Summary of EMN Ad-Hoc Query No. 2016.1100: Migration information and awareness raising campaigns in countries of origin and transit

Introduction

This summary highlights the main findings of the EMN Ad-Hoc Query on migration information and awareness raising campaigns in countries of origin and transit launched by the European Commission on 23rd September 2016. It is based on contributions from 23 (EU Member) States.[1]

1. Have your national authorities ever implemented any information and awareness raising campaign targeting prospective migrants and asylum seekers in their countries of origin or in country of transit towards the EU?

Thirteen of the twenty-three (Member) States participating in this AHQ have implemented some form of information and awareness raising campaigns targeting prospective migrants and asylum seekers in third countries. As shown in the table below, in seven of these Member States (BE, DE, FI, HU, IE, IT, NL) the campaigns are on-going; while in the other five (Member) States, the campaigns took place in the past (FR, LU, NO, PT, SE, UK). Ten Member States (CY, CZ, EE, HR, LT, LT, MT, PL, SK, SI) have never implemented any such information and awareness raising campaigns in third countries.

Table 1 Information and awarness raising campaigns, organising (Member) State, targeted third counti(es) and year.

(Member) States	Targeted third countries (year)
BE	Democratic Republic of Congo (2009-2010; 2010-2011; 2015-2016); India (2009; 2010);); Guinea (2009-2010; 2011-2012); Serbia (2011); Macedonia and Kosovo (2012); Cameroon (2012-2013; 2014-2015); Armenia (2012-2013; 2013-2014); Russia (2013-2014); Senegal (2013-2014); Nigeria (2015; 2015); Albania (2015); Georgia (2016); Morocco (suspended; 2017-2018); Tunisia (2017-2018); Kosovo (2016-2018); Afghanistan (2016)
DE	Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015-ongoing); Afghanistan (2015)
FI	Albania, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Russia, Algeria, Libya, Somalia, Kenia, Ethiopia and Eritrea (2015-ongoing)
FR	Armenia (2013-2016)
HU	Kosovo (24 months); Pakistan (2015-2017)
IE	Ethiopia (ongoing)
IT	Tunisia (2011); Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia (2015-2017)
LU	Cape Vede (2006-2010)
NL	Afghanistan (2013-2014); DRC (2015-2016); Ghana, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Cameroon, Gabon, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Angola, Togo, Guinea (2007-2013); Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Burundi, Liberia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Congo (Brazzaville), The Gambia, South-Sudan, Eritrea, Armenia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Iran, Iraq (2014-2016); Ethiopia (2016-2018)
NO	Afghanistan (2012-2014; and foreseen in 2016-2017[2]); Somalia (2013-2014); Turkey (2013-2014; and foreseen in 2017); Sudan (since 2014)
PT	Cape Verde (2009-2011); Brazil (2016-2018)[3]

[1] Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom.
[2] As of 15th December 2016, the campaign in Afghanistan 2016-2017 was in the planning stage.

SE	Western Balkans countries (last decade)
UK	Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia (2016)

Despite few examples, the information and awareness raising campaigns represent a **more recent activity of EU Member States in third countries.** In particular, Sweden reported isolated examples of ad-hoc information-type of projects carried out in the previous decade[4] by the Swedish missions in some Western Balkan countries. Between 2006 and 2010, Luxembourg implemented a first programme in Cape Verde, while the Netherlands and Belgium started to carry out information campaigns respectively in 2007 and 2009 across different regions. Portugal and France implemented a multiannual project in cooperation with other Member States respectively in the period 2009-2011 and 2013-2016. More recently, Italy implemented its first project in 2011, Norway in 2012, and Germany, Hungary, Finland and the UK started their information campaigns between 2015 and 2016.[5]

In most (Member) States (DE,[6] FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PT, UK), the information campaigns are or have been **limited in number** (between 1 and 3 projects per (Member) State). A noteworthy exception is **Belgium**, where targeted information campaigns appear to be a consolidated practice. Since 2009, Belgium has implemented 21 information and awareness raising campaigns in 14 targeted third countries, and some campaigns were implemented over years. Some protracted activities have been also implemented by Finland, which, since October 2015, has been launching one or two week-long social media campaigns promoting news items on Finnish migration policy through social media.

