



Migration management: New EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration

Brussels, 27 April 2021

Today, the Commission is adopting the first [EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration](#). The Strategy promotes voluntary return and reintegration as an integral part of a common EU system for returns, a key objective under the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). It sets out practical measures to strengthen the legal and operational framework for voluntary returns from Europe and from transit countries, improve the quality of return and reintegration programmes, establish better links with development initiatives and strengthen cooperation with partner countries.

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias**, said: *"The EU is building a new ecosystem on returns – looking at increasing cooperation on readmission, improving the governance framework, equipping Frontex with a new operational mandate on returns and appointing an EU Return Coordinator. Today's Strategy on voluntary returns and reintegration is another piece of that puzzle. Returns are more effective when they are voluntary and accompanied by genuine reintegration options for returnees and this Strategy will develop a more uniform and coordinated approach among Member States to unlock their full potential."*

Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, said: *"Only about a third of people with no right to stay in the EU return to their country of origin and of those who do, fewer than 30% do so voluntarily. Voluntary returns are always the better option: they put the individual at the core, they are more effective and less costly. Our first ever strategy on voluntary return and reintegration will help returnees from both the EU and third countries to seize opportunities in their home country, contribute to the development of the community and build trust in our migration system to make it more effective."*

An effective legal and operational framework

Gaps between asylum and return procedures, challenges in preventing absconding, insufficient resources, lack of data, overall fragmentation and limited administrative capacity to follow-up on return decisions all contribute to the low uptake in assisted voluntary returns programmes. Through the proposed [recast Return Directive](#), the [amended proposal for an Asylum Procedures Regulation](#), the [Asylum and Migration Management Regulation](#) and the [revised Eurodac Regulation](#), the Commission will continue to put in place **fast and fair common procedures** and rules on asylum and return, monitor the granting of return and reintegration assistance and reduce the risk of unauthorised movements. Through its enhanced mandate, **Frontex** can support Member States in all stages of the voluntary return and reintegration process, including on pre-return counselling, post-arrival support and monitoring the effectiveness of reintegration assistance. The **Return Coordinator** and **High Level Network for Return** will provide further technical support to Member States in bringing together different strands of EU return policy.

Improved quality of assisted voluntary return programmes

Providing early, tailor-made and effective return counselling taking into account individual circumstances, the needs of children and vulnerable groups, as well as support after return, improves their chances of successful and sustainable reintegration into their home communities. The Commission will work with Frontex to develop a **common curriculum for return counsellors** complementing existing support from the Agency and making better use of web-based tools such as the **Return and Reintegration Assistance Inventory** and the **Reintegration Assistance Tool**. The Commission, in cooperation with Member States, Frontex and the European Return and Reintegration Network, will also develop a **quality framework for reintegration service providers** based on common standards for managing projects, supported by EU funding.

Strengthening cooperation with partner countries

Cooperation on voluntary return and reintegration is a key aspect of migration partnerships that the EU will strengthen under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The EU will support the **ownership of reintegration processes** in partner countries with capacity building, providing staff with the

necessary skills, or supporting governance structures to cater to the specific economic, social and psychosocial needs of returnees. The EU will also continue to provide assistance for **voluntary return and reintegration of migrants stranded in other countries**, including through exploring new partnerships. Finally, the EU will strengthen links between reintegration programmes and other **relevant development initiatives** in partner countries. The Commission will ensure a more coordinated use of the **financial resources** that will be available under different EU funds to support the entirety of the voluntary return and reintegration process.

Background

Today's Strategy is part of the EU's work to build a common EU system for return under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

The Strategy is based on the results and experience gained in implementing national programmes and EU-funded initiatives in partner countries, including the work done by the European Return and Reintegration Network, Frontex and the EU–International Organization for Migration Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.

For More Information

[Communication](#): The EU Strategy on voluntary returns and reintegration

[Commission Staff Working Document](#): The EU framework on return counselling and the Reintegration Assistance Tool

[Q&A](#): The EU Strategy on voluntary returns and reintegration

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