 per cent of the residing population of the Chechen Republic in 2008. Officially, the level of payment for social and utility services was set to 60 per cent of the actual volume of expenses.\(^{248}\) In total, local government spent RUB 670,280,045 on subsidies for housing and utility services in 2008, (with 78% financing from the regional budget and 22% from the federal budget). However, the average subsidy on housing/utility payments per family is lower on the regional level. In 2006, these payments were equal to RUB 236, in 2007 payments were equal to RUB 341, and in 2008 payments were RUB 464 (the average for the SFD was RUB 504 in 2008).

Besides subsidies on housing/utility spending, the local government allocated substantial resources to the funding of merit-based social assistance programmes. Though widely criticized for inefficient targeting on the country level, these favourable assistance programmes are implemented to benefit the most vulnerable social groups in the Chechen Republic. In 2008, the total number of beneficiaries under merit-based social assistance programmes comprised 134,047 persons (in 2007 the total number comprised 111,335 persons). Of these, the largest group were invalids (68,200 persons), the second largest group were handicapped/sick children (33,350 persons), followed by war veterans at 28,605 persons. The remainder of the beneficiaries included: family members of war veterans and deceased soldiers at 3,163 persons, those suffering from radiation at 963 persons and other categories at 383 persons. The average compensation amounted to RUB 300 in 2008.

Analysis of the structure of household income in the Chechen Republic highlights several significant features of present-day living conditions in the region:

- Official workers wages do not constitute the main or single source of household income in the Chechen Republic;
- Social support benefits - state subsidies represent a significant source of household support for families;
- Incomes from activities in semi-formal, private or irregular sectors are often resources that substantially support households in the Chechen Republic;
- The social groups that are most vulnerable to poverty in the Chechen Republic are the pensioners (either on age or disability conditions), large families, families headed by women and those living in rural areas.

\(^{246}\) Overall, the Russian Federation’s public spending on social protection and social assistance is average for former transition economies (roughly equal to 9% share of GDP for 2006 to 2008). However, the level of the Russian Federation’s non-contributory spending is higher than average for former transition economies. For 2006 to 2008, total non-contributory social protection spending roughly equals to 2.6 per cent of the country’s GDP (the combined share of social assistance spending was approximately 1.8% of GDP and the share of regional privileges 0.8% of GDP).

\(^{247}\) While overall spending on social insurance programmes in the Russian Federation do not have an explicit poverty-alleviation mandate, some parts of the programmes are explicitly designed to reduce the risk of poverty among its beneficiaries (such as provisions of minimum pension) or to cover the most vulnerable social groups (such as social pensions for the disabled elderly without other sources of income).

\(^{248}\) Such measures were introduced in 2006 in order to relieve the burden of housing/utility services for the population. Taking into account that in 2006 the actual rate of payment for housing and utility services was only 5.6 per cent, local government introduced subsidies on the level of 40 per cent from the total volume of payment. Therefore, the actual level of reimbursement for expenses on housing and utility services remained at 40 per cent in 2008.
4.2.3. Minimum subsistence level and the structure of individual household consumption

The official minimum subsistence level in the Chechen Republic for the first quarter of 2009 (1 April 2009) was 4,630 rubles. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Development reports that the minimum subsistence level has been lower than average for the region of the Chechen Republic. In December 2008, the minimum value of a consumer’s market basket was equal to RUB 2,151 in the Chechen Republic. Even though this value is not high compared to the average level of the country (the minimum market basket value constituted 102% of the average value of the country), within the Southern Federal District (SFD), the Chechen Republic had the highest minimum value for a consumer’s market basket (the average for SFD is 94% of the country level). The costs of a fixed set of consumer goods and services also indicate that these costs constitute up to 93 per cent of average costs in the Russian Federation in 2005, 89 per cent in 2007 and 87 per cent in 2008. Indices of consumer prices on food, non-food items, and paid services indicate average rates for food items, above-average rates for non-food items and below-average rates for services.

The consumer price index for the Chechen Republic constituted 116.4 per cent in 2008, which is average for the SFD (116.3%) and not much higher than that for the Russian Federation (112.4%). The consumer price and tariff aggregated index constituted 145.3 per cent in 2008 (115.3% for the SFD, 115.9% for the Russian Federation). Comparative analysis of consumer price indices on regional and country levels for 2006 to 2008 indicates no significant deviation in consumer price indices for the Chechen Republic from the average mean levels for districts and the country. Therefore, consumer price indices fluctuated between 109 per cent and 115 per cent for the Chechen Republic, 109 per cent and 112 per cent for the SFD and 109 per cent and 111 per cent for the Russian Federation.

The structure of household consumption could prove to be a significant source of information on current social standards of living, as well as an indicator of the proportional share of different types of expenditures in households. As of 2006, as previously stated, the Chechen Republic has participated in an All-Russian household budget survey that is conducted on a regular basis by special units of the Federal State Statistical Service (FSSS). Several significant conclusions on the current standards of living in the Chechen Republic can thereby be deduced through analysis of the survey results. The structure of household consumer spending indicates that 87 per cent of spending is directed at basic needs (food, non-food items), with food comprising more than half of total expenditures. Payments for utility services account for 49 per cent of total expenditure. Together with communication and transportation costs, these payments comprise 14.9 per cent of total “service” expenses for the household. Compared to the level of the 1990s, the “food” share of expenditure for households in the Chechen Republic has increased while the share of expenditure on non-food items and services did not change significantly (from 43.6% in 1990 to 51.9% in 2007).

In the Chechen Republic, a comparison between the structure of household expenses and the national average reveals an imbalance toward a larger share of “food” expenses at the cost of non-food items and services. Therefore, on the national level, food expenses account for 31.2 per cent of total expenditure, whereas non-food items constitute 41.7 per cent and services constitute 25.4 per cent of total expenditure. In the Chechen Republic, the per cent share of non-food items remained at 35.1 per cent in 2007, while services accounted for only 13 per cent.

In comparison to the average regional and country levels, major household consumer durables serve as a vivid marker of the living standards in the region. As statistical data indicate, the Chechen Republic has the lowest numbers for the region of all types of consumer durables. Only the most essential household appliances - televisions (present in every household) and refrigerators (present in 96 out of 100 households) rank close to the average for the SFD. Other consumer appliances in the households (at a significant level) are washing machines and vacuum cleaners (43 and 41 for every 100 families respectively).

Further analysis of consumer spending in the Chechen Republic reveals that the structure of food consumption can act as a significant indicator of present-day social living standards for the region. Firstly, the structure of food consumption indicates that though the Chechen Republic is still characterized by low standards of food consumption (in comparison with region and country levels), the Chechen Republic is not on the list of regions below country level for basic food items.

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249 For the last quarter of 2008, official minimum subsistence level in the Republic was fixed at RUB 3,842 per person. For the working-age population, the minimum was equal to RUB 4,202, for the pensioners the minimum was equal to RUB 2,979 and for the children the minimum was equal to RUB 3,594. Source: Federal Legislation, “On minimum subsistence level in the Russian Federation”. Additional information on the actual minimum subsistence level in the region can be found in FSSS data and local government regulations.


Table 8: Consumption of main food items in kg, per person per year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food item</th>
<th>Chechen Republic 1990</th>
<th>Chechen Republic 2007</th>
<th>Average for SFD</th>
<th>Average for Russian Federation</th>
<th>Chechen Republic ranking in RF(^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meat/meat products</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4. Housing

Housing quantity and quality have been urgently needed during the first years after the armed conflict. Complete or partial destruction of houses, as well as damage to major public utility infrastructure (water, gas and electricity) have resulted in a chronic shortage of housing, and inadequate access to public utility services. Evaluating the scope of damage to the housing sector, the Russian government commission reported that over 150,000 private houses and approximately 73,000 apartments were completely or partially destroyed during the years of conflict. Another 2,092 private houses were completely destroyed and flooding in 2002 seriously damaged 2,335 houses.\(^{253}\) In addition, the October 2008 earthquake resulted in the partial or complete destruction of more than 10,614 houses the Chechen Republic.\(^{255}\)

Taking into account the extent of the destruction of housing and major public utility infrastructure, housing and infrastructure reconstruction has been the main focus of federal government support to the Chechen Republic since 2005. Under the federal governmental programme “Reconstruction of Social Sphere and Economy of the Chechen Republic” (conducted from 2002 to 2007 and projected for the period between 2008 and 2011) in combination with National Priority Projects on housing, significant funds have been directed towards the rehabilitation of the housing and public utility system in the Chechen Republic. Additionally, residential housing construction and reconstruction have been a top priority for local government programmes for the period between 2006 and 2008. In general, there has been large-scale housing construction and repair in recent years.

During the period of 2005 to 2007, the number of completed apartments amounted to 1,444, with the total floor area of restored housing being equal to 6 million sq. m in 2007, and indicating an equal allocation between rural and urban housing. Growth in housing construction (estimated as a percentage of the previous year and in terms of money) confirms an upward trend in the total volume of residential housing construction for the period of 2004 to 2008. However, statistical indicators on the quality of housing reveal that overall housing conditions in the Chechen Republic remain substandard. Firstly, the average size of living space per person is the lowest on the country level. Secondly, the rate of houses equipped with major utilities indicates that general living conditions remain below the average level in the Chechen Republic.

Table 9: Major utilities: percentage of equipped housing to total volume of housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water supply</th>
<th>Sewage system</th>
<th>Heating</th>
<th>Baths</th>
<th>Gas</th>
<th>Hot water</th>
<th>Floor electric heat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Federal district</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Federal District</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adigeiya</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestan</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingushetia</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabardino-Balkaria</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalmikya</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachevo-Cherkessiya</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ossetia-Alaniya</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechen Republic</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasnodarsky kray</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavropol'skiy kray</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrakhan' region</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volgograd region</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostov region</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

255 Data from Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Chechen Republic. See: http://www.rosbalt.ru/2008/10/17/533493.htm
Other important social indicators on housing include the number of families officially registered as requiring housing and the percentage share of families that actually receive housing, revealing a high demand for housing in the Chechen Republic. The number of families officially registered as requiring housing has been growing in recent years (from 4,700 to 13,800 families). Of these, only 1.45 per cent of families in need received housing in 2006. In 2007, a total of 500 families received apartments/houses (10.3 % of those registered for housing). Selection criteria for assistance included the social vulnerability of the families. Among those who received assistance were families of 14 persons whose housing was subject to liquidation due to radiation accidents and catastrophes, and families of 190 war veterans and invalids. Although the share of those who receive housing is growing, the number of families in need remains high.

To address the need for housing, the Republican government introduced a special programme intended to benefit young families by improving their housing conditions. In 2008, the National Priority Project «Affordable Housing» improved housing conditions for 620 young families. Financing for the programme amounted to 161,645,000 rubles (RUB 62,598,000 from Federal funds and RUB 99,050,000 from local funds). In 2009, funds were doubled: RUB 194,500,000 was allocated to housing subsidies for young families, with support for 754 young families (twice the number of families in 2008).

However, independent analytical evaluations confirm that the absence of shelter remains one of the main factors that hinder the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to the Chechen Republic. Therefore, according to Vesta estimates, of 1,241 IDP families (6105 persons) presently residing in Ingushetia in the private sector, 69 per cent have no housing, 17 per cent have partly destroyed housing, and 14 per cent indicated that they had housing fit for residence in the Chechen Republic. The availability of shelter is the most crucial factor for families when making the decision to return to the Chechen Republic or not. Therefore, those wishing to return to the Chechen Republic indicated that the restoration of housing, allocation of new housing or assistance with materials for restoring houses would facilitate their return to the Chechen Republic. Those participants of the survey who do not wish to return are mainly ethnic Ingush families, whose houses in the Chechen Republic were completely or partially destroyed.

