



Ana, a young pregnant unaccompanied minor, returned voluntarily to Brazil where she resumed her education. [Read](#) her story.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)

Key Trends

From Belgium

From January to June 2019, IOM facilitated 1147 voluntary returns from Belgium to 71 different countries of origin, with Brazil, Romania, Ukraine, Iraq and Georgia as main destination countries. 62% were male and 38% female. Specific attention is given to the voluntary return of vulnerable persons like Victims of Trafficking (6 persons), Unaccompanied Migrant Children (7), Aged-Out UMC (4) and persons with medical needs (62). From all voluntary returns, 277 persons also requested additional reintegration support via IOM in 54 different countries of origin with Iraq, Afghanistan and Albania as main destination countries. Interested beneficiaries were mainly referred to IOM by Fedasil return desks and reception centers, followed by the NGO partners, and Red Cross reception centers. Some migrants also introduced their file directly at IOM Brussels office.

From Luxembourg

IOM facilitated 59 voluntary returns from Luxembourg between January and June 2019. The top countries of return were Georgia (26), Iraq (6) and Kosovo¹ (6). Male returnees represented 81% of the total number of beneficiaries and female returnees 19%. In addition, 4 were medically escorted including a medical case who was escorted to China via ambulance flight. [Read](#) the story.

¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Country Specific Approaches (CSA) to Reintegration Assistance, Counselling and Visibility in Belgium



Under the CSA project financed by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Fedasil, aimed at increasing returnees skills set and employability for reintegration with more sustainable impact, returnees to Afghanistan, Albanian and Iraq are provided with skills-building opportunities (Technical and Vocational Education and Training - TVET), subsidies to learn skills on-the-job, and entrepreneurship/micro-business trainings); with livelihood opportunities (potential to finance partnerships in social enterprises or cooperation initiatives managed by returnees were discussed); and with psycho-social support (IOM lead Socio- Economic Orientation courses with groups of returnees, and provide opportunities for returnees to network and identify mentors).

During the first 6 months of 2019, 14 Afghans certified in entrepreneurship following two one day curriculum courses on “Micro Business Management Training” delivered by the “United Youth Consultancy & Services” in Kabul and in Nangarhar Province. Following returnees’ needs and feedback and IOM’s evaluation, the course is being extended to 5 days with an extra focus on psychosocial support. A first session took place from 14 to 19 July and a few more sessions will follow after. A video was produced and will shortly be available on the IOM website.

In Iraq, already 29 returnees from Belgium participated in [socio-economic courses and psycho-social orientation](#) delivered by IOM in Baghdad, Duhok, and Sulaymaniyah, provided by both IOM Staff and guest lecturers. The beneficiaries received a manual to refer to during the course of their reintegration. Furthermore, during the first half of 2019 already 10 returnees opted for [TVET courses](#) of 1 to 3 months in diverse subjects/skill sets such as in business management, English language, barbering and hairdressing, mobile phone maintenance, and car mechanics classes.

In Albania, IOM Tirana is currently assisting 6 Albanians with TVET to increase returnee employability in the sectors of hospitality, secretarial work, call centers, real estate, and tourism (i.e. English and German language courses), as well as in the construction sector. The video is available [here](#).

For more information on the project, kindly contact Jacqueline Hall, jhall@iom.int.

Study Visit from Iraq and Afghanistan



From 18 until 29 March, IOM invited 4 colleagues coming from Iraq and Afghanistan to participate in a study visit organized in the frame of the CSA project.

The wide range of activities allowed IOM staff from countries of origin to understand how the asylum procedure, reception and voluntary return program works in Belgium. Additionally, through information sessions and meetings, the project directly targeted a total of 54 migrants and 61 social assistants, government officials, embassy staff and first or second line workers. Numerous other beneficiaries were informed more indirectly.

The overall visit was well received on both sides. The importance of knowledge sharing was presented as an important element in the successful implementation of the project, in coordination with the partners in Belgium and the IOM offices in the countries of origin.

Administrative Assistance in the Balkans

The ‘Administrative Assistance’ project is developed as an alternative assistance to vulnerable cases that return voluntarily to Western Balkan countries, i.e. Serbia, Albania, Kosovo¹, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia. As these returnees cannot benefit from the regular reintegration assistance programme (due to the visa-free regime of most of these countries), a specific supporting mechanism has been developed to provide administrative assistance with obtaining personal documents, school enrolment, guidance and referral for job seeking, referral to different local services, housing, etc.

With the aim of enhancing the visibility of the project within the voluntary return network in Belgium, Fedasil, in coordination with IOM Brussels and Caritas, is planning to organize a Balkan event in Belgium during the first week of November 2019. The objective of the event is to bring together IOM and Caritas respective AVRR focal points and counsellors from North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and Kosovo¹ to meet with Fedasil, IOM and Caritas counterparts in Belgium to exchange on the implementation and the content of this project.

