



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS
Directorate C: Migration and Protection
Unit C1 : Irregular Migration and Return Policy

MIGRAPOL

European Migration Network

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EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

SPECIFICATIONS FOR

EMN ANNUAL REPORT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM 2017

NATIONAL REPORT PART 2

Final version: November 2017

Subject: These specifications provide guidance for EMN NCPs to complete their Annual Report on Migration and Asylum: National Report (Part 2) for the reference year 2017. While this part of the Report is primarily targeted at an EMN NCPs national audience, the contributions will be used to update the EMN Country Fact Sheets and to inform the production of EMN Informs on key aspects of Asylum and Migration Policy in 2017.

I. Introduction

In accordance with Article 9(1) of Council Decision 2008/381/EC establishing the EMN, each EMN NCP is required to provide a Report describing the migration and asylum situation in the (Member) State, which shall include policy developments and statistical data.

I.1 Scope of the EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017

The EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017 will cover the period 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2017.

I.2 Structure

To this aim, these common specifications are for the production of the EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017. To meet the requirements of both COM and the Member States, in terms of both information requirements and timeliness, the reporting process for 2017 has again been split into two separate activities:

- The National Report (Part 1) and Statistics Annex
- The National Report (Part 2)

The National Report (Part 1) will contribute as fully as possible to the factual reporting for the Commission's Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in 2017. To avoid duplication of work, the content of this National Report will again be used by EASO to inform its Annual Report on the situation of asylum in the EU. The specifications for this Report have been detailed in a separate document.

For the National Reports (Part 2), the structure allows for an output primarily intended for each EMN NCP's national audience and as such remains flexible for EMN NCPs to tailor their inputs to this end. Thus, the template has been developed with the aim of providing structural guidance in the form of **main chapter headings**, with flexibility for each EMN NCP to add their own sub-headings as relevant in the national context but at the same time to allow for comparability on specific key themes to support policymakers and other parties interested to obtain a comparative overview.

The template to follow for the production of this part of the National Report is given below. The Report should begin with an **Executive Summary**, summarising the key findings of the National Report, and specifically targeting your national audience.

Section 1 is to introduce the report, setting out the approach / method followed and definitions used.

Section 2 asks for an overview of asylum and migration policy developments, to set a general context for the developments to be described in more detail later in the Report and should continue to provide an overview of the general political developments, as well as main policy and legislative debates, broader developments in asylum and migration, plus institutional developments.

Sections 3-9 require a description of specific developments in the main areas of asylum and migration, organised in seven headings:

Executive Summary

1. **INTRODUCTION**
2. **CONTEXT FOR ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY DEVELOPMENTS**
3. **LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY**
4. **INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM**
5. **UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS**

6. **INTEGRATION**
7. **IRREGULAR MIGRATION**
8. **RETURN**
9. **ACTIONS AGAINST SMUGGLING IN HUMAN BEINGS**
10. **MAXIMISING DEVELOPMENT IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY**

In addition to the main chapter headings, four optional annexes are included. These are:

OPTIONAL: ANNEXES

Annex A: Methodology and Definitions

Annex B: Implementation of EU Legislation

Annex C: National Statistics

Annex D: Bibliography/References/Sources

The chapter headings may be sub-divided into more specific, thematic, topics / sub-sections according to national needs. EMN NCPs may, where relevant, wish to include a general context section setting out recent development as an introduction / rationale for the main policies, legislative developments, specific debates etc. to be included for the reference year 2017.

I.3 Outputs

The completed National Reports (Part 2) corresponding to these Specifications will be used, along with relevant information from the National Reports (Part 1) to update the EMN Country Fact Sheets in 2018 and to publish EMN informs on asylum and migration policy developments in 2018. In agreement with EMN NCPs they will also be published on the EMN website.

I.4 Timetable

In order to meet the deadline required for the publication of the Commission's Annual Report and associated EMN outputs, it is **very important** to respect the timescale given in these specifications.

The National Report (Part 2), addressing all sections, covering also the full period January to December 2017, should be submitted by **30th April 2018**.

All completed deliverable shall be sent to both Magnus Ovilius (magnus.ovilius@ec.europa.eu) plus the EMN Service Provider. The full timetable for the delivery of the various reports is set out below:

- The submission date for the **National Report (Part 1)** is **15th February 2018**.
- The submission date for the **Statistics Annex** is **30th April 2018**.
- The submission date for the **National Report (Part 2)** is **30th April 2018**.
- Publication date of the **EMN Annual report on Migration and Asylum 2017**: **May 2018**
- Publication date of the **Country Factsheets**: **July 2018 (TBC)**

EMN ANNUAL REPORT 2017 ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

(PART 2)

IN [(CYPRUS)]

Executive Summary

In 2017 there has been a significant increase in the applications for international protection submitted before the Cypriot Authorities. Furthermore, the increasing trend in applications submitted by Syrian nationals because of the deteriorating situation in Syria, continued (see detailed statistics in introduction).

