In light of ongoing global campaigns such as ‘I am a Migrant’ and ‘Together’, IOM is actively engaged in organizing events and activities with the aim to raise public awareness on migration and counter the negative perceptions against migrants and refugees.

**ISIC Rabat Visit**

IOM Belgium and Luxembourg and IOM Morocco organized an academic study visit of a delegation of 17 students from ISIC – Higher Institute of Information and Communication in Rabat, Morocco. This visit took place from 10 to 13 July within the framework of the "Media & Migration" Master. The various challenges related to media and migration were discussed in detail with, among others, the United Nations Regional Information Center (UNRIC), Institut des Hautes Etudes des Communications SocialesHECS, the City of Molenbeek and European Commission DG Migration and Home Affairs.

On the occasion of the **20 km of Brussels** on 28 May, IOM in partnership with the United Nations Regional Information Center (UNRIC) organized, under the banner “TOGETHER let’s promote respect, security and dignity for refugees and migrants”, a team of 50 people from 15 different nationalities – many with a migration profile – representing the UN agencies in Brussels, the European Commission, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium Plays 4 Peace, members of the civil society, and the general public.

The UN team was based at a stand to provide a space for discussion, information on the Together and I am a Migrant campaigns, as well as UN activities in Belgium, Europe and worldwide.

More information and pictures. Watch here the UN movie.

---

**ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION**

**Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) January – July 2017**

**From Belgium**

In the first half of 2017 IOM facilitated 1975 returns from Belgium to 76 different countries, a small increase compared to the last 6 months of 2016(August-December). Out these departures, 527 cases received reintegration support mainly to Iraq and Afghanistan. 70% of this reintegration support is used for income generating activities.

While the number of AVRR is lower than in previous years, IOM noticed an increase of requests for vulnerable cases to benefit from the AVRR programmes (more returns of migrants with health concerns, Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Victims of Trafficking).

**From Luxembourg**
IOM in Luxembourg organized and facilitated 99 returns of whom 34 persons eligible to reintegration assistance from the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. In the first half of 2017, as in previous years, Kosovo remains the top country of origin followed by Iraq, with 62 and 10 returns respectively.

**Job Placement**

IOM continues to provide tailored Job Placement assistance in Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation. From January to June, already 30 persons have been assisted with Job Placement counseling and referral. The aim is to support returnees with additional counseling and skills development to enhance the long-term reintegration perspectives of returnees in line with the development needs of the local communities. In Belgium, partner organizations and interested stakeholders received information during several information sessions and workshops.

**Administrative Assistance**

IOM, in partnership with Fedasil and Caritas, implements an activity dedicated to migrant candidates from the Balkan countries. The main objective of the Administrative Assistance is to further support returnees in the various steps of the registration. The administrative assistance has been particularly relevant for vulnerable cases or families away from their country for a long time.

**Assistance to Victims of Trafficking (VoT)**

On 21 January, IOM and Fedasil met with Stad Antwerpen to discuss the topic of women victims of trafficking in Belgium. In order to ensure a safe return from Belgium, IOM conducts risk assessment, family assessment; provides psychological and medical support, can arrange for shelter in a specialized structure for VoT’s, and can support the returnee in finding a training or starting a business.

On 19 April, IOM met with the NGO Pag-Asa and Fedasil to discuss the voluntary return possibilities for victims of trafficking. During this discussion, the challenges (medical, social, financial) linked to the voluntary return of VoTs were discussed, and Pag-Asa particularly mentioned the need for increased and tailored information on AVRR.

**Return of Unaccompanied Minor Children (UMC) and migrants with heavy medical needs**

During the first part of 2017, IOM assisted 17 UMCs and ex-UMCs with their return from Belgium, 5 of them as adults. A total of 14 of these cases decided to receive further reintegration support upon their return.

From January until June 2017, IOM has assisted 16 migrants with heavy medical needs to return from Belgium. Four of these were accompanied by a social escort. The others needed a medical escort to accompany them during their return. Most of them also required wheelchair assistance and some even had a clinic room in transit in order to rest before taking the second flight. Lastly one migrant was returned with a stretcher as well as immediate land transportation by ambulance.

