Dissemination of information on voluntary return: how to reach irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities

EMN FOCUSED STUDY 2015

Dissemination of information on voluntary return: How to reach irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities

MALTA

NATIONAL REPORT

Co-funded by the European Union
DEFINITIONS

The following key terms are used in the report. The definitions are taken from the EMN Glossary v3.0\(^1\) unless specified otherwise in footnotes.

**Assisted voluntary return**: Voluntary return or voluntary departure supported by logistical, financial and/or other material assistance.

**Clandestine entry**: Secret or concealed migration in breach of immigration requirements.\(^2\)

**Compulsory return**: (more commonly known as 'forced return'): The process of going back – whether in voluntary or enforced compliance with an obligation to return – to one’s country of origin / a country of transit / another third country, to which the third-country national concerned voluntarily decides to return and in which they will be accepted.

**Country of Origin**: The country of nationality or, for stateless persons, of former habitual residence.

**Country of Return**: In the EU context, a third country to which a third-country national returns.

**Irregular stay**: The presence on the territory of a Member State, of a third-country national who does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils the conditions of entry as set out in Art. 5 of the Schengen Borders Code or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that Member State.

**Irregular migration**: Movement of persons to a new place of residence or transit that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries.

**Organised facility**: Different forms of premises used for the detention of foreigners or the housing of applicants for international protection as described in the EMN Report on "The Organisation of the Reception Facilities for the Asylum Seekers in different Member States".

**Removal**: means the enforcement of the obligation to return, namely the physical transportation out of the Member State.

**Return**: The movement of a person going from a host country back to a country of origin, country of nationality or habitual residence, country of transit, or any other third country a returnee agrees to be returned to, usually after spending a significant period of time in the host country whether voluntary or forced, assisted or spontaneous.

**Return decision**: An administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return.

**Returnee**: A person going from a host country back to a country of origin, country of nationality or habitual residence usually after spending a significant period of time in the host country whether voluntary or forced, assisted or spontaneous.

**Reintegration assistance**: The assistance provided by programmes with the aim of making the reintegration process of each individual returnee a success. Assistance can be provided in various forms, such as identifying opportunities for work and education, cash-in-hand handed at the time of arrival but most often takes the form of payment of goods that go towards setting up a project to sustain the livelihood of the returnee on a long term basis.

**Third-country national**: means any person who is not a citizen of the Union (including stateless persons) within the meaning of Article 17 (1) of the Treaty and who is not a person enjoying the Community right of free movement, as defined in Article 2(5) of the Schengen Borders Code.

**Voluntary return**: The assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or third country, based on the free will of the returnee.

**Voluntary departure**: Compliance with the obligation to return within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision.\(^4\)

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3 VREN, Final Recommendations, Booklet.

4 The UK definition of 'voluntary departure' is broader. For the UK, 'voluntary departure' includes: 'notified voluntary departures', 'assisted voluntary returns', and 'other confirmed voluntary departures'. A 'notified voluntary departure' is one where a person, established to have breached UK immigration laws and/or having no valid leave to remain in
Irregular migration to Malta is substantially characterised by individuals who have undertaken irregular boat crossings from North African shores aimed at the European mainland, and were rescued in Maltese waters during this perilous journey. This has in recent years ranged from a few hundreds to two thousand such migrants annually. The number of other irregular migrants found on the territory has in recent years been up to a couple of hundreds. In this regard, the large majority of irregular migrants, even those not currently in contact with the authorities, had been identified and had previously been known to the authorities.

The main challenge to disseminate information on voluntary return to those no longer in contact, numbering several hundreds, is in reaching out to them, and ensuring that the correct message is passed on. Mistrust in the authorities, as well as non-governmental organisations working with the authorities, possibly exists. Language barriers and illiteracy also lead to difficulty in creating effective communication channels.

Additionally, irregular migrants whose main intentions were to reach mainland Europe but ended up in Malta after being rescued from the sea are often still aspiring to reach their target. In this regard, this wish coupled with peer pressure often discourage take up of voluntary return options and hence messages to this effect are often "shut off". Other irregular migrants such as overstayers tend to be employed in the informal economy and so are more difficult to reach.