Due to the increase pressure in the CY asylum system, on 28 February 2018, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Cyprus, signed an amendment of the EASO Special Support Plan, which provides for further tailor-made support to Cyprus until 31 January 2018. Besides continuing the implementation of the initial support measures, new activities on backlog management and contingency measures have been added.

1. INTRODUCTION

The refugee crisis has inevitably affected Cyprus, due to its geographical proximity to the Middle East Region.

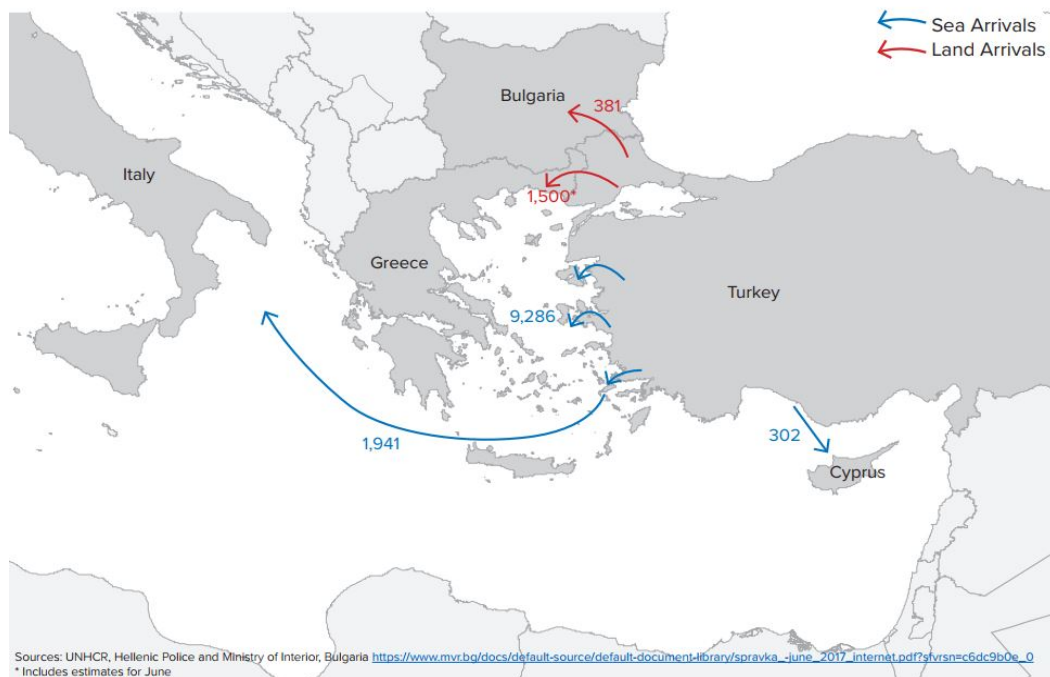
Comparative table of applications for international protection pending and new applications submitted before the Asylum Service in 2016 and in 2017:

Pending Applications 2016	Pending Applications 2017
1369 cases (1827 persons)	3197 cases (3843 persons)
Applications 2016	Applications 2017
3906 cases (4582 persons)	2342 cases (2936 persons)

Statistical data concerning applications for international protection by Syrian nationals

In the last few years there has been an increasing trend in applications for international protection submitted by Syrian nationals because of the deteriorating situation in Syria. In addition, the latest arrivals by boat from Turkey, have confirmed the existence of a new route between Turkey and Cyprus:

LAND AND SEA CROSSINGS FROM TURKEY - JAN TO JUN 2017



Syrians are now choosing Cyprus as their final destination, since they have relatives already residing in the island under the status of applicant or beneficiary of international protection.

Detailed statistics per year concerning Syrian applicants/beneficiaries:

Applications for international protection

YEAR	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
CASES	3906	2342	1730	1373	994	1394	1611
PERSONS	4582	2936	2253	1728	1246	1620	1770

Refugee Status

YEAR	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
CASES	142	118	116	36	19	35	28
PERSONS	224	204	200	53	33	80	53

Subsidiary Protection Status

YEAR	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
CASES	680	692	981	582	80	9	1
PERSONS	1026	1091	1384	941	124	10	1

Regarding the backlog clearance, the Cyprus asylum system is currently supported by additional staff. More specifically, for a period of 2 years starting from January 2017 until the end of December 2018, 4 additional caseworkers have been working at the Asylum Service. These persons are able to contribute significantly to the examination of cases by the Asylum Service. Moreover, in the framework of the EASO Special Support Plan to Cyprus, EASO support is very important for reducing the backlog. EASO has deployed experts, specialized in backlog management, for supporting the Asylum Service workforce.