**Provincial return partner meetings**

Between 15 and 29 June, IOM, in coordination with Fedasil, organized 5 provincial return partner meetings in Brussels, Liège, Namur, Mechelen and Ghent. These gatherings in small groups aimed to enhance the cooperation between IOM, Fedasil and the return partner network. The following subjects were tackled: return&reintegration statistical overview 2017, testimonies, permanence of IOM and Caritas at the Fedasil return desks and the ongoing projects such as Barka, Conex, Medical Assistance, Job Adapted Medical Assistance after Return (AMAAR)

AMAAR assists the migrants with heavy medical needs with an additional medical reintegration grant, during six months after return to enable them to focus on other elements of their reintegration. During the first half of 2017, three migrants of respectively Armenia, Russia and Georgia have been granted a medical assistance. This assistance is highly appreciated by the
Placement, administrative assistance and specific aspects of reintegration to Georgia and returns to Romania.

ASSISTED MOVEMENT OPERATIONS

Resettlement assistance

From Belgium

During the first part of 2017, Belgium welcomed 582 Syrian refugees in the frame of the resettlement project; 421 from Turkey, 152 from Jordan and 9 from Lebanon. Further activities in Turkey and Lebanon are being planned for the rest of the year. As in the past years, IOM provides assistance to the Belgian Government in organizing the selection and pre-departure orientation missions, carries out health assessments pre-departure and possible referrals or stabilization treatments and organizes the international and domestic travel.

From Luxembourg

Two resettlement movements took place in the first half of this year, one in February whence 46 Syrian migrants were resettled from Turkey and one in July whence 26 were resettled from Lebanon. IOM Luxembourg closely collaborated with IOM missions in Turkey and Lebanon in organizing the selection missions for these resettlement movements. Furthermore, IOM Luxembourg provided airport assistance in Luxembourg upon each group’s arrival.

More information on Resettlement to Belgium/Luxembourg

Relocation assistance

From Belgium

The EU relocation scheme is an expression of internal EU solidarity, through which people in need of international protection are transferred from Greece and Italy to another member state of relocation.

From Luxembourg

So far in 2017, Belgium welcomed 686 relocated asylum seekers from Italy and Greece. IOM provides arrival assistance to all beneficiaries arriving in Belgium, i.e. IOM welcomes them at Brussels airport, hands out lunch packages and arranges the local transportation within Belgium.

European Resettlement Network (ERN+)

In February and March 2017, ERN+ hosted three webinars to identify possibilities for the enhancement of the European protection landscape, complementary to resettlement programmes.

The first webinar, “Emerging Private Sponsorship Programmes in Europe: a new partnership between government and local communities” was held on 23 February. It provided clarifications on the Canadian model and assessed the state of play of emerging private sponsor initiatives in Europe, building the capacity of potential new stakeholders. The second webinar, “Hope for a Better Future: Higher Education Scholarship Opportunities in Europe for Refugee Students”, was held on 8 March. This session highlighted key considerations and protection aspects, European existing opportunities were explored and crucial elements of such programmes were put forward. The third webinar, on 23 March, “Enhancing Humanitarian Admission in Europe”, addressed key considerations and protection needs to be taken into account and consequently showcased existing Humanitarian Admission Programmes (HAP) from Austria and Germany as well as French and Swiss protection schemes making use of visas issues on humanitarian grounds to apply for asylum. Preliminary recommendations were drawn with a view of expanding HAPs in the EU.

Family Reunification to Belgium
During the reporting period, IOM assisted in Brussels 147 individuals, 39 families, with the organization of their journey. One can notice a high increase in the number of cases handled compared to last year (cfr. 122 individuals assisted throughout the whole year).

Since 2013, the majority of these individuals have come from Afghanistan. Out of the 147 people who were assisted by IOM this year, 107 traveled from Afghanistan. IOM makes sure that every member of the family has all the necessary documents to travel and to leave the country they are coming from. IOM then books the flight and assists the family at every stage of their journey. This can be particularly meaningful for people who have never traveled before. More information

