

2015 EMN Study on Dissemination of Information on Voluntary Return: How to reach irregular migrants not in contact with the authorities

Top-line “Factsheet” (National Contribution)

National contribution (one page only)

Overview of the National Contribution – introducing the study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections of the Focussed Study, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policymakers.

In Portugal, assistance to voluntary return of foreign citizens who meet the necessary requirements to their countries of origin under cooperation programs established with international organisations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or non-governmental organisations (ONGs), is provided for in Article 139 of Act 29/2012, of August 9¹, and in the Implementing Protocol signed between the Portuguese State and IOM, in force since 2001.

‘ARVoRE’ - Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme [ARVoRE – Apoio ao Retorno Voluntário e à Reintegração] is a project funded by the European Return Fund co-funded by the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service [SEF – Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras] and by the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Internal Administration [SGMAI - Secretaria Geral do Ministério da Administração Interna]. In force since 1997, the programme goal is to assist third-country immigrants who want to voluntarily return to their countries of origin, yet do not meet the conditions to do so.

The beneficiaries of the project are applicants for asylum whose application is pending a final decision or is refused; refugees or temporary protection beneficiaries who wish to return to their country of origin; foreign citizens who are illegally staying in Portugal; and other foreign citizens residing in Portugal. As regards minors, they may only benefit from this programme when they are accompanied by whoever holds parental authority, guardianship or explicit permission.

Access to the voluntary return programme is based on the applicant’s definite will. In situations where authorities are involved, such as cases of notification for voluntary departure, the interested parties are

¹ First amendment to Act 23/2007 of July 4, which approves the legal framework for entry, stay, exit and removal of foreign citizens into and from national territory.

informed on the existence and operation of this programme. Nevertheless, these citizens are not reported to IOM or to the network of partners.

Notwithstanding, one should mention that the main beneficiaries of this programme have been foreign citizens with legal resident status who, due to labour and social circumstances, wish to permanently return to their country of origin.

Nonetheless, there are other situations, such as foreign citizens under situations of extreme economic and social deprivation and, more recently, citizens apparently newly-arrived to Portugal who seem to have legally entered and are also within the legal period of stay. A peculiar aspect is that applicants for asylum and/or beneficiaries of temporary protection generally do not seek the support of this programme to return.

While the procedure is ongoing, the decision is absolutely voluntary, and the interested party may back down at any stage of the procedure. For that reason, in the case of foreign residents or legally-staying citizens, the residence title and formal forgoing of the right to reside in national territory must be submitted prior to the citizen's boarding.

Moreover, assistance can only be provided to foreign citizens returning to their country of origin (Third State) or to another Third State where they demonstrably can be admitted.

The following are not eligible for enjoying this type of assistance: Community citizens and their family members; foreign citizens who have been indicted as perpetrators or who have been sentenced; and foreign citizens who have provided false statements or who have enjoyed similar assistance in Portugal or in any other Member-State - albeit this last requirement may be difficult to ascertain.

IOM is directly responsible for the disclosure and dissemination of information regarding this programme. For that purpose, IOM has the support of an extended partner network composed by immigrant associations and other organisations. SEF or other bodies operating in the area of migration and asylum do not play a part in this particular process.

On the other hand, there has been a growing concern in clarifying the access conditions and the consequences for citizens enjoying this type of assistance, particularly as regards the measure of entry ban in Portugal for a period of three years.

Since 2001 and due to the exceptional circumstances related to the complexity that certain migratory realities have been assuming, some projects aimed at specific target addressees have been approved.

In terms of structure, the program encompasses the following stages: pre-return, transport and departure, and

post-return.

The first stage (pre-return) includes the activities of provision of information and advice to the interested parties. This requires a close coordination between SEF and IOM with the purpose of ascertaining the applicants' eligibility conditions.

In the second stage (transport) there is a complete assistance to the citizen's boarding. It is in this stage that the foreign citizen, if he/she is a resident, delivers his/her residence permit and waives the right to reside, and is notified that he/she will be applied an entry ban into Portugal for a three-year period.

The third and last stage (post-return) is developed in the country of destination of the programme beneficiaries, especially when the citizens receive a subsidy for purposes of developing a project of reintegration, which will be locally monitored and assessed by local partners.