Another Vesta study on reintegration progress by the returnees to the Chechen Republic indicates that housing is a priority for the returnees. Of the returning families, 53 per cent (62 families or 185 persons) do not have their own housing. Of these, 43 families (105 persons) live with relatives, while 13 families (47 persons) rent apartments or houses. Out of 117 families (349 persons) interviewed, housing assistance from the government has been allocated to 18.8 per cent of the families (22 families, or 72 persons), either in the form of financial compensation, allocation of a land plot, or apartments. In addition, about 4 per cent of the returnees received some type of shelter assistance from UN agencies and international governmental and non-governmental organizations [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)].

To sum up, significant progress in housing construction and the reconstruction of the basic public utility system (gas and electricity) has been made in the Chechen Republic. At the same time, the region continues to rank low on such essential housing quality indicators as living space per person, presence of water, hot water and a sewage system in the housing. Shelter is one of the two most important factors that influence the successful reintegration of returnees. At the same time, the absence of housing remains the main reason IDPs are prevented from returning to the Chechen Republic.

4.2.5. Health system

Public health care infrastructure was also severely damaged in the late 1990s. The Ministry of Health reports that the destruction of public health care establishments during the military conflicts in the Chechen Republic, particularly in towns, accounted for a 70 per cent loss in pre-war infrastructure. In 2000, the region lost almost all local health care establishments, city hospitals and polyclinics in the cities of Grozny, Argun, Gudermes, as well as in Groznsensky, Vedensky, Achhoy-Martanovsky, Shatotsky, Sunzensky districts. In addition, medical health care networks in rural/mountain districts, though not much affected by the conflict, did not have the capacity to provide adequate health care services. Present-day estimates indicate that rural health care networks can provide only 20 per cent of the national requirements. Destruction of most of the medical establishments in the cities, together with inadequate coverage to provide adequate health care services. Present-day estimates indicate that rural health care networks can provide only 20 per cent of the national requirements. Destruction of most of the medical establishments in the cities, together with inadequate coverage to provide adequate health care services. Present-day estimates indicate that rural health care networks can provide only 20 per cent of the national requirements.

In addition, deteriorating socio-economic conditions during the past ten years have resulted in a worsening state of public health. Analysis of the main statistical indicators on public health from 2005 to 2008 indicates that inferior living conditions, inadequate food supplies, worsening ecological situations and the absence of adequate access to health care services have led to sharp increases in resilient diseases as well as the appearance of various forms of psycho-social disorders and diseases that require technologically-qualified medical assistance. Morbidity rates for the main classes of diseases reveal a significant rise in infectious diseases, blood disorders, neurological and nervous system disorders and immune system diseases. In terms of infectious diseases, the highest morbidity rates are found to be the result of acute hepatitis and early stage tuberculosis.

From 2006, the health care system started to show the first signs of recovery with the main indicators of health care provisions

257 Social conditions and public infrastructure in Russia. 2008; http://www.gks.ru/bsdreg/8B08_44/Main.htm
showing improvement. The number of hospital beds increased to 8,900 in 2007 (73.2 hospital beds per 10,000 people). Capacities of ambulance and outpatient services (polyclinics) also saw improvement, comprising 27,700 visits per shift (in 1990, the indicator value was 22,500 visits). The number of physicians increased in 2007 to 2,700 (comprising 443.7 persons per physician, or 22.5 doctors per 10,000 of population). Medium-level medical staff numbers indicate higher rates of growth: in 2007, there were 66.7 persons of medium-level staff per 10,000 of population (total number of medium-level medical staff was 8,100 persons), resulting in approximately 149.9 of population load per medium-level medical worker.\footnote{See: http://minzdravchr.ru/} 

Despite significant progress, only the most basic types of medical assistance (such as emergency care, polyclinic services and child vaccination) have achieved pre-war level in the Chechen Republic. In the areas of specialized, highly technological treatment, and highly qualified medical help, there is a distinct shortage of both modern equipment and highly qualified personnel. According to estimates from the Ministry of Health, deprivation of highly technological medical equipment has attained 80 per cent in the Chechen Republic. Understaffing of upper-level medical personnel is at 50 per cent in hospitals, official sources report.\footnote{Report of the Ministry of Education of the Chechen Republic. http://mon95.ru/content/section/17/44/} 

Presently, health care remains one of the policy priorities under the Republican target programme for social and economic reconstruction for 2008 to 2011. The main schemes for federal programmes on the rehabilitation of healthcare include: continued direct financial support to medical personnel; providing diagnostic equipment to ambulances, outpatient services and polyclinics; immunization programmes, with special priority given to children and medical assistance during pregnancy and deliveries. 

\subsection*{4.2.6. Education}

During the years of economic and political instability from the mid-1990s to the beginning of the 2000s, the educational system in the Chechen Republic significantly deteriorated. This deterioration can be measured in both quantitative terms (the direct losses caused by full or partial destruction of infrastructure and full or partial loss of educational establishments), and qualitative indicators (the quality of education as evaluated through the professional level of teaching staff, access to modern education technologies and equipment, etc.).\footnote{Report on Situation in Health Care System in the Chechen Republic for 2007-2008 Information Centers. Russia’s Statistics: Socio-Economic Situation in the Federal Districts. http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b09_20/Main.htm} Immediately after the conflict, official sources reported\footnote{Data of the Ministry of Education of the Chechen Republic. http://mon95.ru/map/frame.htm} that the total volume of destruction of the educational establishments and the depreciation of technical and educational material in the secondary and higher level educational institutions in the Chechen Republic were estimated to be 70 per cent. The qualitative aspect of education was significantly undermined, resulting in poorer quality of education during that time. 

In the initial phase of rehabilitation reconstruction of the educational system of the Chechen Republic, the priority areas included: physical reconstruction of the buildings (especially in cities affected by the conflict), restoration of technical and educational material including libraries, additional financial support for teaching staff, provision of transportation to rural schools\footnote{Report on Situation in Health Care System in the Chechen Republic for 2007-2008 Information Centers. Russia’s Statistics: Socio-Economic Situation in the Federal Districts. http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b09_20/Main.htm} and social assistance to students from poor families. Within the period from 2004 to 2008 the situation improved and new directions for reconstruction were taken. In the following section of this report, main changes and new policy priorities will be discussed in respect to each level of education: pre-school, general, secondary, higher and science. 

In terms of pre-school education, low levels of enrolment into pre-school educational establishments characterize the Chechen Republic. For 2007, a total of 100 pre-school institutions were registered in the Chechen Republic, with 11,000 children enrolled. Therefore the inclusion rate constitutes 7.8 per cent of all children of pre-school age in 2007, the lowest rate in the Russian Federation. The average inclusion rate for the Russian Federation was 59.2 per cent in 2007, and 44.9 per cent for the Southern Federal District (SFD). Compared to 1990, the number of pre-school establishments, as well as the number of children enrolled, remains very low (in 1990, a total of 385 pre-schools enrolled 36,000 children).\footnote{Report on Situation in Health Care System in the Chechen Republic for 2007-2008 Information Centers. Russia’s Statistics: Socio-Economic Situation in the Federal Districts. http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b09_20/Main.htm}

The number of general education secondary schools in the Chechen Republic was 460 for the period between 2003 and 2004. For the period between 2008 and 2009, the number of general education state and municipal schools amounts to 443, with 213,300 students enrolled. Each year, approximately 17,000 to 18,000 students receive certificates of general secondary education (9 grades completed), while general secondary education (11 grades completed) receives fewer students at approximately 10,000 per year. Therefore the number of general secondary schools for 2008 to 2009 roughly equals to the pre-war 1990 level, and the number of students enrolled gradually increased since the 2003 to 2004 period. 

At the same time, the number of students enrolled in evening classes remains high: for 2007 to 2008 the number constituted 42.9 per cent (the average for the Russian Federation was 13.5% and the average for Southern Federal District was 21.1%). However, a downward trend is evident from the enrolment period 2001 to 2002 in the Chechen Republic. 

\footnote{Direct financial support to medical personnel; providing diagnostic equipment to ambulances, outpatient services and polyclinics; immunization programmes, with special priority given to children and medical assistance during pregnancy and deliveries.}
The table below provides segregated data on the numbers of all types of primary and secondary educational establishments in the Chechen Republic up to the beginning of the study year 2008/2009.

Table 10: Primary and secondary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Pre-school</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Evening School</th>
<th>Additional education</th>
<th>Study-Production Units</th>
<th>Primary professional</th>
<th>Secondary professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grozny</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naurskiy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shetkovskoy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadterechniy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groznensky</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gudermessky</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunzhesky</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achhoy-Martanovsky</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urus-Martanovsky</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shalinsky</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurchalovskoy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noshay-Yurtovsky</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vedensky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shatoysky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itum-Kalinsky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharoyksy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basic system of secondary professional education in the Chechen Republic was considered one of the best in the North Caucasus at the end of 1980s. Prior to the dissolution of the USSR, Chechnya had an extensive system of primary and secondary professional education establishments, with a wide range of programmes for vocational training. More than 30 primary and secondary professional establishments were assigned to particular industrial plants or factories, preparing high-skilled workers for specific industrial units. Another distinctive feature of the Chechen Republic’s system of professional education was dispersion: a network of technical colleges and professional schools covered the majority of the rural districts of the region. After 1991, this structure of professional education collapsed.

For the study year 2008 to 2009, 15 establishments of primary vocational education and seven institutions of secondary vocational education opened programmes for students. By the 2008 to 2009 study year, primary professional education establishments restored pre-war numbers of 26 institutions, while secondary professional establishments had not yet attained the level of the 1990s (9 out of 12 secondary professional education establishments were restored).

While secondary professional schools and technical colleges are highly popular among the Chechen youth, as indicated by high enrolment rates and low dropouts numbers, employment rates for graduates from primary and secondary professional establishments remain extremely low. In 2008, the share of graduates who gained employment that corresponded to their professional education was 27 per cent from the primary professional education category (1,664 persons in 2008), and 21 per cent (or 662 persons) from the secondary professional education category. The main contributing factors are low rates of industrial recovery in the Chechen Republic, and discrepancies between market requirements and the qualifications of the graduates.

Comparative analysis of additional indicators across the districts of the Chechen Republic provides information on the quality of education, the factors influencing the quality of education, and information on existing regional discrepancies in the quality of education (indicators such as teacher qualification grades, length of teaching experience, the number of successful candidates in student/graduate contests, average results of final tests, provision of classes with cabinet materials and technical equipment, provision of transportation for rural schools). Regional differences exist throughout the Chechen Republic in the levels of provision of study materials and technical materials, which in turn affects the quality of education. Mountainous, rural regions of the Chechen Republic tend to have more poorly equipped schools and colleges, and have fewer highly qualified teachers with extensive teaching experience. As a result, students from these schools show poorer performance rates and graduate with lower grades than their counterparts in the capital and the Northern areas of the Chechen Republic.

The higher education system in the Chechen Republic consists of three state universities: Chechen State University, Groznensky State Oil Institute and Chechen State Pedagogical Institute. Though the number of state higher educational institutions remains unchanged, the number of students enrolled in graduate study programmes has increased during the last eight years (from 18,600 students in 2000 to 2001, to 31,800 students for 2008 to 2009). Graduation rates have also doubled since 2003. In 2000, the number of graduates dropped to 300 students, while in 2003, the number was 2,600 students, and in 2007, the number of graduates amounted to 4,400 students. For the academic year 2008/2009, the number of students enrolled in programmes in the higher educational institutions amounted to 250 students per 10,000 of population.