**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Study visit from Cameroon**

In the framework of the project ‘Strengthening the Capacities of Local Institutions in Cameroon to Expand the Social Security to include Cameroonian Migrant Workers Living in Belgium’, colleagues from IOM Cameroon did a study visit from 29 May to 2 June. The objective was to conduct interviews with the main Belgian government stakeholders involved in social security in order to complete a feasibility study on the conclusion of a bilateral agreement between Belgium and Cameroon on the transferability of social security benefits. The delegation, composed by IOM Cameroon, the International Relations Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Social Security Office. Colleagues also attended the launch event of the SOCIEUX+, an EU technical assistance facility on social protection, labor and employment, held on 30 May. More information

**Promoting engagement of Guinean diaspora**

With the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg and IOM Guinea launched a project aiming to strengthen the link between the Guinean diaspora residing in Belgium and their country of origin. The project is implemented in partnership with Guinea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad. Firstly the project wishes to support the Ministry in establishing a national consultation framework on migration. Furthermore the project supports the Guinean diaspora in Belgium to engage in the development of their country of origin. A website with a platform for exchanges will be set-up to facilitate information sharing between the diaspora and institutions/associations in Guinea to support local development projects.

More information

**Supporting sustainable land management and improving livelihood in Burkina Faso**

Through a joint funding from the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Belgian Development Cooperation, IOM has improved the living conditions of the population in Burkina Faso’s Central-East region by strengthening their productive capacities and access to basic social services. To address the scarcity of potable water, IOM Burkina Faso opened in March 2017 two new boreholes in the rural commune of Béguédo. Other current activities include the training of farmers on how to recover degraded lands through techniques adapted to each type of soil and the provision of adequate agricultural tools. More information on this project.

**INTEGRATION**

**Skills 2 Work**
In January 2017, the Skills2Work IOM focal points joined in Bratislava for the third regional project meeting. The meeting included the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB), the municipality of Tilburg (the Netherlands), the Swedish Employment Office, and the municipality of Gothenburg (Sweden) and the Artesmisszió Foundation (Hungary). It focused on labour market integration such as the role of municipalities in facilitating labour market integration, good practices regarding skills recognition and validation, PTSD as an obstacle to participation in the labour market, EU migration trends and private sector engagement.

On 20 June, IOM Belgium attended the European Commission launch event of the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals (TCNs), a digital skills assessment tool for the early identification of skills of Third Country nationals.

More information on the project.

VISIBILITY AND EVENTS

Study visit from IOM Morocco

From 2 to 6 July, IOM coordinated a study visit for IOM Morocco within the framework of “Addressing the needs of stranded and vulnerable migrants”, financed by DG DEVCO and different member states (i.a. Belgian Immigration Office). This AVRR project targets stranded, vulnerable and at-risk migrants who are willing to return voluntarily to their country of origin from Morocco but who lack the resources to do so. Participants visited an open return center and learned more about IOM’s operational work in Belgium during a visit at Brussels National Airport. They particularly appreciated to learn through the Belgian model with its specific approach to vulnerable cases, embeddedness of the AVRR program in the civil society with varied partners, high percentage of returnees eligible for reintegration support tailored to individual needs, and cooperation with initiatives providing an alternative to detention.

Surinam Memorial Day - Antwerp

On 19 June, IOM was invited for a guest lecture in collaboration with the Surinamese organization Sudisobe and CAW Antwerp and other partners in Antwerp. The lecture was part of a series of lectures in the context of the Surinam Memorial Day called “Brassa Day”. The lecture gave an overview on the current migration flows, challenges, development needs and involvement of diaspora groups in migration and development issues.

Exchange Day on Voluntary Return

On 12 May, IOM attended an exchange event on voluntary return organized by Fedasil in Charleroi targeting 40 participants (social network and public authorities in the region). IOM organized 3 workshop sessions which comprised short videoconference sequences with IOM Rabat and the movie of Mr. Abdelhak highlighting the return and reintegration assistance from Belgium to Morocco and the work of IOM in the field. Each session included fruitful exchanges with the attendees.

Click here to listen to Abdelhak’s story
Workshop: Voluntary Return of migrants with medical needs

On 11 May, IOM was invited by Fedasil to give a workshop in Ghent on the voluntary return of migrants with medical needs and the associated challenges. IOM counselors and a Fedasil doctor illustrated the considerations, procedures and concerns that come into play when organizing such a return by discussing case studies. Participants shared experience and questions related to the returns of migrants with medical needs. Further best practices were discussed, highlighting the need for an integrated and coordinated approach with involvement of all stakeholders while looking for long-term reintegration possibilities and detailed information in the respective country of origin.