On the **length** of the intervention, most countries have opted for projects lasting for at least a year (DE, FR, HU, IT, LU, NL, NO), while BE, FI[7] and UK have most often opted for shorter interventions.

In almost all (Member) States (BE, DE, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PT, SE, UK), the information campaigns have targeted a **specific third country**. However, there are also examples of regional and global campaigns. Finland has implemented a campaign called 'Stop Human Smuggling' as well as short-term repeated social media campaigns in 15 countries of origin and transit of asylum seekers in Finland. Italy, with the 'Aware migrants' campaign, has reached out to 15 African countries; while in the Netherlands, the project 'Surprising Europe' has addressed 28 third countries.

The information and awareness campaigns serve three types of (not mutually exclusive) **aims**.

- Preventing migrants from irregularly migrating toward EU (Member) States and encouraging informed decisions making, by providing objective and correct information on migration as well as on the risks associated with recurring to smuggling and trafficking criminal networks, and by providing a more realistic picture about life in the EU (BE, DE, FI, HU, IE, IT, NL, NO, UK). Ireland is the only country to support local civil society organisations that inform potential migrants about the risks of migrating to non-EU countries, i.e. Middle East.
- Informing about legal migration channels (BE, LU, PT, IT), by preparing prospective migrants for life in the Member State (LU, NL), in particular as regards cultural differences (NL), by engaging with the diaspora (BE, PT) and by reinforcing the institutional capacity of the third-country in dealing with migration (LU, HU).
- Encouraging potential migrants to stay in the countries of origin, by promoting social inclusion and empowerment of marginalised groups (BE), by engaging with returnees (FI, IE), by improving the quality of life of vulnerable groups (NL), and by providing information on employment opportunities in the countries of origin (BE, DE).

The information and awareness raising projects are have been implemented in **partnership** with a wide variety of entities, that, depending on the type of project, range from international organisations (UNHCR, IOM), NGOs, newspapers, local universities or research centres, private media and communication companies, embassies and ministries in the country of origins as well as other Member States.

On the **communication channels and tools** used, almost all (Member) States resorted to traditional media, such as television, radio, theatre, concerts, leaflets and other paper material (BE, DE, HU, IT, NL, NO). New media, like websites and blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, GoogleAd, Instagram, are also widely used (BE, DE, FI, NL, PT, IT). In some projects, gadgets or writing contests were also mentioned (BE, NO). Some projects implemented by Belgium and Luxembourg foresaw the direct involvement of stakeholders, through seminars (BE, LU) or specific trainings for journalists (BE). Finally, individual counselling with prospective migrants were included in campaigns implemented by Belgium, UK and the Netherlands.

[3] As of 24th October 2016, the campaign in Brazil 2016-2018 was in the planning stage.
[4] No specific information on the timeline has been provided.
[5] No specific information on the starting date of the information campaign carried out by Ireland has been provided.
[6] Not clear whether the information activities carried out in Western Balkans are part of one project.
[7] Finland, besides the campaign 'Stop Human Smuggling' that took place between July and October 2016, since October 2015 implements a series of short term (one or two weeks) and repeated social media campaigns.

The effectiveness of the majority of the information and awareness raising campaigns was positively assessed, although, from the information provided, it seems that only a small minority of projects included a formal, external **evaluation** (e.g. project by Belgium in Albania).[8]

2. Have your national authorities ever implemented any "in-land" information and awareness raising campaign targeting irregular migrants already present on the territory of a Member State / Associated State and asylum seekers with the aim of increasing (assisted voluntary) departures?