A period of possibility for voluntary departure is granted before the issuance of a removal order. Return decisions contain information on the basis of issuance and possibility of appeal. The Police authorities, through the Central Immigration Office, as well as entities such as the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers and the Third Country Nationals Unit within the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security disseminate information on voluntary return options. The organisation currently partnering on such initiatives – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – also provides such information. The Office of the Refugee Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Board also assist with the dissemination of the information.

Current campaigns have mainly consisted of the IOM disseminating brochures/cards and posters, providing dedicated telephone lines, a drop-in office and counselling sessions to accommodation centres. Languages utilised include English, French, Arabic, Bambara and Portuguese.
Section 2: Overview of the national situation

2.1 SCALE OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND OF RETURN IN THE MEMBER STATE

Q1. If available, please provide any estimates of the scale of irregular migrants in your Member State 2010 – 2014.

The purpose of providing such information is to give an idea of the scale of third-country nationals residing irregularly in the Member State, in order to provide a context to the information on national approaches to the dissemination of information on (voluntary) return.

If available, please provide the estimates for each year, as well as a brief footnote describing the population covered, the method used to reach the estimates any caveats as to their likely accuracy. It should be noted, given the differences in methods used to make the estimates, it will not be possible to synthesise this information to produce a ‘total EU estimate’ for the Study.

Please do not here include Eurostat information on third-country nationals found to be illegally present, as this information is available publically and can be therefore analysed centrally for the Synthesis Report.

The following are the figures showing the number of irregularly staying third country nationals found in Malta. These are desegregated by year and by category. It has to be explained that since 2012 Immigration authorities also started to take note of those leaving the Schengen area from Malta when irregular. These figures are also included. It is not possible to provide an estimate on the undetected irregular migrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Irregular migrants arriving by sea</th>
<th>Irregular migrants found inland</th>
<th>Irregular migrants detected exiting Schengen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. Provide any estimates and/or actuals for the period 2010-2014 on:

a. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning by physical transportation out of the Member State, on the basis of a return decision\(^5\) (forced return);

Forced returns from Malta 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) I.e. an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return.
b. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning voluntarily within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision (voluntary departure\(^6\))

Not available

c. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVR packages (assisted voluntary return)

The number of irregular migrants assisted with their return since 2010 averages to around 50 annually, with a slightly higher number assisted in 2014.

*Assisted voluntary returns from Malta 2010-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVRR packages (assisted voluntary return and reintegration – where different from (c))

*Number of persons assisted with their voluntary returns and reintegration through grant packages from Malta 2010-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) The UK definition of ‘voluntary departure’ is broader. See footnote n. 28 above.
2.2 SCALE AND NATURE OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS WHO ARE NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORITIES

Q3. As defined in section 2 of the Background section to this Common Template, this study focusses on irregular migrants whose whereabouts / place of residence are no longer or were never known to the authorities and who, therefore, are not in contact with the authorities.

Please define this group by listing in bullet points the main scenarios in which the authorities would not have contact with irregular migrants, e.g.

- migrants who have given false addresses / moved from their address,
- persons who have entered the Member State irregularly and who are staying there without the authorities’ knowledge,
- etc.

Such information is likely to be available in reports (e.g. annual reports) published by the authorities responsible for ensuring the return of irregular migrants (i.e. migration and asylum authorities) and/or may be obtained by consulting these authorities directly.

Irregular migrants whose whereabouts/place of residence is no longer known include:

- Persons who have entered the Member State irregularly and are staying without the authorities’ knowledge;
- Migrants who have entered regularly and overstayed the duration of their permit (visa) and whose residence is not known to the authorities;
- Migrants in an irregular situation who are no longer calling on a regular basis with the Immigration authorities to extend their stay;
- Migrants who have given false addresses or changed place of residence without informing the authorities;
- Irregular migrants who escaped from detention facilities and have remained untraced.

Q4. If available, please provide any estimates of the scale of the two groups irregular migrants covered in this study for the period 2010-2014:

a. Irregular migrants who were previously known to the authorities, but whose place of residence is no longer known to the authorities (absconding).

b. Irregular migrants whose residence on the territory has never been known to the authorities (clandestine entry).

