

## Budapest Process

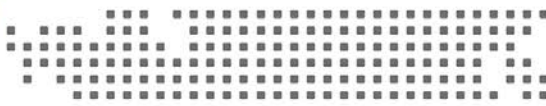
### Joint meeting of the Silk Routes and South East European Working Groups

Thematic Focus on Return and Reintegration

Sarajevo, 7-8 May 2018

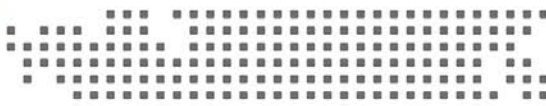
#### Summary/conclusions

1. On 7-8 May 2018, a joint meeting of the Silk Routes and South East European Working Groups was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
2. The meeting focused on the fourth priority area of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration, namely *'Prevent and counteract irregular migration, facilitate return and readmission of irregular migrants, and combat criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants'*. Following the Senior Officials Meeting in December 2016 in Antalya, it was decided that the Budapest Process would have an annual **thematic focus on return and reintegration**. After a successful meeting in Sofia, focusing on the challenges faced in this area, the second Working Group Meeting focused on practical cooperation and identified, from the regional perspective, good practices with concrete solutions in the field of return and reintegration.
3. The meeting gathered **60 participants from 29 countries** – Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom– as well as the Bali Process, Caritas, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the University of Koç and Samuel Hall.
4. The meeting was opened by Bosnia and Herzegovina (Host), followed by welcoming remarks from Turkey (Chair of the Budapest Process and the Silk Routes Working Group). In the opening, the Budapest Process Secretariat updated the participants on the first meeting on the same topic in Sofia in December 2017 and recalled the objectives and guiding questions of the current meeting.
5. To set the scene for the meeting, perspectives from academia and independent bodies were shared. The **Samuel Hall** institute presented their work on creating measurement standards for successful, all-inclusive reintegration including economic, social and psychosocial measurements. **The University of Koç** gave an overview of the linkages between migration, integration and return, stressing that migration is not a linear process. In the discussion, **Australia** raised the importance of defining sustainability of reintegration. **Pakistan** also highlighted that an increased dialogue between hosting countries and countries of origin to provide assistance in handling the return process



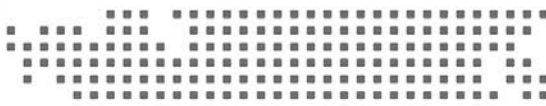
should take place. **Bangladesh** posed the question on medium and long-term solutions to these challenges and it was underlined in response that in any case we need to address the root causes for migration in a cooperative manner. The **Netherlands** took the floor to describe how the role and responsibilities of the hosting state in the return process are defined. Responsibility sharing instead of responsibility shifting was mentioned as crucial in this regard. Finally in this session, **ICMPD** also raised the importance of monitoring the return process to avoid re-return and achieve successful reintegration.

6. In **Session 1** on 'good practices for voluntary return', **Bosnia and Herzegovina** presented its work within the sector for readmission, acceptance and accommodation more precisely on the granting of permits and safe return. Issues on how to be effective and avoid unnecessary delays were mentioned as well as finding out ways to motivate migrants to return voluntarily. **Turkey's** Directorate General of Migration Management has several ongoing projects for AVRR and raised the issue of trust as a main issue for the return process – migrants tend to trust smugglers more than national authorities. **Serbia** presented its new law on asylum and temporary protection as well as its cooperative approach in the return process with other agencies. Following these comments, **IOM** highlighted that return should not be seen as a separate policy but as an integral part of a comprehensive migration policy. Three aspects need to go hand in hand to achieve an efficient framework, namely, a protection framework, legal pathways for migration and a strict framework on irregular migration. **Germany** continued with a presentation on two tools, namely a comprehensive website with a hotline for migrants, information on return counselling agencies and country factsheets in many languages to help returnees make a decision. The second tool, Start-up Aid Plus, provides voluntary returning migrants from 45 countries with additional financial aid and country-specific grants. **France's** Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII) shared in a similar vein its large-scale reintegration grants schemes, which are handled without external interlocutors and with local OFII offices who accompany the process.
7. In plenary, **Germany** mentioned that their information campaigns in countries of origin aim to address the issue with higher trust placed in smugglers than in authorities. **ICMPD** welcomed the different practices from various countries and appreciated the variety of models of cooperation public institutions implement. **The Bali Process** brought forward the crucial need for consistent information sharing among countries. **France** gave additional information on the OFII's target group, namely irregular migrants, rejected asylum seekers as well as students in an irregular situation. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** reiterated the importance of a regional common approach to the issues raised by the return process and motivation for AVRR.
8. In **Session 2** on 'good practices for sustainable reintegration', **IOM** focused on the challenge with a structured AVRR programme considering the mass returns currently in the Silk Routes Region. IOM also mentioned that reintegration should happen at the individual and the community-level with local development projects. In cases of mass returns, issues such as lacking communication/data sharing between countries and issues related to access to land and property still need to be addressed. **Pakistan** informed about its process of management of returnees through the specific institution of "Overseas Pakistanis Foundation", which takes measures for the benefit of overseas Pakistanis and resettlement of returnees in local communities through various means, among others by



setting up a "Facilitation and Reintegration Centre". **Georgia** brought forward its State-NGO cooperation, which gives increased flexibility and experience on the ground. Additionally, **Caritas** presented the ERSO network, created to support migrants upon their return through twinning between EU Member States and countries of origin but also through pre-departure counselling to gain insight into their wellbeing and their motivation. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** shared information on implementation of readmission agreements with other countries, how to best organise the return of their own nationals and as a good practice, the use of local reintegration teams.

