

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

One Year of Ukraine Response

The war in Ukraine entered its second year after the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of the country on 24 February 2022. The humanitarian crisis that followed has swept across the whole region triggering a comprehensive crisis response in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. This response aims to address the humanitarian needs of the nearly 20 million people forced to flee or being displaced by the armed conflict.

According to the most recent [Ukraine Crisis Report 2022-2023](#) published in February 2023, IOM was able to reach nearly 3,000,000 individuals providing inter alia non-food items, shelter, medical transfers, capacity building of health professionals as well as mental health and psychosocial support. More than one year into the conflict, IOM remains dedicated to providing life-saving aid and protection assistance while also scaling up efforts to address longer-term socioeconomic impacts of the war. IOM appealed for a further 1 billion USD to adequately address the humanitarian response, transitional and recovery solutions as well as the regional refugee response.

IOM facilitated the safe transfer of more than 2,200 Ukrainian nationals to 12 countries of the European Economic Area (EEA) under the EU Solidarity Platform, mostly from the Republic of Moldova but also from Estonia, Poland and Romania. Shortly after the war began, Austria was the first country to start transferring Ukrainian nationals and so far, IOM has assisted the voluntary transfer of more than 750 Ukrainian nationals from the Republic of Moldova and Poland. Building on its experience in emergency response and movement management, IOM is supporting the Governments of Austria and affected neighbouring countries to Ukraine by organizing these voluntary transfers in a safe, regular and dignified manner for people most susceptible to vulnerabilities.

For more information on IOM's Ukraine Response, please visit our [dedicated webpage](#) with the latest news and resources.



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ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN & REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

In 2022, IOM Austria assisted more than 1,320 persons

In 2022, a total of 1,323 people were assisted by IOM Austria to return voluntarily to their country of return. Among them, 306 (23%) were female migrants. Despite limited opportunities to return to countries that had high return numbers in past years, such as Ukraine and Afghanistan, the number of assisted migrants was nearly as high as in 2021.

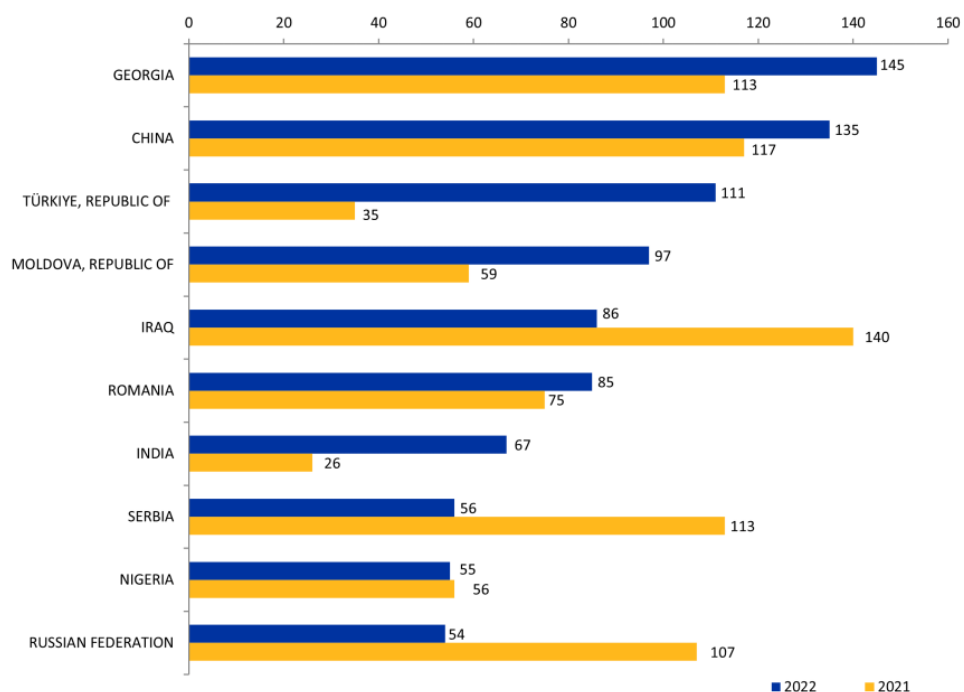
Protecting the dignity and rights of migrants and considering the needs of people in vulnerable situations, such as those affected by human trafficking, unaccompanied minors or persons with health needs, is an essential principle of IOM's work. In total, 9 per cent of all returnees supported by IOM Austria in 2022 were minors and 1.5 per cent were elderly migrants over 65 years of age. 69 of the voluntary returnees had special health needs which were duly addressed when organizing the travel. For the first time, this corresponds to more than five per cent of the overall caseload. 11 migrants were accompanied by a medical escort during their return.