Estimates for (a) could be derived from administrative data and may therefore be calculated by public authorities. Estimates for (b) may have been developed as part of a study. All estimates should be accompanied by a brief footnote describing the method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy.

If such information is available, please complete table A.1.b in Annex 1.

a) The number of persons in an irregular situation not calling at the Central Immigration Office, as at end of 2014 stood at around 900 persons. As at end 2013, this figure was at around 700.

b) No estimates are available yet the figures in this category are not expected to be significant when one considers that undetected sea arrivals are highly improbable.

Q5. Provide a short overview of the challenges faced in the Member State by actors involved in promoting voluntary return in reaching out to the two above-mentioned groups of irregular migrants (i.e. those who are not in contact with the authorities).

The purpose of this question is to investigate the rationale behind the strategies discussed in section 3.

Sources of information may include studies / research, policy documents, government communications, media, parliamentary debates and/or may be obtained by consulting relevant stakeholders.

The main challenge is in reaching, in a targeted manner, the population in question. While one cannot underestimate the potential of word-of-mouth strategies, it is also the case that the message may be improperly disseminated.
Mistrust of authorities, and of non-governmental organisations working with the authorities does not assist in persons eligible for assistance with voluntary return to make contact with the relevant entities.

Language barriers and illiteracy mean that it will always be difficult to communicate the message effectively to some irregular migrants.

Q6. Are there any other specific groups of (irregular) migrant group which actors involved in promoting voluntary return find hard to reach? If so, please describe them here.

Sources of information may include studies / research, policy documents, government communications, media, parliamentary debates and/or may be obtained by consulting relevant stakeholders.

In general, irregular migrants in Malta would have reached the island either unintentionally (possibly through a disembarkation from an irregular boat crossing aimed at arriving onto mainland Europe), or as a stepping stone to the European Union. In this regard, it is difficult to get through the message of return to persons who are for all intents and purposes still aspiring for a better life on the European continent, and so the message of voluntary return is often “shut off”. Peer pressure is also noted to discourage such take up. And so in general the irregular migrant community is not receptive to voluntary return.

Other irregular migrants, such as over-stayers, tend to be employed in the informal economy and hence are more difficult to reach.
Section 3: National legislation and policy on the dissemination of information on (voluntary) return

Q7. Has your Member State set out provisions or rules regarding the dissemination / provision of information on (voluntary) return in legislation or in soft law (e.g. guidelines, policy papers, etc.)? E.g. it may have outlined obligations for certain state authorities to provide such information in asylum interviews, on issuing a return decision, or may have introduced obligations to make information available online or in public places, etc.) (Yes / No)

If so, please state the name(s) of the legislation / policy(s) and describe what it says about:

a. The actors involved / responsible,

b. The content of the information (i.e. whether it covers AVR(R), other voluntary return options, legal obligations including information about return decisions, etc.)

c. The timing of the information provision (e.g. on applying for international protection / for a visa) or only on becoming irregular,

d. Any particular provisions for vulnerable groups (e.g. victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, elderly people) and other specific groups (e.g. specific nationalities),

e. The tools of dissemination (in person (written), in person (oral), via post, via email, in a telephone call, in public spaces, etc.),

f. The language(s) in which the information must be given and any accessibility / quality criteria (visual presentation, style of language to be used, etc.),

g. Confidentiality considerations (i.e. whether the anonymity of the irregular migrant is maintained if they consult an information service).

The purpose of this question is to set out the legal / policy framework on which the national practices to be described in section 4, are based.

No legislation has been enacted entailing an obligation to provide information on voluntary return. Nonetheless, given that the voluntary option is prioritised by the authorities, several offices provide information on this possibility in the course of their encounters with the migrant community, including the Office of the Refugee Commissioner, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers and the Central Immigration Office.

Q8. Specifically, what information does the national authority provide to the migrant when it issues a return decision, and how does it provide this information? Please specify:

a. The content of the information (e.g. AVR,, obligations),

b. The different language(s) in which the information is made available and whether it is available in the applicant’s stated mother tongue,

c. How the information is presented visually, style of language used, etc.,

d. The tools of dissemination used (in person (written), in person (oral), via post, via email, in a telephone call, etc.).

