

NEWSLETTER

IOM Belgium and Luxembourg Newsletter

Did you know that from January until June 2021, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg started managing **three new projects**? With U-CARE (page 2), Other Talks (page 3) and CoP without Borders (page 4) we added 4 new staff members to the team!

Other activities of the office managed to not lose momentum: the Equalcity project finalized the piloting of the SGBV toolboxes (page 5), while the team of the Actiris Coordination platform project met with various stakeholders to finalize the design and conceptualization of the platform (page 7). Despite the impact of COVID-19, the MATCH project boosted their outreach activities to the private sector (page 8) and the AVRR team is also slowly picking up activities (page 11).

Lastly, the office is proud to have launched their own **podcasts**: Diaspora Insights, by and for diaspora (page 9) and the IOM BeLux Podcast (see below).

IN THIS ISSUE

IOM PODCAST LAUNCHED ON SPOTIFY

U-CARE

OTHER TALK

COMMUNITY POLICING WITHOUT BORDERS

EQUALCITY IDAHOBIT

ACTIRIS COORDINATION PLATFORM

MATCH

DIASPORA PROJECTS AND PODCAST IDERD EU DIVERSITY MONTH

AVRR MEDICAL CASES AND UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN (UMC) STATISTICS IOM-CONEX



IOM Podcast Channel launched on Spotify

On the 26th of May, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg has launched its very own **Podcast Channel on Spotify**! On this platform, we will be able to inform you on our projects and initiatives through inspiring interviews and panel discussions. To kick start our channel, we have uploaded our **mini-series podcasts from the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Intersexphobia** with 5 special guests who shared their perspectives and lived experiences on the topic through interviews. **Follow us on Spotify** if you'd like to listen to these interviews and to keep up to date with our future episodes.



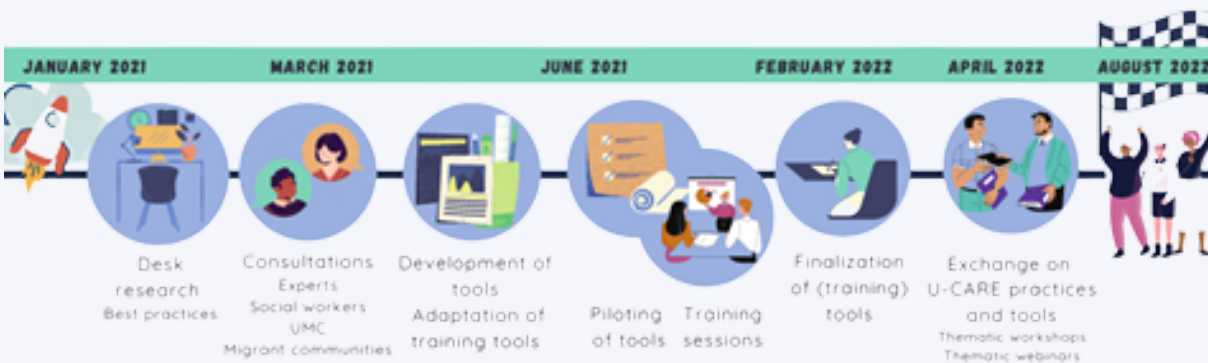
[IOM Belgium and Luxembourg](#)

[IOMBELUX](#)



Unaccompanied Children in Alternative Residence “U-CARE” project aims at developing and improving alternative non-institutionalized care systems for Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) in Europe.

The project activities are coordinated by IOM in Belgium and implemented by IOM in Germany, by IOM and ARSIS in Greece and by IOM and Pleegzorg Vlaams-Brabant en Brussel in Belgium. These activities focus on the following topics: **recruitment and training of foster carers in Belgium and Greece**, with a specific focus on foster carers with a migration background; **alternative care prototypes** for those UMC in Germany who are **transitioning to adulthood**; **raising awareness and (trans)national exchange**.