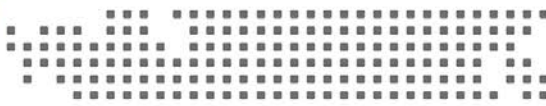
9. When opening the floor for comments, **Austria** noted that diaspora and community engagement can play an important role in the return and reintegration process and, regarding IOM's proposal for increased data sharing in the return and reintegration process, emphasized the need to take account of the recent EU Data Protection Regulation. The **Netherlands** brought one of their challenges forward namely to reach and access all returnees through their case workers and **Caritas** shared their approach of building trust between CSOs and national administrations to work towards successful return and reintegration. **IOM** suggested a reintegration model based on community capacity building in response to **Georgia's** question on how to better manage mass returns.
10. In **Session 3** on 'Special return cases: protecting the most vulnerable in the return process', **Sweden** shared its work with children in the asylum process and reminded participants that various actors understand the best interests of the child in different ways. Co-ordination between relevant actors and different/separate processes is therefore essential to avoid cases where no-one in fact takes responsibility for the child. Its *Common platform of knowledge* aims to make sure that all the actors close to the child, act according to the same information while working hand in hand with municipalities. **Caritas** shared their work in three countries developing vulnerability criteria and building capacities, keeping in mind that vulnerability can also occur after return. Ensuring referral of vulnerable returnees to specialist organisations for support both pre- and post return was highlighted as a good practice. In opening the floor for remarks, **Georgia** presented a few special return cases of sick or pregnant returnees. **Austria** emphasised that return decisions are issued in full respect of the principle of non-refoulement and whilst paying due regard to the health of the individual concerned as well as their family life.
11. In **Session 4** on 'How to establish and maintain functional return processes within national administrations', **Iraq** conveyed its work within the Ministry of Migration and Displacement which partners with other ministries for successful reintegration, partnering with local authorities to suggest employment options for returnees in several domains. **Switzerland** mentioned the importance of liaison officers and language analysis tools for an effective return policy. **Macedonia** gave a presentation on their work in return but also a case of family reunification with Germany as a good example of cooperation. **Albania** presented their readmission agreements including of unaccompanied minors as well as their agreements on information exchange on asylum and migration with several EU member states.. **Ukraine** gave a presentation on its experience in running online information campaigns and distribution of brochures on the possibilities of reintegration, and briefed on projects jointly implemented with FRONTEX on rapid return. The need to raise awareness among young people about migrants and refugees in the country as well as their encountered problems was also highlighted. **The Bali Process** shared their non-



binding work on countering trafficking and smuggling and their interest on the topic of return and reintegration. **Afghanistan** finally presented the Displacement and Return Executive Committee in charge of overseeing and implementing a successful return and reintegration policy and opening opportunities for potential projects. When opening the floor, comments from **Turkey** were raised on the importance of addressing the root causes while **Pakistan** questioned how smugglers are being apprehended at the borders.

12. In **closing**, the Chair summarised the following points:

- The return process should be considered as one element of the whole migration management process
- The definition of reintegration has changed and is now holistic including not only economic elements but also psychosocial and medical indicators. The psychosocial perspective of reintegration has been strengthened.
- The importance to have a post-return plan which can be rolled out for sustainable reintegration was underlined
- Monitoring and measuring the situation in the country of origin is vital in order to understand if and how reintegration can be successful
- Burden-sharing and/or responsibility sharing should not mean responsibility shifting
- Good cooperation with neighbouring and other countries in the region for an overall effective asylum/return procedure, including identification and AVRR, is key
- Communication centres with several languages to ensure understanding of the process for returnees is a good practice
- Importance of the proper infrastructure in order to find and identify potential returnees and establish timelines of dealing with these requests was highlighted
- Training of officials and outreach campaigns organised in partnership with international donors, INGOs and other stakeholders was raised
- Avoiding to wait for an irregular situation and offer reintegration grants early in the process and proactively was highlighted
- There is a need for a solid framework to deal with land and property acquisition for returnees and/or by offering help in the first months including health/accommodation and links with potential employment is crucial
- Repatriation has become a key topic, especially counselling for psychosocial issues and language lessons
- Involving returnees in existing economic activities and business has proved beneficial
- Successful reintegration starts with pre-return: the system needs to be flexible to accommodate different waves
- It is important to identify and engage the responsible stakeholders (guardian, authority,...) when dealing with unaccompanied minors
- Vulnerable people include a wide variety of groups, not only unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking.
- There is a need to establish criteria on vulnerability (i.e. medical issues, social and gender issues, economic challenges) and how to build capacities in countries of origin to address these vulnerabilities



- The importance of country specific tailor-made reintegration system for vulnerable returnees
  - The importance of well-used referral systems for specific specialised groups/people
  - Preparedness include migration control but also to work together on root causes
  - Packages for returnees should be tailor-made offers (after interviews), re. jobs, training, start-ups etc. as well as identifying the suitable region
  - Specialised treatment of vulnerable groups is crucial, especially in crisis situations
  - A good practice is to train national escorts and ombudsmen
  - The importance of mutually beneficial cooperation – for example to couple readmission with visa facilitation
  - Migration partnerships are useful tools also for cooperation on return and reintegration to embed these issues in an overall cooperation framework.
  - Awareness raising in schools and amongst youth on migrants and refugees in the country
13. Based on the interest of the participants, the Chairs and Secretariat will consult on possibilities to hold an additional Budapest Process meeting on return and reintegration still in 2018. Further information will follow on this.
14. The Chair, Secretariat and Host thanked all participating countries and organisations for the engaged discussions during the meeting. The Secretariat was tasked to summarise the discussions and to circulate results within the Budapest Process network.