If information on the above is already included in the response to Q7, please just cross-refer here.

a) All return decisions contain information on the basis of their issuance and on the possibility of appealing against such a decision. In the case of irregular migrants arriving by sea and who would have no information available the return decision is always accompanied by an information booklet on their rights and responsibilities.

b) This is currently available in English, Arabic and French which are the languages most likely to be understood by this category of migrants. In the eventuality of migrants not understanding any of these languages, interpreters are used to give the information verbally.
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c) n/a

d) Written and in person. In case of persons not understanding the written language this is given verbally, through interpreters.

Q9. Did the above-described legislation and policy change at all as a result of the adoption and transposition of the Return Directive?

Current legislation and policy practice by Maltese authorities is in line with the Return Directive. On arrival all migrants reaching Maltese shores irregularly are provided all the necessary information on their removal order, their rights and obligations.

As a result of the transposition of the Return Directive, return decisions are now issued with the possibility of a period of voluntary departure being granted before the removal order. Before this transposition, only a removal order was issued.

Q10. Are any changes to legislation / policy having an impact on the dissemination of information on (voluntary) return planned for the future? If yes, please describe here.

Constant improvements to the quality and widening of dissemination of information on voluntary return are sought and implemented. No particular legislative and formal policy changes are however being considered.

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7 Ireland and the United Kingdom do not participate in the Return Directive and are therefore not bound by its provisions. Norway implements the Directive as it is bound by the provisions of the Schengen acquis.
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Section 4: Overall national approach to disseminating information on (voluntary) return

4.1 ACTORS INVOLVED IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON (VOLUNTARY) RETURN

Q11. Which national authorities responsible for the return of irregular migrants play a role in disseminating information on (voluntary) return, either as part of the processes outlined in section 3 or otherwise?

Please consider the role that migration and asylum authorities, law enforcement authorities, local / municipal authorities play in disseminating information on return.

For each authority playing a role in disseminating information in your Member State, please briefly describe the role and the circumstances under which they provide the information.

Please cover the period in the last five years (from 2010 – 2014), as well as future/planned activities in this area if relevant/available.

The main national authority responsible for the return of irregular migrants, the Immigration Police, through the Central Immigration Office passes on information also on the possibility to return voluntarily to irregular migrants registering their presence in the country.

Other entities, though not responsible for return, disseminate information including the Office of the Refugee Commissioner (national authority responsible for asylum applications), the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (national agency responsible for accommodation centres of asylum seekers), and the Third Country Nationals Unit within the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security in collaboration with the current partner on voluntary returns - the International Organization for Migration.

The Office of the Refugee Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Board also assist in the dissemination of such information.

The provision of information is ongoing, as has been the case since 2010. In previous years the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also played an active role together with other non-governmental organisations. Current initiatives aim to step up the provision of such information to as many irregular migrants as possible.

Q12. Which other actors disseminate information on (voluntary) return; what roles do these actors have and what is the rationale for their involvement in disseminating information on (voluntary) return?

Please complete Table 1 below.

In column 3, describe the role briefly using bullet points making sure to only include information on their role in disseminating information - i.e. "publishing information on a dedicated website, making leaflets available, hosting drop-in information clinics, acting as a community contact point for information on (voluntary) return, etc." rather than "implements AVR programmes", or "holds meetings with community members".

Under 'nature of / rationale for involvement', please describe any contracts that the actor has with the national authorities - e.g. if they have been subcontracted to provide information and advice services to irregular migrants - and any partnerships between national authorities and (e.g.) specific community, diaspora or faith-based groups to promote voluntary return. You may be able to find information on the rationale for involvement on the websites of the national authorities, on the websites of the actors (where these exist), in annual reports of the organisations (again, where these exist), or by consulting the actors directly.