Along with the restoration of the main higher educational institutions in the Chechen Republic, new forms of higher education have appeared in the region, including distance education, higher educational programmes from non-Chechen institutions and Islamic educational establishments.

Several trends in educational development can be highlighted:

• Overall, the educational system of the Chechen Republic is characterized by low levels of enrolment in pre-school establishments; there has been an extensive restoration of the system of primary and secondary professional education (with special emphasis on highly skilled professions), as well as a developing system of higher education (including new forms of education), and recently re-established scientific and research centres.

• While the main issues of reconstruction of the educational system in the first half of the 2000s have been associated with physical rehabilitation of the establishments and their materials, policy priorities have been shifted in recent times;

• At present, the main challenges of the educational system in the Chechen Republic are: the shortage of qualified teaching staff (especially in higher educational institutions); low job placement rates for the graduates; high demand for the development of technical basis for modern education technologies and the implementation of modern educational technologies;

• The ongoing need for extending educational establishments in rural areas, with special attention on the enrolment of children from socially vulnerable groups.

4.2.7. Concluding assessment of human development in the Chechen Republic

Two major observations can be made on the overall assessment of the level of human development in the Chechen Republic. Firstly, substantial progress in reconstruction of the housing and communal services has been made in recent years, as well as restoration of the educational and health systems of the region. The table below demonstrates a positive shift in the dynamics of the major indicators of social human development, which can be regarded as an indication of a qualitative development of the Chechen Republic (CR in the table) from the transitional stage to the developmental stage between 2004 and 2007.

Table 11: Major indicators of social human development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% share of reg. unemployed</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Space per person (sq. m)</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of evening students</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds (per 10,000 people)</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>109.2</td>
<td>107.2</td>
<td>105.2</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of polyclinics (number of visits per shift per 10,000 people)</td>
<td>251.3</td>
<td>256.4</td>
<td>258.7</td>
<td>198.5</td>
<td>206.7</td>
<td>210.3</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>215.1</td>
<td>228.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment into basic capital (in actual prices)</td>
<td>19,921</td>
<td>33,196</td>
<td>46,630</td>
<td>11,576</td>
<td>19,904</td>
<td>28,945</td>
<td>6,056</td>
<td>19,276</td>
<td>26,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. nominal accrued wages (in RUB)</td>
<td>6,739</td>
<td>10,633</td>
<td>13,593</td>
<td>4,648</td>
<td>7,221</td>
<td>9,219</td>
<td>4,002</td>
<td>8,078</td>
<td>9,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. monthly pensions (in RUB)</td>
<td>2,026</td>
<td>2,841</td>
<td>3,682</td>
<td>1,848</td>
<td>2,585</td>
<td>3,657</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>2,210</td>
<td>2,984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, on the country level and that of the Southern Federal District, the Chechen Republic remains the region with the lowest levels of human development. In the UNDP rating of 80 territorial subjects of the Russian Federation in human development conducted in 2008, the Chechen Republic ranks 77th, having one of the lowest averages in major human development indicators in the Russian Federation.

In addition, poverty structures and regional dispersion of poverty throughout the Russian Federation should be taken into account. General analysis of the poverty incidence rate in the Russian Federation indicates that the Chechen Republic as a region with high poverty incidence rates, whereby the majority of population is categorized into vulnerable groups at a higher risk of poverty. These specific groups at a higher risk of poverty include agricultural and service workers (construction and household services), individuals with low professional skills, people living in rural areas and large and single-parent families. Basic social policy recommendations...

266 Overall, between 2002 and 2006, the number of poor in the Russian Federation was reduced by an estimated 12.5 million people. For urban areas, the incidence of poverty declined from 15.9 per cent in 2002 to 7.4 per cent in 2006, and the number for rural areas ranged from 30 per cent to 21.2 per cent. Between 2002 and 2006, real average household consumption increased by 33 per cent in urban areas and only by 19 per cent in rural areas. Therefore, poverty rates in rural areas have increased more than three times the rates in urban areas. World Bank Report: Russian Federation: Addressing the challenge of Chronic Poverty and Vulnerability, analyzing poverty incidence during 2002-2008. 2009.
suggest targeting households and social groups of the most vulnerable in the population, as well as channelling financial support directly toward the most vulnerable households.

### 4.2.8. Small and individual enterprises in the Chechen Republic

To obtain complete information on the number, structure and main indicators of activity of small enterprises in the Chechen Republic, the Chechen Government Committee on Small Businesses and Enterprises conducted a profile study of small enterprises and individual entrepreneurs in the region. According to the results, the Chechen Republic demonstrates dynamics of definite growth in numbers of small businesses over the previous two years. The results of the survey indicate that at the beginning of 2009, a total of 5,721 small enterprises were registered in the Chechen Republic, which constitutes 12 per cent more than in 2008. The number of individual entrepreneurs in the Chechen Republic amounted to 26,058 (18% more than in the previous year). The total volume of small enterprise production in 2008 (excluding the agricultural sector) amounted to RUB 2.4 billion, with the largest share of production generated by the construction sector at RUB 1.6 billion (70% of the total). Two other large shares of production were generated by wholesale trade, services and repairs (total volume of RUB 500 million, or 21% of total volume of small enterprise production), as well as by processing industries (total volume of RUB 300 million, or 9% of small enterprise production). Investments in fixed capital for small enterprises amounted to RUB 15,100,000. Sources of revenues for the Chechen budget reveal that from 2006, the income sector of the Chechen budget was being comprised of revenues from small and medium enterprises mainly in the retail trade and services sectors.

On the regional level, the Chechen Republic has adopted a programme to support small enterprises: the programme “From Survival to Prosperity” will run from 2006 to 2011. Support for small business development is being directed toward the following priorities: support for active business incubators (in Grozny and Shali), continuing construction of business incubators in Urus-Martan, micro-loans (programme for provision of micro-loans to small enterprises, from RUB 300,000 to RUB 500,000); grant support for start-ups (up to RUB 300,000) and training for entrepreneurs. In 2008, the total volume of financing for this programme was equal to RUB 391,000,000 (with RUB 282,000,000 directed from the republican budget).\(^{267}\) Initially, for 2009 the programme was intended to allocate RUB 70,000,000 in support. However at the beginning of 2009, the decision was made to double the sum. At present, RUB 140,000,000 has been directed from the Chechen budget to SME development in 2009. The main activities for 2009 include: grant support for start-ups, micro financing, study programmes and internships. The main criterion for selection of beneficiaries will be the number of jobs generated plus production of goods that will replace the imported ones.

In addition to direct financial assistance, local government supports the SMEs by granting exclusive rates for transporting goods by railways for those enterprises that are involved in reconstruction. Total volume of SME goods transported in 2007 comprised more than 600,000 tons; in 2008 the total volume was more than 2,700,000 tons. Another measure of local governmental support for SMEs is sub-contracting 60 local SMEs for implementation of state-run reconstruction projects. From 2006 to 2007, a total financing volume of RUB 39,000,000 was also implemented through sub-contracting of SMEs. The main sector for sub-contracted SMEs was in the production of construction materials (plastic windows, bricks, subway blocks, etc.)

Overall, the Chechen government has been highly supportive of SME development. The government recognizes SMEs as having a strong potential to decrease tensions in the labour market, to generate jobs, and develop the service, construction, trade and agricultural sectors of the economy. Current estimates suggest that 99 per cent of enterprises in the Chechen Republic fall into the category of micro, small and medium enterprises.\(^{268}\)

### 4.2.9. Recent economic developments

In 2008, the global economic and financial crisis had a significant impact on economic development in the Russian Federation, which in turn will have ramifications for the Chechen Republic. Firstly, the pressure of the financial crisis on the Russian economy will result in a reduction of regional budgets, which in turn will affect the interests of the subsidized regions of the Russian Federation (in this case the Chechen Republic and other Northern Caucasian Republics). In this regard, the Chechen government has taken a pro-active approach to attract investment flows into the region from other regions of the Russian Federation, the Newly Independent States and further abroad. The main economic sectors that have been prioritized for development are agriculture, food processing and the food industry, as well as the car industry, energy sector and service industry. The Chechen government has also prioritized small and micro-business development and aims to support private entrepreneurship activity, which in turn would promote economic development of the region, generate jobs and reduce tensions in the labour market in the Chechen Republic.

In addition, social protection policies and pro-active labour market measures need be introduced to relieve the negative consequences of the economic slowdown. Social groups have been identified according to levels of vulnerability to the crisis and will include those at a higher risk of income insecurity (which coincide with the groups at high risk of poverty) such as low-skilled workers, single-headed

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268 Currently, a micro-enterprise comprises an enterprise with 15 or fewer workers, and a total volume of sold goods of RUB 60,000,000. The second category of enterprises comprises small enterprises with the number of workers ranging from 15 to 100, and a total volume of sold goods of up to RUB 400,000,000. The third category comprises medium-level enterprises with workers numbering from 100 to 250, and a total volume of goods of up to RUB 1 billion.
households, single elderly persons, rural populations in the mountain regions, as well as physically disabled persons and those requiring specialized medical treatment and/or support.

4.2.10. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the current socio-economic situation in the Chechen Republic, three main implications for the development of a comprehensive AVRR programme can be identified.

- Special reintegration measures directed towards assistance in gainful employment and income-generating activities need to be incorporated into a regional AVRR programme. Taking into account the fact that the labor market of the Chechen Republic is characterized by high levels of informal economic activity, high levels of officially registered unemployment rates and high values of major indicators of tension on the labor market, reintegration measures should be oriented on securing long-term self-sustaining income generating activities for the returnees.

- Another main sector that requires reintegration measures is housing. Despite the significant amount of construction work during recent years, the Chechen Republic still ranks lowest on all major quantitative and qualitative indicators of housing in the Russian Federation. Therefore, reintegration assistance should be included in a regional AVRR programme that is directed towards securing housing and/or rehabilitation of housing.

- Finally, since full reconstruction of public health and educational systems of the Chechen Republic has not been achieved, additional reintegration measures that address social, health and educational needs of the groups of the returnees with vulnerable health or educational status (such as children, persons requiring special medical treatment, single elderly persons, etc.) should be foreseen.
5. Experiences with Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in the Russian Federation

This chapter will present experiences with existing assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes that have been implemented in the Russian Federation. Drawing from these experiences, it will be possible to outline a comprehensive AVRR programme for the migrants returning to the Northern Caucasus region (namely, the Chechen Republic) based on three pillars:

1. International human rights norms and general IOM approaches to migration, migrants and assisted voluntary returns, in particular;

2. Analysis of the socio-economic conditions specific to the region and the present-day political situation in the Chechen Republic, in order to identify preferred strategies for the AVRR programme to be developed for the Chechen Republic, including a preliminary list of potential partners in the region;

3. Current IOM Moscow practices in assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes to the North Caucasus region; jointly developed and agreed principles for a comprehensive AVRR programme for the returnees to the North Caucasus region from Eastern Caucasus regions.

The following sections will describe the content of each of the three pillars in more detail, which will then be translated into the draft proposal for the comprehensive AVRR programme to the Chechen Republic.