Finally, one should mention that in addition to individualised support and advice throughout the entire assistance process, the programme also provides: i) payment of the airline ticket in full and without any costs to the beneficiaries until they arrive at their final destination; ii) monetary value to cover any necessary expenses during the trip and; iii) possibility of benefiting from support to reintegration in the country of origin (upon a case-by-case examination and subject to approval).

In view of the above, Portugal has not been experiencing a particular need to internally implement any study regarding the way that information on voluntary return is disclosed to illegally-staying foreign citizens who are not identified by the authorities, without prejudice of obtaining further knowledge on practices and experiences by other Member-States that may be considered as positive and an added value.

[Executive Summary \(Synthesis Report\)](#)

Synthesis Report (up to three pages)

Executive Summary of Synthesis Report: this will form the basis of an EMN Inform, which will have EU and National policymakers as its main target audience.

[Section 1: Overview of EU legal and policy context \[Maximum 1 page\]](#)

This section of the Synthesis Report will briefly outline the EU legal framework and EU policy on voluntary return, including voluntary departure. This will involve a discussion of the main provisions within the EU's asylum acquis and the Return Directive (Directive 2008/52/EC), as well as describing the EU's perspective on the dissemination of information on (voluntary) return, as defined in policy documents, EU communications and research commissioned by the EU institutions.

This section will be developed by the EMN Service Provider and no input from the EMN NCPs is required.

Section 2: Overview of the national situation [Maximum 2 pages, excluding Annex 1]

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.

At the moment, Portugal does not have objective and reliable information on the number of illegally-staying immigrants in national territory. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify trends that approximately point towards or suggest the dimension of that universe, based on the number of citizens detected as illegally-staying in the inspection operations that were carried out.

Within SEF's powers and competences, inspection actions and the control that they impart aim, on the one hand at ensuring the security of citizens and, consequently, social peace and stability, and on the other hand at preventing and suppressing crimes related with the migratory phenomena, with particular focus on trafficking in human beings and document fraud.

Notwithstanding the above, it is possible to register a downward trend of foreign citizens detected between 2011 and 2013², which represents a decrease on the number of legal residents and an increase on the number of legally-staying foreign citizens who sought the Voluntary Return Programme and returned to their countries of origin.

The most likely reason for this trend is probably the economic and structural crisis that Portugal has been facing in the past years, given that it led to the increase of unemployment rates.

As regards 2014, and although data is not yet fully consolidated, a reversal of this trend was detected. 2.397 foreign citizens were detected as illegally-staying, thus representing an increase of 41,2% compared to 2013, expecting that

² in 2011, 42.266 third-country citizens were identified, of which 4.636 were irregularly-staying. In 2012, there was an increase on the identified cases (43.915) with a decrease on the number of illegally-staying citizens (2891). In 2013, 38.152 third-country nationals were identified, of which 1698 were illegally-staying. This is a decrease of -41,3% when compared to the previous year.

the number of immigrants seeking Portugal will be increasing in the upcoming years.

Accordingly, one should mention the growing trend on the number of applications for international protection lodged in recent years. This substantial growth was due to several aspects, more particularly the fraudulent use of international protection mechanisms by third-country nationals with migration intentions who arrived in national territory in flights from Africa, as well as the variation in some of the nationalities that requested international protection to the Portuguese State.

As an example, in 2013 there was an increase in the number of applications for international protection by Syrian citizens, while in 2014 there was a relevant increase on the number of these applications by Ukrainian citizens.

IOM is also unable to estimate or assess the impact of the programme among illegally-staying foreign citizens.

Nevertheless, it is possible to indicate the number of requests for assistance submitted each year, which includes the total number of citizens registered, as well as the number of persons that have failed to complete their registration, yet were directly informed, by IOM or other partner of the support network.

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 decision³ (forced return);
- b. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning voluntarily within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision (voluntary departure⁴)
- c. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVR packages (assisted voluntary return)
- d. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVRR packages (assisted voluntary return and reintegration – where different from (c))

The purpose of presenting such information would be to provide a picture of the proportion of third-country nationals who return voluntarily as compared to those returned by force in each Member State, in order to provide a context to the findings on national approaches to the dissemination of information on (voluntary) return.