Please cover the period in the last five years (from 2010 – 2014), as well as future/planned activities in this area if relevant/available

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8 See Section 2.1 of the Background to this Common Template for a definition of these authorities.
Table 1. Other actors disseminating information on (voluntary) return, their role and the rationale for their involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Role that the actor plays in disseminating information voluntary return</th>
<th>Nature of / rationale for involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NGOs / IOs dealing with return counselling and/or implementing AVR schemes</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>IOM implements the current assisted voluntary return and reintegration project. In this regard it prepares booklet and brochures for disseminations as well as conducts meetings at accommodation centres</td>
<td>Direct implementation of project co-financed under the Return Fund, together with the Maltese authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other NGOs / civil society organisations (e.g. migrant rights groups, migrant-led organisations and other advocacy groups)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>While not in a formal manner, other important non-governmental organisations in the field provide information to migrants they come across requesting such assistance.</td>
<td>As part of ongoing contact with migrants, persons who request such assistance are referred to accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora groups</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based groups</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>As per other NGOs</td>
<td>As per other NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant-led groups</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other community groups</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social / health / education services</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case workers</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Case workers with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner provide information</td>
<td>Brief details are provide as part of the information sessions prior to the actual asylum process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal advisors</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsman / citizens advice bureaus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Advisory services of) trade unions / employer associations</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embassies (third-country and EU)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers / Internet café workers / etc.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Previous attempts have been unsupported</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other actors (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 TOOLS USED TO DISSEminate INFORMATION ON (VOLUNTary) RETURN TO IRREGULAR MIGRANTS NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORITIES

Q13. Provide information on the tools through which information on (voluntary) return is made available in your Member State.

Please complete Table 2 below.

Please cover the period in the last five years (from 2010 – 2014), as well as future/planned activities in this area if relevant/available.

For each tool listed, please state Yes / No, then – if the tool is used in your Member State – briefly describe what the information source is (e.g. website on AVR(R), leaflet on voluntary return, Facebook page on AVR(R) programmes, discussion forum for members of the Nigerian diaspora to discuss return, etc.) then list the actor(s) responsible for (a) funding / developing the tool (e.g. this may be the national migration authority, NGOs, etc.), (b) managing / delivering the information and a link to further information.
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Table 2. Tools used in the Member State for disseminating information on (voluntary) return

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Description (please be brief, using bullet points) including whether this is a current, past or future tool</th>
<th>Actor(s) designing / funding</th>
<th>Actor(s) managing / delivering</th>
<th>Link to further information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets / brochures</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>current</td>
<td>IOM/Return Fund and Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (MHAS)</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster campaigns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>current</td>
<td>Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (MHAS) and IOM / Return Fund and Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (MHAS)</td>
<td>MHAS/IOM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media campaigns</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated social media pages (e.g. Facebook page for returnees or for diaspora groups)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online discussion forums</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helplines / info lines</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>IOM / Return Fund and Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (MHAS)</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in clinic (face-to-face)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community visits and Other tools (visits to accommodation centres)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tools (visits to accommodation centres)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>IOM / Return Fund and Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (MHAS)</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>IOM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS AND STRATEGIES

Q14. Did any of the tools listed in Q13 above form part of a specific strategy or campaign implemented in your Member State to better disseminate information on (voluntary) return? If yes, please state:

a. The actor(s) behind the campaign – specifically whether it was led by a state authority or a non-state authority,
b. The name of the strategy / campaign,
c. The date it was launched and its duration,
d. The rationale for its launch,
e. The specific objectives / aims,
f. Any target groups,
g. Its components (e.g. website, poster campaign and hotline),
h. The actors involved,
i. Any specific results (e.g. in terms of users accessing the information, number of irregular migrants returned, etc.)

Please note that further evaluative information on campaigns and strategies can be included in section 5 and 6.

A stepped up campaign is being conducted to reach out and increase take-up of the voluntary return option by migrants in an irregular situation. This is being undertaken within the main assisted return project in collaboration with the IOM and involves poster and cards.

The specific results of this campaign are yet to be evaluated.

4.4 ACCESSIBILITY OF THE INFORMATION

Q15. Please consider the accessibility of all information on (voluntary) return disseminated to irregular migrants in the Member State. Please provide information on:

a. The language(s) in which the information is provided,
b. Visual presentation of the information
c. For posters / leaflets, the location of the information: where were these placed – in transport hubs, in libraries, in health centres, in areas known to be frequented by irregular migrants – e.g. malls, supermarkets, etc.
d. For websites / helplines: extent to which the URL is easy to find through online search engines\(^9\) and whether there is signposting to the website through other tools.
e. For helplines and drop-in clinics:
   i. The location of the services (if a drop-in clinic),
   ii. The opening hours / hours of access,
   iii. Awareness about the service, including where the telephone number / address is advertised,
   iv. Cost of the service / calling the hotline (or whether free)
f. Confidentiality considerations, i.e. whether the anonymity of the irregular migrant is maintained if they consult an information service (please also specify whether target recipients of the information are made aware of the confidentiality considerations or whether this is simply the internal policy).
g. Other factors that might enhance / reduce accessibility.