For Cypriot Authorities the significant fluctuation in number of asylum applications is considered as an influx of applications for international protection (taking into consideration the size and the population of the country).

The Cypriot Authorities are currently in the process of preparing an indicative timetable for reducing the backlog. It should, however, be taken into consideration that the trend of applications is not a predictable factor.

Following a request from Cyprus, EASO decided to extend the mandate of the current Support Plan into new important areas, which would allow EASO to provide operational support. As part of the agreement, EASO has deployed 8 experts specialised in backlog management. EASO has also provided support in the operation of the Reception and Accommodation Centre for Applicants for International Protection in Kofinou. As a measure of contingency planning, EASO also stands ready to provide operational assistance to Cyprus in the field of registration, screening and reception of persons requesting international protection in case of high number of arrivals.

Furthermore, as it has already been mentioned, an EU funded AMIF project has co-financed in year 2017, the employment of experts which assisted the Asylum Service to examine the applications of persons in need of international protection in order to clear the backlog on pending applications.

With the help of AMIF, there has also been continuous support on the operational capacity of the Kofinou Open Reception Centre, while more efforts are being made in order to increase and improve reception capacity, in particular towards vulnerable groups.

Concerning relocation, in 2017, 78 persons were relocated from Greece and Italy. More specifically, 37 persons were relocated from Italy and 41 persons were relocated from Greece.

With regards to resettlement, the Asylum Service was informed, in 2017, by UNHCR in Ankara that the Turkish Migration authorities and mainly the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, did not consent to the resettlement of a Syrian family of six persons to Cyprus for political reasons. Based on this decision, UNHCR in Ankara was requested to present the family to another resettlement country. Therefore, no resettlement transfers took place in 2017 to Cyprus.

2. OVERVIEW OF ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

This Section may be used to set the general context in which the specific developments are to be described later. This may include an overview of relevant political developments, policy and legislative debates, plus broader developments which affected multiple areas within asylum and migration.

Suggested pointers based on previous national reports:

- general political developments, e.g. elections on regional or national levels, government changes/reshuffles, appointment of new Ministers responsible for asylum, migration and/or integration;
- general overview of main policy and/or legislative changes plus debates that have occurred on migration and asylum issues during the reference year. Main policy and/or legislative debates could include, for example, parliamentary debates, contributions from civil society and/or migrant organisations and/or academia, plus debates undertaken within broadcast or published media (e.g. newspapers);
- any broader policy changes which affected multiple themes and topics within asylum and migration (e.g. affecting both legal / managed migration and asylum);
- For those Member States who held the Presidency of the EU during 2017 (Malta and Estonia), but also immediately prior in 2016 (Netherlands and Slovakia) and after, i.e. in 2018 (Bulgaria and Austria), please provide an overview of the main plans, developments and/or achievements in the area of migration and asylum.

Suggested guidelines for the structure and content of Sections 3 - 9

Sections 3-9 focus on national developments in the seven areas of asylum and migration policy as set out above.

Pointers for completing this section based on previous national reports might include:

- Brief overview of the situation as it existed before the reference period, if this is considered essential for the understanding of the national audience (based on, for example, previous Annual Policy Reports (2016 and earlier years, if relevant))
- Details of all policy and legislative developments, as well as any specific debates that have taken place in 2017, of interest to national audiences. Legislative developments could include changes in, for example, the constitutional law, case law, court decisions, relevant decrees, etc; debates could include parliamentary debates, contributions from civil society and/or migrant organisations and/or academia, plus debates undertaken within broadcast / published media..
- Examples of where information provided by the EMN (e.g. through EMN Studies, Reports, Ad-Hoc Queries) has served to inform national policy development (e.g. has the work of the EMN been referenced in a policy proposal) or any other impacts of the EMN.
- Any specific gender dimensions, where of interest also to national audiences.

3. LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Referring also to section I.1 and I.2 of the introduction to these specifications, outline all developments in your (Member) State in relation to legal / managed migration and mobility of third-country nationals.

Pointers for specific issues for this section relevant to national audiences and based on previous national reports might include developments associated with:

- Economic migration;

- Students and researchers;

There has been no significant development for 2017.

- Family reunification and family formation;

No new policies to regulate the admission of third-country nationals for family reunification and family formation were introduced during the reporting period and no such policies or measures are planned.

- Information on routes to and conditions of legal migration;
- Long-term residence and intra-EU mobility;

Since 2007, the relevant Cyprus Authorities examined more than 1000 applications for acquisition of the status of the long-term resident from third-country nationals who have resided legally and continuously within the controlled areas by the Government of the Republic for five years. As of today, there are about 200 individuals who possess the status of the long-term resident and the average number of applications is 5 per month. There were no political or other developments or changes regarding long-term residence in year 2017.