5.1. General mechanisms of AVRR from Europe to the Russian Federation: IOM Moscow practices in assisted voluntary return and reintegration: major trends and assessment of sustainability

For over a decade, IOM Moscow has been providing assistance in voluntary returns and reintegration of the refugees who left the Russian Federation for Europe during the years of political and economic instability, and who are presently returning to their region of origin. According to statistical data collected by IOM Moscow, the majority of the returnees are going back to the North Caucasus region. The table below summarizes current numbers for assisted voluntary returns between 2007 and 2009 according to destination (IOM Moscow as the main source with data input from IOM Missions in Europe). As the table indicates, 3,497 persons were assisted in voluntary returns during the period. Of the total number, 2,794 (or 80%) of the returnees are going to the North Caucasus region as their final destination. Subsequently, the majority of those returning to the North Caucasus (2,585 persons, or 74%) went to the Chechen Republic and Dagestan. The distribution of returnees by country of departure indicates that the highest numbers of returnees depart from Austria (508 persons) and Poland (1,205 persons). Notably, Austria and Poland also have the highest numbers of returnees going to the Chechen Republic. While several countries (such as Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and Portugal) indicate a flow of returnees to areas other than the North Caucasus region, and other countries have roughly equal numbers of returnees to and from the North Caucasus, Austria, Poland, Belgium, Switzerland and Norway account for the highest numbers of returnees going back to the North Caucasus region (the Chechen Republic and Dagestan, in particular).

Table 12: Distribution by destination of returnees assisted by IOM Missions in voluntary returns between 2007 and 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departure from</th>
<th>Chechen Republic</th>
<th>Dagestan</th>
<th>Ingushetia</th>
<th>N.Ossetia</th>
<th>Kabardino-Balkaria</th>
<th>Other than NC</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Rep</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1205</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1671</td>
<td>1719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>3497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data clearly indicates that the majority (80%) of returnees go to the North Caucasus region as their final destination. Currently, cohesive or region-specific comprehensive programmes on assisted voluntary returns to the Russian Federation do not exist. Operating AVRR programmes (as implemented by IOM Moscow) are specific to the country, not the region, to which the individual is intending to return (different sending countries have different programmes and types of assistance for the returnees depending on the programme in place for a particular donor country). In practice, however, the region of the North Caucasus significantly differs in its economic and social conditions from other parts of the Russian Federation. As a result, returnees may require special reintegration measures that might not be needed for the returnees to other parts of the countries. Such situations result in different types and amounts of reintegration assistance offered to the returnee, depending on region of destination (namely the North Caucasus region) and the AVRR programme in country of departure. Generally, AVRR programmes are similar in the first two stages (pre-departure and transit), and differ significantly in post-departure reintegration assistance for returnees.

For the Russian Federation, the general procedure for the AVRR programmes involves IOM Missions in Europe (from the sending side) and the IOM Moscow Mission (on the receiving side). The main operational procedures of organization, preparation and implementation of the AVRR programme are divided between the sending and receiving Missions in the following way:

Support provided by IOM Missions on the sending side:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Types of Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure stage</td>
<td>» Individual and group counselling of returnees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» pre-departure orientation on reintegration option and assessment of feasibility of individual reintegration plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» booking and ticketing of international travel by airplane to Moscow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» transit assistance in Europe (if no direct flights are available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» embarkation assistance at the point of departure (in the country of current residence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» confirmation of departure to transit and receiving IOM Missions and to the donor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support options provided by IOM Moscow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Types of Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Departure stage</td>
<td>» Provision of updated “Country of Origin Information Sheet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Pre-departure information and counselling on reintegration options, evaluation of the feasibility of returnee reintegration plans (by means of individual inquiry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>» Booking and ticketing of domestic tickets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Booking of hotel accommodation for any transit overnight stays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Arrival, transit and transfer assistance at Moscow International Airports and train stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Transportation from airport of arrival to the hotel for overnight stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Next day transportation from the accommodation to departure airport for domestic flights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Assistance at domestic airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Confirmation of departure of returnees from Moscow to sending IOM mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Return</td>
<td>» Individual counselling on reintegration options and assessment of returnee reintegration plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Organization and implementation of reintegration assistance as envisaged by AVRR programmes in participating countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Assessment of business plans incorporated into reintegration business start-up grant, where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Monitoring of reintegration plan and reporting to the donors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As previously mentioned, currently implemented AVRR programmes significantly diverge in terms of reintegration support provided to the returnees. In the table below, major AVRR programmes are listed with a brief description of types and amounts of reintegration support available for the returnees to the Russian Federation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Types of assistance provided by IOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Belgium | 1994       | » Return ticket, baggage allowance  
             » Reception/transit assistance  
             » Onward travel arrangements  
             » Reintegration grant (700 Euros per person, 1400 Euros per family/case) |
| Germany | 2002       | » Pre-departure information relevant to individual reintegration plan |
| Ireland | 2001       | » Return ticket  
             » Reception/transit assistance  
             » Onward travel arrangements  
             » Reintegration assistance (600 Euros per person) |
| Poland  | 2005       | » Return ticket  
             » Installation grant (200 Euros per person)  
             » Reception/transit assistance  
             » Onward travel arrangements |
| Switzerland | 2002 | » Pre-departure information relevant to individual reintegration plan  
             » Return ticket  
             » Reception/transit assistance  
             » Onward travel arrangements  
             » Reintegration grant (up to $3000 based on business plan) |
| Austria | 2007       | » Return ticket  
             » Reception/transit assistance  
             » Onward travel arrangements |
| UK      | 2004       | » Return ticket, baggage allowance  
             » Reception/transit assistance/relocation cash grant  
             » Onward travel arrangements  
             » Four options of reintegration assistance (business start-up, education, job placement, vocational training) and grant (up to GBP 2,000 per family member, based on business plan) |

Under the German ZIRF Programme and Switzerland’s RIF Programme, pre-departure counselling is provided for the returnees to the Russian Federation. During these counselling sessions, a special inquiry form is completed, which provides general background information on the returnee (age, gender, marital status, ethnic origin, country of origin, final destination, occupation and professional qualifications) and includes specific questions that are of primary interest to the returnee. Currently, IOM Moscow practices indicate that the majority of the returnees to the North Caucasus region inquire about rental costs, the situation with the labour market...
(employment opportunities) housing, prices on food, goods and construction materials, medical drugs and the possibility of receiving special treatment. Such inquiry forms are usually sent via fax or email to IOM Moscow where they are processed and then returned to the sending IOM Missions (or to the NGOs that are providing counselling to the potential returnees in the donor country).

As for reintegration support, four countries have included a reintegration component in their AVRR programmes at present: Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland, and the UK. In recent years, the Czech Republic and Poland incorporated a reintegration component into their AVRR programmes. Under the Czech Voluntary Return and Reintegration from European Countries Programme (2007), a reintegration grant of USD 400 per person was issued. The Polish Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Unsuccessful Asylum Seekers Programme (2005) also included a reintegration grant (200 Euros cash grant or 1,500 Euros per family/case for a selected business plan). The Polish reintegration package included a business start-up grant, which was awarded on the basis of a competition among business plans that had been submitted by the returnees to IOM Moscow within the six-month period after return. The feasibility of business plans was assessed by IOM Moscow and approved by the donor at the final stage. Therefore, individuals who had shown an interest in starting their own business and presented a viable business plan were given the opportunity to start a micro-business.

Under the current reintegration schemes, five main types of reintegration assistance can be provided to the returnees (notably, at present all types of assistance are given in a non-cash form):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of reintegration assistance</th>
<th>List of documents which can be presented for receiving reintegration assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing needs: apartment rentals or materials/equipment for reconstruction/rehabilitation of houses</td>
<td>Copies of client and renter identification, copy of ownership certificate, rental agreements, invoices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical assistance: purchase of medical drugs and necessary medical treatment</td>
<td>Medical service agreement, letter from doctor, prescription and diagnosis, invoices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate living and household needs</td>
<td>Invoices, payment checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational support: for up to one year of university/college/school fees and corresponding materials</td>
<td>Copy of agreement with university/school, invoices, copy of birth certificate, copy of agreement with kindergarten, invoices for payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job placement/vocational training: 3 month’s salary to the employer, up to 2 month’s vocational training courses (incl. stipend)</td>
<td>Copy of agreement with employer, copy of agreement with course providers, invoices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business start-up grant (business set-up, purchase of equipment, rent of premises)</td>
<td>Copy of business license, invoices, copy of purchase/partnership agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current systems of implementation of AVRR programmes that incorporate a reintegration component for returnees to the North Caucasus region highlight several important trends in long-term sustainability:

- The majority of the returnees contact IOM Moscow within the first month of return. IOM Moscow provides counselling on reintegration procedures and the funds available for the returnees, identifies their most urgent needs and future plans, and selects the most suitable forms of assistance. As a general rule, returnees present and implement their reintegration plans within a six-month time frame. As such, the recommended time frame for the implementation of reintegration assistance would be three to six months.

- In some cases, the returnees did not have complete or accurate information on current living conditions in the region or the conditions of return, which led to disappointment and confusion. Recommended approach: That pre-departure orientation sessions include accurate and objective information on the situation in the region to which returnees intend to go, as well as reintegration options available for them upon return, in order to avoid raising false expectations.

- The most popular type of support requested is the small business set-up grant. The most common businesses for the North Caucasus region are: private taxi (transportation), private food/commodity store, bakery/pastry shop, confectionery shop, tailor’s workshop, manufacturing walkway slabs, café/bar, farming, greenhouses and cattle breeding. Monitoring of the reintegration process reveals that several factors proved crucial for the success of micro and small businesses: personal characteristics of the individual (such as age, professional qualifications, past experience in business management), informal network support (family and relatives, social connection) and local governmental support. The main challenge reported by returnees is the inability to raise additional funds for larger business start-up (due to the weak banking system and complicated loan procedures). Recommended approach: in this regard can include the incorporation of micro business start-up grants as a reintegration option for the returnees, in addition to careful examination and selection of business plans.

- The second most popular type of assistance requested was assistance with housing and immediate living expenses. Generally, material assistance of this kind is usually requested by large families, female-headed households, households...
with little experience in starting up micro or small businesses and families seeking to repair their homes. Such assistance is usually directed toward buying furniture, household appliances, and commodities for children, as well as construction materials for home repair. Recommended approach: Support for immediate living and housing expenses must be included in the reintegration package.

• No individual who returned during the period from 2007 to 2008 took part in business training. This tendency is due to the fact that the reintegration grant is not sufficient for the start-up capital required for any large business in the Russian Federation. For micro and small businesses such as food stores and repair or delivery services, no special business knowledge is required. Usually, previous work experience, with some assistance from relatives, is sufficient for starting micro or small businesses. Recommended approach: There is no need to include business start-up courses in the reintegration package. However, if a business start-up grant is being considered, analysis of professional qualifications and past work experience of the returnee should be included in the evaluation.

• Short-term accommodation is the most common request upon arrival. However, addressing only this type of request (or any request for short-term assistance) proves to be less effective in ensuring the sustainability of return than an approach that addresses long-term needs. Returnees who received reintegration assistance in the form of start-up business grants demonstrated a greater success rate in reintegration than those who applied their reintegration assistance to immediate housing needs and/or living expenses. Recommended approach: including options of reintegration assistance that are oriented toward long-term goals and are not defined by immediate short-term needs only.

• In general, feedback from the returnees about reintegration options has been positive. The majority of the returnees are positive about the reintegration assistance provided through IOM Moscow and consider the assistance to be timely and relevant. Financial assistance is widely recognized as crucial for successful reintegration after return. Conclusion: including a reintegration component into AVRR programmes increases the probability of sustainable returns.

Based on experience in the implementation and monitoring of AVRR programmes to the North Caucasus region, and taking into account successful experiences of AVRR programmes implemented by other EU Member States, the five basic principles for a comprehensive AVRR programme shall include:

• an individual, case-by-case approach;
• pre-departure counselling and orientation that will not raise false expectations;
• an enhanced reintegration component that addresses both short and long-term needs of the returnees;
• flexibility of reintegration opportunities: ability to choose options which are best suited to the family/individual (however, the maximum financial cost of reintegration assistance is to be determined by the donor, not the individual);
• the possibility to apply for a business start-up grant (either in the form of a business plan competition, or as an option in lieu of all other types of support).