\(^9\) Member States may wish to draw conclusions about this third bullet point by using a ‘mystery shopper’ method and searching for the information using different search terms.
a) The information is being provided selectively in English, French, Arabic, Bambara and Portuguese.
b) This is mainly in the form of posters and small cards
c) Posters are being mainly placed at the Police Central Immigration Office, at accommodation centres, and at offices related to the asylum process.
d) No particular website has been created
e) IOM offices are located in a central town, which is open during office hours. There is a dedicated telephone number which is disseminated among the migrant community.
f) National authorities are only informed by IOM offices of a potential returnee once it is clear that s/he has decided to initiate the process leading to actual return.
g) Any matter that instills/diminishes the level of trust in a source of information on such options for return has an effect on the possibility to provide the correct information.

4.5 CONTENT OF THE INFORMATION

Q16. What is the content of the information made available in Member States. Specifically, where can irregular migrants go to find information on different aspects of voluntary return?

Please complete Table 3 below.

Mark whether the actors listed horizontally provide the information listed vertically. Where they do, please specify through which of the tools listed in Q13 this information is made available – i.e. state “website of the migration authority”, “leaflet on AVR(R) published by IOM”, etc.

Where this information is not disseminated through any national sources, please state N/A.
### Table 3. Content of the information disseminated to irregular migrants by Member States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Provided</th>
<th>National authorities responsible for return</th>
<th>Organisations with an official role in implementing and/or promoting AVR(R) programmes</th>
<th>Diaspora groups, faith-based groups, migrant-led groups, other community groups</th>
<th>Case workers</th>
<th>Legal advisors</th>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The legal obligations of the returnee (i.e. their status, their obligation to return and how they can ensure compliance with return decisions)</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on AVR(R) programmes available in the Member State</td>
<td>Posters, presentations, cards</td>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>Not known/possible</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on eligibility conditions for AVR(R) programmes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Leaflets</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the irregular migrant should go for more information (signposting)</td>
<td>Posters, presentations, cards</td>
<td>Information sessions</td>
<td>Not known/possible</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other voluntary return options (i.e. options for voluntary return without assistance)</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the irregular migrant can expect at the airport on returning</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the irregular migrant can expect in the country of return (e.g. registration with third-country authorities, labour market access, housing, etc.)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individually tailored information*</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Note that tailored is most likely to be available through helplines and drop-in clinics, although it may be possible to tailor information to some extent through online services.
4.6 TARGETING OF THE INFORMATION

Q17. Please specify which (if any) of the approaches described in Q13 – Q16 above have been used specifically to target irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities. What was the rationale for using this approach to target this particular group?

This has been mostly through posters placed in areas where migrants tend to refer to. This could also lead to word of mouth information.

Q18. Do any of the approaches described in Q13 - Q16 above target any other groups (e.g. specific types of irregular migrant, e.g. vulnerable groups, failed asylum applicants, particular nationalities, etc?) If so, please describe below through what methods / approaches they target these groups, and also discuss the rationale for targeting these particular groups.

The main audience for this approach has been migrants who have reached Malta through irregular boat crossings, as the major group of irregular migrants in Malta.
Section 5 – Case studies on information provision to irregular migrants with whom the authorities do not have contact

The purpose of this section is to look at TWO or more selected practices, projects or approaches employed in the Member State to disseminate information on (voluntary) return in order to identify promising practices in dissemination of information to irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities and to learn lessons about what has and has not worked. Member States are requested to identify at least one “successful” approach and one “less successful” approach, stating the criteria they apply to define "successful".