In 2022, Georgia was the country with the highest number of voluntary returnees from Austria supported by IOM (145 persons) with an increase of 28 per cent compared to the previous year, followed by China (135 persons). The third most frequent return country was Türkiye, with 111 assisted persons – this number has more than tripled compared to the previous year.

As part of the RESTART III project*, 61 persons were supported not only in their voluntary return but also in their reintegration in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Somalia, Tunisia and Uzbekistan, inter alia with cash and in-kind assistance. A total of 44 RESTART III participants were male, 16 female and one returnee had a diverse gender identity. Almost half of the migrants with reintegration support (27 persons) returned to Uzbekistan, a country which was added to the RESTART III project only in March 2022. The reintegration ideas of the beneficiaries were manifold and ranged from a grocery store to transportation services and agricultural activities.

More details can be found on our [IOM Austria website](#).

Top 10 Countries of Return 2022



 **Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Interior**

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

RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION IN EUROPE IN 2022

Ever since its foundation in 1951, IOM has been a reliable partner for European governments in the field of resettlement and has been providing support to EU Member States in relocation since 2015.

Resettlement is an instrument and symbol of international solidarity and burden sharing to find a durable solution for refugees who are unable to return to their country of origin for fear of continued persecution and do not have the option to stay in their country of asylum. In 2022, a total of 22,615 beneficiaries were resettled to 18 countries in the European Economic Area (EEA). During this period, IOM continued to support refugees and the use of resettlement as a critical protection measure, in liaison with governments and UNHCR, as well as other partners such as EUAA (European Union Agency for Asylum) and NGOs.

2022 Resettlement statistics

TOP 5 DESTINATION COUNTRIES

SWEDEN	4,980
FRANCE	3,164
NORWAY	3,140

TOP 5 DEPARTURE COUNTRIES

LEBANON	5789
TURKEY	2769
JORDAN	1682
EGYPT	1455
RWANDA	1267

TOP NATIONALITIES

	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	10290
	CONGO, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE	2624
	ERITREA	1285

SEX AND AGE

0 - 17 years old	 4,525	 5,079
18+ years old	4,807	4,557

NOTE: IOM recognizes the diversity of gender identities, however for the purpose of the current report a binary classification is used to match the available records.

In addition to resettlement activities, IOM supports EU Member States in intra-EU relocation, in particular from those countries at the external borders. The new Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM) was set up after 21 EU Member States and associated countries signed the Declaration on Solidarity in June 2022. Through the continued responsibility sharing reinforced by the VSM in addition to ongoing EU-funded actions, pressure on the reception and asylum systems of the five first-line countries of migrant arrivals, Italy, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, and Malta, is set to be further alleviated. IOM's support included the implementation of pre-migration health activities, pre-departure orientation sessions, movement management, accommodation (in Greece) and internal transfers (e.g. in Italy and Spain).

2022 Relocation statistics

TOP DESTINATION COUNTRIES

GERMANY	216
FRANCE	184
PORTUGAL	160



TOP DEPARTURE COUNTRIES

GREECE	394
ITALY	254
CYPRUS	48
MALTA	14

TOP NATIONALITIES

	AFGHANISTAN	143
	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	71
	CAMEROON	66

SEX AND AGE

18+ years old	 122	 351
0 - 17 years old	86	151

NOTE: IOM recognizes the diversity of gender identities, however for the purpose of the current report a binary classification is used to match the available records.

For more information on resettlement, relocation and complimentary pathways, please visit our [dedicated webpage](#) with the latest news and resources.

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

IOM Austria is delighted to announce that after the successful [WIR IV](#) closing events in December 2022 and January 2023 in Vienna and Graz, the preparation of the new workshop series for 2023 is under way.

The closing events

In addition to a presentation of the past year's activities and short films, the closing events offered the audience insights in the theoretical-pedagogical approach behind the media workshops, namely the "pedagogy of the oppressed" according to Paulo Freire. The importance of being aware of one's own roots to construct one's identity and future was also emphasized.