*It is acknowledged that there may be some double-counting between (b) and (c) and (b) and (d). If such information is available, please complete **table A.1.a** in Annex 1.*

Please see tables attached.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

- Immigrants who have entered national territory with a consular visa and whose address is not the same as the one declared in the visa application, or who have changed address after the title's expiry;
- foreign citizens who have been notified to voluntarily leave national territory, or foreign citizens whose application for international has been refused;
- Foreign citizens, who have applied to legally reside in Portuguese territory, however actually reside in another Member-State.

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.*

It is not possible to provide objective and reliable information for this data request.

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.

As already pointed out, the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme is coordinated between the

Portuguese State and IOM, who performs the disclosure and dissemination of information regarding this programme. Such dissemination is carried out both directly and indirectly. The first one is carried out by IOM with the beneficiaries/bodies that look for IOM's services and/or in information and clarification sessions with experts who work directly with migrants; the second one is carried out by the Information and Advice Network and/or other relevant partners in the territory.

According to IOM, one of its main challenges is the fact that this organisation privileges a direct approach with an actor (which very commonly is a body) and, through that channel, with migrants. Hence, as there is no direct contact with the main addressees, there is no effective perception on the disseminator effect of this information, on how it takes place and if it in fact is understood by migrants, as the target audience.

Another important aspect relates to the coverage of this dissemination, i.e. when privileging a dissemination strategy to other actors, instead of - for instance - using the media, the visibility and reach may be limited and constrained by the secondary dissemination that is made.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the current information materials are written in Portuguese and Russian, given that those are the main languages spoken by migrants who seek for the Programme. Nevertheless, shall there be any alteration in the migrant profile that seeks the Programme and speaks other languages, such as Hindu, Chinese or Arabian there are not any support materials that can be made available.

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.

According to IOM, detected situations relating to specific groups show that the majority of foreign citizens who were refused international protection do not wish to return to their country of origin, hence, usually they refuse that kind of assistance.

Other examples are those of Asian and middle-east communities that do not have a strong culture of association among them and, therefore, the language might be a barrier. So far, IOM's endeavours to involve these communities have not produced the desired results.

Section 3: National legislation and policy on the dissemination of information on (voluntary) return [Maximum 2 pages]

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.

Political guidelines in this regard are enshrined in the Immigration Act (article 139) and in the Implementing Protocol between the Portuguese State and IOM. As already mentioned above, the provisions and rules guiding information dissemination regarding voluntary return are a competence of IOM that applies them in the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme.

Information provided by the Programme points out the candidates' rights and duties, as well as the requirements they must fulfil in order to be eligible to the Programme. The candidate is also informed on the possibility of receiving support to reintegration in his/her country of origin, more specifically regarding the amounts and conditions.

Foreign citizens accepted in the Programme are paid the airline ticket and provided with €50 pocket money. The possibility of reintegration in the country of origin is considered up to maximum amount of €1.500 that shall be assigned in accordance with each candidate needs. This funding is limited to 60 foreign citizens per year.

Since 2001, programmes for certain categories and nationalities of migrants (Guinea-Bissau and Brazil nationals) have been developed. In this context, in 2014 IOM in partnership with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality [CIG - *Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género*], the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (United Kingdom), the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Criminal Intelligence Service (Austria) and the Attorney General Office (Spain) set off the CARE project.

Largely funded by the European Return Fund, this project aims at providing an individualised assistance to victims of trafficking in Austria, Spain, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom, as regards return and reintegration in their countries and communities of origin. The project aims at providing a coordinated and integrated action for assisting victims of trafficking in three different stages, more specifically: pre-departure, post-arrival and reintegration. It requires a comprehensive support, based on each person's individual needs, thus smoothing the transition process

and reducing the risk of recurrence in other situations of trafficking. By adopting an assistance strategy focused on the victim, the project expects to support 130 victims of trafficking in human beings, including 10 unaccompanied minors.