Sammy Mahdi

Staatssecretaris - Secrétaire d'Etat
voor Asiel en Migratie
à l'Asile et la Migration



In the beginning of May, the Belgian U-CARE project activities were presented in a **successful online event** that brought together more than 120 **Belgian stakeholders** on the topic of matching unaccompanied migrant children with foster families with a migration background. Guest speakers included Mr. Sammy Mahdi, the Belgian State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, Frank Van Holen, Director of Care Policy at Pleegzorg Vlaams-Brabant en Brussel and guest lecturer at VUB, and a diverse panel (see picture below). For the recordings and a short article on the event, head to our website's [news section](#).

Furthermore, the project team has had several **consultations with EU experts** for the development of practical guidelines for recruiting foster carers with a migration background and alternative care prototypes for UMC transitioning to adulthood, which will be piloted in the second half of 2021. The **Caring for Unaccompanied Migrant Children handbook** was adapted to the **German and Greek context** and complemented with a **culture-sensitive module** (on racism and breaking taboos) and **3 information leaflets** for foster carers on the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia and Pakistan. These will be used in the capacity building sessions of foster carers and social workers in Belgium and Greece. The documents as well as a new recruitment video will soon be available on the [U-CARE webpage](#) and the [FAB project page](#).

This project is funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.



The Belgian U-CARE activities are co-funded by Fedasil.



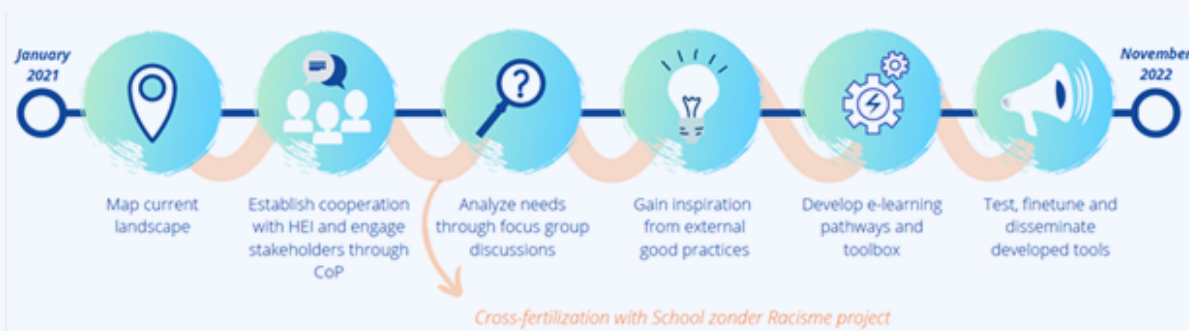
Panel

Maryana Vukadinovic Directrice Mentor Jeunes	Bieke Van Houdt Tuteur MENA	Katja Fournier Moderator Chercheuse Odisee	Francesca Megna FAB project manager IOM UK	Youssef Himi Le père de la famille d'accueil



The **Other Talk – Teaching Migration project** kicked off at the beginning of 2021. The project’s objective is to **provide tools to current and prospective teachers** in Dutch-speaking secondary schools in Belgium that will **build their capacity to teach about migration, refugees and related media literacy** and to foster their pupils’ critical thinking on these topics in their (future) classrooms.

After mapping the landscape of Dutch-speaking higher education institutions in Flanders and Brussels and the best practices, first connections with umbrella organizations (such as Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (VLIR), Vlaamse Hogescholenraad (VLHORA), de beroepsvereniging voor lerarenopleiders in Vlaanderen (VELOV), research institutes and individual teacher trainers were established.



Along the way, IOM has decided to shift away from the initial idea of developing a module towards a **toolbox**. In close cooperation with teacher trainers, this toolbox can be embedded smoothly in existing courses. To ensure a **bottom-up need-based approach**, IOM and Caritas International have launched a joint needs assessment. Caritas focuses on developing CPD (Continuous Professional Development) e-learning pathways for current teachers. Current and prospective teachers, as well as teacher trainers, are asked about their views on the existing curriculum, which elements regarding teaching migration, diversity, refugees, and media literacy are lacking, and how these needs could be met. In the next stage, focus group discussions will be organised with our target audience to dive more qualitatively into the collected responses. This input will be used as an important building block to design the envisaged toolbox according to the expressed needs.



Invite guest speakers: Take a step into the lived realities of migrations through testimonials by teachers or students with a migration background or experts in a migration related field.