„Be the person you want to be!“

Dr. Ursula Struppe,

MA 17, Integration and Diversity Unit of the City of Vienna

The peers and project participants shared their learning and voiced their ideas and what matters to them, such as on experiences of discrimination and what they wish from society.

„I am now able to accept other's opinions.“
a workshop participant

The events were rounded off by interactive exercises with the audience. In small groups, everybody was encouraged to discuss their backgrounds and what is important to them in life.



Project participants (above) and audience (below) at the closing event in Graz. ©IOM



Empowering multipliers for an enhanced peer-to-peer approach

In February 2023, our new multipliers were introduced to the project. Teenagers and young adults with a migrant background participated in our one-day training "Designing and Moderating Workshops", where they learned practical skills on how to conceptualize and implement workshops on topics of social inclusion.

Accompanied by a mentor, they will hold their own two-hour workshops in schools in the coming months. Through this peer-approach, our multipliers act as role models and inspire other adolescents to voice their concerns for society.

You can also find the WIR project on [Instagram](#).

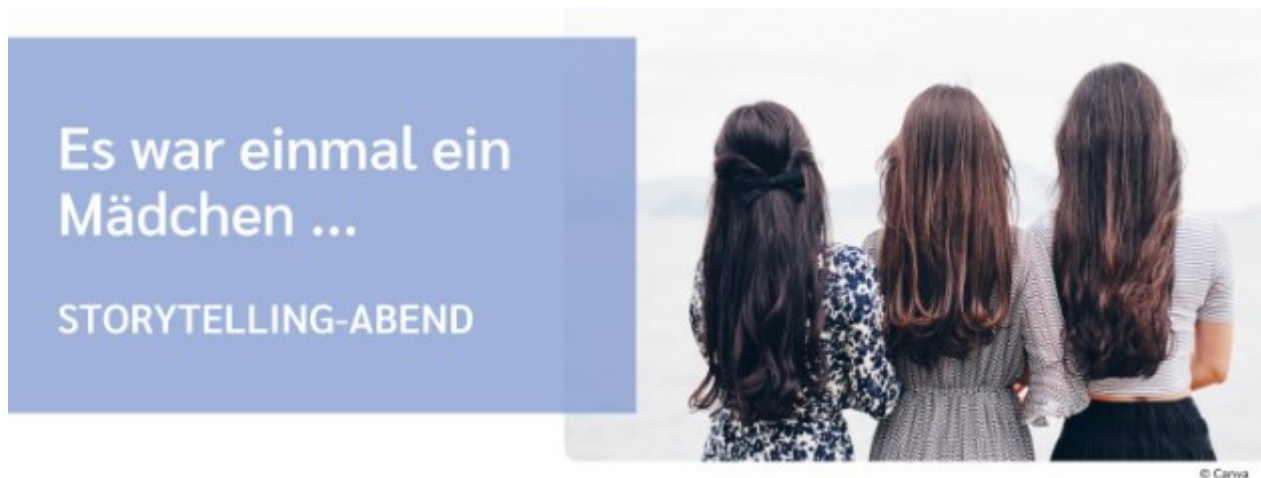


Newly enrolled multipliers reflect on their strengths during the multipliers training in Vienna. ©IOM

Opening rooms for untold stories

Prompted by the positive resonance of the first story-telling evening in July 2022 as well as the enthusiasm of the audience for interactive elements and sharing space at the closing events, the WIR IV project team organized a second story-telling evening for migrant girls and women of all generations on 10 March 2023.

Two days after International Women's Day, twenty women participated in the event and told stories about their past, their dreams and their life journeys. They were offered a space to talk about topics that don't get to be touched upon in the busy everyday life, and daughters seized the opportunity to ask "difficult" questions. It was an inspiring evening that sparked great conversations. Two generations were able to get to know each other better and to connect on a different level, and hopefully to grow understanding for each other.



This event also allowed to promote the workshop series which will start in May 2023 by providing an impression of our approach as well as by answering questions on the project and the upcoming workshops.

If you are impatiently waiting for the short films of the year 2022, you will be glad to hear that they will be online soon. Until then, you can get a first impression on our [Instagram channel](#). Here we also provide more information about the workshop series starting in May. For more information, please contact: integrationvienna@iom.int



The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation, contributes funding to our work in Tunisia, where IOM provides shelters, protection, and assistance to vulnerable migrants in the framework of the IOM Tunisia Appeal 2021-2024. The program's goal is to urgently respond to the emergency needs of migrants in need by reducing acute vulnerabilities and improving resilience considering the increased surge of migrant caseload and mounting socio-economic challenges in Tunisia.

