



AD HOC QUERY ON 2020.81 Umbrella Inform – Covid-19 and Return – Part 2 (REG Practitioners and NCPs)

Requested by COM on 21 December 2020

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden plus Norway (24 in Total)

Disclaimer:

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1. Background information

This Ad-Hoc Query contributes to the section of a planned EMN OECD COVID-19 Umbrella Inform that will be published in March 2021 and covers the measures adopted by Member States and Norway in relation to third-country nationals subject to a return decision. It requests an update to the responses given to AHQ 2020.57.

This purpose of the Umbrella Inform is to discuss the key issues that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic based on information already gathered and new information to be collected. The Inform will compare and contrast the force majeure measures taken up to June/July 2020, based on the information already collected, with measures in place at a point in time as of 31 December 2020 in order to assess whether policies have evolved or not. The purpose is not to provide a timeline of developments but to highlight changes.

The Umbrella Inform will discuss what are the challenges still faced by Member States at 31 December 2020, and whether or not any lessons have been learned. In their answers to the AHQs, Member States are asked to reflect on the types of challenges faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges.

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Please complete two separate responses to this ad-hoc query; the first including all information, both for limited and for wider dissemination, and the second including only information suitable for wider dissemination. This AHQ will be launched as two separate AHQs to facilitate this. The version with public information only will be used in the synthesis for the Umbrella Inform.

This response is to include information suitable for wider dissemination from your response to Part 1 of this AHQ.

These AHQ responses will count as 3 AHQs in total.

Note: Please use the tables foreseen in questions 1 and 3 when answering the questions.

2. Questions

1. What was the number of operated returns between January and December 2020? Please provide an estimate of the number of operated returns by month between January and December 2020 indicating whether the returns were voluntary or forced, and if forced, whether these were escorted on non-escorted (if available).
2. Please provide the situation as of 31 December 2020 in your Member State related to any contingency measures in place during / due to the pandemic in relation to issuing return decisions (i.e. internal procedures). Please in your answer address the types of challenges still faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges.
3. What was the number of return decisions issued between August 2020 and December 2020, disaggregated by month?
4. Please provide the situation as of 31 December 2020 in your Member State regarding any contingency measures in place during / due to the pandemic in relation to the following activities. Please in your answer address the types of challenges still faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges: a) Individual assessment; b) Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention; c) Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place; d) Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained; e) adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes
5. Please provide the situation as of 31 December 2020 in your Member State related to any contingency measures in place during / due to the pandemic in relation to carrying out voluntary and forced (escorted/non-escorted) returns Please in your answer address the types of challenges still faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges in relation to the following activities: a) Issuance of identity and travel documents; b) Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); c) Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; d) Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return).

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6. Did your country experience any challenges upon adapting or lifting travel restrictions? Yes/No. In you answer please address the types of challenges faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges.

We would very much appreciate your responses by **12 February 2021**.

3. Responses

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		Wider Dissemination ²																															
	EMN NCP Austria	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.																														
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	1. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Of which AVR(R)</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>246</td> <td>223</td> <td>406</td> <td>61</td> <td>345</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>249</td> <td>222</td> <td>409</td> <td>51</td> <td>358</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>120</td> <td>112</td> <td>239</td> <td>28</td> <td>211</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>61</td> <td>61</td> <td>22</td> <td>0</td> <td>22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2020	Voluntary	Of which AVR(R)	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	246	223	406	61	345	February	249	222	409	51	358	March	120	112	239	28	211	April	61	61	22	0	22
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¹ If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

² A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."