Gamification: Learn by doing. Innovative, interactive games stimulate constructive dialogues and bring other perspectives to the table.



Decolonize your mind: Reflect on how one’s personal frame of reference influences used teaching practices.

In order to connect the project partners of the Teaching Migration project with relevant educational organizations, a Community of Practice has been established. This is a dynamic group with a culture of open dialogue and different levels of participation. In addition to the bi-monthly gatherings, some members will be closely involved in interventions and others will take on a more advisory and/or supportive role.



The 'Community Policing Without Borders' Project (CoP) has officially started the 1st of April 2021 and it will run for a period of 2 years. The project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). CoP is aimed at inspiring the Belgian local police into tackling cases of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance within the Belgian police zones and between the Belgian police and the migrant communities.



More specifically, the project will focus on the following four specific objectives:



1. Improve the police's **Human Resources policy and processes** to increase migrant representation in the police corps and retain police officers with a migration background.



2. Improve the quality of the existing **complaint mechanisms** to increase their accessibility to victims of racist and xenophobic acts and efficacy in addressing acts of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.



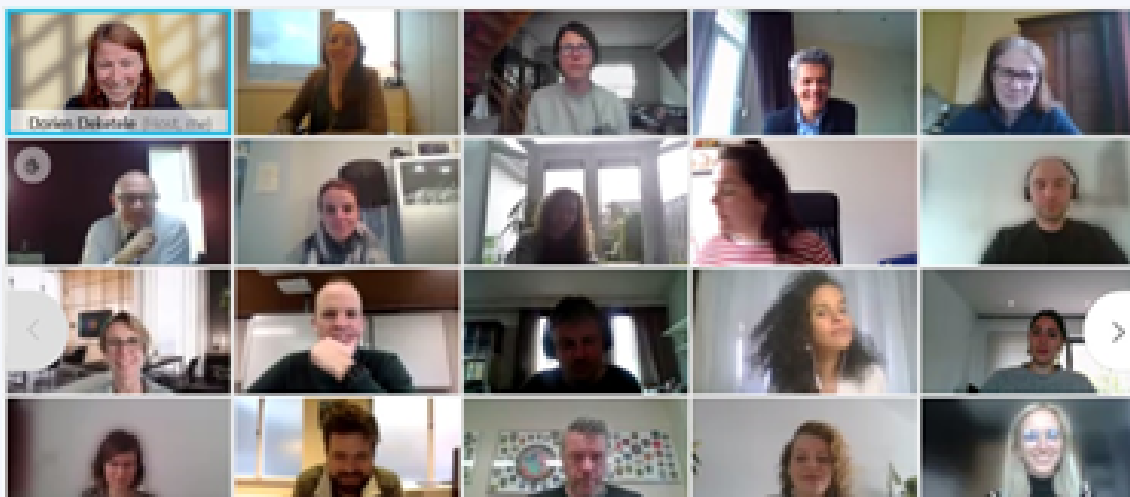
3. Improve **community policing and trust** between migrant communities and the police to reduce racial bias, xenophobia and intolerance.



4. Facilitate **transnational exchange** among stakeholders on local, national and European levels to contribute to the eradication of all forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance in police forces in the EU.



Find out more on [Community Policing without Borders](https://www.iom.int) | [International Organization for Migration \(iom.int\)](https://www.iom.int) or contact ddeketele@iom.int.



A kick-off meeting took place to officially launch the project on the 29th of April 2021. It was attended by representatives of all partners and affiliated partners.

This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014 - 2020).



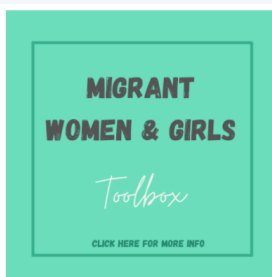
Equalcity

Equalcity has entered its final year with many important activities to be rolled out! The 4 thematic toolboxes are currently being piloted by Equalcity's partner cities: Brussels, Luxembourg, Rome and Gothenburg. **The toolboxes will build the capacity of frontline services to better detect and address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against migrants and within migrant communities** and will be ready in November.