ExpoSciences

On 28-29 April, IOM participated in the Village ‘Society’, organized by mediels asbl, as part of the event ‘ExpoSciences’, held by the Young Belgian Scientists in Tour&Taxis. The aim of the Village, entitled ‘Migrants are also parents and children’, was to raise awareness of the youth, schools and families, about the root causes of migration. The village gathered several organizations active in the field of migration and was supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation. IOM had the opportunity to hold a stand and animate the Migrant’s Game, an educational tool conceived by Prof. Bonaventure Kagné, as a role play allowing the player to understand the variety of migration journeys and profiles.

Have a look at the special file produced by the newspaper ‘Le Ligueur’. View here the pictures of the migrant’s game and the event. Watch here the movie on the event.

10 years reintegration

On 30 March, Fedasil celebrated the 10 years of the structural reintegration assistance from Belgium. Together with Caritas, IOM joined the event and gave a historical overview of the various return and reintegration projects over the years, from a general assistance package to tailor-made projects based on particular needs. More information on the event in French & Dutch. Read the main reintegration trends from Belgium since 2006 in French & Dutch.

Training for medical escorts

On 21 March, IOM organized a training in Brussels for its pool of medical escorts. The training tackled the following issues: voluntary return in practice, responsibilities and duties of a medical escort and the impact of a travel by plane on migrants with health needs. Both theoretical and practical sides of the impact of a travel by plane have been discussed thoroughly, including migrants with psychiatric problems.

This training was also the opportunity for the escorts to share their own experiences and best practices when escorting migrants with health needs.

Festival des Migrations

From 3 to 5 March, IOM Luxembourg held a stand during the 3-day Festival of Culture and Migration organized every year by CLAE. It was an opportunity for IOM to get closer to the Luxembourgish society and accordingly inform them on IOM’s work in Luxembourg as well as at a global level.

More information
On 15 February, IOM gave an introductory lecture on Migration and Diversity in Karel De Grote (KDG) College in Antwerp. Two sessions were organized to give all students the opportunity to follow the lecture. 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.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**New project for IOM in Luxembourg**

IOM has recently established a collaboration with the Luxembourgish Ministry of National Education, Youth and Adolescence, in particular with the Office National de l’Enfance, in a project seeking to improve the protection and integration of unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs). Its aim is to reinforce and expand the national system of family-based care so as to cover UMCs with migration background. This project which is funded by the European Commission through DG Justice is set to start in October 2017. In parallel, IOM is in the process of drafting an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a 12 months family assessment project. Its aim is to understand better the context of origin of UMCs currently present in Luxembourg and to assess/determine UMCs’ most durable solutions, in the best interest of the child.

**Study day: Migration, refugees and a diverse classroom**

When? Monday 16th of October from 9u to 16u
Where? UCLL campus Everlee
IOM, UNHCR, 11.11.11 and number of other educational partners are organizing a study day for teachers, future teachers, direction, and coordinators with a central focus on: how to teach for and about refugees and migration? A day where contextual depth, concrete tools and exchange will be key.

[More information and registration](#) (Please note the event will take place in Dutch).

**Interesting IOM Publications**

- AVRR 2016 Key Highlights
- Remittances in ACP Countries: Key Challenges and Ways Forward
- Migration in the 2030 Agenda
- Community Study on the Needs of Returned Migrants Following the Andaman Sea Crisis
- Free Movement of Persons in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Global Migration Data Analysis Centre: Data Briefing Series | Issue No. 9, July 2017
- Extreme Heat and Migration
- Migrants in Disaster Risk Reduction: Practices for Inclusion
- Enhancing the Safety and Sustainability of the Return and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking

For more information, contact the IOM Country Office for Belgium and Luxembourg’s Communications team [here](#).

**CONTACT US**

**IOM Belgium and Luxembourg**

Rue Montoyer, 10, 4th Floor
B-1000 Brussels
iombrusselscomunications@iom.int
+32 2 287 74 12

**Disclaimer:** The news and views contained in these media monitoring dispatches, which are provided for information purposes only, do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IOM or its Member States, nor does IOM represent or endorse the accuracy or reliability of any advice, opinion, statement or other information provided herein.