- Other aspects of legal migration;

The Directive for the Intra-Corporate Transferees (ICTs); was transposed to national legislation and put into force on 17 February 2017 with Law N.9(I)/2017. It has been implemented during the reporting period.

- Managing migration, including visa policy and Schengen Governance.

4. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Concerning Reception of asylum applicants, an EU funded project was implemented under AMIF in year 2017, which co-financed the operation of the Reception and Accommodation Centre for Applicants of International Protection in Kofinou. The implementation of this project has offered services to approximately 300 individuals who at any time reside at the Reception Centre. The co-financed services were the provision of operational support, on-site administrative and security staff, social care for residents, provision of meals, additional equipment, maintenance of old equipment and bus tickets for residents travelling outside the Centre. Also, another two AMIF EU co-funded projects provided medical care to the Reception Centre residents (general practice, mental health and community health). A third project co-financed structured activities for the residents of the Reception Centre, aiming towards the improvement of their quality of life.

The majority of the applicants residing in Kofinou Reception Centre were Syrians and applicants from Africa, specifically from Eritrea (who arrived to Cyprus via the relocation mechanism) and Somalia.

No legal or other policy developments took place in 2017.

5. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS¹

Vulnerable persons are mentioned in the existing legislation and more specifically in Articles 9ΚΓ, 9ΚΔ, 9ΚΕ, 9ΚΣΤ and 10. According to article 9ΚΔ (1), the authorities take into account the special situation of the vulnerable persons, such as, the minors, the unaccompanied minors, the elderly, the pregnant women, the single parents, the victims of trafficking, persons with serious diseases, persons with mental disorders, victims of torture, rape, or other form of psychological, physical or sexual abuse, such as FGM victims.

The reception and the registration of vulnerable applicants are provided in articles 9ΚΔ, 9ΚΕ, 9ΚΣΤ, 9ΚΖ and 10 of the Cyprus Refugee Law.

A special (screening) form is completed by the Immigration officers as soon as the applicants complete their application for international protection. Based on the screening form, the Immigration Officers can, for example, identify someone as an unaccompanied minor, and therefore the Director of the Social Welfare Services is notified, who, according to the Refugee Law, acts as the minor's representative/guardian. Also, the Asylum Service has established a screening procedure of the applications received by the District Immigration Offices of the Police.

Moreover, the Asylum Service has specially trained experts who have been assigned the task of examination of cases of unaccompanied minors and give priority to the examination of the applications submitted by UAMs.

Cyprus is in the process of opening a Special Reception Centre for vulnerable applicants. The unaccompanied minors are hosted in special houses for girls and boys or to foster families, under the supervision of the Welfare Services. Recognized victims of trafficking and potential victims of sexual exploitation are accommodated in a special shelter, operated by the police.

Applicants, who after the relevant screening, fall in the category of persons with special reception needs, are not referred to the General Reception Centre currently operating in Cyprus (which does not have the necessary structure) and instead are referred to the Social Welfare Services.

6. INTEGRATION

The projects of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund mainly aim to support the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), strengthen the accommodation capacity of asylum seekers, provide of all necessary services related to asylum procedures, facilitate the integration of third country nationals in the local community with the help of local authorities/NGO's/ public bodies/other social partners, increase assisted voluntary returns, increase cooperation with other member states as well as support the administrative capacity of Cyprus to manage successfully all sectors related to migration. Some of the AMIF projects currently implemented, include Greek Language courses, the operation of "Migrant-Info Centres" (Mi-Hub), educational integration of children from third countries etc.

¹ As well as unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking in human beings, 'vulnerable groups' include minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, persons with mental health problems and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, based on the definition of 'vulnerable group' in the proposed recast of the Directive laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers ("Receptions Directive").

7. IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Referring also to section I.1 and I.2 of the introduction to these specifications, outline all relevant developments in your (Member) State in relation to irregular migration.

The phenomenon of irregular immigration in Cyprus is considered by Cyprus Authorities as a very serious problem, since Cyprus is geographically situated in the middle of a politically unstable area.

Furthermore, Cyprus Authorities confront with a unique situation, due to the fact that about 37% of the island is occupied by Turkish troops, a fact that obstructs the Authorities of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus to exercise effective control in those areas.

Pointers for specific issues for this section relevant to national audiences and based on previous national reports might include developments associated with:

- Border management at the external border;

The Departments of Cyprus Police responsible for combating irregular immigration are the Aliens and Immigration Unit, Port and Marine Unit and Cyprus Police Aviation Unit. In general, the mission of the above-mentioned units is the effective control of the external sea borders and of entry – exit points of the Republic of Cyprus in order to support regular migration by combating irregular migration.