The piloting of the toolboxes provides an opportunity for project partners to receive feedback from participants on the content and quality of the toolbox. This evaluation will cater for further adaptation and tailoring of the tools, before making them accessible to the 70 Trainee Cities and organizations, and their networks, in November 2021 (see map).



OUR TOOLBOXES



EQUALCITY'S TRAINEE CITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

This summer, the Equalcity Thematic Workshops will take place where project partners and Trainee Cities and Organizations will be able to virtually gather around the table to discuss the toolbox(es) of their choosing and learn about how to apply and use the tools in their local context. The events will provide an opportunity for participants to share their feedback on the training manuals through interactive dialogue and active participation. Based on their feedback, the tools will be fine-tuned before being translated into selected languages.



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014 - 2020).

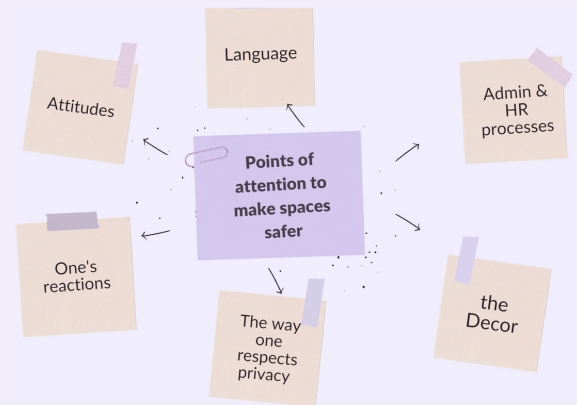
INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND INTERSEXPHOBIA (IDAHOBIT) 2021

On the 17 of May 2021, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Intersexphobia (IDAHOBIT), with a special guest appearance from Aïda Yancy: Project Coordinator of the Equalcity Project at Rainbowhouse Brussels, and developer of the toolbox on “Creating safe(r) Spaces for LGBTQI+ people with a migrant background.”



What is a Safe(r) space:

A safe(r) space is any kind of spaces perceived by an individual as welcoming and accepting of their identity, and in which they can share information about themselves without fear of negative repercussion. It must foster a climate challenging social norms and prejudice even in the form of microaggressions. A climate that makes people feel truly respected, and physically, psychologically, emotionally secure enough to take risks, express and explore their views, identities, attitudes and behaviours.



As part of this 5-part mini-series campaign, Aïda speaks about the importance on creating safe(r) spaces for LGBTQI+ people with a migrant background and recognizing intersectionality in all its form- with specific reference to Belgium's capital-Brussels.



Listen to the podcast:



IOM Belgium and Luxembourg



IOMBELUX

FRONTLINE WORKERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT CAMPAIGN COMING SOON!



At Equalcity, we interviewed 9 frontline workers and were given the opportunity to highlight the important role they play in the daily lives of many individuals and families within migrant communities. They often serve as a bridge between these communities and their host country. The interview for the "Frontline Workers in the Spotlight Campaign" will be available soon across our social media platforms!



The Actiris Coordination Platform project is off to a great start for 2021! Following on from the benchmarking and good practices of similar coordination platforms in Belgium and across Europe, **the project was able to narrow the field down and invite two good practices to the “virtual” table to provide inspiration and insight on the operational model of their platform.**

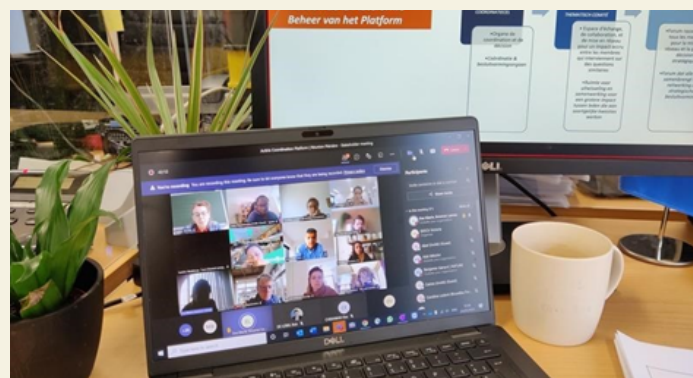
The Athens Coordination Center for Migrant & Refugee Issues (ACCMR) in Athens and the Coordination de l'Action Sociale de Schaerbeek (CASS) in the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR) were invited based on their relevance to the envisioned conceptual elements of the Actiris Coordination Platform.

