

# International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

Country Office for Austria



We hope that this will find you and your colleagues, families and loved ones in good health amid this pandemic. Our newsletter will provide you an insight into the work of IOM in Austria and beyond, as this issue highlights some works supported by Austria IOM is doing in Libya as well as IOM's efforts in connection with ethical recruitment. We wish you an interesting read!

## Austrian Ministry joins the Global Policy Network on Recruitment

Cross-border recruitment is a vital part of facilitating international labour mobility. When implemented in a fair and transparent manner, it contributes to safe and orderly labour migration, which benefits all involved. However, when international standards are not adhered to, the risks for migrant workers can be severe. Fraudulent and unethical behaviour by unscrupulous labour recruiters can lead to human trafficking and forced labour.

In order to protect the rights of migrant workers, IOM around the world partners with governments, civil society and the private sector to improve ethical recruitment practices. IOM's flagship initiative [IRIS: Ethical Recruitment](#) unites these efforts and provides support to IOM Member States. Since December 2020, IRIS supports the new [Global Policy Network on Recruitment](#), a Member State-led collaboration to bring together senior policy makers, regulators and practitioners to address challenges, identify solutions and highlight promising practices to strengthen recruitment regulation and migrant worker protection. Especially in light of the current pandemic, the time to promote ethical recruitment is now and many important steps are being taken by civil society organizations, home and host governments, and other stakeholders.

In Austria, IOM is working to put ethical recruitment and protection of migrant workers in supply chains on the policymaking agenda. Following presentations on IRIS and the Global Policy Network to relevant federal ministries earlier this year, we are delighted to announce that the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection joined the Global Policy Network on Recruitment in May 2021. We are looking forward to an interesting and fruitful exchange! Through quarterly meetings of thematic working groups on topics such as licensing and oversight of labour recruiters, members will have an opportunity to learn from peers and counterparts from around the world, share perspectives, and co-develop strategies and solutions that can be tested in home jurisdictions.

*„The Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection welcomes the establishment of the Global Policy Network for Recruitment. Through a best-practice approach and dialogue on an international scale, we hope to gain knowledge about other countries' regulatory structures in order to learn from each other's experiences and find ways to harmonize regulation within a wide global framework.“ July 2021*

For more info, please see the [FAQs](#) and feel free to contact us at [IOMvienna@iom.int](mailto:IOMvienna@iom.int).

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## Capacity building for a harmonized approach towards Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Austria

Austria has a long tradition in assisting migrants with their voluntary return and reintegration. For many years, support in the form of return counselling, return preparation, organization of the return travel, as well as reintegration assistance after arrival in the country of origin has been provided to migrants in need.



The provision of voluntary return and reintegration assistance to migrants in Austria takes place in a complex environment and usually requires the coordinated effort of a considerable number of different stakeholders. The well-established return system in Austria has recently undergone significant changes. In 2020, the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services has been established and took over responsibility for return counselling in 2021. Together with the increasing complexity of voluntary returns, these structural changes reinforce the need for a harmonized approach towards processes and standards in the field of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in Austria.

With the project [RESTART III](#)\*, IOM Austria aims to contribute to a nationwide and unified high-quality return counselling by making sure that return counsellors have access to quality management tools such as guidelines and targeted trainings on processes and standards in the field of AVRR. Besides return counsellors, AVRR trainings by IOM are also offered to other actors in the field such as the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum or professionals of the Youth Welfare or the health care system.

### First training sessions in May and June 2021

In May and June of this year, the first trainings sessions for return counsellors working in different Austrian provinces took place. The trainings provide practical and theoretical knowledge on AVRR in general and information on the Austrian return system in particular. Topics such as the legal framework for voluntary return in Austria and the European Union, the organization of the return, the Authorities (and their processes) involved in facilitating voluntary return, as well as reintegration in the country of return are discussed with return counsellors during the training sessions. Furthermore, the trainings emphasize on return counselling in practice. Participants are invited to reflect on their role as counsellors, the challenges arising in different counselling settings and on characteristics of good communication. The team of trainers consists of experts from IOM Austria, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum as well as Caritas Austria. During the first training sessions, the return counsellors' discussions reaffirmed that – due to a wide variety of duties and responsibilities as well as difficult situations in counselling – their day-to-day work can be quite challenging. Hence, capacity building opportunities such as the IOM trainings on AVRR are highly valued.

In order to address the needs of migrants in situations of vulnerability (e.g. unaccompanied or separated minors, persons with health needs) in the best possible way, return counsellors will receive further targeted training on the voluntary return of persons in vulnerable situations.