Such principles are regarded as respectful of individual and family rights to choose better long-term solutions without limiting opportunities and will serve to promote sustainable return and reintegration of the families in the region.

5.2. Major factors specific to the region to be considered when creating a comprehensive AVRR programme for the Chechen Republic

Based on the analysis of the current demographic, social and economic situations and the existing administrative structures and security conditions in the Chechen Republic, five major factors specific to the region have been identified, which should be considered when developing and implementing a comprehensive AVRR programme to the Chechen Republic.

These factors, along with preferred strategies, include:

• An extremely high level of income insecurity as a result of the current situation in the labour market of high levels of unemployment, lengthy job search, low capacity of government employment agencies that can provide viable options for job opportunities due to low labour demand and a lack of sufficient investment in the region. For the majority of the population, this situation translates into a high demand for sustainable income. At the same time, the state sector of the economy has been unable to secure sustainable income and employment opportunities. Recommended approach for AVRR programme: for individuals with primary and secondary levels of education - self-employment orientation, self income-generating activities, and micro-business start-up, especially in rural and mountain areas in such sectors as agriculture, food production, construction and production of construction materials, services and trade. For individuals with higher education (medium level and highly qualified professionals) and teachers - possible employment in the state sector in cities and additional short-
term qualification training. Additional factors favouring orientation towards self-employment and starting micro and small businesses: high levels of entrepreneurial activity and self-employment, high levels of employment in individual households, widespread semi-formal economy. Potential partners: international NGOs and international organizations facilitating income-generating projects and life-supporting activities, such as the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the International Medical Corps (IMC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), or the United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF.

- Despite substantial progress in rehabilitation and reconstruction of residential housing and major public infrastructure networks (roads, water, gas, and electricity) in the previous years, full reconstruction of housing and communal infrastructure has not been attained. The most notable results of reconstruction activities can be seen in Grozny and in the major cities of the Chechen Republic. This situation translates into an ongoing high demand for shelter and/or adequate housing and living conditions, especially in the rural and mountain areas. At the same time, the Chechen government has taken a pro-active approach toward the reconstruction of residential housing and communal infrastructure, and is at the forefront in reconstruction of residential housing in the cities and in development of public infrastructure in rural areas (gas, electricity, water, roads). Reconstruction of housing in the rural areas has been conducted by personal and family efforts mainly, or with a degree of help from the international community (housing rehabilitation projects facilitated by international organizations and NGOs). Recommended approach for AVRR programme: for returnees to the rural areas - housing assistance by means of home rehabilitation/renovation, for returnees to the cities- assistance in apartment rental or referral to government agencies. Potential partners: for returnees to the rural areas - international organizations involved in projects on shelter rehabilitation in the region (DRC, Help, IRC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)), for returnees to the city - local government agencies.

- High levels of involvement by the Chechen government, and active participation in housing construction, public infrastructure rehabilitation and a pro-active government policy that provides social assistance indicates an overall positive and pro-active level of government support for selected social groups such as young and large families (in obtaining apartments), farmers (special agricultural credits) and micro and small business development. Additional considerations that can be crucial during the implementation stage: a strict hierarchical system of administrative and political structures on the regional level that feature strong subordination of decisions made on the highest level in order to allow for a strategic and efficient approach. Recommended approach for AVRR programme: initial high-level coordination and close cooperation with the Chechen government to ensure full governmental support and effective cooperation during the implementation stage; high-level coordination will create additional political and security conditions that will guarantee sustainable return. Potential partners: Chechen Presidential Administration, Committees on Small Business Development, Departments of Social and Regional Development, Ministry of Housing and Communal Services.

- Prolonged presence of international organizations in the region (since 1998) that have implemented a wide range of humanitarian, transition, recovery and developmental programmes in the region. By 2009, the general improvement of the situation in the Chechen Republic has prompted international assistance to come to their final stages of developmental assistance, with the majority of organizations gradually moving out of the region. At the same time, their presence has resulted in an independent network of local NGOs featuring organizational capacities and direct experience in monitoring, training and providing assistance in generating income and social support. However, the significant limitation of local NGO structures has restricted their internal funding and increased their dependence on outside financial sources for large-scale projects. Recommended approach for AVRR programme: to use local NGO networks for referrals (depending on the services provided by NGOs), or to utilize existing resources of local NGOs for monitoring purposes of the project. International NGOs should cooperate closely with those present in the region and can be used as a referral network. Potential partners: the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Cartas, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Food Programme of the United Nations (WFP), UNHCR, Médecins du Monde (MdM), Handicap International (HI), Vesta.

- Highly efficient informal communication, referral and support networks, based on extended family (kinship, community) can serve as a primary basis for counselling, referral, decision-making and resolving immediate and long-term needs of the individual/family; also consider the high dependence on informal networks. Upon return, the returnees will be re-united with the local community through such networks and, after a short period of adjustment to new living conditions, will consider options that are developed through such networks. Recommended approach for AVRR programme: since informal networking is extremely important, the best strategy would be to grant the returnees a certain degree of freedom and time to decide what reintegration options will be more suitable for them. Communication through their informal networks will assist returning families in developing solutions and will facilitate decisions on what kind of assistance is required.

- Analysis of the data reveals that the most vulnerable groups for assisted voluntary return can be identified (social groups that have a lower capacity for successful reintegration and will require a more comprehensive and generous reintegration package because of their specific social, demographic or economic status). These groups include those who are at a higher poverty risk, are less employable, have a weak demographical status and suffer from poor health conditions. For the Chechen Republic, these groups include: single women-headed households with two or more children, individuals with a high need for specialized medical treatment and continuous medical assistance, handicapped individuals, single seniors,
unaccompanied minors and teenagers and families who intend to return to the southern mountain areas of the Chechen Republic. **Recommended approach for AVRR programme**: case-by-case approach, early planning, with the development of individual reintegration plans before departure (identifying the main needs and ways to meet them), direct referral to the agencies in the region, close monitoring (can be extended up to one year). **Potential partners**: Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Hammer Forum, Handicap International (HI), Médecins du Monde (MdM), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), UNHCR, World Food Programme of the United Nations (WFP), state social support agencies, state medical centres and hospitals as well as local NGOs.

### 5.3. General framework for a comprehensive AVRR programme in the North Caucasus region (focusing on the Chechen Republic)

The proposed framework for a comprehensive AVRR programme to the North Caucasus region is based on the principles outlined by the “High Level Conference on the Situation and Status of Citizens from the Russian Federation in EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway”, which took place in Vienna in May 2008. The framework conforms to internationally recognized individual and family human rights norms and corresponds to IOM standards for humane and orderly migration that upholds the human dignity and well-being of the migrants. This framework includes:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage/approach</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>individual (family) case-by-case approach</td>
<td>» to evaluate prospects for successful return for each individual case&lt;br&gt;» to identify possible risks for reintegration and evaluate vulnerability for each particular case</td>
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<tr>
<td>detailed counselling and early planning <em>(professional or business training courses before departure may be an option)</em></td>
<td>» to create an individual reintegration plan that addresses risks/benefits of specific conditions of return (to give the returnee “the know-how” for returning)&lt;br&gt;» to motivate individual/family before departure, to create positive attitude toward return</td>
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<td>a reintegration à-la-carte approach, possibility of choosing one or several options best suited for individual/family needs, identified on basis of individual reintegration plan, within a fixed amount of total reintegration support available for the returnee</td>
<td>» to address both short-term and long-term needs&lt;br&gt;» to provide returnees with the choice of reintegration options which can be selected individually&lt;br&gt;» to create the basis for a self-sustainable livelihood&lt;br&gt;» to create immediate support in the meeting most essential needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close monitoring of reintegration <em>(possibly including a psycho-social component)</em></td>
<td>» to assess the success of each individual reintegration&lt;br&gt;» to provide psychological support and smooth transition in the first stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local government as the main partner in the implementation stage</td>
<td>» to secure additional reintegration assistance for the returnees from the local government&lt;br&gt;» to achieve additional stability for the return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relying on a network of locally-operating organizations during implementation (both governmental and NGO), as well as to build a network</td>
<td>» to build capacity of local community&lt;br&gt;» to promote community self-reliance&lt;br&gt;» to create a referral network of organizations</td>
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6. Recommendations for a Comprehensive Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme to the Chechen Republic

Russian citizens from the Chechen Republic comprise the largest group of asylum seekers in Austria. Although the number of people who are granted asylum in Austria is decreasing, a significant amount of Chechens have been granted asylum in the past, and many have the right to remain in Austria. While many intend to return to their region of origin, a considerable number prefer to remain in Austria and ultimately integrate into Austrian society, as the survey results demonstrate. Therefore, efforts to enhance their integration into Austrian society will be of paramount importance.

Under such circumstances, the integration measures need to focus on assistance in learning German, as well as on assistance in healthcare, education, job placement and in developing relationships with the citizens of the receiving country. The latter could be achieved through “buddy systems”, joint sport and cultural activities, as well as through raising awareness among Chechens and Austrians. Especially vulnerable groups consist of young Chechens who are inexperienced at living in a multicultural setting with a stable and non-violent surrounding and who lack a stable education background.

However, an increasing number of Chechens are deciding to return voluntarily to their region of origin due to various reasons (such as pending deportation to Poland or another EU member state as a result of the Dublin II Regulation, family reasons, the normalising situation in the Chechen Republic, etc.). In order to assist these Chechens with a “return in dignity” and to facilitate their reintegration into the Chechen Republic, the development of a high-quality, region-specific, comprehensive, information-based, targeted voluntary return and reintegration programme is of high importance. As such, returnees can be provided with long-term prospects for a sustainable return.

As mentioned above, the survey revealed five major types of assistance required for return to the Chechen Republic (listed in order of priority):

1. Covering of travel costs
2. Support in job search
3. Assistance in obtaining travel documents
4. Psycho-social support
5. Return counselling

This research report indicates that assistance in covering travel costs is one of the top priorities. However, to achieve sustainability in the AVRR programme by ensuring that people are well reintegrated in their home societies, the programme should be based on five principles:

1. Individual approach
2. Pre-departure counselling and orientation
3. Reintegration addressing short and long-term needs
4. Flexible reintegration opportunities
5. Possibility to apply for business grants

6.1. Individual approach

To recognize potential opportunities for reintegration and spot possible risks related to reintegration, the specific background of the potential returnee that includes his/her individual reasons and conditions for return, are taken into account. The background

269 Grouping Chechen individuals and families with Austrian individuals and families.
information may include age, sex, marital status, education, professional skills, etc. Individual reasons for return could include a pending deportation to Poland or another EU member state, the decision to be buried at home for old people or terminally ill persons), concern for family members at home, frustration caused by the lengthy waiting period of the asylum process, etc.

Both the socio-demographic background and reasons for return shall determine the needs of the returnee in the Chechen Republic. For example, people returning as a result of disappointment in their expectations of a life in Austria probably anticipate more opportunities in the Chechen Republic than in Austria, therefore they require specific support in fulfilling their plans. Individual circumstances of return may include either returning alone or with the family, requirement of travel documents, etc.

Due to different psycho-social reasons, such as a difficult background in the Chechen Republic, pride becomes a typical characteristic in terms of strong cultural and national identity, especially for men. For these cases, there is a need for an empathetic approach in communicating with the Chechen people. Therefore, in designing a customized approach, the survey confirms that psycho-social support should be given special consideration. In general, the individual’s potential and plans of the potential returnees should be assessed and evaluated in terms of reintegration possibilities.