For the purpose of more efficient and accurate checks at the airports of the Republic of Cyprus, 6 e-gates (Border Xpress Kiosk) were installed at the departure area at Paphos Airport. Meanwhile a project concerning the installation of e-gates at Larnaca Airport took place and it is expected to be implemented in 2018.

In relation to APIS (Advance Passenger Information System) and PNR (Passenger Name Record) all necessary arrangements have been made in order to be implemented by May 2018.

- Sea border surveillance

The Port and Marine Unit of Cyprus Police as well as the Cyprus Police Aviation Operation Unit, play an important role in the border control in Cyprus. Specifically the Port and Marine Unit of Cyprus Police is operating radar systems at its headquarters controlling the coasts of the Government of The Republic of Cyprus. Also police vessels of the Port and Marine Unit and helicopters of the Cyprus Police Aviation Operation Unit are used in an effort to combat irregular immigration by exercising coordinated patrol activities. It should be noticed that activities concerning search and rescue (SAR) procedures are also taken into consideration in the framework of implementing operational activities.

- management at the external border;
- Preventing and tackling of misuse of legal migration channels;
- Fight against facilitation of irregular migration ('smuggling') and prevention of irregular stay.

The Aliens and Immigration Unit is responsible for dismantling smuggling networks. The transnational criminal networks have managed to expand their activities in the area of human

smuggling and connected the movement of irregular immigrants with various cross border criminal activities. The networks of human smuggling play an important role in the increase of irregular immigration.

Bearing in mind the political problem of the occupation of 37% of the island by Turkish troops, where the authorities of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus do not have access, smugglers take advantage of the situation and support migrants to travel to Cyprus and reach the areas controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus authorities.

Cyprus Police has managed though to apprehend number of smugglers and dismantle a number of networks as well. In particular the number of smuggling cases in 2014 was 11, in 2015, 12, in 2016, 16, in 2017, 15 and up to April 2018, 3 cases..

➤ False/falsified documents

The use of false/falsified documents is one of the most common modus operandi used by irregular immigrants and their facilitators to cross borders. During passport control at points of entry-exit at Larnaca and Paphos Airports the number of detections of false/falsified travel documents upon arrival in 2014 was 23, in 2015, 7, in 2016, 20, in 2017, 16 and up to April 2018, 7 cases. At departures the number of detection of false/falsified travel documents was in 2014,142 cases, 2015, 95, in 2016, 83, in 2017, 109 and up to April 2018, 36 cases.

As pointed out, the main number of cases concern third country nationals attempting to travel from Cyprus to other EU Member States by using EU false / falsified documents.

A project regarding False Documents Authenticity had been launched at Larnaca and Paphos Airports for random checks of around 500 travel documents per month in a period of 6 months. During 2017, 16 training programmes concerning False Travel Documents issues took place, where 199 border guards were trained.

8. RETURN

Referring also to section I.1 and I.2 of the introduction to these specifications, outline all relevant developments in your (Member) State in relation to return.

The aim of the Cyprus Police is to apply a humane and effective return approach as it is considered a vital part of the migration policy. The policies are developed by the Ministry of Interior* and are considered to be stable and consistent. The return rate is enhanced mainly by the adequate cooperation and coordination between all national competent authorities, European and International Organizations, such as IOM, UNHCR and FRONTEX, for the implementation of administrative decisions and measures to carry out the return of irregular migrants. The priorities among others primarily lie on promoting voluntary returns, operational aspects of the return, implementing relative Directives and Recommendations in this field, building relationships with diplomatic representations, interviewing of the TCN by police members, providing financial incentives etc.

Pointers for specific issues for this section relevant to national audiences and based on previous national reports might include developments associated with:

- Enhancing return migration management including cooperation among EU Member States on return practices

- Main national developments in the field of return, including return decision, (assisted) voluntary return), (alternatives for) detention, etc.;

The aim of the Cyprus Police is to apply a humane and effective return approach as it is considered a vital part of the migration policy. The return rate is enhanced mainly by the adequate cooperation and coordination between all national competent authorities, European and International Organizations, such as IOM, UNHCR and FRONTEX, for the implementation of administrative decisions and measures to carry out the return of irregular migrants. The priorities among others primarily lie on promoting voluntary returns and operational aspects of the return, implementing relative Directives and Recommendations in this field, establishing relationships with diplomatic representations, interviewing of the TCN by police members, providing financial incentives granted by the competent Department etc.