Q19. Cross-referring to the approaches outlined in section 4, please describe in further detail at least TWO practices, projects or approaches employed in your Member State since 2010 to disseminate information on (voluntary) return:

★ one practice / project / approach that has proven particularly effective in reaching out to irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities; and

★ one practice / project / approach that has not been (very) effective in reaching out to irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities.

Please provide your rationale for describing these as successful / less successful. In doing so, please provide any indications / evidence– or counter-evidence - of:

a. The effectiveness of the practice / approach at increasing awareness amongst irregular migrants who are not in contact with the authorities about their options regarding voluntary return and/or at providing such migrants with a comprehensive understanding of their options so as to be able to make a balanced, well-informed decision about voluntary return.

b. Specific challenges associated with the approach to disseminating information implemented by the national authorities directly in raising awareness of irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities?

c. Factors that made the approach a successful / not-so-successful tool for disseminating information on (voluntary) return to irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities.

Please consider the following possible factors that may contribute to the success / challenges of the approach: the actors providing the information (and the level of trust that the actor engenders in the applicant / migrant), the 'tone' of the information being provided (i.e. whether it is threatening / supportive / factual / etc.), the extent to which the approach allows the recipient to remain anonymous, accessibility to the information, location of the information, the timing, etc.)

Possible sources of evidence for questions 19a – 19c include:

i. Statistics on use of the information tools (e.g. users of hotline number, webpage visits, Facebook page hits / 'likes', leaflets distributed, number of leaflets downloaded / requested, etc.),

ii. Evaluations / research,

iii. Personal testimonies from returnees / irregular migrants who made use of the services (where identified in secondary sources e.g. studies, social media sites, on websites, etc.),

iv. Opinions / perspectives of stakeholders on the effectiveness of their resources - you may gather this information through primary research (i.e. interviews with the authorities, with NGOs supporting irregular migrants accessing the services, etc.).

Please also describe any evidence of particular groups (e.g. diaspora, NGOs, individuals) accessing the information.

While the handing out of cards and placing posters in strategic offices that lead to word-of-mouth dissemination is considered as having sufficient potential to reach out to irregular migrants with little contact with the authorities, no particularly very effective means of information to encourage substantial take-up has yet been identified.
Section 6 – Effectiveness of different approaches to disseminating information on (voluntary) return

6.1 INDICATIONS / EVIDENCE FROM THE TESTIMONIES OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS AND RETURNEES

Q20. Does your Member State collect any (monitoring and/or evaluation) information from those returning voluntarily (e.g. at airports, when participating in AVR programmes, after they have returned) about the information they received prior to return and/or how useful they found this information (yes / no)? If yes, please describe:

a. Who collects/ed this data,
b. Who the data is/was collected from (e.g. those participating in AVR, those returning to specific countries),
c. The situation in which the data is/was collected (e.g. on return, on considering return, at the airport), and
d. The method used (e.g. survey, interviews, etc.), as well as
e. The date / frequency of the data collection (e.g. is this done monthly, annually, or was it part of a one-off project) and
f. Any caveats as to the quality of the data.

No such information is collected.

Q21. If the above-mentioned information is available, please present the results, in particular any information on:

a. The most common tool through which the returnee accessed information (e.g. through friends, via the Internet, via a leaflet),
b. The extent to which they understood the information (e.g. was it presented in a user-friendly format, was it in their own language),
c. The extent to which the information was comprehensive. Did they have to seek further information elsewhere and if so, why,
d. The extent to which they trusted the information and whether there was anything about the way in which the information was provided that acted as an obstacle to their trusting it,
e. The timing of the information provision and whether it would have been of any use if the information had been provided at an earlier stage,
f. Whether the information influenced their decision to return home or not.

Not available.

6.2 OTHER INDICATIONS / EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The purpose of Q22 to Q24 is to allow Member States to include any additional information on the effectiveness of the approaches described under section 4 that are not covered in section 5. This sub-section should not repeat information already included in section 5. Please only include new information here.

Q22. Are there any other indications / evidence available of the effectiveness of the different practices / approaches described in section 4 at increasing awareness amongst irregular migrants who are not in contact with the authorities about their options regarding voluntary return and/or at providing such migrants with a

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11 For example, for migrants returning through AVR programmes, where surveys are conducted before the AVR programme is complete (e.g. at airports), it may affect the responses received as – for example – returnees might feel pressured into providing a positive response even where they have a negative perception of the information provided.
comprehensive understanding of their options so as to be able to make a balanced, well-informed decision about voluntary return.