From January to June 2019, 45 families and vulnerable persons have been assisted with the administrative support by local IOM missions in Kosovo¹ (9), Albania (20), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), the Republic of North Macedonia (5) and Serbia (8).

For more information on the project, kindly contact Arta Hajra: ahajra@iom.int

Joint Complementary Mechanism for Sustainable Reintegration in Brazil



Since January 2019, IOM Brussels, under the management of IOM Portugal and together with IOM Ireland and IOM Brazil, is implementing a 2-year project called 'Joint Complementary Mechanism for Sustainable Reintegration in Brazil'. Funded by AMIF and co-funded by the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), the project aims to contribute to a more informed and sustainable reintegration process in Brazil, through a complementary joint reintegration model. This mechanism reinforces the support provided by existing AVRR programmes implemented in Portugal, Belgium and Ireland. Strengthening the connection between pre-departure and post-arrival counselling, the project sets up a referral and coordination mechanism that promotes a more sustainable reintegration for returning migrants in Brazil.

The project focuses on the three main Brazilian States to which migrants have returned to in the past years, namely: Goiás, Minas Gerais and São Paulo. The support is available to all Brazilian returnees.

For more information on the project, kindly contact Charlotte Crahay: ccrahay@iom.int.

Job placement support in the Caucasus and Western Africa

Within the Belgian AVRR programme, funded by Fedasil, returnees returning to the Caucasus and Western African region can receive additional support in being linked to trainings or internships available locally. IOM missions in Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation (Caucasus region) and Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea and Niger (Western Africa) are in direct contact with governmental and non-governmental training and employment agencies, development actors and the private sector. Building on these networks and activities developed under the EU Trust Fund (in West and Central Africa), returnees can receive additional counseling and be referred to local training and development programmes.

In 2019, 21 persons so far have been identified for additional support under the Job Placement activity in Armenia (4), Burkina Faso (3), Georgia (6), Guinea (1) and the Russian Federation (7). In the next months, IOM missions are also planning to organize group trainings for returnees from Belgium, focusing on employment and entrepreneurship possibilities in their respective country of origin.

For more information on the project, kindly contact Karel Michiels: kmichiels@iom.int.

Job Placement Activities & Monitoring Mission Niger



Collective reintegration project in welding and metalwork in Tahoua. © IOM, 2018

From 28 February to 4 March, IOM Belgium and Fedasil conducted a monitoring mission in Niger. The mission was organized in the frame of the Belgian AVRR programme, funded by Fedasil, and which entails a Job Placement component to strengthen the links with the local government, private sector and development cooperation actors in the Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Russian Federation) and West African (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Niger) regions. The aim of the monitoring mission was to gain a better insight in the collective and community-based projects developed under the EU Trust Fund return initiatives and to identify possible synergies with the traditional AVRR programmes. The mission was also linked to the Job Fair in Tahoua (2-3 March), which was organized by IOM Niger together with the local incubator CIPMEN and the university of Tahoua and financed by the European Union.

The job fair reunited more than 6000 visitors and 133 local businesses during two days with members of the diaspora, private sector, government authorities and young entrepreneurs. Additionally, meetings with beneficiaries supported with collective reintegration projects, showed the importance for an integrated approach to reintegration. In Niamey, the delegation had the chance to learn more on IOM Niger's "Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM)" to respond to the different migration related challenges in Niger and also visited a Transit center for women and children and beneficiary from the Belgian programme, who received additional support under the Job Placement component to develop her kindergarten in Niamey.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Job Placement-related activities of IOM Belgium.

Return of Unaccompanied Minor Children (UMC)



From January until June 2019, IOM assisted 11 Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) and ex-UMC to return voluntarily to their home country from Belgium. This number includes 4 aged-out UMC and 7 UMC. The ex-UMC were respectively from Brazil (1), Iran (1), Albania (1) and Macedonia (1). Comparingly, the UMC were from Lebanon (2) – Palestinian refugees –, Ivory Coast (1), Peru (1), Albania (2) and Burkina Faso (1).

Albania remains the top country with request of AVRR regarding UMC.

10 out of the 11 beneficiaries are currently being assisted by IOM with their reintegration project, which include schooling, vocational training, income generating activity.