Vulnerable migrants benefit from safe spaces, protection, and access to critical services

Starting in February 2022, the Austrian contribution was used to provide accommodation to men, women, boys and girls in shelters in Zarzis, Medenine and Tataouine. Overall, IOM provided medical assistance to 2,915 vulnerable migrants, including life-saving medications for migrants who were rescued at sea in Zarzis and who had injuries, such as burns from exposure to a combination of fuel and sunlight while aboard the boat. IOM also contributed to essential assistance such as access to medical consultations for migrants, access to the COVID-19 vaccination and PCR tests. To reach those with limited access to health services, a two-day health caravan in the Medenine governorate was organized to provide medical consultations to vulnerable communities, including migrants. A total of 765 consultations were conducted including ophthalmology, endocrinology, gynaecology, psychiatry, and paediatrics, as well as screenings for hypertension, diabetes and breast cancer. Furthermore, the IOM team provided more than 200 migrants with mental health and psychological well-being support.

As people on the move often face challenges in proving their legal identity because documentation is often lost or destroyed during the migration process, or births during the journey or in the country of destination were not immediately registered, IOM Tunisia provides legal aid for migrants in need. In 2022, most of the almost 100 cases concerned access to legal residency and regularization processes pertaining to personal and civil status law. IOM also worked on cases of children's rights, protection of migrants' rights in the framework of criminal proceedings, providing legal counsel for migrants' association and societies, and social and labour law procedures.

Medium term needs are met to facilitate transition from emergency shelter and assistance to sustainable solutions

Recognizing quality education is a human right, IOM Tunisia supported 21 children living in IOM-run shelters in Medenine through the provision of uniforms, stationary and school supplies, thus facilitating their access to education and promoting learning. Two workshops for parents were held to foster better understanding on the importance of schooling and to help them navigate the Tunisian education system.

IOM Tunisia also managed family reunification cases, providing direct support, legal guidance, and stakeholder coordination to facilitate reunification of vulnerable migrants with close relatives in another country. Such crucial legal assistance contributes to efforts of expanding accessibility to legal pathways to regular migration. As another means for facilitating sustainable solutions, IOM Tunisia also supported 66 migrants who opted for returning to their country of origin. Assistance to their safe and dignified return included pre-departure support and counselling, escort for unaccompanied children and migrants with health needs, as well as post-arrival and socio-economic reintegration assistance in their countries of origin.



Health caravan in the Medenine governorate. © IOM

With funding from

 **Austrian
Development
Cooperation**

Data collection on displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria

With the Temporary Protection Directive, the European Union introduced a regime that grants those who fled Ukraine after the Russian invasion started on 24 February 2022 a residence permit, as well as access to social benefits, education, employment and healthcare. By December 2022, there were 87,570 displaced persons from Ukraine with temporary protection status in Austria.

The system of basic care (*Grundversorgung*) provides immediate support and housing. Unlike asylum seekers, for whom the system was originally established, the majority of displaced persons from Ukraine lives in private accommodation. This presents particular challenges and potential vulnerabilities. In January 2023, IOM Austria in collaboration with the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Integration Fund conducted a survey among displaced persons from Ukraine residing in Austria. The objective of this non-representative survey with 552 respondents was to identify risk factors of experiencing violence, exploitation, or abuse when accommodated in private versus public housing. Currently the results are being analyzed and a report will be drafted.

We will keep you posted on the expected publication date.



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European Migration Network (EMN):

New EMN Inform under the lead of EMN Austria

In February, the EMN published a [new Inform](#) on the topic of prospects for displaced persons in non-EU first reception and transit countries. Creating prospects for displaced populations is high on the policy-making agenda of most EMN Member Countries. The Inform explores the national strategies and how these are implemented in EU and international frameworks.



Furthermore, good-practices are identified and new opportunities to further strengthen and foster (cross border) partnerships are analyzed. EMN Austria has been leading the Advisory Group for this publication, and lessons-learned from last year's [Austrian National EMN Conference 2022](#) on the same topic were incorporated in the development of this publication.



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