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			<p>2020 Number of return decisions issued[1]</p> <table> <tr><td>January</td><td>2.125</td></tr> <tr><td>February</td><td>1.826</td></tr> <tr><td>March</td><td>1.579</td></tr> <tr><td>April</td><td>1.493</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>1.311</td></tr> <tr><td>June</td><td>1.400</td></tr> <tr><td>July</td><td>1.390</td></tr> <tr><td>August</td><td>1.426</td></tr> <tr><td>September</td><td>1.549</td></tr> <tr><td>October</td><td>1.388</td></tr> <tr><td>November</td><td>1.333</td></tr> <tr><td>December</td><td>1.365</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>18.185</td></tr> </table> <p>[1] First return decisions issued to a migrant (all nationalities – EU citizens included)</p> <p>4.</p> <p>4a Individual assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of voluntary return, face-to-face counseling has been impossible for a number of weeks, but adaptations to our return desks have allowed a quick re-opening and pick-up of our face-to-face counseling. Outreach in the streets and homeless centers also picked up after a number of weeks, taking into account general hygienic and social distancing rules. <p>Reintegration packages were redesigned in a flexible case-by-case approach. Where counseling in countries of return proved difficult, the possibility of giving reintegration assistance in cash (as opposed to in-kind) or extending the delay in which reintegration assistance should be provided, were all parts of this flexible approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially, because the registration of asylum seekers halted and there was no influx in the reception centers, asylum seekers receiving a return decision were allowed to stay in the reception center. Gradually, when registrations and thus influx resumed, and because air traffic slowly picked up, persons receiving a return decision were again transferred to open return centers, where they are counseled about voluntary 	January	2.125	February	1.826	March	1.579	April	1.493	May	1.311	June	1.400	July	1.390	August	1.426	September	1.549	October	1.388	November	1.333	December	1.365	Total	18.185
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			<p>return. When people choose for voluntary return, but are unable to organize this within the timeframe of their return decision, they are allowed to stay longer in the open reception center. Although this system was in place already before the corona outbreak, we now see that in these cases, their exceptional extended stay lasts longer than before.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Immigration Office has not released all detained persons but has made an assessment on the basis of the potential health risks, the possibility of returns within the legal period of detention (which is difficult because it is hard to estimate when return is possible for a particular destination), and the fact that the person could be a risk for public order or national security • An individual assessment is made for each detention decision. Due to the Corona pandemic following aspects will also be taken into account: • personal circumstances à persons covid-19 vulnerable (illness, age) will not be detained • profile à due to the lack of capacity for detention priority is given to new arrivals at the border who do not comply with the entry conditions, to persons coming from criminal law detention (public order cases) and to persons who cause nuisance in society. • country à due to the lack of capacity for detention priority is given to cases for which an effective return is possible – flight available / restrictions in countries of destination and transit. <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention</p> <p>The alternatives to detention are the same as before the covid-19 pandemic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Return decisions (order to leave the territory, information on voluntary return is given and a period of 30 days to do so) and the possibility to prolong the period to leave the territory on a voluntary basis, if it can be demonstrated that steps have been taken to this end. The prolongation of the deadlines of return decisions would allow persons who have a stay in reception centers, to stay there. 2. The sefor procedure (the follow up of the return decision on an individual basis) is put on hold during the covid-19 pandemic. 3. The Open Return Places (300 places in the collective open reception facilities of Fedasil are allocated for open return places). 4. 'OTC' -status: coaching in open centres of irregularly staying families, who are living in the open reception infrastructures, are followed up by the immigration office and Fedasil community-based family-units for irregular families with minor children (which are considered as an alternative to detention). Some families in 'OTC' status reside in the community-based family- units.
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			<p>5. The community-based family-units (houses and apartments): families are legally “detained” in these houses/apartments, but can go outside and there are no bars nor security guards.</p> <p>Additionally in 2020 6 coaches were recruited to coach families with minors (residing at their own home) towards return.</p> <p>The Immigration Office is using already alternatives to detention for families with minor children but still sees a lack of effective alternatives (the fact that a person is compliant to the alternative is not sufficient; there must also be compliance to the return decision. The outcome is very limited). <u>There is a need to investigate the effectiveness (an effective return as outcome) of the alternatives to detention.</u></p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place</p> <p>In the context of voluntary return, return desks remained initially closed (during the first lockdown period) and application to return were temporarily suspended. Procedures for voluntary return were partially digitalized, thanks to the collaboration with implementing partners such as IOM and Caritas.</p> <p>Pre-departure counselling is an essential part of the Belgian AVRR program. Information on Voluntary Return is given via our receptions structures, return desks and partner organizations. Return and reintegration counselling continues to take place, but is adapted in line with Covid-19 measures (face mask, social distancing, etc.). Counseling meetings with returnees are limited and some of the meetings are planned online via video call. Therefore, counseling never ceased in Belgium and for the credibility of the voluntary return program, it is important that it should not cease. Counseling swiftly took on remote methods, such as through a free telephone number or via Whatsapp, Skype and Viber. Keeping contact with the residents of the reception centers through our network of social workers also remained just as before. This included pro-actively spreading latest updates on the possibilities for return and information of the specific quarantine assistance through our social assistants and network of partner organizations. A system of pre-registration of candidates for voluntary return was created. Keeping close contact with our reintegration partners in countries of origin through Skype to have the latest information on the situation in the countries of origin is very important too. This has proven instrumental to keep all candidates for voluntary return well informed and enthusiastic about their return, and to swiftly pick-up once the possibilities opened up.</p> <p>Face-to-face counseling has been impossible for a number of weeks, but adaptations to our return desks have allowed a quick re-opening and pick-up of our face-to-face counseling. Outreach in the streets and homeless centers also picked up after a number of weeks, taking into account general hygienic and social distancing rules.</p>
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			<p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained Access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions is always maintained, also pre covid-19. The right to education has been guaranteed within the limits of the restrictive measures taken with regard to educational establishments and pupils. Measures applicable irrespective of the nationality and residence status of the persons concerned.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programs Reintegration packages were redesigned in a flexible case-by-case approach. Where counseling in countries of return proved difficult, the possibility of giving reintegration assistance in cash (as opposed to in-kind) or extending the delay in which reintegration assistance should be provided, were all parts of this flexible approach. Fedasil offers a quarantaine package (250 EUR + 50 EUR) for accommodation and food in countries of origin where quarantaine measures are applicable. Our reintegration partners had the opportunity to use an emergency fund for reintegration activities that were affected by Covid 19. Mouth masks, sanitizing gels, mandatory Covid 19 tests, compulsory quarantine upon return (etc.), are all additional costs on top of the reintegration package. <u>Belgium welcomes all logistic and financial aid which could be given by Frontex.</u></p> <p>5.</p> <p>5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; BE continued identifying potential returnees and identifying priority cases. Identification interviews were conducted remotely (video- or teleconferencing). In the second half of the year, face to face interviews were again possible for some embassies, but remained exceptional. In order to (try to) convince the embassies of the advantages of this system, the Immigration Office organized an information session for our most important partners, in which was showed a “live demo” of the VCI tool. All the advantages of the tool (security for the users, transparency, quality, no registration of the interview, etc.) were explained. Some embassies and consulates seemed really interested but in effect only a small number of representations did want to use (and have used) the VCI tool. It is therefore important to use the actual crisis as a good incentive to stimulate authorities (as well the diplomatic and consular services, but also and foremost the central authorities of the third countries, which could then give instructions top-down to their representations to use this tool) and convince them of the advantages of the VCI tool.</p>
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			<p>Concerning Voluntary Returns, there have been no reported problems with embassies/consulates in the handing out of passports or other travel documents, other than some delays due to the lack of personnel in the consulates. Cooperation with embassies and consulates is generally good in the context of voluntary return. This good cooperation continued during the corona-period, albeit at a much lower frequency.</p> <p><u>Issuance of identity and travel documents is hindered due to the COVID19 pandemic, because:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some countries suspended the issuance of travel documents • Some countries refuse to carry out for example identification interviews, as a result, we have to suspend the identification procedure • For identification procedures carried out in the country of origin: we note that for some countries, the procedure can take longer due to the COVID 19 pandemic <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin);</p> <p>Concerning detention:</p> <p>Guidelines were provided by WHO and CPT for treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. In addition Belgian national guidelines for residents in residential communities were issued. The Immigration Office converted all these guidelines into instructions for the closed detention centers.</p> <p>The following measures were taken in closed centres to allow staff and residents to comply with these rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic hygiene: <p>As of the 3th of March a sheet with practical information (basic hygiene measures such as greeting without physical contact, washing hands regularly) for residents is made available in 17 languages. Disinfectants and soaps have been made available to staff and residents to this end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the maximum capacity of the closed detention centres has been reduced by half in order to respect social distancing (296 maximum capacity instead of 635). - limited access to the residents, to the detention centres and of course health security measures need to be respected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Of every person that enters the detention centre (staff, lawyers, catering, cleaning...) the temperature is measured. In case of a temperature above 37,4° or covid-19 symptoms the entry is refused. ○ Visits are conducted behind a protective plexi shield. No physical contact is allowed. ○ The wearing of a mouth mask is mandatory. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mouth masks: The obligation to wear mouth masks by the staff as of the 22nd of April. All staff members and residents received mouth masks. • monitoring covid-19 cases: The medical services of the centers have made the necessary arrangements to closely monitor the suspected cases of covid-19 and to take the test if necessary. Since the beginning of May all new residents and residents with covid-19 symptoms are tested. Until the test results are known, the resident will be held in quarantine. The already existing measures to detect and follow up vulnerable persons in detention continue to be applicable. • access to communications (internet, smartphones) and relaxation time has been extended, each resident receives 5 euros per week for this purpose and increased access to the Internet. • Each new resident is tested upon arrival in the detention center. Pending the test results, they are placed in quarantine. <p>For the forced return itself: The implementation of protection measures during return operations to encourage third countries to admit persons in return proceedings were provided on international and national levels. For the execution of the return by plane, the EASA guidelines are followed. The entry requirements imposed by destination countries ranging from PCR testing, to PLF forms, to installing apps...), quarantine, are monitored and the IO tries to comply.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Migrants returning voluntarily are obliged to obtain a negative test result. Costs related to covid testing are funded by the program. As stated earlier, if a quarantine period is requested by the country of origin, returnees are offered a quarantine package.</p>
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			<p>If a negative covid-19 test is requested, the necessary steps are taken. However, if a person refuses the test, it cannot be forced.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return).</p> <p>The IO conducts talks with countries of origin that still refuse to accept forced return.</p> <p>The Belgian Immigration Office takes all necessary steps in preparation of returns (including identification procedures), but a lot of these efforts are useless if flights are continuously cancelled and if the third country embassies / consulates are not starting over their normal functions (i.e. analyzing the readmission / identification requests, organizing interviews when necessary, issuing ETC's, etc.). During the pandemic staff of embassies / consulates returned to their home countries (which was also the case for Belgian embassies / consulates), to continue the identification procedures direct contact with the countries of origin could offer a solution in that case. <u>This is linked to the use of VCI: technological solutions could be a pathway to reestablish contacts and a normalizing of the functioning of the representations. Belgium would welcome a reinforcement of the contacts on high level with the third country authorities.</u> It also is trying to intensify the bilateral contacts with the third country authorities on all levels.</p> <p>These contacts should also be used to promote the use of repatriation flights. Although cooperation around repatriation flights works well with many countries of origin in the context of voluntary return, some countries of origin have been reluctant to allow even these profiles on their repatriation flights.</p> <p>The Immigration Office sees that readmission requests on the basis of the EURA and Benelux RA are responded (perhaps in some cases a bit slower than usual); but the agreement on a readmission does not necessarily mean that the return can already be organized. This is not always the case (due to lack of international flight connections linked to the pandemic). <u>Belgium also welcomes the internal communication between the Member states on the evolution of cooperation with the third countries (this should also be maintained once the COVID 19 pandemic is finished).</u> There are already existing different channels of communication and information exchange (REM, EMN, EMN-REG, Council meetings, EURINT, Frontex DCP/PRAN, etc.) which remain important in this context.</p> <p><u>As regards the use of eRCMS in particular, Belgium is one of the Member state which is functioning as a pilot Member state for this tool and is promoting the use of it towards other third countries.</u></p>
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			<p><u>Furthermore the Immigration Office will start to develop a comprehensive RECAMAS which will be part of the its new digital platform (Migration Case Management System – called EVIBEL new generation)</u></p> <p>6. After a short period of closing due to Covid measures, Fedasil return desks and partner organizations are opened again for counselling. Flight options are monitored on a daily basis and we try to organize as many returns as possible. We have been witnessing an improvement regarding flight options which makes it possible to organize returns to most of the destination countries. However, some destinations remain inaccessible until present time.</p> <p>Concerning the forced returns: the entry requirements imposed by destination countries ranging from PCR testing, to PLF forms, to installing apps...), quarantine, are monitored and the IO tries to comply.</p>												
	EMN NCP Bulgaria	Yes	<p>1. See the attached file. ad_hoc_2020.80_2_umbrella_inform_aHQ_return_finalpart_1_-_reg_practioners.docx</p> <p>2. There were no contingency measures in place.</p> <p>3.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>Number of return decision issued</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>455</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>442</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>656</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>417</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>405</td> </tr> </table> <p>4. 4a Individual assessment Bulgaria did not implement contingency measures or procedures relating to individual assessment.</p> <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention No changes.</p>	2020	Number of return decision issued	August	455	September	442	October	656	November	417	December	405
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
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			<p>The foreigner is obliged to appear every week in the territorial structure of the Ministry of Interior by location. The foreigner pays personally or through a third person a money guarantees within a certain deadline. The amount of the money and the deadline are determined by the Regulation implementing the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria. The foreigner submits as a temporary bail a valid passport or other travel document, which he receives back after his return or expulsion.</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place Return counselling is getting back to normal.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained Minors subjected to return decisions do not have access to the national education system. Usually, NGOs perform educational activities with these minors, but they have been ceased since March 2020 due to Covid-19 crisis.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes No changes in the financial packages.</p> <p>5. 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Normal process of identity and issuing a travel documents, no restrictions because of COVID pandemic.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Undergoing PCR test before and after each return operation for both escorts and forced/voluntary returnees.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; All the returnees undergo PCR tests prior to return.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). Cooperation and relations at present time are at same level before COVID pandemic. Difficulties are encountered in cases where a diplomatic or consular mission of a third country refuses to confirm the identity of the foreigner and does not issue a travel document.</p> <p>6. Related to COVID pandemic main challenge is related to forced return due to the frequent cancellation of flights.</p>
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	EMN NCP Croatia	Yes	<p>1.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="824 392 1375 831"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>77</td> <td>98</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>113</td> <td>157</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>56</td> <td>83</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>15</td> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>15</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>40</td> <td>46</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>38</td> <td>88</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>51</td> <td>156</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>70</td> <td>35</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>51</td> <td>113</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>48</td> <td>69</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>48</td> <td>68</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Forced returns to land border crossing points are conducted by police car (they are escorted). Forced returns by air are escorted at least to the airport. All voluntary returns are non-escorted.</p> <p>2. During the COVID-19 epidemic, Ministry of the Interior applies the instructions of the Croatian Institute for Public Health regarding COVID-19. When the police treat illegal migrants, it is checked whether the foreigners have symptoms of COVID-19. If foreigner has symptoms of COVID-19, the competent epidemiologist is notified and takes further action. If the foreigner does not have symptoms, the police continue to act, ie issue decisions regarding return in accordance with the Foreigners Act (Official Gazette 133/20). Of course, in the case that a foreigner cannot leave the Republic of Croatia due to travel restrictions, the deadline for return is extended and decision on expulsion is not issued.</p> <p>3. N/I</p> <p>4.</p>	2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	77	98			February	113	157			March	56	83			April	15	4			May	15	5			June	40	46			July	38	88			August	51	156			September	70	35			October	51	113			November	48	69			December	48	68		