Return of migrants with heavy medical needs

From January to June 2019, 4 migrants with heavy medical needs have been assisted by IOM in Brussels. For migrants with specific needs, IOM makes sure to provide adequate travel assistance by working closely with airline companies and a pool of medical and social escorts. Hence, out of the 4 medical escort missions, 2 were organized with the support of 2 medical staff composed of one nurse and one physician each. In addition, during the same period IOM Brussels has organized other escort missions for migrants with various types of vulnerabilities (elderly persons, persons with light disabilities, etc). Travel is facilitated until the final destination with adapted onward transportation if needed. Based on specific criteria, some of the vulnerable migrants have benefitted from additional reintegration assistance under the Adapted Medical Assistance After Return (AMAAR) project. It has been developed by Fedasil, in partnership with IOM and Caritas, and in response to the increasing number of migrant candidates suffering from a significant medical condition and willing to return to their country of origin.

For more information on the project, kindly contact Valérie Keller: vkeller@iom.int.

Return of victims of trafficking (VoT)

Between January and June 2019, IOM has assisted 5 victims of trafficking to voluntarily return from Belgium to their home countries (Hungary and Romania). Following IOM's procedures and guidelines, this was done in close cooperation with the 3 official NGO shelters for victims of trafficking (Surya, Pag-Asa, Payoke), following tailored needs and risk assessments.

During the last six months, IOM Belgium was also requested to provide general information on AVRR to victims of trafficking who are being assisted by these shelters. This information can help them to decide whether they prefer to stay in Belgium or request assistance for a voluntary return.

Reintegration Stories



Dima, Iraq

Dima, a young Iraqi girl, was only three years old when her parents decided to migrate from Iraq. After a perilous journey through land and sea, Dima and her family arrived in Belgium and settled in a center as they applied for asylum. After three years as migrants, and having received a negative decision on their request, they decided to return to Iraq. Dima and her parents had counseling sessions with IOM after their arrival to Iraq and discussed their reintegration plan thoroughly. Dima was enrolled in a summer school to help her interact with other children. [Read more.](#)



Anahit, Armenia

Anahit left Armenia in September 2017 due to medical problems. She found the life in Belgium to be expensive, and medical treatments did not live up to her expectations. In addition, she missed her family back in Armenia. Through IOM's return partner in Mechelen, she received information about the possibility to return. Anahit returned to her home village Oganavan in July 2018, reuniting with her husband and son. She used the reintegration assistance fund to buy cattle for her family business. IOM Armenia, through the Job Placement Project, is currently looking into trainings and means on how to improve the production and conservation processes of milk and cheese. [Read more.](#)

Escort Missions



Morocco

Mrs. Larmoudi arrived in Belgium in 2011 to reunite with her daughter and seek for medical help as she was suffering from several diseases. After 7 years, Mrs. Larmoudi's daughter couldn't support her mother financially anymore and they decided that it would be better to return to Morocco where her second daughter would take over the care. IOM assisted to organize her voluntary return. Accompanied by an IOM operational escort during the journey, she arrived safely in Rabat where she was very happy to be reunited with her family. After return, IOM supported her reintegration through the AMAAR project in order to receive all necessary medical support.



© FAI Flight Ambulance

Luxembourg – Ambulance Flight Return to China

On 6 June, IOM operated a highly challenging AVRR operation, involving the return of an irregular migrant from Luxembourg to Tieling, China. The migrant had been suffering from a severe health condition, arriving in Luxembourg in 2017. He was admitted a year later to the Ettelbruck (CHdN) hospital suffering from several medical issues including brain haemorrhage, paralysis and an infectious disease requiring quarantine. Residing with another Chinese family, his condition was reported to be weak but stable.

Expressing his will to return to his country of origin through legal help, the migrant’s medical condition was judged too severe to operate his return through conventional air travel. IOM liaised with his family to arrange his post-arrival and ensured he would be able to support himself. The IOM was also warranted to organise an ambulance flight as he required constant medical attention during his travel. Picking him up from a hospital in Luxembourg, two doctors and two nurses assisted the migrant through over 21 hours of air travel, including 3 refuelling stops and two medical emergencies along the flight. Arriving in China at around 2 am, the migrant was transferred to another hospital and placed within the custody of his family, who has assumed his care ever since.

MEET MUNKHJIN



Munkhjin arrived in Belgium in December 2018, where he joined his mother. After having stayed two months in Belgium, he could not get used to life there. He preferred to return to his father and friends in his home country, Mongolia.

IOM assisted to organize the assisted voluntary return of the 13 year old boy. Accompanied by an IOM operational escort during the journey, he arrived safely in Ulaanbaatar where he was very happy to be reunited with his family and friends.

In 2018, almost 3,000 persons departed voluntarily from Belgium, among which 58 to Mongolia. A total of 23 Unaccompanied Migrant Children were assisted within the AVRR project from Belgium.