Most (Member) States (HR, CZ, EE, FR, HU, IT, LV, LT, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, SI, SE) did not report any specific information and awareness campaigns targeting irregular migrants or asylum seekers already on the territory of the Member State. Some information activities are however implemented within Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes, as alternatives to information campaigns (EE, FR, LV, LU, MT, NL, PT) or complementing them (BE). In particular, France mentioned an overarching strategy on communication and promotion of AVRR, foreseen in the Action Plan of 10th June 2015 on return and reintegration.[9]

The "in-land" information and awareness raising campaigns can be grouped according to the target groups: whether they aim at general third country nationals (BE, DE, SK, CY, FI), or whether they target specific third nationalities (BE, UK).

- As regards the campaigns aimed at all **irregular migrants**, the Slovak Republic (through IOM) has implemented between 2009 and 2011 a wide-ranging campaign which employed a variety of information channels (websites, counselling, leaflets, stickers, information helpline, etc.). Similarly, Cyprus (since the beginning of 2016) and Belgium (since 2011) have been implementing a multilingual and multi-media campaign on AVRR. Germany, in more limited scale, since October 2015 has been conducting a campaign which consists in the distribution of multilingual information leaflets informing migrants on AVRR. Germany is also producing an animated explanatory film on the rights and duties during the asylum procedure. Finally, Finland has financed for a couple of months in 2015 a project aimed at setting up a multilingual website with stories of returnees, accompanied by a pre- and post-launch social media campaign. Finland was the only country to report the implementation of a campaign to disseminate information on voluntary return among the **general national public and decision makers**. This consisted in a poster campaign at bus stops in Helsinki, accompanied by information on the project website and press releases.
- Only two countries implemented **information campaigns targeting irregular migrants originating from specific countries**. Belgium since 2009 has implemented five campaigns of different scale targeting nationals of Brazil, Albania, Iraq and Afghanistan. The UK has been implementing since February 2016 a campaign targeting Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Iraq citizens in Calais.

3. Are there any new migration information and awareness raising campaigns being planned within the next 6-12 months? If so, please fill in one table per planned campaign.

The majority of (Member) States that implement or have implemented in the past information and awareness raising campaigns on their territory or in third countries will continue to do so in the next six or twelve months (BE, DE, IT, FI, FR, HU, NL, NO, PT, UK). Three countries that had some forms of campaigns in the past (LU, SK, SE) did not indicate any upcoming projects. As for the Member States that have never implemented information campaigns, none of them (HR, CZ, EE, LV, LT, PL, SI) plan to do so future and CY is currently implementing a pilot reintegration programme, which might in the future include information and awareness campaigns in the countries of origin.

The planned campaigns consist of the continuation of the ongoing projects (IT, HU, UK), new projects in third countries (BE,[10] FR,[11] NL,[12] NO,[13] PT[14]) and information and awareness raising campaigns targeting migrants already present in the Member State (DE, FI, PT).

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[8] The Netherlands (Ministry of Security and Justice) has conducted a research on the effects of information campaigns, carried out by its own research centre (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum, WODC). The final evaluation report will be accessible for the public mid December 2016 and will be uploaded on the WODC website.

[9] Source: 2015 EMN Study *Dissemination of information on voluntary return: How to reach irregular migrants not In contact with the authorities*, referenced in the AHQ.

[10] The project will be carried out in Morocco and Tunisia targeting Sub-Saharan Africans in transit towards Europe.

[11] A project might start covering unaccompanied minors in countries of origin.

[12] The project will be carried out in Ethiopia, with the aim to prevent irregular migration and trafficking.

13 The project will be carried out in Afghanistan, with the aim to protect the most vulnerable children in Afghanistan through provision of psychosocial support and reintegration of unaccompanied children.

4. According to available information and the experiences of national authorities, what makes an information and awareness raising campaign effective? How should the effectiveness of a migration information campaign be measured most accurately?

The main **elements identified by Member States that contribute to the effectiveness** of migration information and awareness campaigns are as follows.