Recommended:

1. To treat each case individually during pre-departure counselling, including psycho-social support
2. To develop a customized and flexible approach for reintegration in the Chechen Republic (depending on the availability of measures).

6.2. Pre-departure counselling and orientation

Assisted voluntary return programmes have been facilitated in various EU member states, including Austria, for several years. However, as the survey data revealed, the Chechens who had already accessed the counselling service were not satisfied with the quality of the service. Therefore, there is a demand for improvement in pre-departure counselling in order to meet the expectations of individuals who opt for the voluntary return programme. The importance of such a response is indicated by the resulting cascade effect and sustainable return. The cascade effect implies that satisfaction with the services provided result in wider dissemination of information on the voluntary return programme, thereby creating a snowball effect. Sustainable return can be seen as the result of optimistic and realistic counselling and assistance whereby the returnee is more satisfied after return to the Chechen Republic and will be less inclined to return to Austria.

There are several explanations for the negative assessment of return counselling, which should be taken into consideration in view of potential improvement. Communication among Chechens living in Austria is very extensive, whereby information on assistance provided by certain institutions soon becomes known throughout the EU. As an illustration: if an institution in one of the EU member states provides better or worse return support (e.g. one beneficiary receives less money than another beneficiary in another country), a certain level of aggravation may be provoked. As such, the monetary aspect of return and reintegration assistance needs to be standardized, at least among the major EU destination countries for Chechens. In addition, as stated above, the individual and cultural background of the potential returnee should be considered during the counselling session. The survey revealed that the majority of the participants were interested in assistance in meeting their travel costs and with job placement. However, informing the potential returnees that they will receive assistance is insufficient. There is a need for comprehensive information on how this assistance will be provided in terms of job search, education opportunities, or access to business grants. The information may be provided in promotion materials that give the client specific contacts, as well as comprehensive inter-personal communication with examples of best return and reintegration practices, etc. In this way, a counsellor would present a custom-made package of information specifically targeted to the group/individual, for example, young people, women, etc. By presenting specific information, and taking into account particular needs, the counsellor will assist the potential returnee in his/her decision making process. This information package should include, inter alia, data on types of required documents for particular reintegration assistance (for example, a business plan) and practical information on assistance available in the Chechen Republic (for example, the contact details for relevant institutions, documents required for different reintegration measures, etc.). In this regard, the comprehensive collection of basic information is critical during the preparatory phase for return in addition to the accurate completion of all required pre-departure forms. Careful processing of the forms saves time, energy and additional financial costs related to reception in the Russian Federation. Another point highlighted in the survey, was the need for assistance with obtaining valid travel documents. To this end, a sound cooperation with the Russian authorities in Austria is crucial.

In general, consideration must be given to providing the potential returnees with objective and accurate information on the situation in the region in order to avoid raising false expectations that cause disappointment and risk of re-emigration. In this regard, the goal of in-depth counselling is to create an individual reintegration plan and to motivate potential returnees by giving as much support as possible.
Recommended:

1. To improve pre-departure counselling by providing customized service with objective and realistic information

2. To standardize monetary compensation for AVRR programmes, at least within the major EU countries of destination for Chechens

3. To develop levels of cooperation with the designated Russian authorities in Austria in terms of the issuance of travel documents

4. To develop a comprehensive information package containing vital data, which is easily adjustable to meet specific needs and demands for smooth return and reintegration

5. To involve client-friendly, supportive counsellors

6.3. Reintegration addressing short and long-term needs

The reintegration component may target both short- and long term needs of returnees. Short-term needs may include the organization of return travel with all necessary documents, as well as financial support for the initial phase after return to cover living and housing expenses. Other short-term needs may be addressed by orientation assistance (home rental, housing, food, construction material costs, medical assistance, etc.) and assistance in organizing all documents required in the country of origin, as well as by assistance with finding accommodation, etc. Furthermore, any initial need for psychological support within the period after return should be provided in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Moreover, the health conditions of returnees was indicated as the third main reason for leaving the Chechen Republic, therefore, as a measure of reintegration, health assistance must also be considered. This consideration is strengthened by the fact that the verification mission to the Chechen Republic confirmed that the health care system in the region requires further improvement. As a result of post-Soviet education and war time experience, emergency and/or primary care is at a high standard, however diagnostics, prevention, treatment and patient follow-up, etc. is at a lower standard.

Long-term needs may include job placement, educational and vocational training, business grants and assistance in framing the business plan, as well as assessment of implementation of the business plan, and assistance in self-organized groups (child care, women support groups, etc.). The survey revealed a concrete need for addressing employment issues in the Chechen Republic and as such, assistance with job placement ranked second in priority for return. Both short- and long term needs should be addressed to create a basis for self-sustainable livelihood and to create immediate support in meeting the most essential needs in order to ensure sustainability.

**Recommended:** consider long-term needs as a priority given the entrepreneurial spirit of the Chechen people, for example, encourage micro- or small businesses. Consider that important needs include medical support.

6.4. Flexible reintegration opportunities

The survey indicated that approximately half of the housing infrastructure had been destroyed, that the unemployment level is high and that many Chechens are not satisfied with education resources. As a result, there is a need for the development of customized educational and vocational training and customized job and housing assistance. As stated above, there is a need for medical support, with health ranking third on the list of reasons for leaving the Chechen Republic. Furthermore, the verification mission revealed that there is an urgent need for support measures for pre-school education. Given the high birth rates of the Chechen women who participated in the survey, the issue of childcare could become urgent for returnees. Therefore, consideration must be given to different options for women and children, such as the funding of childcare groups, which would offer employment opportunities for female returnees and address the problem of childcare.

Returnees should be given an opportunity to choose their preferred type of reintegration assistance, for example, individuals with higher educational backgrounds may opt for short-term re-training courses to elevate the level of their professional skills. Therefore, returnees should be provided with reintegration options. To this end, there is a need for a structure that will facilitate meeting their demands in the Chechen Republic. This structure will liaise with local authorities and service providers as part of a flexible approach that can accommodate a return structure that is well-developed and staffed with personnel who are well informed on the subject matter.

**Recommended:** establish a structure that addresses the specific needs of returnees to the Chechen Republic from Austria that includes educational and vocational training as well as assistance with housing and job placement.
6.5. Possibility to apply for business grants

According to IOM experiences, reintegration assistance provided through the AVRR programmes to the North Caucasus region in the form of grants to start up a business proved to be more successful than reintegration assistance used for immediate needs such as covering housing or living expenses. However, the survey did not indicate that starting up a business was a high priority for potential returnees; therefore, a good combination of short and long-term measures is crucial for returnees from Austria.

In addition, the challenging economic conditions in the Chechen Republic as revealed by the survey results, especially in terms of employment, requires that return counselling information on the economic situation and in turn provides motivation for self-employment (by means of relaying concrete success stories for example). Different actors among the international agencies provide for micro-credit opportunities (such as FAO and ICRC), as confirmed by the verification mission to the Northern Caucasus. Therefore, linking the returnees to such programmes must be considered. The potential returnees should be provided with current information on different sectors of the economy and assistance with developing a business plan, including possible contacts with banks and other useful networks. In this regard, relations with microcredit structures in the Chechen Republic are also advisable.

As the survey revealed, many Chechens migrating to Austria have attained some level of education, especially those over 36 years of age. However, over 75 per cent of those surveyed were manual labourers. As such, income-generating activities can be relevant to many returnees, especially those from rural areas (for example, FAO offers support to individuals in rural areas seeking to start a greenhouse or bee-keeping business). Some business plans simply require minimal initiative and assistance to materialize. Therefore, the reintegration programme should provide such resources and motivation to returnees in terms of developing business plans. When promoting business plan competitions, the panel of judges for the successful candidates should be comprised of IOM staff, donors and other possible stakeholders. Decisions by the panel will have to take into account professional skills, past work experience and market demands.

Recommended:

1. To motivate the returnees in terms of self-employment
2. To equip the AVRR programme with the necessary tools to facilitate self-employment
3. To combine self-employment with a customized approach that includes counselling and assistance with documents.

On the whole, success of the AVRR programme requires close cooperation between high-level national and local governments in the Russian Federation and Austria. This approach would ensure effective cooperation during the implementation phase and would provide an additional political and security dimension that guarantees sustainable return. Cooperation with local and national governments, as well as other stakeholders such as NGOs and international agencies active in the field, will bring more stability to return and reintegration in the Chechen Republic and successful integration in Austria.
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ANNEX: Survey Questionnaire

PROFILE SURVEY ON RUSSIAN NATIONALS FROM THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC IN AUSTRIA

For the interviewer to introduce him/herself:

• “My name is ______ and I am here on behalf of the International Organization for Migration in Vienna. We are conducting this survey in order to assess the profile of the Chechen community in Austria; their living conditions, needs, past experiences, future plans, etc.

• Please note that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that you can refuse to answer the questions, or interrupt the interview, at any time.

• This interview and the answers you provide will be treated in an absolutely confidential manner and will not be passed to any third party.

• Results will be made anonymous and only aggregated data will be presented in the end.

• The questionnaire is divided into five parts:

  1. Generic personal data.
  2. The situation in Chechnya before you left the country.
  3. Your journey.
  4. Your stay in Austria.
  5. Future prospects.

• The interview will last about 50 minutes.

• When marking the questionnaire please use and ‘X’ in the appropriate box for your answer

DATE OF INTERVIEW: ____________________________________
LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: __________________________________
START TIME: _____________________________________________
END TIME: _______________________________________________
INTERVIEWER: ____________________________________________
FILE NUMBER: ____________________________________________
PART A – General Profile

1. Sex:
   □ (1) Male
   □ (2) Female

2. How old are you?
   □ (1) 18-21
   □ (2) 22-25
   □ (3) 26-35
   □ (4) 36-45
   □ (5) 46-55
   □ (6) 56-65
   □ (7) 66-75
   □ (8) Older than 75

3. What is your civil status?
   □ (1) Single
   □ (2) Married
   □ (3) Divorced
   □ (4) Separated
   □ (5) Widowed
   □ (6) Other (please specify): ________________________________

4. Do you have children?
   □ (1) Yes
   □ (2) No

5. If the answer to question 4 is “Yes”, please specify the age of your child(ren). If your answer was “No”, please continue with question 6.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What is your highest level of education completed?
   □ (1) Primary school
   □ (2) Secondary school (8 years)
   □ (3) High school (10 years)
   □ (4) Vocational training / Technical institute (Field): ________________________
   □ (5) University (Faculty): ________________________
   □ (6) Other (please specify): ________________________
7. How many years of education did you complete?
   □ (1) 1-3 years
   □ (2) 4-8 years
   □ (3) 9-10 years
   □ (4) 11-15 years
   □ (5) More than 15 years

8. What is your native language?
   □ (1) Chechen
   □ (2) Ingush
   □ (3) Russian
   □ (4) Other (please specify): ________________________________

9. Which other language(s) do you speak? (Multiple responses possible)
   □ (1) Chechen
   □ (2) Ingush
   □ (3) Russian
   □ (4) German
   □ (5) English
   □ (6) Other (please specify): ________________________________
   □ (7) Not Applicable

10. When did you arrive in Austria? (Choose one from each column)
    □ (1) Prior to 1999 □ (1) January
    □ (2) 1999 □ (2) February
    □ (3) 2000 □ (3) March
    □ (4) 2001 □ (4) April
    □ (5) 2002 □ (5) May
    □ (6) 2003 □ (6) June
    □ (7) 2004 □ (7) July
    □ (8) 2005 □ (8) August
    □ (9) 2006 □ (9) September
    □ (10) 2007 □ (10) October
    □ (11) 2008 □ (11) November
    □ (12) 2009 □ (12) December
PART B – Pre-Migration Situation