Furthermore, in March, the project management team had successfully carried out its 2nd Working Group Discussions where the draft vision and mission statement, conceptual design and governance structure - developed using the findings of the 1st round of Working Group Discussions and of the study visits - were further co-designed amongst relevant stakeholders who are active in the field of labour market integration of newcomers in the BCR. The importance of a co-collaborative effort in designing the network is detrimental to the success of the project aiming at improving the coordination and exchanges of its beneficiaries.

More recently, the project had completed its final Stakeholder Meeting, based on the results from the consultations that were held during the 1st and 2nd working group discussions. This meeting provided an opportunity for the project management team to again present the consolidated conceptualization of the Coordination Platform to stakeholders and gather their feedback, inputs and recommendations to improve the draft conceptual documents, in order to finalize the conceptual design and functionalities of the envisaged platform.



Final Stakeholder Meeting, May 2021



Working Group Discussions with ACCMR, March 2021



This project is funded by the European Union via the Structural Reform Support Programme and implemented by IOM in cooperation with the European Commission.



This project is implemented in coordination with Actiris.



Webinar: Tapping Into Nigeria's Talentpool For a Rapid Economic Rebound



On the 20th of May, the MATCH team at IOM Belgium organised a webinar with the Nigerian-Belgian Chamber of Commerce. Speakers from the international recruitment agency Aldelia and the Nigerian branch of the company Barry Callebaut were invited to discuss **how investing in Nigerian talent through projects like MATCH can benefit all parties involved.**

During this discussion, Adriaan Verbeke, managing director of Barry Callebaut in Nigeria, explained how the company was able to successfully implement onboarding strategies for its diverse staff.

Watch the recording of the webinar [here!](#)

On the 23rd of June, the project management team in Belgium and Senegal had the honor to present MATCH during the Forum de Dakar 2021.

The seminar showed **how skills mobility partnerships can create triple winning situations:** meeting the workforce needs of companies, improving the skills of employees, and contributing to the growth of economic activities in all countries involved. The workshop showed how a company can benefit from projects carried out in Senegal such as MATCH. The seminar also highlighted the need to insert labour mobility initiatives into the local ecosystem and take into account business trade and investment strategies while supporting the local ecosystem.

Find out more [here](#).

Forum de Dakar



[Watch](#) Rob de Lobel, Head of Unit LHD, presenting MATCH



Digital Africa Conference & Exhibition: African Talent Europe's Solution to Labour Shortages

We were able to present MATCH and increase our outreach towards Nigerian companies by participating in the 9th edition of the Digital Africa Conference & Exhibition, which took place on June 24th, 2021. The project team at IOM Nigeria animated a workshop **highlighting how African talent can be a solution to Europe's labour shortages.**

World Bank event: Low Hanging Fruit or a Pipe Dream? Mutually Beneficial Labour Mobility Programmes between Europe and Africa

During this event, representatives from IOM were invited to present a brief overview of the EU context and initiatives to enhance legal pathways. Daphné Bouteillet-Paquet, project manager at IOM Belgium in charge of MATCH, presented the state of implementation of **our EU pilot project aiming at developing legal pathways between Nigeria and EU countries.** During this session, Daphné provided answers to different issues and challenges that arise when speaking about labour mobility.

The event stressed the importance of **reducing brain drain and finding ways to promote and maximise brain gain through our project.** Daphné highlighted the importance of a close level of cooperation with diaspora organisations to support skills development and to contribute to the integration of migrants in the countries of destination.



Social Protection & Jobs Seminar Series

Labor & Skills GSG and International Organization for Migration

Low Hanging Fruit or a Pipe Dream?
Mutually Beneficial Labor Mobility Programs between Europe and Africa

June 10, 2021 | 09:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT | 15:00 - 16:30 PM CET | Webex



Follow MATCH on LinkedIn for weekly updates!