Finally, one should mention that IOM has insisted that the option Assisted Voluntary Return is deemed similar to other existing options, especially as regards contexts associated to vulnerable groups, such as victims of trafficking in human beings.

IOM provides information, either periodically or when requested, on the Assisted Voluntary Return projects to all actors involved, privileging the sharing of information material and by arranging information sessions for experts.

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.

When a foreign citizen holder of a valid travel document is detected as illegally-staying, he/she is notified to voluntarily leave national territory, and is informed of the legal time limit to do so, as well as of the legal provisions that enable him/her to appeal this decision.

If the citizen does not speak Portuguese, he/she is ensured that all information will be provided in a language that he/she understands.

In situations where the citizen has economical difficulties which prevent him/her of complying with the decision of leaving the territory, he/she is referred to IOM and provided with all the necessary contacts. Quite frequently, SEF establishes contact with IOM with a view to ensure a monitoring of the situation.

Nevertheless, if it is the case of a citizen without legal documents, he/she cannot, on a first stage, be notified to voluntarily depart. In this case, a procedure for forced removal is initiated. Without prejudice of the afore-stated, the citizen may always ask for IOM's support to voluntarily return to his/her country of origin. Furthermore, shall there be any alterations to the citizen's conditions, more specifically as regards his/her legal documents, the afore-mentioned decision may be changed, thus enabling the citizen the possibility to enjoy the assisted voluntary return support.

The procedure is the same as for foreign citizens who have had their application for international protection refused.

Q9. Did the above-described legislation and policy change at all as a result of the adoption and transposition of the Return Directive⁵?

Portuguese policy action and more specifically the legal framework governing assistance matters have always defended and guided their procedures based on the principle of a dignified and sustainable return of foreign citizens, especially for those who are undeniably in more vulnerable situations.

In actual terms, action in matters of assisted removal is operated under the partnership between Portuguese authorities and IOM, by means of the 'ARVoRE' Project - Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme - in force since 1997. Since 2001 is in force the Implementing Protocol signed between the Portuguese State and IOM.

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.

Nothing to report.

Section 4: Overall national approach to disseminating information on (voluntary) return [Max. 12 pages]

4.1 ACTORS INVOLVED IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON (VOLUNTARY) RETURN

Q11. Which **national authorities** responsible for the return of irregular migrants⁶ play a role in disseminating information on (voluntary) return, either as part of the processes outlined in section 3 or otherwise?

Please complete the text box below this question.

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.

IOM is responsible for implementing the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme and for its direct dissemination to all actors and interested parties. As already mentioned in Q5, the adopted dissemination strategy gives priority to a direct action through IOM services and indirect action through the Information and

⁵ 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*.

⁶ See Section 2.1 of the Background to this Common Template for a definition of these authorities.

Advice Network. Established in 2007, presently it has the collaboration of about 60 focal points throughout national territory⁷. In addition to dissemination of information regarding assistance to return, this network also forwards and manages all cases together with IOM.

Ever since the end of 2014, IOM has invested in the diversification of its action as concerns the dissemination of information on this type of assistance, aiming at attracting other relevant actors that, albeit indirectly, may be involved in the process.

Accordingly, between the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015, IOM promoted a series of meetings with potential new partners and/or actors, aiming at providing all the useful information regarding the Programme, and also divulged it to a wide range of organisations and bodies.

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

⁷ CNAIs: Lisbon, Porto and Faro; Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Lisbon; CAPELA Association in Portimão; Reception Centre João Paulo II (Coimbra); Secretariat for Migration of Funchal diocese; CLAIs: Aveiro; Barreiro; Beja; Braga; Chaves; Laranjeiro; Leiria; Montijo; Setúbal; Seixal; Sintra; Viseu; SEF's Regional Delegations: Aveiro; Beja; Braga; Bragança; Cascais; Castelo Branco; Évora; Leiria; Lisbon, Vale do Tejo and Alentejo – NRAF; Portalegre; Portimão; Santarém; Setúbal; Tavira; Viana do Castelo; Vila Real; SEF Regional Directorate for the Centre - Coimbra; SEF Regional Directorate for the North - Porto; SEF Regional Directorate for the Algarve – Faro; Regional Directorate for Communities of the Azores; SEF Regional Directorate for Madeira – Funchal.