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			<p>4a Individual assessment</p> <p>According to the Foreigners Act (Article 182, paragraph 4), all decisions regarding return are made on the basis of an individual assessment in accordance with the rule of proportionality. In this sense, the individual assessment must take into account all the important circumstances of the case, and especially the circumstances that are listed as important circumstances by the law (e.g. that these are vulnerable people, that children attend school, family life, circumstances that indicate the existence of a risk of circumventing the obligation to leave the EEA, etc.) and the rule on the proportionality of the return decision in relation to the individual circumstances of the foreigner side.</p> <p>Regarding AVRR, within “Croatia National Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR.HR)” IOM Croatia is organizing and delivering return counselling for each person interested in assisted voluntary return on their request, after providing necessary information regarding AVRR program.</p> <p>The period was characterized by unprecedented challenges arising from the global COVID-19 pandemic. This situation was further aggravated by the March’s earthquake in Zagreb and December’s earthquake in Petrinja, which necessitated adaptation to extra-ordinary working environments and flexibility in terms of devising new approaches to outreach, counselling and organizing actual returns.</p> <p>During 2020 total of 77 cases consisting of 88 individuals have requested and received return counseling of which 40 individuals were eligible and assisted voluntary return. All cases were informed and advised of the possibility to return to the country of origin voluntarily and introduced to the procedures required to make return possible. Individual assessment within the form of counseling was commonly implemented from one to ten rounds depending on the profile and needs of the individual.</p> <p>With the outbreak of COVID-19, migrants willing to return home voluntarily were informed about the ongoing COVID-19 situation and that airline companies might cancel the planned flights or conduct further medical checks to allow boarding, and might be subject to checks and/or be quarantined in transit and/or on return, as per measures adopted by the competent authorities in transit country(ies) and in country of origin.</p> <p>Prior to COVID-19 outbreak, 2 families and 2 individuals (12 individuals in total) have expressed interest in continuing further with their voluntary return. After return counselling, all were identified as eligible to enroll into the programme and offered reintegration assistance to alleviate migratory pressures in Country of Origin, which they accepted. After COVID-19 outbreak, additional 10 individuals have been offered reintegration assistance, paying attention to specific economic and social pressures caused by COVID-19 in Country of Origin.</p>
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			<p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, detention centers remained open. Efforts have been intensified to ensure adequate care for foreigners accommodated in centers. Until December 2020, foreigners were only examined for symptoms before being placed in a reception center, and from December, all foreigners are tested before being placed in detention.</p> <p>Information leaflets on conscientious and responsible behavior during the COVID-19 virus pandemic, are available at detention centers for foreigners and reception centers for applicants for international protection, developed and translated by IOM into 26 languages (Amharic, Arabic, Bambara, Bengali, Chinese, Edo, English, esan-ishan, French, Fula, Hausa, Igbo, Italian, Kurdish-Sorani, Mandinkan, Pashto, Pigeon-English, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Soninke, Spanish, Tigrinya, Urdu, Wolof and Yoruba) and leaflets with instructions from the Croatian Institute for Public Health, which have been translated into the languages used by foreigners.</p> <p>Foreigners accommodated in detention centers are advised to stay inside and measures are taken inside the facilities for protection (eg distance markings on the floor, hygiene items, medical staff, temperature measurement before entering the restaurant...). Face masks are regularly distributed to people housed in detention centers. Also, dispensers with disinfectants have been installed in the facilities. In addition, efforts have been increased to maintain high hygiene standards in order to preserve the health of applicants as well as staff working in detention centers.</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place</p> <p>Regarding AVRR, IOM Croatia has adapted to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 epidemic through adaptation to extra-ordinary working environments and flexibility in terms of devising new approaches to outreach, counselling and organizing actual returns.</p> <p>With primary concern being public health and beneficiaries' health, IOM Croatia maintained provision of information and other assistance primarily through online channels. Information dissemination and counselling were done virtually, using phone, communication applications such as WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, Skype, Signal and e-mail, directly with interested migrants. All fixed phone numbers in the office have been re-directed to staff mobile phones. Return counsellors regularly communicated with Reception centers, Transit centers, Embassies and NGOs working with target beneficiaries to provide them with recent information regarding Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration.</p> <p>All potential beneficiaries were introduced to AVRR programme in Croatia and fully informed of the necessary steps for assisted voluntary return and reintegration. All beneficiaries who have decided to apply for AVRR have received tailor-made counselling, including vulnerability assessment.</p>
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			<p>IOM Croatia has encountered 88 individuals who were interested about the AVRR programme in Croatia. All were informed and advised of the possibility return to the country of origin voluntarily and introduced to the procedures required to make return possible. With the outbreak of COVID-19, migrants willing to return home voluntarily were informed about the ongoing COVID-19 situation and that airlines might cancel the planned flights or conduct further medical checks to allow boarding and might be subject to checks and/or be quarantined in transit and/or on return, as per measures adopted by the competent authorities in transit country(ies) and in country of origin.</p> <p>During conversation with potential beneficiaries, it was very important to provide migrants up-to-date information on return opportunities, either using commercial or repatriation flights as well as land transport, where appropriate. Providing reasons why return was not possible due to COVID-19 situation was important as well, letting beneficiaries know what regulations were in place in countries of transit and countries of origin. Further, it was important to explain that such regulations and restrictions disabled returns during this specific period. Once such restrictions are lifted and voluntary return was enabled, beneficiaries were familiarized with each step of travel and what will or may be required from them.</p> <p>Total of 22 individuals were assisted with reintegration assistance which should be utilized within 6 months after return. All cases have contacted IOM office in CoO within one month after return and confirmed they would like to proceed with utilization of reintegration assistance.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained Regarding unaccompanied minors, the Ministry responsible for social policy has issued guidelines on how to protect unaccompanied children in situations of risk of threat or epidemic. Having in mind the interruption of classes in schools, Ministry of the Interior has taken the necessary actions in order to provide children access to educational content, to the same extent and in the same way like other children in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Science and Education.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes No.</p> <p>5. 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents;</p>
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			<p>Some Embassies (eg Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina) issued travel documents for their citizens, of course, in compliance with all epidemiological measures.</p> <p>Regarding AVRR, IOM Croatia has assisted twelve individuals in obtaining needed travel documents from the respective embassies within the Croatian AVRR program. The communication with the embassies was via different telecommunication means and no major obstacles were occurred.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); If illegal migrants are transported by police vehicles, the vehicles are regularly disinfected and police officers and migrants wear appropriate protective equipment. When dealing with foreigners in police stations, all participants in the proceedings, including foreigners, adhere to the prescribed epidemiological measures and use protective equipment.</p> <p>Regarding AVRR, IOM has maintained health and sanitary measures during the entire assisted voluntary return, starting from the counselling and throughout the whole process of return. All airline companies and airports have imposed different regulations during travel, but most required passengers to wear personal protective equipment. IOM Croatia introduced travel kits for beneficiaries consisting of one medical mask for each three hours of travel time, one flight-safe bottle of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and a COVID-19 travel information fact sheet based on World Health Organization's recommendations, translated to beneficiaries' language. One country of origin (Vietnam) imposed mandatory quarantine for the returnees for 14 days. It was free of charge for Vietnamese nationals and was organized at designated facilities run by the Government. After the quarantine's release, the beneficiaries were instructed to contact IOM for reintegration assistance if eligible.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Since December 2020, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been requesting a negative PCR test in order to receive foreigners in the readmission procedure.</p>
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			<p>Regarding AVRR, one country of origin (Vietnam) imposed mandatory quarantine for the returnees for 14 days. It was free of charge for Vietnamese nationals and was organized at designated facilities run by the Government. After the quarantine's release, the beneficiaries were instructed to contact IOM for reintegration assistance if eligible. One country of return (Colombia) has imposed a request to submit negative PCR test as entry condition for all passengers (including Colombian nationals). IOM Croatia has organized and financed initial and follow-up PCR tests for travelling migrants at nationally designated COVID-19 testing centers. Entry restriction has been lifted on 5 November 2020.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). Some Embassies (eg Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina) issued travel documents for their citizens, of course, in compliance with all epidemiological measures.</p> <p>In regards of AVRR program, IOM Croatia has continued good cooperation practice with Embassy of Iraq in Zagreb and established good relations with Embassy of Nigeria in Budapest. To assist Colombian and Vietnamese nationals to reach their repatriation flights in Vienna, Warsaw, Frankfurt and Paris, IOM has engaged in intensive weeks long cooperation with the Embassy of Colombia in Vienna and Embassy of Vietnam in Budapest to make voluntary return of these individuals possible. During planning stages of voluntary returns, IOM has also established good relations with border authorities in Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Poland, and paved a way for future cooperation for voluntary returns requiring transiting through EEA countries. IOM Croatia has established virtual line of communication with third-country authorities to inform them of possibility of return, as commercial and repatriation lines were opening. During transit, due to a lack of direct connecting flights, overnights at airside hotels needed to be arranged, where available. In situations where overnight could be provided only in the territory of Member States, coordination between Embassy of Country of Origin, IOM's office and border authorities was required for the entry to the country for transit purposes only. In such cases Embassy used diplomatic channels to arrange crossing the national border of transit country for an overnight stay.</p> <p>6. No.</p>
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	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please see attached file returns_2020.xlsx 2. There are no contingency measures in place. The issuance of return decisions continues as normal. 3. See file attached in Q1 4. There are no contingency measures in place for any of the topics mentioned in Q4. (a) and (c). When needed, online/remote interviews are conducted (d) No children are detained in Cyprus, so access to education is not influenced by a return decision. All children have full access to education. (e) The financial packages have not changed due to pandemic. 5. There are no contingency measures in place for any of the topics mentioned in Q5. The main challenge is the lack of flights. (c) In some cases, the returnee might be tested positive the day prior the flight. In this case, the return must be postponed, although the whole preparation process had been completed 6. No. 																																			
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <table border="1" data-bbox="824 1082 1429 1337"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>84</td> <td>29</td> <td>4</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>46</td> <td>47</td> <td>5</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>45</td> <td>18</td> <td>2</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>1</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>29</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 	2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	84	29	4	25	February	46	47	5	42	March	45	18	2	16	April	4	1	0	1	May	7	8	1	7	June	29	10	0	10
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			<p>July 162 31 0 31</p> <p>August 383 16 1 15</p> <p>September 128 27 0 27</p> <p>October 89 28 3 25</p> <p>November 44 18 6 12</p> <p>December 39 23 5 18</p> <p>2.</p> <p>Current situation does not influence the process of issuing return decisions. The number of return decisions issued is influenced proportionately by the number of foreign nationals illegally entering and staying in the territory of the Czech Republic.</p> <p>3.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Number of return decisions issued</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>834</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>1061</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>821</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>638</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>4.</p> <p>4a Individual assessment;</p> <p>The cases in hand were treated individually. Any assessment done aimed especially at, inter alia, measures affecting cross-border traveling which were introduced by countries of return. The prospects of return were assessed based on information from various internal and public sources.</p> <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention;</p>	2020	Number of return decisions issued	August	834	September	1061	October	1000	November	821	December	638
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			<p>Detention of foreign nationals is regulated by Foreigners Act (No. 326/1999 Coll., as amended) and by Asylum Act (No. 325/1999 Coll., as amended) in the Czech Republic. The detention (and its alternatives) are imposed in the same way as before the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place; Digital solutions played a strong role in adjusting return and reintegration counselling to conditions in place. Also, enhanced communication with all stakeholders involved in the return process contributed to a better quality of the return counselling and served as a base for an access to up-to-date information regarding cross-border measures, sanitary measures in countries of origin and operational support.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained; Yes, it was.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes; In general, any financial or reintegration assistance to returnees is based on individual assessment of each case. COVID-19 pandemic has not changed this practice but some requirements recently introduced by authorities in countries of origin reflect on the provided assistance. This concerns particularly PCR COVID-19 testing prior to return or insurance coverage. Also, the financial packages of return are planned during the preceding year and so they were not changed due to COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Regarding the voluntary returns, the travel documents were predominantly issued in timely and orderly manner. Furthermore, digital solutions such as videoconference have proved to be a good way to streamline identification process and other related procedures (e.g. return counselling). Regarding the forced returns, the effectivity of issuing travel documents has not changed since 1st August 2020 until now, however, a poor cooperation with certain consulates prevails and due to COVID-19 pandemic, some states do not issue travel documents at all. To improve the situation, the Directorate of Foreign Police (DFP) has started to cooperate with some states via the electronic system called RCMS, or to initiate negotiations with the representatives of the given countries. The DFP is also establishing contacts with <i>EURLIO</i> (European Return Liaison Officers Network).</p>
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			<p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Strict sanitary requirements were swiftly enacted in March and physical access to facilities (e.g. detention or asylum centers) in which foreign nationals are present was limited. The staff was and is equipped with masks, disinfectants and is supposed to adhere to social distancing. Same applies to foreign nationals. Any foreign national diagnosed with COVID-19 is subject to quarantine in separated premises and his/her state is closely monitored by medical staff. All facilities in which the foreign nationals reside are provided with information about necessary sanitary measures and equipped with sanitary protection tools. The returnees are equipped with masks and disinfectants and are instructed on sanitary requirements which they have to abide during the journey and upon arrival to the country of origin. For this purpose, extensive monitoring of countries of return 's sanitary measures and requirements has been conducted in order to best prepare the returnees for their departure and smooth reception in the country of origin.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; PCR COVID-19 tests are carried out if necessary and required by authorities of the country of origin prior to return.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). Regarding the voluntary returns, an extensive communication with consular staff on operational level was an important element throughout the year. An exchange of information regarding logistics, entry conditions, necessary travel documents, repatriation activities and conditions for stay and transit in the Czech Republic during COVID-19 pandemic was beneficial for both the authorities of third countries and us. Regarding the forced returns, cooperation with certain consulates prevails problematic and due to COVID-19 pandemic, some states do not issue travel documents at all. To improve the situation, the Directorate of Foreign Police (DFP) has started to cooperate with some states via the electronic system called RCMS, or to initiate negotiations with the representatives of the given countries. The DFP is also establishing contacts with <i>EURLLO</i> (European Return Liaison Officers Network).</p>
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			<p>6. Yes.</p> <p>The challenges we observe are related to the COVID-19 testing prior to return. Since the commercial flights have been considerably limited, traveling to remote areas might be lengthy because of the lack of connecting flights. Returnees sometimes have to meet short deadlines of the validity of their PCR COVID-19 tests upon arrival to the country of origin as required by its authorities and hence the tests have to be carried out on very short notice prior to their departure.</p> <p>Regarding forced returns, the non-existence of some flight connections or the often cancelled connecting flights is viewed as a significant problem.</p>																																				
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	<p>1.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>01.01-31.12.2020 operated returns</th> <th>January</th> <th>February</th> <th>Marth</th> <th>April</th> <th>Mai</th> <th>June</th> <th>July</th> <th>August</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Forced return</td> <td>14</td> <td>19</td> <td>6</td> <td>4</td> <td>8</td> <td>10</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Return with period of voluntary departure</td> <td>70</td> <td>97</td> <td>45</td> <td>27</td> <td>51</td> <td>101</td> <td>111</td> <td>110</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>84</td> <td>116</td> <td>51</td> <td>31</td> <td>59</td> <td>111</td> <td>114</td> <td>115</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2.</p> <p>Taking into account the current pandemic situation, the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) had to change its priorities. Due to limited number of human resources the number of migration surveillance control raids was minimized to direct its forces to border controls and street patrols, to contain the spread of the Covid-19.</p> <p>Issuing return decision takes place at the PBGB offices, where the sanitary measures are followed (2+2 measure, using the personal protective equipment and disinfecting the rooms). If needed, the PBGB supplies with masks also the returnee, if needed. The issuance of a return decision must be done in person, to be able to follow the procedure - sign the documentation and to introduce the content of the return decision to a person. In this regard the PBGB has not faced any challenges.</p> <p>3.</p>	01.01-31.12.2020 operated returns	January	February	Marth	April	Mai	June	July	August	Forced return	14	19	6	4	8	10	3	5	Return with period of voluntary departure	70	97	45	27	51	101	111	110	Total	84	116	51	31	59	111	114	115
01.01-31.12.2020 operated returns	January	February	Marth	April	Mai	June	July	August																															
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			<p>4.</p> <p>a) Individual assessment is part of return procedure, also and especially in COVID-19 situation. Due to the pandemic, the PBGB has used more returns without escorts, because of the compulsory isolation period applied to officers after the flight. During the pandemic, the PBGB has faced challenges getting permissions from transit counties due to transit time periods. It has to be taken into account that there are usually only a few flights to the county of origin. The number of connecting flights has reduced and therefore it is difficult to find suitable flights.</p> <p>b) Voluntary departure was preferred also prior to the pandemic-times, but the 2020 was exceptional as return decisions with a voluntary departure composed 93% of total return decisions. Return decision was extended, in cases where flights were not available or the person was unable to return. Alternatives to detention were preferred to detention.</p> <p>c) During the year 2020 return counselling was provided without any interruptions, but the counselling was offered via Skype or phone calls. In detention centre return counselling took place in person. In the beginning rooms with separation glass were used.</p> <p>d) During 2020, there were no minors in detention centre; Access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained.</p> <p>e) Assisted voluntary return packages were individually assessed and based (for instance covering the hotel costs, if person had to stay in self-isolation in third country).</p> <p>5.</p> <p>1. So far, the PBGB hasn't faced any major difficulties.</p>																																																																																																		