In January, our Diaspora Engagement team launched a new podcast series called **Diaspora Insights**. The goal of this podcast is to offer a safe space where diaspora members can share their perspectives on various topics, while also highlighting the work they do.

Salomé Ysebaert, researcher at the Afrika Museum in Tervuren, Brussels, was the first person interviewed for the podcast.

Click on her photo to hear what she had to say about diaspora communities in Belgium.



To kick off the start of the **European Diversity Month** in May, the IOM CO shared a video where staff members said what diversity means to and for them. To bring this month to an end, we released the second episode of the Diaspora Insights podcast featuring the youngest district councilor of Belgium **Aïssatou Cissé**.

Parallel to the launch of our second podcast episode, **our third Diaspora newsletter** was published online and can be accessed here. This edition includes a variety of information on the iDiaspora platform, calls and events for and by diaspora members, and some facts on vaccines.

The Rwanda Diaspora Engagement project, coordinated by IOM Rwanda with the support of IOM Belgium, is in full implementation.



The project aims at **improving the Rwandan Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** and Health sector through

assignments of Rwandan diaspora members living in Europe who are willing to go to Rwanda to exchange expertise and knowledge. We spoke with **Clément Uwimana**, the first Rwandan diaspora from Belgium who went to Rwanda for a three-weeks-assignment to give trainings on atomization techniques in Rwanda. His story will soon be available on our social media channels. Read all about the project in the article published by IOM Rwanda here. Are you a member of the Rwandan diaspora and do you work or are you aspiring to work in the health sector? Check out the call for applicants to join this type of exchange here.



Lastly, IOM is looking into the possibility of setting up a **Diaspora Advisory Board** and created a survey to receive input on the creation of this initiative. The main purpose of this Board is **to create a space for interactive dialogue between members of diaspora groups and project teams**. With the Diaspora Advisory Board, we hope to improve our current and future projects by better understanding how these projects have been perceived by diaspora members.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND EUROPEAN DIVERSITY MONTH 2021

The office of IOM Belgium and Luxembourg reflected on this year's theme for **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**: "Youth standing up against racism". The colleagues of IOM Belgium and Luxembourg support the UN in their efforts to #FightRacism!

Throughout our projects, we work towards the elimination of racial discrimination so that all voices are represented and can equally participate and contribute to the development and well-being of our society.



EU DIVERSITY MONTH

United in Diversity

The European Diversity Month raises awareness on the importance of diversity and inclusion in our workplace and in society. At our office, we are proud to have a diverse body of colleagues from all over Europe and abroad, bringing different perspectives, and experiences to the table so that we can carry out our roles with dignity and respect.

So what does diversity in the workplace mean to you?

The staff of our Country Office answered this question in a short video, click [here](#) to have a look!

Assisting medical cases and Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC)

Over the years, AVRR has paid special attention to vulnerable migrants, such as victims of trafficking, UMC and migrants with medical conditions. On May 26, IOM CO Belgium in close coordination with IOM office Guayaquil helped a young female returnee to return to her home country, Ecuador. The young lady was accompanied by a female IOM Brussels colleague to ensure a return in safe/decent conditions while adopting an age and gender-sensitive approach. On May 28, IOM CO Belgium organized the AVRR of a migrant from El Salvador. In view of the specific migrant's needs, a medical operational escort accompanied the returnee throughout the return journey. A wheelchair was also foreseen to ensure maximum comfort and dignity to the migrant with mobility issues. Airport reception assistance was provided in San Salvador and a proper handover of the returnee took place under the supervision of colleagues in El Salvador. The returnee will further be assisted thanks to the reintegration assistance (standard and enhanced national programs).