*Orientation before return is key. Return counselling supports migrants in the preparation of their voluntary return and forms an integral part of Austria's return system.*

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For more information on AVRR from Austria, please visit our [website](#) and feel free to contact our AVRR Unit: [avrr.vienna@iom.int](mailto:avrr.vienna@iom.int)

*\*The project RESTART III - Support for the Austrian Return System and the Reintegration of Voluntary Returnees in Afghanistan is implemented by IOM Austria from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022 and co-financed by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and the European Union.*



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## IOM Libya supports the national COVID-19 response and vaccine campaign

For Libya's fragile and under-resourced health care system, which in 2020 suffered from attacks against health infrastructure, frequent fuel shortages and electricity outages, continued mobility restrictions and high unemployment create an environment where migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to rely on humanitarian community health partners for service delivery and referral to private health care facilities. COVID-19 continues to aggravate the already complicated situation of vulnerable migrants and IDPs in Libya, many of whom are deeply affected by the unstable security situation without access to basic essential services and little to no access to health care.

IOM Libya has been working closely with Libyan health authorities since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 to respond to the unmet health needs of migrants, internally displaced persons and host communities in Libya. With support of the Austrian Development Agency, the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation, to the [IOM Libya COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan 2021](#), IOM will sustain ongoing efforts to facilitate improved access to overall health services for migrants in Libya and support Libyan authorities to plan and roll out a national vaccination campaign focused on promoting equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine for all persons in Libya.

Specifically, the new 12-month project will 1) continue to address migrant health needs in detention centres, specifically working to reduce infection spread by providing hygiene kits and facilitating increased awareness among migrants and other vulnerable populations on methods of transmission and prevention; 2) enhance the capacity of Libyan authorities at six detention centres and six Points of Entry to respond to COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks; 3) support of national-level efforts by mapping mobile migrant populations to Libyan authorities and provide recommendations to inform about the vaccination campaign, training Ministry of Health and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) personnel on campaign implementation and providing Libyan authorities with cold chain equipment to support the vaccination campaign.

In this project, IOM will draw on its large network of partners to connect migrant community leaders with the municipal NCDC campaign focal points at local level. It is critical that migrants are informed and neither afraid of the vaccination process or of presenting at health facilities. IOM will conduct information, risk communications, community engagement and awareness-raising activities in concert with NCDC and community leaders to enable migrants to access information and encourage them to present on vaccination day at health facilities.

## Workshops 2021 in Vienna and Graz under the project WIR III

After preparation, networking and outreach, this year's WIR workshop series took place in Vienna and, for the first time, in Graz. The aim of the project [WIR III – Workshops on Integration and Encounters](#) is to reach girls and young women with different migration backgrounds and to strengthen them in regards to their multiple identities and social participation.

14 girls and young women in Vienna and 6 girls and young women in Graz took part in vivid discussions on the topics of identity, belonging, home and experiences of discrimination, as well as expectations towards (migrant) women. To enhance their opportunities for voicing their thoughts and concerns, participants were enabled to use their creativity to prepare one short film per workshop group. For this, they experimented with camera work, sound recording and the development of storyboards with the support of media experts. Even anime elements can be expected in this year's short films! The participants' active involvement throughout the workshops demonstrates the valuable approach of the project while addressing important questions on social inclusion and integration. In September 2021, the workshop groups will meet again to discuss the finalization of their media products and in November 2021, the girls and young women will have the opportunity to present



WIR III Workshop participants. © IOM

their short films and to engage in a panel discussion in an open closing event. In addition to these activities, a workshop day is planned for boys and young men.

Last year's short film as well as the closing event's recording can be accessed here [WIR SIND VIELE: Kurzfilm „Wir“ | OKTO](#) and here [WIR SIND VIELE: Abschlussevent | OKTO](#).

You can also follow the WIR III Project on [Instagram](#).

## Two New EMN Austria Publications plus Launch Event

“Accurate, timely, interoperable? Data management in the asylum procedure” focuses on the types of data that are collected on asylum seekers in Austria and how the data are managed. The study describes recent developments and trends relating to data management and discusses challenges and good practices that have emerged in Austria in the area of data collection and management.

[Country Report Austria \(German\)](#) | [Country Report Austria \(English\)](#) | Order a hard copy [here](#)

“Long-term irregular staying migrants in Austria. Practices and challenges” sheds a light on the phenomenon of long-term irregular staying persons in Austria. Although the topic of irregular migration recurs in political and media debates, Austrian policymakers have only selectively focused on the issue. The report examines the approaches taken by the responsible authorities to avoid and mitigate situations of irregularity and highlights the social consequences for concerned third-country nationals. In addition, the measures taken for irregular staying persons in relation to the COVID-19-pandemic are analyzed.

To mark the publication, EMN Austria organized an expert discussion on 28 June 2021. The event focused on current approaches to ending irregular residence, looking into return and regularization as two possible options. In addition to the Austrian study results, key study findings from other EU Member States were presented. Furthermore, EMN Sweden shed a light on the Swedish path towards regularization. Discussants reflected on whether return and regularization are the only ways to end an irregular stay. More information on the event can be found [here](#).

[Country Report Austria \(German\)](#) | [Country Report Austria \(English\)](#) | Order a hard copy [here](#)



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

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