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			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Disinfection is prioritized and personal protective equipment is used by the PBGB. Person will be provided with the certification about his negative COVID-19 test result, if required or if he or she asks for it. The personal protective equipment is also provided to the returnee. 3. Acceptance of COVID- tests and alternatives by transit and country of origin - there have been situations where the PBGB had to find alternative solutions because the returnee refused to take the test or after recovering from the COVID-19, the test could still be positive even if the person is cured. The medical-personnel in the detention center, can write a certificate that the person has been in isolation or that he or she has recovered from COVID-19 after some time has passed. <p>d. There are no new cooperation relations with third countries.</p> <p>6. If a person is unable to return, the return will be postponed. Main challenging issues have been: transit time in return; COVID-test results; reduced number of flights (difficulties to find suitable transit countries).</p>
	EMN NCP Finland	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please see attachment fi_response_umbrella_inform_ahq_return_prac_part_ii.docx 2. Return decisions were issued normally despite of the pandemic, per se. However, the Finnish Immigration Service has issued a guideline on issuing temporary residence permits or extended permits under certain conditions to applicants who are unable to return to their home country or their country of permanent residence due to the COVID-restrictions. However, the fact that the COVID-situation is worse in applicant 's home country than in Finland is not sufficient ground for obtaining a residence permit. 3. Please see attachment to Q.1 4. 4a Individual assessment Guidelines have been issued by the Finnish Immigration Service on assessing the possibility of extensions for residence permits issued for the purpose of employment, family or studies. Income requirements and the progression of studies may be examined more loosely in COVID-situation in individual cases. When assessing a