Regarding the use of detention in return procedures it is submitted that the rights of foreign nationals (documented or undocumented) in Menogia Detention Center are safeguarded and provided based on the relative Law and Regulations governing the place; and are driven by the sensitivity for protecting fundamental human rights. Also, the reports and recommendations of the Ombudsman, CPT, UNHCR, and other national or european bodies are taken into consideration.

The IOM Cyprus Office which is funded by European funds plays an active role in return and reintegration of TCN and the results are encouraging. In the same vein, the Aliens and Immigration Department of the Cyprus Police through its Divisional Units contributes to this direction and arrange the voluntary return of those irregular migrants who either address to Police for assistance or are detained and wish to be repatriated.

As of January 2016, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Cyprus Office is implementing the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR) under the project name ‘Information and Support Centre for Voluntary Returns’. The project is co-funded by AMIF. The aim of the Centre is to promote voluntary returns focusing on the needs of the returnee. In order to incentivise returns the Centre promotes different actions in awareness-raising for AVRR, mainly through informational events, operation of a mobile information unit, the social media as well as television and radio campaigns. Additionally, financial and in-kind assistance is provided per returnee as another form of incentive, while further reintegration assistance is provided to TCNs who wish to establish a small business. The program offers, among others, individualized counselling on return, reintegration assistance, specialized assistance and referral services to vulnerable individuals. Moreover, it undertakes travel arrangements, it facilitates travel documentation, arranges escorts, if required.

IOM Cyprus Office cooperates with the Social Welfare Services, the Cyprus Police, Asylum Service, the Civil Registry and Migration Department, the Ministry of Interior, and NGOs, when implementing the programme.

As for voluntary returns by the Civil Registry and Migration Office, these remain the same as in the previous years.

- Return of rejected asylum seekers;

In Menogia Detention Centre no unaccompanied children / families with children or vulnerable groups are detained. In cases where a parent is detained and the child has no other place to stay, the Social Services Department takes the responsibility of the minor who has the right to visit the parent.

- Return of irregular migrants;

A return decision is issued by the Ministry of Interior / Civil Registry and Migration Department, concerning a particular irregular migrant, which in practice, gives him / her a time period of usually no more than one month, in order to make arrangements so as to leave Cyprus. The aforementioned Ministry, within the framework of the migration policy, gives emphasis on promoting voluntary instead of forced returns. If the migrant does not conform to the above administrative decision, then detention and deportation orders are issued and these are executed by the Police after the migrant's arrest.

Noting that, detention is used if no other sufficient but less coercive measures can be applied effectively by the relative Ministry. Detention is necessary in order to prevent the risk of absconding and is used as a mean for effective enforcement of return decisions. The collective effort is the detention period to be as short as possible and with a view to completing the return procedure successfully.

In the process of return, several legal instruments and administrative decisions are taken into consideration, such as national law, policies / circular letters, European legislation / Directives / handbooks / the principle of non refoulement, Ombudsman's reports, UNHCR recommendations, etc.

It must be mentioned that, in practice, there are several challenges faced in the return process and the relevant competent authorities are in a constant effort to deal with or to overcome them (refusal of the Third Country National to cooperate for the return, lack of documentation and difficulty in identity verification, refusal by the diplomatic representations to issue travel documents claiming the consent of their national, no direct flights to distant destinations, abuse of the asylum procedures etc). The interviews of the migrants are carried out by administrative staff and immigration officers in order to realize their personal circumstances and intentions (regarding their return) and mainly to establish the prospect of the return itself. These interviews are regarded as the cornerstone of the whole procedure.

Undoubtedly, the actual return process is implemented with due respect to the fundamental and individual rights of the returnee. When a non-cooperative irregular migrant refuses or resists to return, the Police, as a last resort, take coercive measures, especially in cases of return by escort; the measures are certainly proportional and the force used never exceeds reasonable levels. The safety, physical integrity and dignity of the returnee is always safeguarded.

The aim is to apply a humane and effective return approach as it is considered a vital part of the State's migration policy. Thus, in order to enhance the return rate there is adequate communication, cooperation and coordination between all national competent authorities, European and International Organizations, such as IOM, UNHCR, FRONTEX for the implementation of administrative decisions and measures to carry out the return of irregular migrants. The main concerns of Police besides the promotion of voluntary returns lie in operational aspects of the return, implementation of relative Directives and Recommendations in this field, establishing relationships with diplomatic representations etc.

In Menoyia Detention Centre no unaccompanied children / families with children or vulnerable groups are detained. In cases where a parent is detained and the child has no other place to stay, the Social Services Department takes the responsibility of the minor who has the right to visit the parent.

The returns are achieved at a satisfactory level considering the challenges and obstacles faced not only by the competent authorities in Cyprus but also our partners in EU. The priorities set and the relative actions taken are regarded as having a rather positive impact on the return procedure.