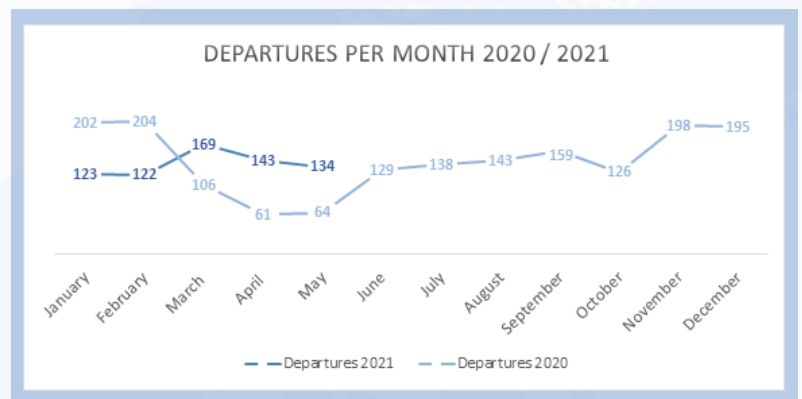


Furthermore, on June 7, IOM CO Belgium organized the return of two unaccompanied migrant children to Guinea-Conakry. Operational challenges caused by the pandemic (non-issuance of an entry Visa to Guinea for European escorts) were overcome thanks to the good bilateral coordination between IOM offices in Belgium and Guinea. An IOM colleague in Conakry, holding a Schengen visa, agreed to come to Belgium and accompany the UMC back to their home country.

Reintegration assistance is designed to support a sustainable return and reintegration of migrants in their countries of origin and within their local communities.

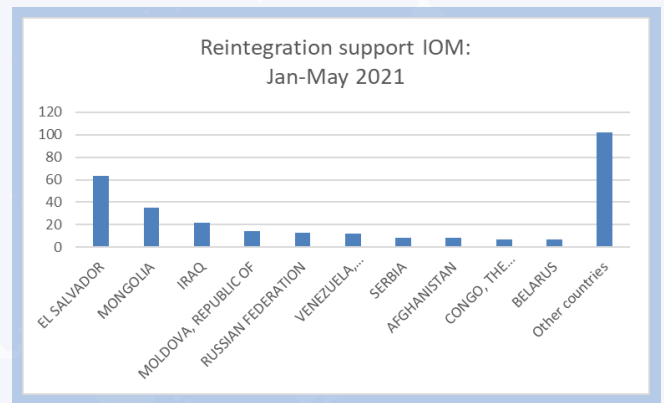
Statistics

From January to May 2021, IOM Belgium assisted 691 migrants with an Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) from Belgium to 72 different destination countries worldwide. Compared to the same period in 2019, an increase of 8% can be noted.



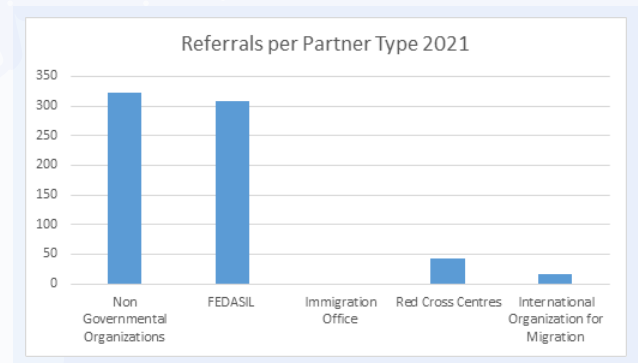
The main destination countries for 2021 are **Brazil** (202 persons), **El Salvador** (200 persons) and **Ukraine** (54 persons).

In the last years, IOM, in close cooperation with Fedasil and AMIF, has invested in **enhanced economic and psycho-social reintegration support through country-specific activities**. This support complements the individual reintegration support.



STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL NGO PARTNERS THROUGH THE IOM-CONEX PROJECT

Conex, the voluntary return network of organisations involved in migrant protection and assistance, has focused its activities on capacity building and leveraging new partnerships.



IOM increased its cooperation with frontline organizations such as **CAW Kortrijk and Oranjehuis** in West-Flanders.

An intervision session was organized with various partners at the Belgian coast **to share expertise and best practices, and connect the different stakeholders**. The coastal region is known as an important transit zone for migrants trying to reach the UK.

In Brussels, IOM provided information sessions and training for frontline workers from **Samu Social, an organisation providing shelter to homeless people**. A significant part of their beneficiaries have migration backgrounds and face a lack of future perspectives in Belgium.

For more information on the Conex project activities, please contact Andreas De Boer: adeboer@iom.int