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			<p>residence permit on compassionate grounds it is assessed whether the applicant is able to get adequate medical care despite of the COVID-situation in his/her home country.</p> <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention Sanitary measures in place, possibility for quarantine and testing at detention centers.</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place Similarly, as earlier, f2f return counselling continued with safety measures and with the support of phone and social media app communication.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained TCN children residing in Finland have the same obligation to go to school in the municipalities, so the access was depending on the COVID19 situation of particular schools.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes FI did not adjust the financial packages on a general level but COVID19 could be seen as a reason to a higher support in individual cases, if applicable.</p> <p>5. 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Activities carried out by email or electronic platforms. Overall processes have been slower due to no identification interviews held, and to limited recourses at destination countries, where the officials are working from home. Also, fewer requests for travel documents has been made since there's been limited options to carry out the actual removals.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); PPE's and hand sanitizer supplied for staff and returnees and overall stricter sanitary measures.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Testing for Covid-19 is provided for returnee, also possible quarantine arrangements are taken care of, if needed. When necessary, reception centre refers the returnee to the test to a health service provider or the test is taken in a detention center.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). Cooperation is maintained via electronic means; emails, telephone calls.</p>
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			<p>6. Main challenge has been last minute cancellations of flights and/or last-minute changes in the travel dates by the airlines. In addition, some airports have stated that all returnees have to be escorted as a requirement to get a transit permit. This requirement has made it more difficult to arrange removals, since there are limited routing options available. Available escort staff is limited and the need to under go either two negative Covid19 tests or self-quarantine for 14 days after returning from return operation means they're not available continuously.</p>
	<p>EMN REG Practitioners France</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. non available</p> <p>2. Regarding the issuance of return decisions, no contingency measure due to the pandemic was introduced in 2020. However, the issuance of return decisions was put on hold in March and April 2020 due to the lockdown.</p> <p>3. non available</p> <p>4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4a Individual assessment See our answer to question 4 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid. ○ 4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention A new sanitary protocol has been implemented since July 2020. As a consequence, all detention centers are fully operational again. Furthermore, sanitary measures (social distancing, masks, hydro-alcoholic gel) have been reinforced and thus, the detention centers' occupancy rate increased to 60%. Lastly, a specific detention center hosts returnees who have been tested positive to Covid-19 but do not require hospital care. Medical presence is reinforced in the said detention center to ensure the adapted care of these returnees. Regarding alternatives to detention and instructions given to the competent authorities to promote house arrest, there has been a slight increase (by 1 point) of the proportion of administrative decisions of house arrest among pronounced measures (from 9% in 2019 to 10% in 2020 of the latter).