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Joint IOM - Fedasil Mission to Jordan and Egypt



© Belgian Embassy in Jordan and Iraq, 2019

During the week of 20 May, a delegation of IOM and Fedasil management representatives conducted a fact-finding mission to Jordan and Egypt. This 4-day visit was meant to assess the general migration situation in those 2 countries as well as in the whole Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and to strengthen potential contacts and partnerships. It was a good opportunity to see IOM’s capacity in terms of voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement activities.

The delegation had meetings with IOM in Amman and Cairo, with the Belgian Ambassador to Jordan and Iraq, the UN Resident Coordinator and other important stakeholders. A visit was also organized to the Azraq refugee camp, located about 90 kilometres off the Syrian border, hosting over 35,000 Syrian refugees.

Info Sessions and Events on Voluntary Return



IOM-Caritas Partner Day

On 28 March, a partner day for all specific activities within the CSA project was organized in close cooperation with Caritas International. After a general introduction by Fedasil on the Voluntary Return programme in Belgium and an overview of all countries/regions participating the, almost 100 participants, were split up in 5 respective working groups. IOM's colleagues from Iraq and Afghanistan each gave a workshop on the activities implemented within this project both in their respective countries.

Colleagues from IOM Iraq explained the importance of the Socio-Economic Orientation sessions and the gave an overview of the topics that are being discussed during sessions as such. These sessions are offered to all returnees from Belgium that returned during 2018-2019. Colleagues from IOM Afghanistan presented their Micro-Business trainings that are also free of charge and accessible to all returnees from Belgium (returned in 2018 and 2019). They further stressed the importance of the psychosocial aspect that sessions as such have for the beneficiaries. During the gathering, the colleagues from the respective countries of return had the opportunity to interact with partners in the Belgian migration field, which often led to interesting exchanges. The workshop and presence of IOM and Caritas partners was very well received by our partners and counterparts in Belgium.

Croix-Rouge de Belgique

On 12 April, IOM was cordially invited by *Croix-Rouge de Belgique* to give a session on voluntary return during one of their thematic days for social workers. The gathering focused on 'preparing the migrants for the life after the center in the event of a negative decision' and included presentations of other participants as well, for instance the NGO *Point d'Appui* working with irregular migrants in Liège. The AVRR programme was presented to the social workers. The question 'how to talk about voluntary return with migrants' was also addressed and some reintegration stories were shared with the participants. The session also gave time for questions & answers. Around 30 social workers from different Croix-Rouge centers were present.



Azraq refugee camp, Jordan © IOM 2019

Assisted Movement Operations

Resettlement Assistance

In 2019 so far, 233 refugees travelled to Belgium within the frame of the resettlement programme. All 233 refugees are of Syrian nationality. The majority of them (215) are coming from Turkey while the remaining travelled from Jordan and Lebanon. IOM carried out a fit-to-travel check to all refugees, assisted with the visa collection and organised the transfer to Belgium. Since the onset of the Syria crisis, IOM has been involved in the coordination mechanisms for humanitarian response and has continued to operate ongoing resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes from within the region. IOM's resettlement operations in countries neighbouring Syria, as well as in Syria itself have continued to support refugees and states, including pre-departure health assessments, pre-departure logistics for visa processing and travel documents, pre-departure orientation sessions and movement management.

For more information, please consult the [IOM Resettlement Booklet 2019](#).

Family Reunification

In recent years, we have seen an ever-increasing number of people travelling under the auspices of IOM in the frame of their family reunification to Belgium. From January to June 2019 included, 214 Afghans, from both Afghanistan and Iran, were assisted by IOM to travel to Belgium. A further 18 Somali nationals (travelling from Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya) and 6 Rwandan nationals (travelling from Uganda) were assisted. This makes up a total of 238 persons who called upon IOM for assistance in organizing their travel to Belgium. Amongst them, 9 minor children travelling alone, were assisted.

For more information, please visit our [website](#).

Family Assessment of Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC)

Since January 2019, IOM assisted the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs' Immigration Directorate of Luxembourg (MoFA) with nine family assessment cases of UMC present on the Luxembourgish territory, including of three UMC from Albania, three from Iraq, one from Algeria and one from Morocco. At a donor meeting held on 12 June 2019, the MoFA confirmed its interest in continuing the collaboration with IOM on the family assessment of UMC. In principle, the project's implementation will be renewed for an additional year as of September 2019.



Beneficiaries of the project 'Enhancing Tunisian youth employability', Brussels © IOM 2018

Labour Migration

Tunisia

The project “Enhancing Tunisian youth employability through vocational apprenticeships and professional internships in Belgian companies”, funded and supported by the Belgian Government, started its implementation in March 2018 and is running until October 2019. The project aims at supporting the efforts of the Tunisian government to reduce the high unemployment rates among young Tunisian nationals by offering six-month internships and apprenticeships in Belgium to a group of 30 selected beneficiaries, to enable them to reinforce their knowledge, acquire new professional competences, and increase their probability of finding a job in the Tunisian labour market upon return.