- Strengthening cooperation with third countries of origin and transit on return and reintegration management. Return of irregular migrants;

The Aliens and Immigration Department within the return procedure addresses to the diplomatic missions of Third Countries usually through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to submit a request for the issuance of a passport or a travel document. Indeed, a number of Third Countries cooperate and respond where as some others claim that the process is forwarded only if their citizen gives his / her consent for the issuance

9. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Referring also to section I.1 and I.2 of the introduction to these specifications, outline developments in your (Member) State in relation to countering trafficking in human beings.

Pointers for specific issues for this section relevant to national audiences and based on previous national reports might include developments associated with:

- National strategic policy developments;

During this reporting period, the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) worked toward the implementation of the National Action Plan 2016-2018. More specifically, the most important work produced is described below, in short:

(a) Legislation: During the implementation of the current anti-trafficking legislation [L.60(I)/2014] certain gaps have been identified, which need to be tackled. For this purposes, during the previous reporting period (2016), the contributions of the Police and the Social Welfare Services were collected, which are two the main government services involved in the said legislation amendment. Based, amongst others, on the findings of these two services, during this reporting period, the Ministry of Interior has drafted an amending bill, which is currently under review from the members of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group. Upon completion of this stage, the bill will be placed to public consultation prior to continuing the formal legislative procedures. The main amendments proposed in the bill concern:

- the increase of the maximum penalty for trafficking of adults from ten (10) to fifteen (15) years, upon the recommendation of both the Criminal Court and the Police.

- Redefining the role and competencies of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group so as to ensure that all involved authorities will bear the core responsibility of implementing actions related to their competencies, under the overview and coordination of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group. This proposed amendment has taken into account the objections and strong reactions of the NGOs that had participated in the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group, for the difficulty in actually implementing actions by the Group. According to the NGOs, this was the main reason that led to the withdrawal of certain NGOs from the Group, even if some of them did not actually meet the specific set of conditions for re-admittance into the Group.

(b) Trainings: Three series of trainings were completed during the reporting period, in which a total of 200-220 officers were trained. The trainings, focused on sexual and labor exploitation, as well as trafficking for the purpose of forced marriages. The trainings included references to the main provisions of the legislation, indicators for detection of victims and the National Referral Mechanism. Trainings involved first-line public officers as well as marriage officers.

Furthermore, a mid-term progress evaluation of the National Action Plan was carried out in 2017 by the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group. The progress made by each relevant Department was recorder and further actions were decided for ensuring further developments.

- Improving identification of and provision of information to third-country national victims of human trafficking;

The National Referral Mechanism, which was finalised and approved in 2016, was fully implemented by all parties involved. It provides appropriate guidance and standard operating procedures for handling victims and potential victims of human trafficking (including identifying and referring victims to services), so that victims and potential victims have access to their rights. All authorities and organizations involved with dealing with (presumed) victims have been informed and trained on the National Referral Mechanism for a more effective outcome.

- Coordination and cooperation amongst key actors;

The Ministry of Interior, as a national coordinator and facilitator of the process, had previously collected needs of the government services for cooperation with NGOs. On 7.10.2016, NGO "KISA" undertook the responsibility of coordinating actions to promote cooperation protocols between government services and the NGOs. So far, during this reporting period, one cooperation protocol has been signed and another is pending signage shortly:

- In March 2017 a cooperation protocol was signed between the Cyprus Police and twelve (12) NGOs for the protection and promotion of human rights, which also covers issues of trafficking in human beings.

- A cooperation protocol between the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance and the NGO "Cyprus Stop Trafficking", aiming at the protection and the provision of the best possible support to the potential or identified victims is expected to be signed shortly.

d) Measures on cooperation between (Member) States.

The issue of housing of victims was further promoted at this level, during the reporting period. Specifically, the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Social Welfare Services, has conducted an exploratory visit to Thessaloniki and contacted the Organization A21 Thessaloniki, in Greece, for the issues of housing and rehabilitation services to victims in Cyprus. Following these contacts, the A21 Organization was positive for discussing a framework for cooperation with the Cypriot authorities. The invitation of the Regional Director of Europe to Cyprus to further enhance the procedures was agreed. The Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance has been informed of this development and is expected to undertake a relevant initiative. It should be noted that the Ministry Interior has cooperated with the said organization on training issues and a representative of the organisation has participated as a trainer in the training workshops for the front-line officers.

- Cooperation with third countries.

A case was jointly investigated by the Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Cyprus Police (OoCTHB) and the Bulgarian Authorities. Initially information was exchanged from both countries through Europol. The case was considered as a "high profile" case and, therefore, Europol coordinated meetings between the prosecutors and investigators of both countries. Operational meetings in Cyprus, Bulgaria and at the Europol offices in The Hague had taken place, while a coordinated operation for the dismantling of the criminal network was carried out in Cyprus and Bulgaria and a Joint Investigation Team was set up. More than fifteen (15) women were sexually exploited by the criminal network. Two persons were arrested by the Bulgarian authorities

and were brought before the Court, many were interrogated while many others are expected to be arrested. The case is still under investigation.