11. Which district does your family originate from?
   □ (1) Groznensky
   □ (2) Gudermessky
   □ (3) Kurchaloisky
   □ (4) Nozhay-Yurtovsky
   □ (5) Shalinsky
   □ (6) Vedensky
   □ (7) Shatoysky
   □ (8) Sharoysky
   □ (9) Itum-Kalinsky
   □ (10) Urus-Martanovsky
   □ (11) Achkhoy-Martanovsky
   □ (12) Sunzhensky
   □ (13) Nadterechny
   □ (14) Naursky
   □ (15) Shelkovskoy
   □ (16) City of Grozny
   □ (17) Other (please specify): _____________________

12. Did you have property in Chechnya?
   □ (1) Yes
   □ (2) No

13. If the answer to question 12 is “Yes”, please specify what kind of property and what is the current condition of the property (multiple replies possible). If your answer was “No” please continue with question 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A house</td>
<td>Existing and available</td>
<td>现有且可用</td>
<td>破坏</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An apartment</td>
<td></td>
<td>An apartment</td>
<td>Existing, but occupied by other tenants</td>
<td>被其他租客占用</td>
<td>其他 (请填写)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A business entity</td>
<td></td>
<td>A business entity</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>其他 (请填写)</td>
<td>不知道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territory/land</td>
<td></td>
<td>Territory/land</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>不知道</td>
<td>不知道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. In which district of Chechnya did you have property? (Multiple replies possible)
   □ (1) Groznensky
   □ (2) Gudermessky
   □ (3) Kurchaloisky
   □ (4) Nozhay-Yurtovsky
   □ (5) Shalinsky
   □ (6) Vedensky
   □ (7) Shatoysky
   □ (8) Sharoysky
   □ (9) Itum-Kalinsky
   □ (10) Urus-Martanovsky
   □ (11) Achkhoy-Martanovsky
   □ (12) Sunzhensky
   □ (13) Nadterechny
   □ (14) Naursky
15. With whom did you live in Chechnya before you left? (Multiple replies possible)

- (1) Alone
- (2) Your spouse/partner
- (3) Your child(ren)
- (4) Your father
- (5) Your mother
- (6) Your spouse’s/partner’s father
- (7) Your spouse’s/partner’s mother
- (8) Your siblings
- (9) Your spouse’s/partner’s siblings
- (10) Your grandparents from mother’s side
- (11) Your grandparents from father’s side
- (12) Your spouse’s/partner’s grandparents from mother’s side
- (13) Your spouse’s/partner’s grandparents from father’s side
- (14) Your nephews/nieces
- (15) Your spouse’s/partner’s nephews/nieces
- (16) Other (please specify): ___________________

16. How good, in your opinion, was your experience with the following members of society in Chechnya, before you left?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>0</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rather good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rather bad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other family members
Neighbours
Colleagues/peers
Employers
Legal Counsellors
Other Ethnicities
Law Enforcement
Local Authorities
Housing authorities
Government Authorities

17. How satisfied were you with the following issues in Chechnya before you left?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather unsatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economical issues
Political issues
Security issues
Health issues
Educational issues
Social issues
Religious issues
Cultural issues

18. How was your employment situation 6 months before you left Chechnya? (Multiple answers possible)

- (1) Employed full-time
- (2) Employed part-time
- (3) Employed irregularly
- (4) Unemployed
- (5) Other (please specify)
19. If the answer to question 18 is “Unemployed”, please specify how long you had been unemployed before leaving Chechnya? If you were employed please continue with question 20.

□ (1) 0-3 months
□ (2) 4-6 months
□ (3) 7-11 months
□ (4) 1-2 years
□ (5) 2-3 years
□ (6) 3-4 years
□ (7) More than 4 years

20. What was your main occupation/field of expertise before you left Chechnya? Please specify: __________

21. What was your level of expertise?

□ (1) Beginner level
□ (2) Intermediate level
□ (3) Expert level

22. What was your main task?

□ (1) Manual work
□ (2) Office work

23. Who (else) contributed to your family’s income 6 months before you left? (Multiple replies possible)

□ (1) Your spouse/partner
□ (2) Your child(ren)
□ (3) Your father
□ (4) Your mother
□ (5) Your spouse’s/partner’s father
□ (6) Your spouse’s/partner’s mother
□ (7) Your siblings
□ (8) Your spouse’s/partner’s siblings
□ (9) Your grandparents from mother’s side
□ (10) Your grandparents from father’s side
□ (11) Your spouse’s/partner’s grandparents from mother’s side
□ (12) Your spouse’s/partner’s grandparents from father’s side
□ (13) Your nephews/nieces
□ (14) Your spouse’s/partner’s nephews/nieces
□ (15) Other (please specify):___________________

24. What was the family’s income 6 months before you left Chechnya?

□ (1) Less than 1000 roubles per month
□ (2) Between 1001 and 2000 roubles per month
□ (3) Between 2001 and 5000 roubles per month
□ (4) Between 5001 and 7000 roubles per month
□ (5) Between 7001 and 10000 roubles per month
□ (6) Between 10001 and 15000 roubles per month
□ (7) Between 15001 and 20000 roubles per month
□ (8) Over 20001 roubles per month
□ (9) Don’t know
25. How safe did you feel in Chechnya?
- (1) Very safe
- (2) Safe
- (3) Rather safe
- (4) Regular
- (5) Rather unsafe
- (6) Unsafe
- (7) Very unsafe

26. How safe, do you think, were the following groups in Chechnya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very safe</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Rather safe</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Rather unsafe</td>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>Very unsafe</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Young women</td>
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<td>Men</td>
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<td>Young men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly people</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PART C – Migration Period

27. How important were the following issues for your decision to leave Chechnya? Please rank the three most important issues!

1. Economical issues
2. Political issues
3. Security issues
4. Health issues
5. Educational issues
6. Social issues
7. Religious issues
8. Cultural issues
9. Other issues (Please specify)

28. In general, please rank the three most important issues!

1. Economical issues
2. Political issues
3. Security issues
4. Health issues
5. Educational issues
6. Social issues
7. Religious issues
8. Cultural issues
9. Other issues (Please specify)

29. When you left Chechnya, did you intend to go to a country other than Austria to apply for asylum?
- (1) Yes
- (2) No
30. If the answer to question 29 is “Yes”, please specify what your intended country of destination was. If your answer was “No”, please continue with question 31.

☐ (1) Georgia  
☐ (2) Turkey  
☐ (3) Middle East  
☐ (4) Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.)  
☐ (5) Baltic state (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia)  
☐ (6) Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary)  
☐ (7) Western Europe (Germany, France, United Kingdom, etc.)  
☐ (8) Northern Europe (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Denmark)  
☐ (9) Other (Please specify): ______________________

31. When did you leave Chechnya? (Choose one from each column)

☐ (1) Prior to 1999  
☐ (2) 1999  
☐ (3) 2000  
☐ (4) 2001  
☐ (5) 2002  
☐ (6) 2003  
☐ (7) 2004  
☐ (8) 2005  
☐ (9) 2006  
☐ (10) 2007  
☐ (11) 2008  
☐ (12) 2009  
☐ (1) January  
☐ (2) February  
☐ (3) March  
☐ (4) April  
☐ (5) May  
☐ (6) June  
☐ (7) July  
☐ (8) August  
☐ (9) September  
☐ (10) October  
☐ (11) November  
☐ (12) December

32. Have you ever lived outside Chechnya before?

☐ (1) Yes  
☐ (2) No

33. If the answer to question 32 is “Yes”, please specify in which other place(s) you have lived before? (multiple replies possible). If your answer was “No”, please continue with question 34.

☐ (1) In other countries of the European Union  
☐ (2) In other parts of Europe  
☐ (3) In other parts of the former Soviet Union  
☐ (4) In other parts of Russia  
☐ (5) In the Middle East  
☐ (6) Other (please specify): ______________________

34. With whom did you leave Chechnya? (Multiple replies possible)

☐ (1) Alone  
☐ (2) With (a) member(s) of your family  
☐ (3) With (a) member(s) of your partner’s/spouse’s family  
☐ (4) With (a) friend(s)  
☐ (5) With (an) acquaintance(s)  
☐ (6) In a group with people that you did not know  
☐ (7) Other (please specify): ______________________
35. What kind of transport service did you use? (Multiple replies possible)
   □ (1) Plane
   □ (2) Train
   □ (3) Public bus
   □ (4) Taxi
   □ (5) Private car
   □ (6) Lorry/goods transporter
   □ (7) Other (please specify): __________________________

36. How much did you pay to come to Austria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport costs</th>
<th>Middle man costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 50 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 500 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501 to 1000 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001 to 2000 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 to 3000 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001 to 4000 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4000 Euros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. Which territories did you enter on your way to Austria? (Multiple replies possible)
   □ (1) Another territory of Russian Federation (Stavropol Krai, Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, etc.)
   □ (2) Georgia
   □ (3) Turkey
   □ (4) The Middle East
   □ (5) Ukraine
   □ (6) Belarus
   □ (7) Moldova
   □ (8) Baltic state (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia)
   □ (9) Poland
   □ (10) Czech Republic
   □ (11) Slovakia
   □ (12) Hungary
   □ (13) Bulgaria
   □ (14) Rumania
   □ (15) Greece
   □ (16) Other (please specify): __________________________
   □ (17) Don’t know
   □ (18) Not applicable

38. For what reasons did you come to Austria and not another country? (Multiple replies possible)
   □ (1) Contacts with residents from Chechnya currently living in Austria
   □ (2) Joining family
   □ (3) German language proficiency
   □ (4) Reputation of a good asylum policy in Austria
   □ (5) Reputation of good social assistance offered to asylum seekers in Austria
   □ (6) Reputation of a good health system in Austria
   □ (7) The person(s) who assisted me to leave Chechnya proposed this country
   □ (8) Pure coincidence
   □ (9) Other (Please specify): __________________________
   □ (10) Don’t know
39. Did you know anyone in Austria when you left Chechnya?
   □ (1) Yes
   □ (2) No

40. If the answer to question 39 is “Yes”, please specify what kind of people you already knew in Austria? (Multiple replies possible)
   □ (1) Family members
   □ (2) Friends
   □ (3) Acquaintances
   □ (4) Friends of friends
   □ (5) Other (Please specify): _____________________________

41. What was your plan for the future when you arrived in Austria?
   □ (1) Settlement in Austria
   □ (2) Return to Chechnya
   □ (3) Relocation to another country of the European Union
   □ (4) Relocation to another part of Europe
   □ (5) Relocation to another part of Russia
   □ (6) Relocation to another part of the former Soviet Union
   □ (7) Relocation to the Middle East
   □ (8) Other (Please specify): _____________________________
   □ (9) Don’t know

42. How long did you originally intend to stay in Austria?
   □ (1) 0 to 6 months
   □ (2) 6 months to 1 year
   □ (3) 1 to 2 years
   □ (4) 2 to 3 years
   □ (5) 3 to 5 years
   □ (6) 5 to 10 years
   □ (7) More than 10 years
   □ (8) For ever
   □ (9) Don’t know

PART D – Stay in Austria

43. What is your current status in Austria?
   □ (1) Asylum seeker in the admission procedure
   □ (2) Asylum seeker in the asylum procedure
   □ (3) Rejected asylum seeker
   □ (4) Recognized refugee
   □ (5) Subsidiary protection status
   □ (6) Other (please specify): _____________________________
   □ (7) Don’t know
44. If you are currently in the asylum process, please specify when (month, year) did you file your asylum application? (Choose one from each column)