With all the beneficiaries undergoing their internships in Belgium, IOM organised on 20 February a one-day training on soft skills and their importance on the workplace. The training was organised in response to a gap in the beneficiaries' knowledge on the topic highlighted by the monthly reports received from the interns and the companies.

On 30 March, the first 15 beneficiaries who completed their internship in Belgium returned to Tunisia for the second phase of the project, which started with follow-up training on soft skills held in Tunis from 15 to 17 April, complementing the first one they had in Belgium.



On 29 April, upon completion of the training, the beneficiaries received their certificates of participation at a reception organised by IOM Tunisia. Participants included Mr. Vincent Viaene, First Counsellor at the Belgian Embassy to the Republic of Tunisia, representatives of the enterprises involved in the project, and of IOM Tunisia. By 30 June, 16 of the beneficiaries currently back to Tunisia already have a confirmed employment. In Belgium, 7 beneficiaries will continue their internships until the beginning of August and will receive the same support and training as the others upon return in Tunisia. A closing conference presenting the achievements of the project will be held on 12 September in collaboration with the Belgian Immigration Office.



Participating associations and their coach, training session, module 1, Women 4Dev Academy project © IOM 2019

Migration and Development

Empowering Female Diaspora Associations

In December 2017, IOM Belgium launched its [Women 4DEV Academy](#) as a short-term pilot project to empower African diaspora women's associations in Belgium by strengthening their role and capacities as effective actors in the development of their countries of origin. Financially supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation, the project ended on 31 May and involved 11 African diaspora associations together with students and young graduates taking the role of accompanying coaches. Women 4DEV Academy allowed the associations to engage more efficiently in projects through an extended capacity-building programme composed of three training modules on project management communication and visibility, and fundraising. Through these modules, participating women developed their abilities in marketing their associations, keeping financial records, and managing projects. For an inside look, please click [here](#). The overarching goal of these trainings was to provide practical skills and knowledge, in an effort of improving the associations' perception as drivers and potential partners for development.



On 26 March, the non-profit organization [PluriElles](#) organized an international conference in Brussels aiming at discussing the leadership role of African women and Afro-descendants. IOM RO Brussels took part in a panel debate 'Regards croisés', together with other key speakers. A total of 100 participants took part in the event, representing various diaspora associations, political representatives, non-profit organizations and international organizations. Under the patronage of MEP Cécile Kyenge, the event was sponsored by our IOM Country Office in Brussels (as part of the Women 4Dev Academy project), [Wallonie-Bruxelles International](#), the [Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie](#), and the [Embassy of Canada](#) among others.

[Vision Channel Africa](#) (VCA) covered the event and made a small movie which can be viewed [here](#). For more information on the Women 4DEV Academy, please click [here](#).



On Friday 24 May, the project's beneficiaries, IOM staff, donors and press were brought together for a closing event at Wallonie-Bruxelles International in Brussels.

As participants and coaches presented their lessons learned from the training modules and exchanged on their personal experiences, several musical interludes and a festive cocktail animated the evening which had the final purpose of facilitating network and potentially new collaborations.

The video of the closing ceremony is available [online](#).

Diaspora Engagement in Belgium and Germany to support TVET in Rwanda



© IOM 2019 / Emma Masabo, IPRC Karongi, District Karongi, Rwanda

Based on the 2018 Rwandan diaspora mapping exercise conducted by IOM in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom, findings showed that the majority (about 90%) of the diaspora members is willing to contribute to the social-economic development of Rwanda but lacks the information or the opportunities to do so. IOM, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda, is currently implementing a new project seeking to engage the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium and Germany in supporting the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in their country of origin.

As capacities of TVET institutions to provide labour market-tailored and employable skills trainings in Rwanda have proven to be limited, the aim is to strengthen and guide them through a ToT model handled by qualified diaspora members in areas such as ICT, renewable energy, engineering, agriculture and transport.

The project will also focus on building the capacities of the diaspora members that will train the trainers through ToT in developing 10 ad-hoc pilot project proposals to be implemented in Rwanda and related to their areas of expertise. IOM Rwanda is currently undertaking a feasibility study on the needs of TVET schools and institutions on the ground. The following step will include diaspora outreach campaigns both in Belgium and Germany in an effort to attract qualified professionals for engagement.

Other projects

LINK IT



On 12 July, IOM Belgium and IOM United Kingdom organized the [closing conference](#) of the LINK IT project at the Ateliers des Tanneurs in Brussels. It gathered about 80 representatives from EU institutions, International Organizations, national governments, and civil society.