Table 1. Other actors disseminating information on (voluntary) return, their role and the rationale for their involvement

Actor	Y/N	Role that the actor plays in disseminating information voluntary return	Nature of / rationale for involvement
NGOs / IOs dealing with return counselling and/or implementing AVR schemes	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material; information, advice and referral of cases to IOM	Focal Points in the Information and Advice Network
Other NGOs / civil society organisations (e.g. migrant rights groups, migrant-led organisations and other advocacy groups)	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material; referral to IOM and management of the situation; information, advice and referral of cases to IOM	Focal Points in the Information and Advice Network
Diaspora groups	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material	NA
Faith-based groups	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material	NA
Migrant-led groups	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material	NA
Other community groups	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material	NA
Libraries	N		
Social / health / education services	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material	NA
Case workers	N		
Legal advisors	N		
Ombudsman / citizens advice bureaus	N		
(Advisory services of) trade unions / employer	N		

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associations			
Embassies (third-country and EU)	Y	Indirect dissemination to other actors and potential beneficiaries; disclosure of information material	
Shopkeepers / Internet café workers / etc.	N		
Other actors (specify)	N		

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.

Table 2. Tools used in the Member State for disseminating information on (voluntary) return

	Y/N	Description (please be brief, using bullet points) including whether this is a current, past or future tool	Actor(s) designing funding	/ Actor(s) managing delivering	/ Link to further information
Leaflets / brochures	Y	Past, present and future - leaflets on the Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme	IOM	IOM e pontos de contacto da rede parceiros	NA
Poster campaigns	Y	Past, present and future -poster identifying the contact network for advice on the programme	IOM	IOM	NA
Media campaigns					
Websites	N	IOM Portugal does not have a specific website dedicated to matters of Voluntary Return. The information is available at IOM International website: http://www.iom.int/ and at the partners' websites			
Dedicated social media pages (e.g. Facebook page for returnees or for diaspora groups)	N	IOM Portugal does not have a specific Facebook page dedicated to Voluntary Return Programme. The information is shared through IOM's Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/iommigration			
Online discussion forums	N				
Helplines / info lines	N				
Drop-in clinic (face-to-face)	N				

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Community visits and	N	There are no community visits: the involvement is made by means of information sessions.			
Other tools	N				

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.

In the Portuguese case, the above-mentioned aspects are part of the activities of disclosure and dissemination of information on voluntary return.

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 engines⁸ 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.

⁸ 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.

The existing information materials are available, as for the leaflets, in Portuguese and Russian. Posters are only available in Portuguese.

The visual presentation of the information materials is in general appealing, assuming visibility by the effortless identification and recognition both by the institutions/organisations and by the migrants.

Leaflets are available at IOM, front-office services of the partners of the Information and Advice Network, Embassies and other actors that directly get involved with communities of migrants.

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

	National authorities responsible for return	Organisations with an official role in implementing and/or promoting AVR(R) programmes	Diaspora groups, faith-based groups, migrant-led groups, other community groups	Case workers	Legal advisors	Other (please specify)
The legal obligations of the returnee (i.e. their status, their obligation to return and how they can ensure compliance with return decisions)	IOM - All information is available at the official website. It may also be provided to the foreign citizen by telephone, e-mail or in person	IOM - Leaflets / Direct information	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary		
Information on AVR(R) programmes available in the Member State	IOM - All information is provided by telephone and e-mail, whenever requested or in situation of notification for voluntary depart from national territory	IOM - Leaflets / Direct information	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary		

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Information on eligibility conditions for AVR(R) programmes	IOM: Information provided by telephone and e-mail, whenever requested or in situations of notification for voluntary depart from national territory	IOM - Leaflets / Direct information	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary		
Where the irregular migrant should go for more information (signposting)	NA	NA	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary	Information is provided directly and by leaflets, when necessary		
Other voluntary return options (i.e. options for voluntary return without assistance)	NA	NA	NA	NA		
What the irregular migrant can expect at the airport on returning	NA	IOM - Provides information and assistance under the scope of support to reintegration	NA	NA		
What the irregular migrant can expect in the country of return (e.g. registration with third-country authorities labour market access, housing, etc.)		IOM - Provides information and assistance under the scope of support to	Direct information	NA		

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		reintegration				
Individually tailored information ⁹						
Other information (specify)						

⁹ 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?