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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place See our answer to question 7 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid: return and reintegration counselling took place except during the first lockdown period.○ 4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained See our answer to question 8 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid.○ 4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes See our answer to question 10 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid. ○ 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; In 2020, France used all means at its disposal to obtain identification and issuance of travel documents by third-countries consular representations: face-to-face meetings when possible and agreed by the third-country, experimentation of interviews by video-conference when agreed by the third-country (this last method has led to some positive results), etc. However, dematerialized communication was not always a panacea. ○ 5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); See our answer to question 11 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid regarding this point. A slight precision from OFII in charge of voluntary return in France to its previous answer: When it comes to voluntary return, costs are not covered by OFII (with an exception for a joined charter to Iraq organized by Germany and financed by Frontex) and therefore are not always affordable by the foreign nationals. In any case, the test requirement implies a higher number of flight cancellations. ○ 5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; See our answer to question 11 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid regarding this point. In addition: Organizing Covid-19 testing is a daily challenge. In 2020, most third-countries required a PCR test, only Germany asked for rapid antigen detection test.
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			<p>○ 5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). See our answer to question 11 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid regarding this point.</p> <p>6. See our answer to question 12 of AHQ 2020.57 which is still valid. In addition: France complies with both third-countries and airline companies' requirements (according to IATA standards). Therefore, challenges are numerous:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCR tests (organization, testing refusal by returnees, etc.), • QR-code (mandatory for some destinations, to be provided to airlines companies at boarding), • quarantine, • reduction of airline companies' quotas, • availability of flights and flight details, • etc. <p><u>Global situation regarding returns in France in 2020:</u> France has continued its fight against irregular migration but in 2020 the number of returns of irregular migrants was reduced by 47.8% in particular because of increased difficulties in organizing travels in a health crisis context with tightened borders in receiving countries, the closure of many consulates of foreign countries which hindered the obtaining of consular 'laissez-passer', the collapse of air traffic and the difficulties in obtaining PCR tests. The most important decrease was registered for forced returns and voluntary assisted returns of third country nationals (respectively -51.8% and -63%). Assisted and spontaneous returns were less impacted (respectively -39.8% and 22.7%). In total, almost 15,950 irregular migrants (TCNs and EU nationals) were returned in 2020 (returns, assisted voluntary returns and spontaneous departures), which represents less than half of the number of returnees in 2019 (31,404).</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Germany</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. /</p>