The event provided an overview of the successes of the project and presented the findings of IOM's Syrian refugee skills profiling. It also gave the opportunity to share refugee experiences from across the project and to facilitate workshops and conversations around refugee integration from across the EU countries involved.

The [LINK IT](#) project is an EU-funded project that has been running in Germany, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom for the past 18 months. The project aimed to link pre-departure and post-arrival support to facilitate the socio-economic integration for resettled Syrian refugees in the EU.

Fostering Across Borders (FAB)

The Fostering Across Borders (FAB) project is funded by the European Commission, DG Justice (European Union's Right, Equality and Citizenship Programme, 2014-2020). It aims at improving & expanding the quality of Family-Based Care (FBC) of UMC with dedicated foster carers who will be trained and supported to address challenges and specific vulnerabilities UMC face. The project started on 15 January 2018 and is implemented in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland and the United Kingdom.



In Belgium, the project partners are [Fedasil](#), [Minor-Ndako](#) and [Mentor-Escale](#). In Luxembourg, IOM works in partnership with the Luxembourgish Red Cross. Since the beginning of 2019, IOM Belgium, together with its implementing partners, has revised and adapted the training package to fit the Belgian local context. Following this, 4 Train-the-trainers (ToT) sessions were organized in order to pilot the training package using a feedback or a demonstration model. Two ToT were held by each partner, training professionals to become trainers on FBC for UMC. Furthermore, Mentor-Escale trained experienced Foster carers with the purpose of organizing joint training sessions to include more field experience in the upcoming training session(s) for new foster carers.

Currently, the training package is being further improved and adapted based on the remarks made during the ToT sessions. The training package is developed to be used by professionals to train new foster carers and will be made available by the end of the project in French and Dutch. Additionally, two information sessions on FBC for UMC were held in Brussels and Gent by Minor-Ndako and Pleegzorg Vlaanderen in order to recruit new foster carers. [A video](#) has been produced with the aim to promote family-based care for UMC, and hopefully, to recruit new foster carers as well. It will be soon available in Dutch and French on our Country Office [website](#).

The project will end mid-September with a final EU visibility event hold in Brussels on 10 September.

For more information on the project *Fostering Across Borders*, please visit [IOM EEA's website](#), where mappings and the training package will be available.

In Luxembourg, a second inter-stakeholders' meeting was organized on the 21st of January at the Luxembourgish Red Cross premises. The meeting gathered representatives of the Luxembourgish authorities (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Family and Integration and the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Childhood) as well as of the Red Cross, Caritas, and different reception centers. The meeting sought to provide a project update and to present the training tool kit to all stakeholders in an effort to collect their feedback and streamline their input into the concerned output. The toolkit underwent an adaptation phase throughout February and march and was piloted in April during the Train the Trainer session delivered by IOM staff to social workers within the Luxembourgish Red Cross' Foster Placement Unit.

PROTECT

IOM Belgium is part of a regional project called [PROTECT](#) - Preventing sexual and gender-based violence against migrants and strengthening support to victims. This project aims to support the coordination and/or adaptation of support services for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) victims and potential victims among refugees, migrants and asylum seekers (children and adults, including LGBTQI people). The project is funded by the EU's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020. As part of the project's first phase, a kick-off coordination meeting was organized in Budapest from 14 until 16 January. Among the participants were representatives from the 12 IOM COs participating in the project and IOM Regional Office in Brussels, as well as experts from the Latin-American Women's Rights Service, the SOGICA Project and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

IOM Belgium's partner in this project is the organization [Le Monde selon les femmes](#). In coordination with IOM, Le Monde selon les femmes developed a training tool on SGBV, and on sexual violence in particular. The training of first line actors will be rolled out at the end of the year.

New projects

MATCH

The project “Migration of African Talents through Capacity building and Hiring – MATCH”, developed by IOM Belgium, has been selected for funding by the European Commission (DG HOME – AMIF Fund). The project seeks to address labour market shortages in 4 EU Member States by enabling an estimated 210 migrants from Nigeria and Senegal to work for a period of 1-2 years in companies in Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg or the Netherlands where specific sectorial labour shortages have been identified - primarily the ICT, technology and digitalisation sectors. In addition to the mobility scheme, MATCH will implement complementary activities such as skills development, capacity building and knowledge sharing. The project is expected to start in late 2019 and will have an overall duration of 36 months.

Other initiatives and events

Millenium Film Festival



In partnership with the [Global Migration Film Festival](#), IOM Belgium & Luxembourg Chief of Mission, Mrs. L. Palatini, moderated the debate after the movie ‘[The Way Back](#)’ on 25 March, as part of the [Millenium International Documentary Festival 2019](#) official competition.