In addition, the Office of Trafficking in Human Beings takes part in parallel investigation of another high-profile case of human trafficking with the purpose of committing crimes, with the Polish and UK Authorities. Under this umbrella, members of the THB office participated in operational meetings with the Polish Authorities. There is a prospect of forming a second joint investigation team.

10. MAXIMISING DEVELOPMENT IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Referring also to section I.1 and I.2 of the introduction to these specifications, outline relevant developments in your (Member) State in relation to maximising the development impact of migration and mobility.

Pointers for specific issues for this section relevant to national audiences and based on previous national reports might include developments associated with:

- Progress towards mainstreaming migration in development policies;
- Cooperation with partner/third countries for economic migration
- Efforts to mitigate ‘brain drain’;

An awareness campaign was co-funded under AMIF, in order to inform the general public on issues related to the applicants and beneficiaries of international protection as well as migration issues. The aim was to enhance acceptance of diversity, to strengthen mutual respect and solidarity as well as to contribute to the fight against racist tendencies in local society. Project deliverables were, among others, the production of short fiction films and mini documentaries, which were used, in conjunction with other parameters, as the basic tools for the awareness campaign.

- Migrants’ remittances;
- Working with diasporas.

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NATIONAL REPORT PART 2: ANNEXES

ANNEX A: METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Methodology

This section should include brief information on how the report was produced and who contributed to it. Information to be provided should include the following:

- Methods used in identifying and selecting sources of information, legislative and statistical sources used and whether the previously given criteria used to define what is considered as a ‘significant development/debate’ was modified in any way;
- An overview of the type and sources of information used, including statistics;
- Which, if any, organisations/institutions/individuals were contacted to obtain the relevant information;

- Any problems that were encountered;
- Whether any aspects (or statistics) could not be addressed (or provided) in accordance with these specifications. If alternative information was provided, one should outline how the alternative information should be interpreted in relation to what was requested in these specifications;
- Whether there are any reservations/caveats one should apply to any of the included information and, if so, how.

It is particularly important to provide appropriate detail(s)/reference(s) to developments cited. For example, provide details of the reason(s) why a cited development (e.g. institutional change) occurred to avoid making the information seem anecdotal. Similarly, for media reports, and this is linked to the approach used for describing a significant development/debate, provide details of the rationale followed for describing a particular development.

Terms

To the extent possible, terms and their definitions as given in the EMN Glossary should be used. If this is not possible for some term(s), or they do not exist in the Glossary, then this section should provide the (national) definitions used.

Where different and appropriate, 'national' definitions should be compared with definitions used in any relevant EU Directives or other EU legislation. If definitions are the same in national and EU legislation, this should be highlighted.

ANNEX B: IMPLEMENTATION OF EU LEGISLATION

The purpose of this Section is for you to provide information on how policy and legislative developments at and decisions taken by the EU have had an impact at national level, e.g. in terms of modifications to national policy and/or legislation and/or practices resulting from such EU developments.

Detail any experiences, debates, both at political level and within wider society (e.g. issues raised by migrant (support) associations, academia) in the implementation or non-implementation (in which case outline the reasons for this) of the most significant EU legislation in asylum and migration, both for directives previously (before 2017) transposed into national legislation, as well as those transposed during 2017. Any impact or changes or experience with the entry into force of EU re-admission agreements, including with respect to bilateral agreements which existed before, can also be included.

Include also any inter-(Member) State experiences (good or bad) in the implementation of EU legislation (e.g. differences in treatment of nationals compared to other EU and/or third country nationals, consequences at national level in exercising of right to free movement). The purpose is to identify any consequences as a result of approaches that may be taken by another (Member) State for which a (positive or negative) impact in your (Member) State has been observed.

Indicate also, whenever possible and if applicable, where information provided by the EMN (e.g. through Studies, Reports, Ad-Hoc Queries) has served to inform such developments. In addition, and if known, indicate if information from other sources (e.g. IOM, ICMPD, GDISC, OECD) has been used to the same purpose. In particular, this section should identify aspects/topics which might merit further consideration by policymakers.

ANNEX C: NATIONAL STATISTICS

Please include here any **national statistics** relevant to the thematic sections 1-9 (if not integrated into the text. You may wish for example, to include tables of data, making specific reference to (aspects of) these in the narrative sections.

ANNEX D: BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES/SOURCES

Please include here any relevant references or information sources used in compiling the National Report (Part 2).