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			<p>2. As mentioned in AHQ 2020.57, there have been no significant changes in the internal procedures in regard of COVID-19 aside from general measures to protect the health of the staff of the responsible governmental agencies and the third country nationals subject to return decisions.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4. a) There have been not been any substantial changes to the information provided in AHQ 2020.57. Third country nationals who could not be returned to their country of origin due to reasons in relation with COVID-19 receive a toleration of stay (Duldung) until a return decision can be enforced.</p> <p>b) There have been not been any substantial changes to the information provided in AHQ 2020.57.</p> <p>c) Nothing has changed in the basic procedure described in AHQ 2020.57. Sanitary measures in the counselling centres have been adjusted to allow for face-to-face counselling. However great care has still being taken to provide virtual alternatives to visiting a counselling centre in person. Updates on the pandemic situations were made available on the homepages described in AHQ 2020.57 on a regular basis.</p> <p>d) No changes to the information provided in AHQ 2020.57.</p> <p>e) In addition to the information provided in AHQ 2020.57, in the scope of the ERRIN reintegration programme an additional in-cash payment has been added for third country nationals returning to their country of origin in 2020. The continuation of this measure will be evaluated in 2021.</p> <p>5. a) No significant changes to the information provided in AHQ 2020.57.</p> <p>b) In addition to the information provided in AHQ 2020.57 the following measures have been taken: Extensive hygiene concepts have been implemented for the parts of the return process supervised by the Federal Police. This primarily concerns escorted returns on charter and scheduled flights, where hygiene and distance rules are maintained as far as possible. Those measures include:</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protective equipment for returnees and escorts - Use of larger aircraft - Higher number of escorts for each charter flight: individual assessment in terms of aircraft size, staffing and scheduling and varies according to the destination country, taking into account the duration of the flight - If possible: documented medical examination / interview of passengers directly upon arrival at the airport <p>c)</p> <p>If target countries require the submission of a negative COVID-19 test, this is usually carried out in accordance with the requirements of the target country prior to the measure.</p> <p>The regularly updated overview of the national situation regarding the challenges posed by the pandemic and the dynamically changing requirements of the countries of origin is being continued and has been expanded to include the points of requiring a PCR or antigen test, compliance with a quarantine obligation, and the online registration obligation and/or generation of a QR code, and is also regularly updated in order to continue to be able to react quickly to changes and to make the return process available to responsible actors in Germany.</p> <p>The hygiene concepts developed in coordination with the Federal Police at the airports for the implementation of forced returns are continued and were continuously adapted/expanded in line with changing developments during the course of the pandemic in order to provide the greatest possible protection for all persons involved in a return operation.</p> <p>Forced returns:</p> <p>To the extent possible, returns from immigration detention facilities and pre-removal detention were continuously utilized. COVID-19 testing can be more straightforwardly arranged at these facilities.</p> <p>In cases where pre-removal detention could not be arranged, problems remain regarding the required timing of testing and actual removal, which may mean the failure of the measure or make it considerably more difficult. In addition, the generation of a QR code or online registration requirement demanded by some countries of origin is problematic, for example, if the required information cannot be provided due to a lack of available data.</p> <p>Voluntary Return:</p> <p>REAG/GARP programme beneficiaries receive hygiene kits prior to departure. COVID-19- compliant hygiene standards are maintained in the accommodations, during transportation to the airport, and during the flight. In most countries, a negative COVID-19 test is required prior to return.</p> <p>Returnees must consult a doctor prior to departure and present the test result before check-in. Fees required for the test may be covered under the REAG/GARP programme.</p>
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			<p>If the countries of origin require the returnees to be quarantined, the REAG/GARP programme can also cover the costs if they are not covered by another organization in the respective countries.</p> <p>Quarantine requirements in some countries of origin for the post-arrival period are subject to wide variation, as are testing requirements. In addition, the conditions to be met to fulfill this requirement (explicitly the actual assumption of costs prior to departure) also complicate the return process in some cases.</p> <p>With regard to the return process in general, positive changes have only occurred to the extent that a few countries of origin also accept testing by means of a rapid antigen test.</p> <p>d)</p> <p>See answer to question 6</p> <p>6. In addition to the answers provided in AHQ 2020.57 the following information can be added: The German authorities keep an eye on the dynamic development of entry regulations worldwide and try to use all available possibilities to facilitate returns. To this end, the ZUR (Zentrum zur Unterstützung der Rückkehr) and the Federal Police regularly provide the foreigners authorities with situation reports/country lists. In addition to general entry regulations, return-specific regulations are also included. An evaluation of the cooperation is difficult in many cases, as the social, political and economic effects of the pandemic cannot be adequately assessed for all states.</p>																																																		
	<p>EMN NCP Hungary</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. The statistics includes the clients both of the NDGAP and the Police, and it includes readmissions and returns of 3rd country nationals to 3rd countries only.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary[MF1]</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted[MF2]</th> <th>Non-escorted[MF3]</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>-</td> <td>58</td> <td>52</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>-</td> <td>52</td> <td>44</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>-</td> <td>44</td> <td>35</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>-</td> <td>23</td> <td>9</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>2</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>-</td> <td>82</td> <td>82</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>-</td> <td>83</td> <td>72</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>-</td> <td>91</td> <td>84</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>-</td> <td>90</td> <td>79</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2020	Voluntary[MF1]	Forced	Escorted[MF2]	Non-escorted[MF3]	January	-	58	52	6	February	-	52	44	8	March	-	44	35	9	April	-	23	9	14	May	2	30	30	0	June	-	82	82	0	July	-	83	72	11	August	-	91	84	7	September	-	90	79	11
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			<p>October - 143 136 7</p> <p>November - 129 123 6</p> <p>December - 171 168 3</p> <p>[MF1]HU does not have any statistics on voluntary return only if it was carried out as an assisted voluntary return by IOM during the period open for voluntary departure.</p> <p>[MF2]escorted to the destination country (includes readmission to neighbouring 3rd countries at land border)</p> <p>[MF3]escorted to the border of Hungary (aircraft door). This number includes the assisted voluntary returns by IOM if it was carried out in the period open for voluntary departure (or if no period for voluntary departure was established)</p> <p>2. Please note that in Hungary there are 2 different authorities responsible for aliens policing procedures: the Police and the National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing. Both immigration authorities implemented their tasks and measures in accordance with the current international, national rules and legislations. There were no special contingency measures in relation to issuing return decisions introduced due to the pandemic situation.</p> <p>NDGAP: Third-country nationals who were not able to return to their countries due to COVID-19 have the possibility to apply for a certificate of temporary residence (please note that this is not a residence permit) in case it is justified, meaning that although the third-country nationals have taken all measures possible to leave the territory of Hungary, due to circumstances beyond their capacity barred them from actually leaving Hungary.</p> <p>Police: no change in practice</p> <p>3. The statistics includes the clients of both the NDGAP and the Police.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Number of return decisions issued</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>156</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>227</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>230</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>228</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>294</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>4. a) Individual assessment</p> <p>Both immigration authorities implemented their tasks and measures in accordance with the current international, national rules and legislations.</p>	2020	Number of return decisions issued	August	156	September	227	October	230	November	228	December	294
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			<p>NDGAP: Third-country nationals who were not able to return to their countries due to COVID-19 have the possibility to apply for a certificate of temporary residence (please note that this is not a residence permit) in case it is justified, meaning that although the third-country nationals have taken all measures possible to leave the territory of Hungary, due to circumstances beyond their capacity barred them from actually leaving Hungary.</p> <p>Police: The Police immigration authorities implemented their tasks and measures in accordance with the current international, national rules and legislations during the contingency period too.</p> <p>b) Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention The practice of individual assessment when ordering detention or alternatives to detention did not change. The Detention Centres fall under the responsibility of the Police. The National Police HQ initiated a quarantine sector in one of a detention centres separating the infectious and non-infectious detainees. Due to health safety reasons, a detainee placed for the first time in a detention centre shall undergo self-isolation for 10 days before entering the community in the detention centre. No self-isolation is ordered in case of a negative PCR test.</p> <p>c) Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place The IOM carries out the return and reintegration counselling (at the moment no ongoing project). There were no changes in the practice.</p> <p>d) Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained There were no changes in the practice. There was no detention ordered against children in the mentioned period.</p> <p>e) adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes The IOM carries out the reintegration programmes (at the moment no ongoing project).</p> <p>5. The deportations in 2020 were significantly influenced by the responses of destination and transit countries to the COVID pandemic. The list of available destinations has been narrowed down as a result of travel and entry restrictions. The duration of deportation proceedings has multiplied in several cases, leading to an increase in the number of detainees awaiting deportation. Organizing deportations is difficult due to reduced flight numbers and new administrative burdens associated with entry.</p>
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			<p>a) Issuance of identity and travel documents NDGAP: Some embassies agreed on consular interviews carried out by means of VCI to minimise contact. Police: The excellent network between the Police immigration authorities and the consular sections are going smoothly during the pandemic situation too.</p> <p>b) Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin) Carrying out returns falls under the responsibility of the Police, but in case the return is carried out by air, it is the NDGAP who organizes the return. NDGAP: Mouth-to-nose masks are provided during the return procedures, escorts are also wearing masks during the missions. Gloves are optional. Protective goggles have been purchased for the escorts, usage varies on the requirements of the return mission (e.g.: rules introduced by organizing MS on a FX coordinated charter flight). Police: In the alien policing procedures belongings to the Police, only the Ukrainian party demanded the 14 days quarantine period or negative PCR test regarding the handover.</p> <p>c) Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival NDGAP: If needed, PCR testing is carried out by outsourced medical services for the returnees according to the rules on entry introduced by transit or destination countries. If a return is escorted, escorts are also tested (PCR) before and also after the mission. Police: In the alien policing procedures belongings to the Police, only the Ukrainian party demanded the 14 days quarantine period or negative PCR test regarding the handover.</p> <p>d) Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return) NDGAP: no changes. The excellent network between the Police immigration authorities and the third-country authorities are going smoothly during the pandemic situation too.</p> <p>6. No.</p>
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	<p>EMN NCP Ireland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Please see Table 1 in attachment covid_19_umbrella_inform_return_wider_dissemination_final.docx</p> <p>2. General Explanatory Note: Ireland does not participate in the Return Directive (2008/115/EC). A deportation order is either issued in accordance with section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 or section 51 of the International Protection Act 2015 (for rejected asylum seekers). A deportation order is accompanied by a covering letter, referred to as an 'arrangements letter.' The arrangements letter specifies the date by which the person is required to leave the State. If the person does not leave the State, they are obliged to report to the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) at a time specified in the arrangements letter to allow for arrangements to be made for deportation. At the appointment, the person is required to produce any travel documents, such as tickets, which could help in their removal from the State. The arrangements letter also notes that if the person fails to comply with the terms of the deportation order, or contained in the arrangements letter, the person may be liable to arrest without warrant and detention under the terms of section 5 of the Immigration Act 1999. Decisions letters enclosing deportation orders resumed being issued from August 2020. In October 2020, the Minister for Justice requested officials to stop issuing letters enclosing deportation orders for the duration of Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions, as part of a pragmatic and humanitarian approach. Level 5 is the highest level of restrictions in Ireland's Living with Covid-19 plan.</p> <p>3. Please see Table 3 in the attachment to Question 1.</p> <p>4. 4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained: Children subject to return decisions are entitled to attend school for as long as they are in the State. Schools in Ireland reopened for the period August 2020 to December 2020.</p> <p>Nothing to report for the other headings.</p> <p>5. /</p> <p>6. Forced Return: The Immigration Service Delicery of the Department of Justice continues to provide its services in line with national efforts to deal with the current Covid-19 situation. This matter is under constant review and pragmatic decisions will be made where required. This approach applies to the deportation process in general,</p>
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			<p>including the issue of proposals to deport and the making and issuing of Deportation Orders, and takes cognisance of the fact that access to legal advice and legal proceedings are potentially restricted. Deportation Orders are not being enforced during the current phase of the Covid-19 pandemic except in circumstances where there are national security or public policy concerns.</p> <p>Voluntary Returns: It is open to individuals to apply for Voluntary Return both to the Immigration Service and to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for assisted voluntary return. Applications are progressed as much as possible, bearing in mind the current circumstances.</p>																												
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<p>1. Please note: The answers to this AHQ concern the Assisted Voluntary Repatriation projects, since voluntary repatriations also fall under the competence of the Department of Public Security.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tot.</td> <td>267</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2.</p>	2020	Voluntary	January	54	February	40	March	14	April	0	May	0	June	0	July	9	August	12	September	13	October	41	November	32	December	52	Tot.	267
2020	Voluntary																														
January	54																														
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			<p>3.</p> <p>4. Pre-departure services, especially counselling, mainly continued remotely. Information activities run by IOM on AVRR continued during the crisis; training and information sessions continued remotely. No additional financial resources have been allocated to adapt the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes to Covid-19. Nevertheless, the entities implementing the projects have been allowed to adjust their budget for the purpose of meeting the costs for serological and/or swab tests, (whenever required by third Countries as a precondition for return), in compliance with the expenditure ceilings provided for in the relevant Public Notice.</p> <p>5. With reference to the quarantine measures in the countries of origin, the entities implementing the projects have been informing about a very different and continuously changing situation according to the relevant third country. In this respect there have been several requests, that swabs/ serological tests on returnees should be undertaken before departure and/or after arrival, in general within a few hours. Moreover, some countries require a compulsory quarantine period in private facilities, at the expenses of the returnee concerned, while other countries of origin provide for trust quarantine measures</p> <p>6. Upon lifting travel restrictions, the most remarkable challenge was represented by the requests, by some third countries, of carrying out swabs/serological tests on returnees before departure and by the relevant quarantine periods.</p>						
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<p>1.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>VOLUNTARY: 139 FORCED: TOTAL 6; ESCORTED 5 TOTAL: 145</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>VOLUNTARY: 85 FORCED: TOTAL 9; ESCORTED 6 TOTAL: 94</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>VOLUNTARY: 71</td> </tr> </table>	January	VOLUNTARY: 139 FORCED: TOTAL 6; ESCORTED 5 TOTAL: 145	February	VOLUNTARY: 85 FORCED: TOTAL 9; ESCORTED 6 TOTAL: 94	March	VOLUNTARY: 71
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				FORCED: TOTAL 8; ESCORTED 8
			April	TOTAL: 79 VOLUNTARY: 26 FORCED: -
			May	TOTAL: 26 VOLUNTARY: 157 FORCED: -
			June	TOTAL:157 VOLUNTARY: 38 FORCED: TOTAL 1; ESCORTED 1
			July	TOTAL: 39 VOLUNTARY: 38 FORCED: -
			August	TOTAL:38 VOLUNTARY: 56 FORCED: TOTAL 2
			September	TOTAL: 58 VOLUNTARY: 68 FORCED: TOTAL 4; ESCORTED 1
			October	TOTAL: 72 VOLUNTARY: 109 FORCED: TOTAL 6; ESCORTED 1
			November	TOTAL: 115 VOLUNTARY: 52 FORCED: TOTAL 1
			December	TOTAL: 53 VOLUNTARY: 31 FORCED: TOTAL 1
			TOTAL (January - December)	TOTAL: 32 VOLUNTARY: TOTAL 870 FORCED: TOTAL 38; ESCORTED TOTAL 22