Hussein crossed lands, seas and borders to arrive in Brussels from Baghdad. A year later, he decided to go backwards. From Brussels to Athens, this road movie takes us along the migratory path of Hussein and of thousands of other migrants. [Read](#) Hussein's ‘I am a migrant’ story.

The movie won the Prize for Best Screenplay.

Study Visit Turkey

During the week of the 10th of June, IOM facilitated, in close cooperation with the Belgian Immigration Office, a study visit for a high level delegation from the Turkish Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) - Department Irregular Migration. The objective of this visit was to observe operational modalities used in Belgium for returns to countries of origin. The delegation was particularly interested in finding out more about the way Belgium uses biometrics in the process of identification and the Readmission Case Management Systems (RCMS) that are currently being piloted in Belgium. The delegation had the opportunity to test the different electronic exchange methods that are used in process of identification, which was well received. Additionally, several meetings with Belgian and EU counterparts were organized such as the Federal Police, the EURLO Network, DG Home and DG Near among others.

Educational Outreach

On an ad-hoc basis, IOM Brussels engages in educational activities. The office is part of an educational working group together with UNHCR, I.I.I.I and a number of Belgian NGOs. The office also provides guest lectures in schools.

On 15 February, IOM gave an introductory lecture on Migration and Diversity in Karel De Grote (KDG) College in Antwerp. The aim was to give an overview of the current migration dynamics and challenges. By giving a detailed look at the figures and trends, the info session also aimed to tackle prejudices related to migration issues and to better educate teachers to deal with diversity and to pay attention to this reality in classrooms.

On 23 March, IOM was invited as a guest speaker for the society of geography teachers (VLA – Vereniging voor Leraars Aardrijkskunde). The one-day congress discussED the topic of ‘Borders – International Migration in Classroom’. Fitting in the theme, IOM gave a lecture on migration trends and challenges, discussing routes, trends and difficulties to keep in mind when discussing migration.

Consular Round Table



Embassies provide assistance, through their consular services, to migrants who are willing to go home with the help of IOM. They also collaborate with IOM in the implementation of projects in different thematic areas, such as labour migration, migration and development or movements. To strengthen this collaboration and provide consular officials with up-to-date information on ongoing initiatives, IOM Belgium and IOM The Netherlands organized a Consular Round Table in Brussels on 14 June. The event gathered 20 diplomatic representatives and provided the opportunity to have fruitful exchanges with both IOM offices. [Read more.](#)

Gender

As the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, IOM strongly advocates for gender equality within its offices worldwide while also taking into account gender-specific migration trends in all its activities. IOM believes that a gender-specific approach can mean the difference between implementing a project that successfully addresses the specific needs and capacities of all IOM beneficiaries, and one that fails to do so and perpetuates inequality.

To increase the knowledge of all our Country Office (CO) staff on the concepts of gender and migration, and consequently to increase the gender-approach in project development and implementation, the CO in Brussels has set up a gender unit. The spectrum of responsibilities of this unit includes all actions related to gender awareness raising and mainstreaming. This is not solely limited to the projects implemented by the CO; the unit also aims at working on gender specific issues within the office itself. On 8 March, the unit organized a 'gender drink' for IOM staff in celebration of International Women's day. In addition to this, an info session was organized on gender awareness, terminology and mainstreaming within projects.

Mauritanian Diaspora Event



On 9 June, IOM Belgium organized a meeting in Brussels for the members of the Mauritanian diaspora residing in the Benelux in the framework of the EUTF - IOM Initiative to Strengthen Border Management, Protection and Reintegration of Migrants in Mauritania. The event was one of 3 different reunions held in different European cities for the component "Support to Circular and Temporary Migration of the Mauritanian Diaspora" of the project.

The objective of these meetings was to identify qualified members of the Mauritanian diaspora who would be willing to engage themselves with - and support the development of their country of origin, by temporarily returning to Mauritania and carrying out capacity-building missions within its ministries and public institutions.

IOM was able to hold the meeting with a group of highly qualified and motivated diaspora members, in order to present the project and to address their queries through constructive dialogue. Besides learning more about the project, attendees had the opportunity to get to know one-another through a networking event, and even gain insights on a survey conducted during the application process, summarizing the profiles and qualifications of its participants. In attendance were notably a representative of the Mauritanian government, representatives of the Mauritanian Embassy in Brussels, as well as representatives of IOM Belgium and IOM Mauritania. The meeting touched on some important topics such as female empowerment and the logistical organisation of the overall project, which were both extensively discussed, culminating in suggestions and conclusions that will be considered in the project's implementation.

Training on Mainstreaming Migration into International Cooperation and Development

From 19 until 21 March, IOM Belgium participated in a training on mainstreaming migration into international cooperation and development. Through this training, IOM increases its capacity to assist development practitioners to mainstream migration into international cooperation and development projects. This project is funded by DG DEVCO.