- □ (1) Prior to 1999
- □ (2) 1999
- □ (3) 2000
- □ (4) 2001
- □ (5) 2002
- □ (6) 2003
- □ (7) 2004
- □ (8) 2005
- □ (9) 2006
- □ (10) 2007
- □ (11) 2008
- □ (12) 2009

- □ (1) January
- □ (2) February
- □ (3) March
- □ (4) April
- □ (5) May
- □ (6) June
- □ (7) July
- □ (8) August
- □ (9) September
- □ (10) October
- □ (11) November
- □ (12) December

45. Which is the current stage of your asylum application?

- □ (1) I have not yet filed my application for asylum
- □ (2) I have just filed the application for asylum
- □ (3) I have been notified that another EU-country is responsible for my asylum claim ("Dublin case")
- □ (4) I have received a negative decision at first instance
- □ (5) I have received a negative decision at first instance, and filed the first appeal
- □ (6) I have received a negative decision at second instance (UBAS/Asylum Court)
- □ (7) I have received a negative decision of UBAS / Asylum Court, and filed the second appeal
- □ (8) Other (please specify):_________________________
- □ (9) Don't know

46. If you are a recognized refugee, please specify since when (month, year) you have been recognized? (choose one from each column)

- □ (1) Prior to 1999
- □ (2) 1999
- □ (3) 2000
- □ (4) 2001
- □ (5) 2002
- □ (6) 2003
- □ (7) 2004
- □ (8) 2005
- □ (9) 2006
- □ (10) 2007
- □ (11) 2008
- □ (12) 2009

- □ (1) January
- □ (2) February
- □ (3) March
- □ (4) April
- □ (5) May
- □ (6) June
- □ (7) July
- □ (8) August
- □ (9) September
- □ (10) October
- □ (11) November
- □ (12) December
47. Where are your immediate family members at present?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>In Chechnya</th>
<th>In Austria with me</th>
<th>In other parts of Austria</th>
<th>In another EU Member state</th>
<th>In other parts of Europe</th>
<th>In other parts of Russia</th>
<th>In other parts of the former Soviet Union</th>
<th>In the Middle East</th>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your spouse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your mother</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your father</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your child(ren)</td>
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<td>Your partner’s/ spouse’s father</td>
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<td>Your partner’s/ spouse’s mother</td>
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<td>Your grandparents / mother’s side</td>
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<td>Your grandparents/ father’s side</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your partner’s/ spouse’s grandparents/ mother’s side</td>
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<td>Your partner’s/ spouse’s grandparents/ father’s side</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

48. How satisfied are you with the following issues in Austria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Rather satisfied</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rather unsatisfied</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>Very unsatisfied</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economical situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political situation</td>
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<td>Security situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational situation</td>
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<td>Social situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural situation</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49. How is your current employment situation in Austria?

- (1) Employed
- (2) Unemployed

50. If the answer is “Unemployed”, please specify how long you have been unemployed?

- (1) 0-3 months
- (2) 3-6 months
- (3) 6-12 months
- (4) 1-2 years
- (5) 2-4 years
- (6) more than 4 years

51. If the answer is “Employed”, please specify your employment situation in Austria.

- (1) Employed full-time
- (2) Employed part-time
- (3) Irregular jobs
- (4) Other (please specify): ______________________________
52. How long have you been working in Austria?

□ (1) 0 to 6 months
□ (2) 6 months to 1 year
□ (3) 1 to 2 years
□ (4) 2 to 3 years
□ (5) 3 to 5 years
□ (6) More than 5 years

53. What is your current income in Austria? (categories should be on cards and not read out loud)

□ (1) Less than 250 Euros per month
□ (2) Between 251 and 500 Euros per month
□ (3) Between 501 and 750 Euros per month
□ (4) Between 751 and 1000 Euros per month
□ (5) Between 1001 and 1250 Euros per month
□ (6) Between 1251 and 1500 Euros per month
□ (7) Between 1501 and 1750 Euros per month
□ (8) Between 1751 and 2000 Euros per month
□ (9) Over 2001 Euros per month

54. What is your occupation now? Please specify: ______________________

55. Have you ever applied for services of civil society organizations in Austria?

□ (1) Yes
□ (2) No

56. If the answer to question 55 is “Yes”, please specify how satisfied you were with the services of civil society organizations? If you answered “No”, please continue with question 57.

□ (1) Very satisfied
□ (2) Satisfied
□ (3) Rather satisfied
□ (4) Regular – indifferent
□ (5) Rather unsatisfied
□ (6) Unsatisfied
□ (7) Very unsatisfied

57. How would you assess your experience with the following members of society in Austria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleagues/ peers</td>
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<td>Employers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Counsellors</td>
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<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
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<td>Law Enforcement</td>
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<td>Local Authorities</td>
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<td>Housing Authorities</td>
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<td>Government Authorities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
58. Do you follow the present developments in Chechnya?

☐ (1) Yes
☐ (2) No

59. If the answer to question 58 is “Yes”, please specify how often you follow the present developments in Chechnya?

☐ (1) Very frequently
☐ (2) Frequently
☐ (3) Rather frequently
☐ (4) Neither frequently nor seldom
☐ (5) Rather seldom
☐ (6) Seldom
☐ (7) Very seldom

60. Currently what is/are your main source(s) of information about Chechnya? (multiple replies possible)

☐ (1) Government officials
☐ (2) Russian Embassy, Consulate
☐ (3) Civil society organizations
☐ (4) Electronic media (Internet, radio, TV)
☐ (5) Print media (newspaper, magazines)
☐ (6) Other representatives of Chechen Diaspora
☐ (7) People in Chechnya
☐ (8) Other (please specify): ___________________

61. Are you in contact with people in Chechnya?

☐ (1) Yes
☐ (2) No

62. If the answer is ‘Yes’, please specify how often you are in contact with people in Chechnya?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Members</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Once a quarter</td>
<td>Once every 6 months</td>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Colleagues/ peers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community leaders</td>
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<td>Doctors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63. How do you contact people in Chechnya? (Multiple replies possible)

☐ (1) By telephone (mobile or land line)
☐ (2) By regular mail
☐ (3) By e-mail
☐ (4) By advanced techniques (Skype, msn messenger, etc.)
☐ (5) By personal contact
☐ (6) By travelling to Chechnya
64. Do you have spare financial resources to send home?
□ (1) Yes
□ (2) No

65. If the answer to question 64 is “Yes”, please specify how frequently you send money home? If you answered “No”, please continue with question 85.
□ (1) Occasionally
□ (2) Once a week
□ (3) Once a month
□ (4) Once a quarter
□ (5) Once every 6 months
□ (6) Once a year
□ (7) Less than once a year
□ (8) Never
□ (9) Other (Please specify): __________________________

66. If money is sent, please specify how much money, on average, you are able to send home? Otherwise jump to question 85
□ (1) Less than 100 Euros per month
□ (2) Between 101 and 200 Euros per month
□ (3) Between 201 and 300 Euros per month
□ (4) Between 301 and 400 Euros per month
□ (5) Between 401 and 500 Euros per month
□ (6) Over 501 Euros per month
□ (7) Nothing

PART E – Future Prospects

67. What conditions do you think are needed to return to Chechnya? Please rank the three most important factors!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Secured employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Acceptable living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acceptable level of security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Acceptable political situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Security for the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Acceptable educational system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Acceptable medical services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Acceptable economic conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
68. **What assistance will be needed most in case of return? Please rank the three most important factors!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Return Counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Travel costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Transportation of belongings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assistance in obtaining travel documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grants for start up of small enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Housing allowances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Job placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Job seeking assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Educational assistance (college, university, language, computer technology courses, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Assistance in social reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Psycho-social assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69. **What assistance will be needed most in case you stay in Austria? Please rank the three most important factors!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grants for start up a small enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Housing allowances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Job placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Job seeking assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Language courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other educational assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assistance in social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Psycho-social assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Health assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70. **What challenges will be faced most in case of a stay in Austria? Please rank the three most important factors!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Financial challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Job opportunities for yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Job opportunities for your children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Attitude of local population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Housing conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71. **What are your current plans for the future?**

- [ ] (1) Settle in Austria
- [ ] (2) Return to Chechnya
- [ ] (3) Relocation to another country of European Union
- [ ] (4) Relocation to another part of Europe
- [ ] (5) Relocation to another part of Russia
- [ ] (6) Relocation to another part of the former Soviet Union
- [ ] (7) Relocation to the Middle East
- [ ] (8) Relocation to other country (please specify): _____________________
- [ ] (9) Don't know
72. If the answer is “Return to Chechnya”, please specify when you think you would return? Otherwise jump to question 79

- (1) Very soon
- (2) Soon
- (3) Rather soon
- (4) Sometime
- (5) In a rather long while
- (6) In a long while
- (7) In a very long while

73. With whom would you go back?

- (1) Alone
- (2) Your spouse/partner
- (3) Your child(ren)
- (4) Your father
- (5) Your mother
- (6) Your spouse’s/partner’s father
- (7) Your spouse’s/partner’s mother
- (8) Your siblings
- (9) Your spouse’s/partner’s siblings
- (10) Your grandparents from mother’s side
- (11) Your grandparents from father’s side
- (12) Your spouse’s/partner’s grandparents from mother’s side
- (13) Your spouse’s/partner’s grandparents from father’s side
- (14) Your nephews/nieces
- (15) Your spouse’s/partner’s nephews/nieces
- (16) Others (please specify): ___________________

74. How do you think your situation would be in Chechnya in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very satisfying</td>
<td>Satisfying</td>
<td>Rather satisfying</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Rather unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Very unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security situation</td>
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<td>Health situation</td>
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<td>Educational situation</td>
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<td>Social situation</td>
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<td>Religious situation</td>
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<td>Cultural situation</td>
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</table>

75. Would you like to work in the same sector where you worked before you left Chechnya?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

76. Would you be interested in starting up a small business?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Don’t know
77. How do you assess your experience in that field?
   □ (1) Very experienced
   □ (2) Experienced
   □ (3) Rather experienced
   □ (4) Regular
   □ (5) Rather inexperienced
   □ (6) Inexperienced
   □ (7) Very inexperienced

78. How would the residence in Austria affect a person's chances on the labour market in Chechnya?
   □ (1) Very positively
   □ (2) Positively
   □ (3) Rather positively
   □ (4) No effect
   □ (5) Rather negatively
   □ (6) Negatively
   □ (7) Very negatively
   □ (8) Don't know

79. In your opinion, are there opportunities for a returnee to sustain himself/herself in Chechnya?
   □ (1) Yes
   □ (2) No
   □ (3) Don't know

80. If the answer is “Yes”, please specify: In your opinion, are there many opportunities for a returnee to sustain himself/herself in Chechnya?
   □ (1) Very many
   □ (2) Many
   □ (3) Rather many
   □ (4) Neutral
   □ (5) Rather few
   □ (6) Few
   □ (7) Very few

81. Have you ever made use of return counselling?
   □ (1) Yes
   □ (2) No

82. If the answer is “Yes”, please specify: How satisfied were you with the return counselling?
   □ (1) Very satisfied
   □ (2) Satisfied
   □ (3) Rather satisfied
   □ (4) Regular
   □ (5) Rather unsatisfied
   □ (6) Unsatisfied
   □ (7) Very unsatisfied
PART F – FINALE

83. How do you evaluate your stay in Austria, balancing benefits and costs?

□ (1) Very positively
□ (2) Positively
□ (3) Rather positively
□ (4) Neutral
□ (5) Rather negatively
□ (6) Negatively
□ (7) Very negatively

84. Is there anything that hasn’t been asked but we should take into consideration (health situation, etc.)?