- Understanding the addressees of the campaign and the socio-cultural context, by thorough profiling of the target groups (BE, DE, LV, NO) and identifying the key messages to be channelled (BE, DE).
- Identifying right content: the message should be simple and short and accompanied by infographics (DE), it should be balanced, focusing both on the positive and on the negative aspects of the phenomenon; it should be emphatic but not paternalistic or patronising (BE, DE) and refer to real life stories and to individual situations (BE, DE, UK).
- Designing communication style: the message should use the language of the target group and the translation should be of high quality (BE, DE, FI); moreover, given the sensitivity of the topic, humour is discouraged (BE) as well as symbols with a negative connotation (e.g. aircraft, suitcases) (DE).
- Identifying right communication channels: the campaign should employ the same communication channels used by the target group; in particular, the use of internet and social media is in general encouraged (BE, DE, FI), especially when interaction of target groups is possible, for instance when a native person reacts to comments or posts. Moreover, the involvement of the diaspora as well as of trusted community members is an element that adds credibility to the message (BE, DE, NO, UK).
- Integrating the campaigns in a larger policy action makes the message more effective, for instance simultaneous campaigns in countries of origin and in the Member State, and return operations (BE); moreover, repeating the message is important, as changing mentality takes time (BE).

Depending on the type of information campaigns, i.e. in third country or "in-land", different **indicators** have been suggested to measure their effectiveness. In the former case, an indicator could be the inflow of irregular migrants from the target group (BE); while for the latter, the number of voluntary returns of nationals of the targeted group (BE). In both cases, surveys could be employed to detect the change in migration preferences among the members of the target group. Finally, the suggested indicators to measure the effectiveness of social media campaigns are the number of visits to web pages, the number of 'likes' and sharing (FI, PT).

Some **challenges** in evaluating the effectiveness of information and awareness raising campaigns were also reported. In general, it is hard to capture a change in preferences, and surveys to measure preferences before and after the campaigns are expensive and hardly used (BE). It is also challenging to ascertain that the decisions not to migrate or to return to the origin country depend upon the information campaign rather than on other factors (NO). A more fundamental challenge is the fact that information and awareness campaigns rely upon a set of assumptions which are very difficult to verify; for instance, it is assumed that the message will be trusted by migrants and that migrants are in possession of incorrect information, which lead them to take unsound decisions; that migrants have an actual choice and may opt for alternatives to migration, as well as that decisions are individual processes (NL).

5. Please provide contact details of a person/institution responsible for the implementation of the information awareness raising campaigns in your country.

MS[15]	Contact Person	Institution
BE	Katy Verzelen Attaché Ilobel	Immigration Office, Immigration Liaison Officers
	Manon Muyle	Fedasil, Project Officer, International Unit - Direction Operational Management
CY	Natasa Xenophontos Koudouna	IOM Cyprus, Head of Office
DE	Saliha Kubilay	BAMF
FI	Rim Mezian	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Communication Coordinator
	Hanna Kautto	Finnish Immigration Service, Head of Press and Communications Services

[14] The projects will be carried out in Brazil, with the aim of strengthening migration management and providing information of legal migration channels.

15 HR, CZ, EE, HU, IE, LV, LT, LU, MT, NO, PL and SE did not provide a contact person.

FR	N/A however FR NCP can be the contact point for additional questions	
IT	Carmelita Ammendola	Ministry of Interior
NL	Jan Rinzema	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Po-Ling Ho	Repatriation and Departure Service, Ministry of Security and Justice
NO	Stine Münter	Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Department of Migration
PT	Marta Bronzin	IOM, Head of Office
	Luis Carrasquinho	IOM, AVRR Focal Point
SK	returnhome@iom.int	IOM, AVRR unit
UK	Hanna Morrison	Home Office
	xxx@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	Home Office

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

You may obtain further details on this EMN Ad-Hoc Query Summary and/or on any other aspect of the EMN, from: HOME-EMN@ec.europa.eu

Produced November 2016