The approach is based on the disclosure and dissemination of direct information, within a framework of support to reintegration, however without a notion on the range that such information may have in this target-group, given that the available instruments do not embrace such purpose.

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.

Please see answer above, Q17.

Section 5 – Case studies on information provision to irregular migrants with whom the authorities do not have contact [Max. 4 pages]

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.

As already mentioned in this document, in Portugal the dissemination of information is carried out by IOM in the context of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme. Between 2010 and 2014 there was no other specific project aimed at strengthening this activity.

Nevertheless, IOM considers that disclosure and dissemination of information regarding this matter is extremely important, thus including it in its activities regarding the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme.

With regard to statistics, there is no data and/or studies that may bring added value on this matter.

Section 6 – Effectiveness of different approaches to disseminating information on (voluntary) return [Max. 4 pages]

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 data¹⁰.

No relevant information to mention.

¹⁰ 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.

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.

The access to information is mostly made through organisations/bodies that provide some kind of assistance to migrants. Nevertheless, it is important to note the relevance of the role played by friends/family in this process. Even though between 2010 and 2014 they have lost some of previous significance, they are still a primary source of information regarding return.

It is hard to establish to what extent the information is in fact understood by beneficiaries. However, all information materials are created in line with the target-audience, and the information provided by IOM's staff also takes into account the need to adapt the speech. In both cases, information materials are very comprehensive, enclosing information on the many aspects and facets of the programme.

The information is crucial in the decision making process and is used as a support to the elucidation of questions about the programme.

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 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.).

Nothing to report.

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).

Nothing to report.

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).

Nothing to report.

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.

An analysis to the work carried out notices that, despite the effort made by all the parties in an effective information dissemination that serves all actors involved, it is important to diversify the activities on the basis of which scope and target-audience they address.

It is also important to assess the perception that organisations/bodies have on the programme and the disseminated materials, and what is the visibility and impact that they are able to achieve.

Finally, it is important to have an updated strategic political vision that enables the adequacy of the promotion and access to the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme in accordance with migratory situations, which are not constant.

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

	Year					source	Method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy
	2010 (total)	2011 (total)	2012 (total)	2013 (total)	2014 (total)		
a. Third-country nationals returning by physical transportation out of the Member State, on the basis of a return decision (forced return) ¹¹	601	661	620	420	372	SEF/SEFSTAT	Administrative data collection
b. Number of third-country nationals returning voluntarily within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision¹² (voluntary departure)	47	28	60	43	41	SEF/ SEF STAT	Administrative data collection
c. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVR packages (assisted voluntary return)						SEF/SEF STAT	
d. Number of irregularly-staying third-country nationals returning via AVRR packages (assisted voluntary return and reintegration) – where different from (c)	460	556	754	672	408	SEF/SEF STAT	

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

	Year					source	Method used to reach the estimates, as well as any caveats as to their likely accuracy
	2010 (total)	2011 (total)	2012 (total)	2013 (total)	2014 (total)		
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).							
b. Number of irregular migrants whose residence on the territory has never been known to the authorities (clandestine entry)							

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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

Sources of info / method		Used? (Y/N)	List the sources: for secondary sources, cross-refer to bibliography; for primary sources list the stakeholders involved	Type of information provided (refer to question numbers / sections if useful)
Evaluations				
Studies		Y	2009 EMN Study "Assisted return and reintegration in Third Countries: Programmes, strategies and incentives"	
Other reports				
Legislation		Y	Act 29/2012 of August 9, first amendment to Act 23/2007 of July 4	
Policy documents		Y	Immigration, Borders and Asylum Report 2011 to 2014 [RIFA – <i>Relatório de Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo</i>]	
'Mystery shopper'				
Interviews with stakeholders (list the stakeholders)				
Consultation with national stakeholder (list them)		Y	SEF/IOM	
Consultation with national network		Y	SEF/IOM	
Other (specify)				