Migration mainstreaming has been recognized as an important factor in achieving international development targets since 2005 and the SDGs offer an opportunity to embrace a comprehensive approach to the links between development cooperation, migration and relevant policy areas that have an impact on development.

The training focused on key sectors (health, education, security, urbanization, governance, rural development, private sector development and trade, employment, environment and climate change) in which migration can impact development, and development can impact migration.

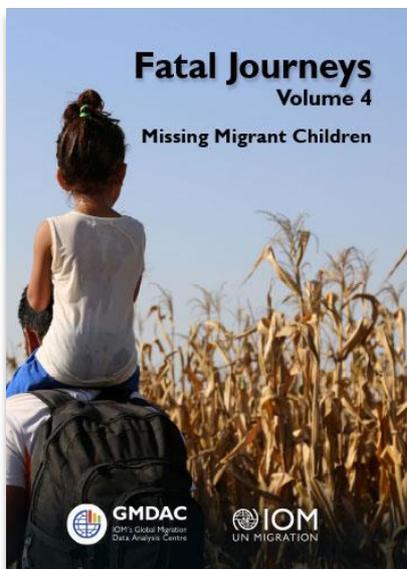
Coming soon...



We are delighted to announce that the fourth edition of the Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) will take place again this year! The Call for Films is open until 9 August. [Click here](#) for more information and to submit your film. Have also a look at the [GMFF portal](#).

Interesting IOM publications

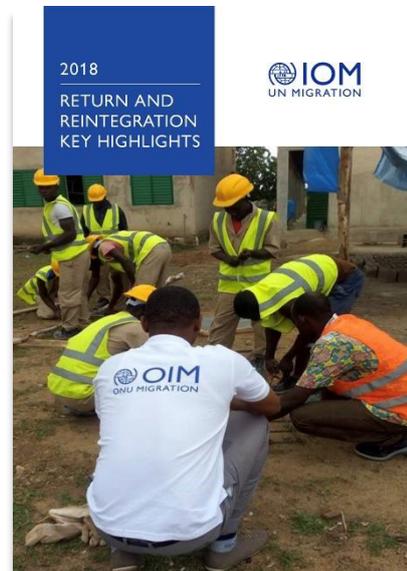
Fatal Journeys – Volume 4



Underage migrants are amongst the most vulnerable groups of migrants, yet data concerning missing migrant children tends to be limited. This report takes a special focus on why data is lacking, how it could be improved and considers policy options that can be used to prevent these tragedies from occurring.

Read [here](#) the full report.

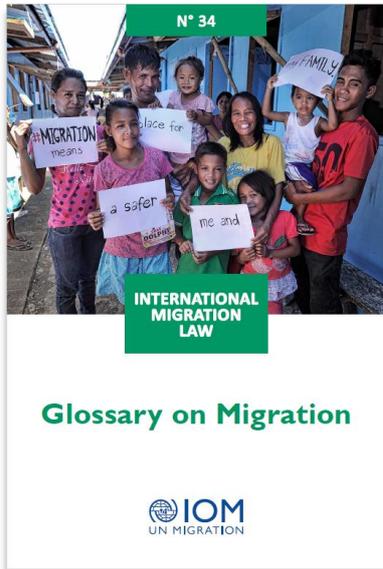
Return and Reintegration Highlights 2018



Worldwide in 2018, 63,316 migrants have returned home with the assistance of IOM through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) framework.

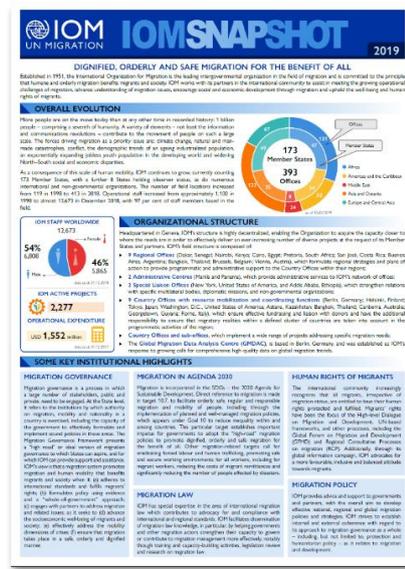
[Read](#) the full report that provides trends, figures and key global, European & national initiatives on AVRR.

IOM Glossary



IOM has recently updated its glossary. Find it [here](#) and check out IOM's new definition of a migrant (page 130).

IOM Snapshot



A quick read highlighting the vision and core activities of the Organization.

The IOM Snapshot is now available in [Dutch](#). It is also available in [French](#), [English](#), and [three other languages](#).

Contact

For more information, please contact the Communications team [here](#).