Possible sources of evidence include:

i. Statistics on use of the information tools (e.g. users of hotline number, webpage visits, Facebook page hits / 'likes', leaflets distributed, number of leaflets downloaded / requested, etc.),

ii. Evaluations / research,

iii. Personal testimonies from returnees / irregular migrants who made use of the services (where identified in secondary sources e.g. studies, social media pages, websites, etc.),

iv. Opinions / perspectives of stakeholders on the effectiveness of their resources - you may gather this information through primary research (i.e. interviews with the authorities, with NGOs supporting irregular migrants accessing the services, etc.).

Not available. However the following information may be of interest:

**Number of irregular migrants indicating interest in taking up the option of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (Source: International Organization for Migration)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of persons indicating interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q23. Please also describe any factors that make these approaches successful / not-so-successful tools for disseminating information on (voluntary) return to irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities.

Possible sources of evidence include evaluations / research, personal testimonies from returnees / irregular migrants who made use of the services (where identified in secondary sources), opinions / perspectives of stakeholders (you may use primary research for this).

No such information is available.
Q24. Please describe any specific challenges associated with the approach to disseminating information implemented by the national authorities directly in raising awareness of irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities?

Possible sources of evidence include evaluations / research, media reports, reports of government, policy papers, opinions / perspectives of stakeholders (you may use primary research for this).

Contacting, or bringing to the attention of, such a category of migrants to make them aware of the assisted return option remains the primary challenge.

6.3 LESSONS LEARNT

Q25. Are there any lessons to be extracted (by Member States completing this Common Template) from the findings presented above that could be taken on board by other Member States?

Please consider both lessons about what went well and what went less well, as well as lessons about how the practice / project / approach could be improved in the future.

Malta is still at a stage where it is learning from other Member States with substantially more experience in this field.
### Annex 1  National statistics on return and number of irregular third-country nationals

**Table A.1.a: National Statistics on the number of third-country nationals returning, by year and by type of migrant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010 (total)</th>
<th>2011 (total)</th>
<th>2012 (total)</th>
<th>2013 (total)</th>
<th>2014 (total)</th>
<th>Method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Third-country nationals returning by physical transportation out of the Member State, on the basis of a return decision (forced return)</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>Immigration Records Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Number of third-country nationals returning voluntarily within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision(^\text{12}) (voluntary departure)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVR packages (assisted voluntary return)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVRR packages (assisted voluntary return and reintegration) – where different from (c)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table A.1.b: National Statistics on the number of third-country nationals not in contact with the national authorities, by year and by type of migrant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010 (total)</th>
<th>2011 (total)</th>
<th>2012 (total)</th>
<th>2013 (total)</th>
<th>2014 (total)</th>
<th>Method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Number of irregular migrants who were previously known to the authorities, but whose place of residence is no longer known to the authorities (absconding).</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Number of irregular migrants whose residence on the territory has never been known to the authorities (clandestine entry)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only a figure of migrants who since 2014 are no longer calling in 2015 for an extension of their current permit can be provided. As in May 2015, the figure stands at 333 individuals.

\(^{12}\) I.e. an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return.

\(^{13}\) In accordance with the provisions of Directive 2008/52/EC (Return Directive) the time-limit shall be of 30 days. Ireland and United Kingdom do not take part in the Directive, are not bound by its rules and therefore may apply different time limits on voluntary departure.
### Annex 2  Description of data-collection methods used

**Table A.2: Data-collection methods used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources method of info / Used? (Y/N)</th>
<th>List the sources: for secondary sources, cross-refer to bibliography; for primary sources list the stakeholders involved</th>
<th>Type of information provided (refer to question numbers / sections if useful)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reports</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Statistical figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy documents</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Mystery shopper'</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>With the International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with stakeholders</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Policy Development Directorate and Third Country Nationals Unit within the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Immigration Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with national stakeholder</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Policy Development Directorate and Third Country Nationals Unit within the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Immigration Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with national network</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>