

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 neighboring countries. We wish you an interesting read!

UKRAINE

Starting on 24 February 2022, the war in Ukraine triggered an unprecedented humanitarian crisis across all regions of the country. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has mobilized teams and boosted capacity in Ukraine and neighboring countries to respond to the growing humanitarian needs of Ukrainians forced to flee the country, those internally displaced, and stranded third-country nationals.

IOM is committed to stay and deliver, and to help those in need.

Cash and financial support, transportation, food, shelter, and hygiene items are among the most pressing needs for displaced people. Access to medicines and health services remains the second most pressing need for both those displaced, and those staying at their places of residence.

Until 1 April 2022, almost 7.1 million people have been displaced within Ukraine as a direct result of the war, according to an [IOM study](#). More than 4.5 million people have crossed into neighboring countries, including over 213,000 third-country nationals. The humanitarian needs are growing by the minute.

On 19 March 2022, the first refugees from Ukraine arrived in Austria from Moldova through a humanitarian admission program, as part of the European Union Solidarity Platform. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and IOM worked closely with the authorities of both Moldova and Austria, as well as the European Commission, to facilitate the transfers.

Austria was the first EU country to implement a reception program under the EU Solidarity Platform. "We are extremely grateful to the Austrian government for setting up this airlift for people who have fled Ukraine so quickly," said Marian Benbow Pfisterer, Head of IOM Austria.

For more information on IOM's Ukraine Response please visit our dedicated webpage with the latest news and resources, including [IOM hotlines](#) in Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Moldova, Lithuania and Slovakia to support persons affected by the war in Ukraine and in different countries: iom.int/ukraine-iom-response-2022

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ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN & REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

In 2021, IOM Austria assisted more than 1,350 voluntary returnees

In 2021, IOM Austria assisted a total of 1,358 migrants to voluntarily return to their countries of origin. Given the existing pandemic-related travel restrictions and taking into account changed responsibilities within the Austrian AVRR system, this figure, although lower than in previous years, represents a remarkable result.

In 2021, as in the period from 2015 to 2019, Iraq was the country with the highest number of voluntary returnees from Austria (140 persons assisted by IOM), followed by China (117 persons). The third most frequent return countries were Serbia and Georgia (with 113 assisted persons each). 23 per cent of the assisted people were female, seven per cent were minors.

The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) assumed responsibility for return counselling in 2021. In close cooperation with the BBU GmbH, the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, IOM continues to support migrants worldwide in their voluntary return and pays particular attention to those persons who are in vulnerable situations. In 2021, a total of 63 voluntary returnees assisted by IOM Austria had special health needs that had to be considered when organizing the return. This corresponds to an increase of 1.3 per cent to 4.6 per cent compared to 2020.



As part of the [RESTART III](#) project, 67 persons were assisted not only in their voluntary return but also in their reintegration in Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Somalia and Tunisia, *inter alia* with cash and in-kind assistance. However, the political changes in Afghanistan in August 2021 led to the global suspension of Assisted Voluntary Return to that country.

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



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RESTART III is co-financed by the
Austrian Ministry of the Interior and
the European Union.

LAUNCH OF NEW IOM-BBU COOPERATION HOTLINE



In March 2022, the new IOM-BBU cooperation hotline was officially launched. The aim of the hotline is to provide prompt, uncomplicated and high-quality support for all questions relating to voluntary return from Austria. This includes questions regarding general return modalities and routings, COVID-19 entry requirements, carry-on of additional or special luggage and the handling of vulnerabilities identified during the voluntary return counselling.

The hotline is implemented in the framework of the [RESTART III](#) project, which is funded by the European Union and the Austrian Ministry of the Interior.

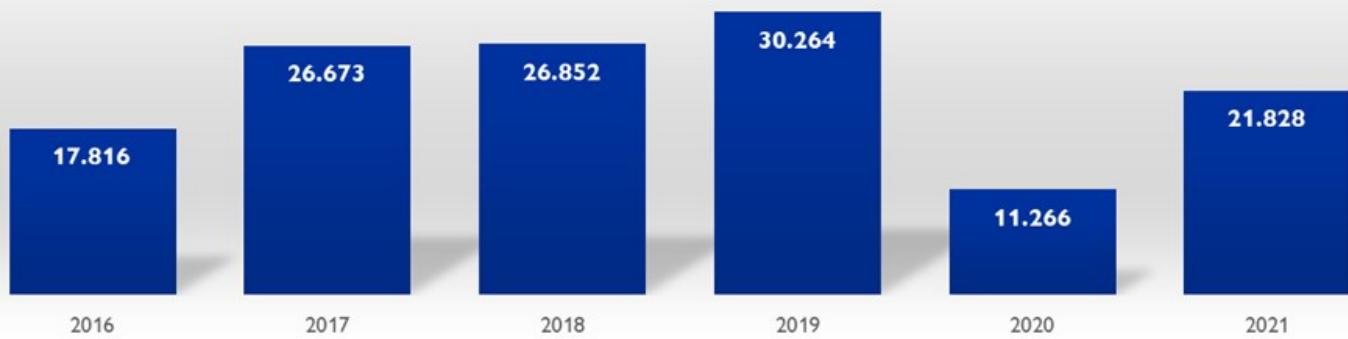
For any further background information, please refer to iomviennaoperations@iom.int or avrr.vienna@iom.int.

RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION IN EUROPE IN 2021

Since 1951, IOM has played a vital role in resettlement by providing a range of supporting activities to receiving states. The aim is to ensure that beneficiaries are resettled in a safe and dignified manner. IOM's resettlement support includes case processing, pre-migration health activities, movement management and pre-departure/post-arrival integration support. IOM works closely with governments, UNHCR as well as other partners such as the European Union Agency of Asylum (EUAA) and NGOs to assist persons in need of international protection.

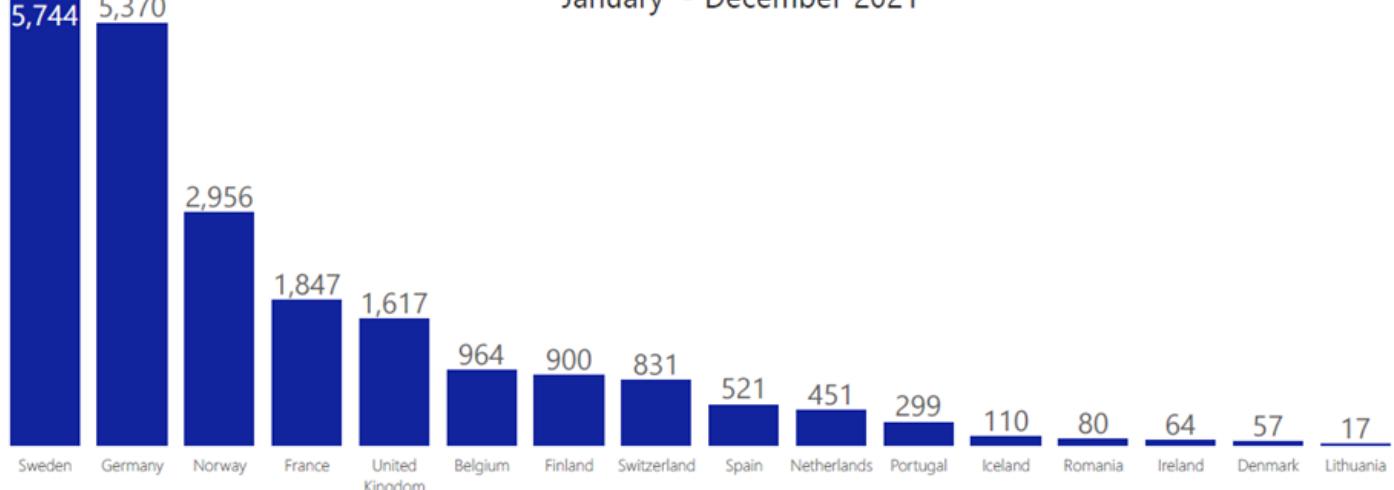
While 2020 was heavily impacted by COVID-19 travel restrictions, 2021 saw the resettlement/humanitarian admission of 21,828 persons in Europe, with the top 3 receiving countries being Sweden, Germany and Norway. This included IOM's contribution to providing safe pathways for 785 Afghan nationals who had been forcibly displaced to neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, such as Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Resettlement and humanitarian admission to the EEA
Beneficiaries supported by IOM (2014-2021)



In addition to resettlement, 2,853 beneficiaries were relocated from Greece, Italy and Malta to 16 European countries, the top 3 receiving countries being Germany, France and Portugal. Relocation represents an important expression of solidarity. Through this tool, states in Europe can help one another to cope with the pressure on their asylum systems by relocating persons in need of international protection who have requested asylum. IOM worked closely with involved governments and other partners such as UNHCR, UNICEF and EUAA to facilitate the relocation of beneficiaries.

Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions to the EEA
January - December 2021



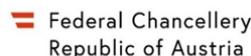
INTEGRATION UNIT: NEW WORKSHOPS FOR YOUTH IN AUSTRIA

IOM Austria is delighted to announce that the implementation of the project WIR IV has started in January 2022 and will last for 24 months. WIR IV continues the focus of previous WIR projects and will discuss topics such as discrimination experiences, identity and belonging as well as gender roles and empowerment with adolescents and young adults with a migration background.

The team is looking forward to the first workshops in Vienna and Graz, which will allow participating youth to express their thoughts in a creative way. We are also very much looking forward to trying out new formats!

The workshop curriculum is currently being updated and will build upon lessons learned from previous years. Details on upcoming workshops are available on our website here: [WIR IV](#). In the project's first stakeholder meeting in early April, our team will facilitate dialogue and knowledge transfer between migrant communities, youth workers and radicalization prevention actors. The focus lies on the needs of young people with different migrant biographies, taking into account the current world's events and their impact on youth.

The project WIR IV was also represented at International Women's Day celebration at Westfield Donauzentrum Wien: At the information booth, we answered questions by visitors and provided information about IOM's activities in Austria. Among others, we discussed challenges and opportunities for migrant youth and migrant women in Austria, and made young visitors acquainted with the project's offer.



This project is funded by the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria.



IOM Staff and a young visitor at Donauzentrum Wien.
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ASYL-TRAIN II: LAUNCH OF A NEW TRAINING FORMAT

The workshops on specific regions were developed in 2021 based on feedback from participants of the intercultural competency trainings, which provide space for self-reflection on the role of one's own cultural context in (professional) interactions. The workshops on specific regions build on this and address characteristics and common practices of specific regions. The workshops do not offer generally valid "instructions for action" nor are they similar to country-of-origin work by specialized institutions. The workshops rather represent an expansion of knowledge about specific regions and are therefore one component of intercultural competence.

Together with experts on the selected regions, Somalia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, the [Asyl-Train](#) team conducted two of these new workshops in February and March 2022 for employees of the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum. The workshops started with a brief overview of intercultural competences, addressing topics such as the concept of "culture", diversity or the reflection of stereotypes and prejudices. The experts – Maynat Kurbanova for the Chechen Republic/Russian Federation and Sicido Mekonen for Somalia – then presented general facts and historical developments. The workshops culminated in a discussion in the format of a talk show between the IOM moderator and the expert. Topics such as language use and communication practices, social and family structures, or taboos were discussed. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions. The first two workshops were met with a very positive response from the participants.



View of Somalia during an IOM mission.
© IOM



This project is co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

AUSTRIAN NATIONAL EMN CONFERENCE 2022 & WORKSHOP

On 17 March 2022, IOM Austria as the National Contact Point in the European Migration Network (EMN) organized the [Austrian National EMN Conference 2022](#) on the topic of “Innovative Solutions to Create Sustainable Perspectives for Displaced Populations”. More than 120 participants from Austria and around the world participated in the hybrid conference. It provided the opportunity to critically reflect on the situation of displaced populations in first reception countries, the challenges of integration, and the potential drivers to stay or migrate further. Additionally, existing and emerging innovative solutions to provide sustainable perspectives were showcased. Distinguished speakers from 12 different countries shared their expertise with the aim to contribute to a differentiated understanding on how sustainable perspectives can be created.



On the following day, building on the results of the conference, EMN Austria organized a workshop. The workshop focused on practical implementation of innovative solutions for displaced populations in three important host countries, namely Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey. A selected group of more than 30 stakeholders from EU Member States, international organizations, civil society, and academia received insights into the needs of displaced populations in these countries. Furthermore, the participants discussed success factors for durable solutions addressing those needs.

More information on the conference and the workshop can be found [here](#).

EU MIGRATION TALKS & NEW PUBLICATION: INTEGRATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN AUSTRIA



IOM Austria marked International Women's Day 2022 with an event dedicated to the integration of migrant women. During the event, the latest [study](#) of EMN Austria on the topic of “Integration of Migrant Women in Austria: Policies and Measures” was presented. Representatives from relevant national and local authorities, civil society organizations, international organizations and academia came together in a virtual format to discuss pressing issues. These included the lack of relevant data, the need to individually support migrant women and their families, and the integration of women and children fleeing the Ukrainian conflict. The detailed program and individual presentations can be found [here](#).

Based on data and statistics, the new EMN study identifies key challenges and opportunities for the integration of migrant women in Austria. The study furthermore analyses whether and to what extent the particular situation of migrant women is taken into consideration in national integration policies and measures. One focus is on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Further publications of EMN Austria can be found under [www.emn.at](#).



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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.