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			<p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL: 908</p> <p>2. Part one of Section 32 of the Law on the Management of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection (hereafter - Law) was the only contingency measure that was in place in year 2020 in relation to issuing return decisions. Part one of Section 32 stated: foreigners whose legal stay has expired during the state of emergency declared in the country are entitled to continue to reside in the Republic of Latvia without obtaining a new residence permit or visa for up to two months after the lifting of the state of emergency, retaining the right to employment, if such were given to the foreigner during his legal stay with residence permit or visa.</p> <p>But Law has been changed on December 23, 2020 (part one of Section 32 of Law has been removed). Consequently, despite a state of emergency in force, foreigners whose legal residence expires during the state of emergency are not entitled to continue to reside in the country and are subjects for return decision. So this is how legal framework in relation to issuing return decisions now differs from state of emergency that was declared in March, 2020 and continued until June, 2020.</p> <p>There are no contingency measures in force and ordinary procedure is applied. Only adapted pandemic specific internal procedures/guidelines exist.</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. travel restrictions;2. spread of Covid-19;3. safe return;4. unclear possible/available return routs and operational/actual flights;5. interests of foreigner in legalizing status in Latvia (commitments in Latvia);6. radical decrease of direct flights from Latvia, especially to third-countries (available only ~10% of previously available flights). In the end of year 2020, almost no flights from Latvia to third-countries available. <p>OCMA Latvia internal procedures/guidelines:</p>
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			<p>1) from mid-March, 2020 communication with the client/irregular migrant takes place remotely (by phone and e-mail). The required documents for return decision are received by e-mail. Meeting with the client takes place only once and only for issuing return decision. Decisions for prolonging voluntary departure deadline and decision for canceling voluntary return decision can be sent by e-mail. Specific sanitary precautions/measures were implemented. These procedures/precautions addressed challenge No.2;</p> <p>2) from mid-March voluntary return decision is issued with the longest possible departure time. These internal guidelines addressed challenges No.1, No.3, No.4 and No.6. Legal procedure remained the same as before the pandemic;</p> <p>3) In those cases where the options for return were limited due to Covid-19, decisions on extension of the period for voluntary departure were issued (at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic the situation in destination country was assessed as well). This addressed challenge No.1 and No.6. Legal procedure remained the same as before the pandemic;</p> <p>4) If the interests of TCN were legitimate (there was a possibility for TCN to receive a residence permit even after return decision was issued for them (voluntary return decisions were canceled afterwards). This addressed challenge No.5. Legal procedure remained the same as before the pandemic, only applied more often. Example: TCN who is illegally in Latvia and is going to continue studies. After return decision is issued, if it is expected to be very difficult to come back for studies, possibility to arrange and submit documents for residence permit is given to TCN. If TCN cooperates and does everything on time, return does not take place, and after positive decision on granting residence permit for TCN, voluntary return decision is canceled.</p> <p>3.</p> <table> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>126</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL (August - December)</td> <td>407</td> </tr> </table>	August	61	September	107	October	126	November	54	December	59	TOTAL (August - December)	407
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			<p>4. Contingency measures/internal procedures in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no contingency measures regarding individual assessment. Individual assessment is made in every case and is carried in ordinary procedure; 1. no contingency measures in place. The pandemic has not influenced the grounds for taking decision on pre-removal detention and alternative measures. If Covid-19 signs are identified, the detained third-country national is isolated and the necessary medical care is provided in health care facilities. There were no Covid-19 cases in detention centers; 1. no contingency measures - only internal procedures: <p>Return counselling is done by phone, e-mail (OCMA); no contingency internal procedures in place regarding return counselling (SBG); return and reintegration counselling is mainly done by phone, WhatsApp, e-mail (IOM).</p> <p>Comment: In relation to ensuring the return and reintegration counselling it is necessary to point out that during pandemic situation returnees showed a high interest in returns to their home countries, so the return counselling was provided more often than in ordinary situation (by OCMA, SBG, IOM). The possibilities for return of migrants were searched in cooperation with consular services of third-countries (e.g. Georgia, Russia);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no contingency measures in place. <p>Comment: The pandemic situation has not influenced the access to education for minors (foreigners subjected to return). The access to education was provided during pandemic the same as during the ordinary situation. In 2020 during the pandemic there were no third-country national minors subjected to return decision in Latvia.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no contingency measures in place, no changes made. <p>5. Contingency measures in place:</p>
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			<p>1. No contingency measures in place.</p> <p>Comment: In 2020 during the pandemic there were only 2 third country nationals (1 pers. – citizen of Georgia and 1 pers. – citizen of Russia), who were not in possession of travel documents. The cooperation with Georgian and Russian Embassies was very smooth and successful. Travel documents for both persons were received in due time, without delay. Both mentioned cases were readmission cases (implemented on the base of EU readmission agreements). In case of return of citizen of Georgia the travel document was received by the use of "Readmission Case Management Electronic system", but in case of return of citizen of Russia the travel document was issued by the Embassy;</p> <p>1. In relation to health and sanitary measures, the access to health care is provided in all return procedure stages. Isolation is applied in case if signs of COVID-19 are identified and quarantine for contact persons is provided, as well as sanitary measures are carried out;</p> <p>1. During return operations negative test results are always provided for returnees and escorts, regardless of request of the transit or destination country;</p> <p>Comment: In case of assisted voluntary returns, there are additional difficulties with COVID tests - they have to be organized, paid for and returnees has to be accompanied, because otherwise they will not be accepted at the Covid-19 testing site without a payment order. Additionally, IOM employee's phone and e-mail should be given where to send a reply and password (for test results).</p> <p>1. If there is unclear information on the conditions for crossing the border or the conditions for returning to specific destination countries, information is checked/confirmed by calling to consular services. The same applies to controversial information that is received from third-country national. The pandemic has not negatively influenced the cooperation with third countries.</p> <p>6. Yes. Challenges:</p>
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			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information shortage on travel restrictions/entry rules/transit rules implemented by third countries and operational/available flights; 2. failure to comply with the return decision due to canceled flights/travel restrictions adopted by EU MS and third countries; 3. with the exception of Russia and Georgia, overall there was reluctant involvement of third-country consular services and third-country national authorities in the field of return of their citizens. The same applies to informing their nationals about return opportunities/possibilities; 4. an increase/decrease in return decisions when certain travel restrictions were adopted/lifted; 5. Problems to check execution of voluntary return decisions. <p>Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperation with third-country consular services and usage of IRMA platform. <p>Comment: more often calls to third-country consular services in Latvia and EU. Usage of IRMA platform. Information on IRMA platform regarding operational/available flights and travel restrictions implemented by third countries is helpful but requires finer development and more frequent information updates. Some kind of mapping would be useful as well;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. decisions on extension of the period for voluntary departure were issued. In some cases irregular migrants with return decision legalized their status in Latvia but in all other cases – left country after one or two decisions on extension of the period of voluntary return departure; 2. No measures were taken; 3. No measures were taken; 4. No measures were taken. 																				
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <table border="1" data-bbox="824 1177 2119 1342"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>112</td> <td>3</td> <td>2 (escorts were provided to the state border of Lithuania)</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>155</td> <td>6</td> <td>2 (escorts were provided to the country of transit) 3 (escorts were provided to the country of origin)</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>92</td> <td>3</td> <td>1 (escort was provided to the country of transit)</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 	2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	112	3	2 (escorts were provided to the state border of Lithuania)	1	February	155	6	2 (escorts were provided to the country of transit) 3 (escorts were provided to the country of origin)	1	March	92	3	1 (escort was provided to the country of transit)	1
2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted																			
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			<p>Public Security Working Group of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has developed algorithms/recommendations for officials working with foreigners (in terms of interviews, actions that require a direct contact with a person such as fingerprinting, etc.) which were followed to ensure public health recommendations.</p> <p>b. The grounds for detention have not changed, however since the quarantine regime has been adopted in Lithuania, in order to prevent the outbreak of the virus all detainees have been subject to a quarantine period of 14 days. A COVID-19 test has been performed for foreigners that were detained. Alternatives to detention have been applied as usual.</p> <p>c. Governmental officials provided foreigners with information on the possibility to apply for voluntary return assistance (brochures or contact information were given). Assisted voluntary return programme is implemented by IOM Vilnius office. There has been no interruption of provision of return counselling. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, IOM Vilnius has been increasingly providing assisted voluntary return counselling services via telephone, e-mail and mobile applications. Nonetheless, physical meetings had been taking place if the situation required so.</p> <p>d. During the period of quarantine regime (17 March – 27 May 2020), the educational and childcare process, as well as, the educational activities in all educational establishments and day care centres had been be suspended in Lithuania. Remote educational process was organized. As of 18 May 2020, the educational process still continued being suspended, organised remotely, except for pre-school and pre-primary education. At the beginning of the new school year as of 1 September 2020, the educational process was renewed, but from 7 of November, after the announcement of the second quarantine, the educational and childcare process was again organized remotely again.</p> <p>e. There have been no changes in provision of the financial package to returnees related to assisted voluntary return programme in Lithuania.</p> <p>5. a. Cooperation with third country authorities remained stable during the pandemic. Replies had been received to all queries related to obtaining identity documents.</p> <p>b. All sanitary measures against COVID-19 were complied with during the forced return operations. Foreigners who were expelled from Lithuania were subject to a COVID-19 test and protective equipment (masks, gloves, disinfectants) was provided prior their departure. All beneficiaries of assisted voluntary return programme in Lithuania were informed about the possibility to receive protective masks and gloves prior their departure.</p> <p>c. All foreigners who had been expelled from Lithuania were subject to a COVID-19 test prior their departure. In terms of assisted voluntary return, beneficiaries had been tested for COVID-19 if countries of transit or origin</p>
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			<p>requested so. Since October 2020 all returnees were tested for COVID-19 48-72 hours before the arrival to their country of origin. In case a beneficiary required mandatory isolation upon arrival to the country of origin and had no means to cover the costs, IOM Lithuania paid the costs for the accommodation.</p> <p>d. Cooperation with third countries has not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, 2 Moldovan citizens were returned in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova to the Republic of Lithuania through an organized humanitarian corridor (through Belarus and Ukrainian territories). In 2020, a Tajik national was expelled from Lithuania in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Republic of Belarus. The foreigner was transferred to the representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan via the border crossing point in Medininkai and subsequently departed from Minsk International Airport by a charter flight. In 2020, a citizen of the Russian Federation with a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Estonia was identified in cooperation with the competent authorities of Latvia and Estonia. The foreigner had been transferred to the representatives of the competent authority of the Republic of Estonia.</p> <p>6. YES. The limited availability of transport connections had significantly reduced the possibilities for implementation of voluntary and forced returns. Closed borders of some countries had made it more difficult to select travel routes to countries of origin. Challenges: 1. Fast spread of COVID-19; 2. Closed borders and travel restrictions imposed by other countries; 3. Significant decrease in the number of flights departing from Lithuania; 4. Additional measures to ensure safe return and removal; 5. Difficulties in enforcing voluntary return decisions; 6. Decrease in the number of accommodation places in Lithuania accepting beneficiaries of AVR in case isolation is needed before departure; 7. Additional restrictive measures that were imposed on arrivals to Lithuania: arrival was possible only with a negative COVID-19 test, isolation after arrival was mandatory for 14 days.</p>																								
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="824 1203 1704 1331"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>23</td> <td>11</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>n.a.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>13</td> <td>10</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>n.a.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>2</td> <td>9</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>n.a.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	23	11	n.a.	n.a.	February	13	10	n.a.	n.a.	March	2	9	n.a.	n.a.
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			<table> <tr><td>April</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>June</td><td>12</td><td>1</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>July</td><td>18</td><td>4</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>August</td><td>33</td><td>4</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>September</td><td>12</td><td>4</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>October</td><td>15</td><td>7</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>November</td><td>18</td><td>7</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> <tr><td>December</td><td>10</td><td>7</td><td>n.a.</td><td>n.a.</td></tr> </table> <p>Note: Luxembourg following the actions taken by the European Union after closing the external borders, could not carry out any type of return operations outside of the EU beginning on 18 March 2020. Also the fact that Germany closed the borders with Luxembourg on 14 March 2020, and the other neighboring countries (France and Belgium) followed, made impossible to carry out return operations. In addition, the International Airport of Luxembourg was closed to commercial flights beginning on 19 March 2020. The first return operation after this confinement was done on 10 June 2020 to Portugal.</p> <p>2. N/A.</p> <p>3.</p> <table> <tr><td>2020</td><td>Number of return decisions issued</td></tr> <tr><td>August</td><td>59</td></tr> <tr><td>September</td><td>99</td></tr> <tr><td>October</td><td>115</td></tr> <tr><td>November</td><td>125</td></tr> <tr><td>December</td><td>64</td></tr> </table> <p>4.</p> <p>4a Individual assessment</p> <p>No.</p>	April	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	May	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	June	12	1	n.a.	n.a.	July	18	4	n.a.	n.a.	August	33	4	n.a.	n.a.	September	12	4	n.a.	n.a.	October	15	7	n.a.	n.a.	November	18	7	n.a.	n.a.	December	10	7	n.a.	n.a.	2020	Number of return decisions issued	August	59	September	99	October	115	November	125	December	64
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			<p>As of 31 December 2020, as well as during the period of confinement (18 March until 24 June 2020), there were no specific measures or procedures relating to the individual assessment in the context of return decisions and the execution of return decisions.</p> <p>Return decisions are anyhow issued. Execution of return is subject to an individual assessment in which the prospect of remoteness continues to be a priority consideration</p> <p>In the context of the pandemic, the reasonable prospect of return exists less often.</p> <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention</p> <p>No there were no contingency measures concerning pre-removal detention and alternatives of detention</p> <p>However, taking into consideration the closure of internal borders imposed by the neighboring countries (Germany, France and Belgium) beginning on 14 March until 15 June 2020, as the health authorities were trying to avoid overcrowding detention facilities and/or semi-open holding facilities, the effective reception capacity of the Detention Center had been reduced at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis to 2 units and a maximum of 29 detainees. This is still the case on 31 December 2020.</p> <p>A residence unit always operates as a common transit unit in which new arrivals are accommodated before being transferred to the usual residence units at the end of a 7-day quarantine period in order to avoid any potential risk of contamination</p> <p>The Detention Center has hosted mainly single men since the beginning of the State of Crisis until the month of November 2020. After the renovations of the Detention Centre it was possible to place again women and families at the Detention Centre.</p> <p>If during the first wave of Covid-19, the detainee who was tested positive was transferred directly to the Hospital Centre (CHL), for the second wave, the detainee who was tested positive was placed in the unit inside the Detention Centre initially intended to house families/women.</p> <p>At present, the Detention Centre operates 2 living units (maximum 29 detainees), a transit unit for new arrivals (quarantine for 7 days or until the doctor decides that the detainee can enter a normal living unit) and an isolation unit for detainees tested Covid positive. If there are no Covid positive tested detainees this unit can be used for women or families.</p>
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			<p>The visits for the benefit of detainees prohibited since 21 March have been reinstated under certain conditions from 20 July: a person detained in the Detention Centre can receive only one visitor at a time, the latter having to submit to a temperature test, to hand disinfection and to the wearing of a mask inside the center. In order to guarantee the social distancing between visitors and the retained persons, a strict separation between visitors and retained persons has been put in place.</p> <p>Since 18 March 2020, about 60 detainees have been released from the Detention Center because their return was not materially possible, in particular due to the containment measures taken by the respective transit or host countries. The extended persons of the Center are no more offered, as this was the case during the first wave, to be accommodated in the emergency accommodation structure which, unlike the Retention Center, is a semi-open center unless the Directorate of Immigration pronounces a house arrest order at the SHUK.</p> <p>During the lockdown, the Minister of Health had indicated at a press conference that people with symptoms of infection would be taken care of at one of the advanced health care centers, regardless of their social security coverage, which also applied to foreign nationals at the end of their rights and those who are illegally staying who do not have social security coverage. In order to counter the psychological barrier that some people may face and who may hesitate to go to one of the advanced health care centers, the Ministry of Health has passed an official communication to all healthcare professionals in advanced care centers to raise their awareness that all people can benefit from care provided in advanced care centers regardless of their social security cover or residence status.</p> <p>The Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs ensured that no administrative sanctions would be imposed on those who would present themselves in an advanced care center during the health crisis and that, in this regard, no return decision or a placement decision at the Detention Centre will be taken. This provision is still in force.</p> <p>During the State of Crisis, the suspension of all administrative and judicial deadlines were suspended with the exception of the ones regarding administrative detention of third-country nationals (article 1 (3) 2 of the amended grand-ducal regulation of 25 March 2020 on the suspension of deadlines in jurisdictional matters and temporary adaptation of certain other procedural conditions). This situation</p>
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			<p>made very difficult to maintain third-country nationals in administrative detention if there were no possibilities to execute a return decision through another Member State. Since 15 September 2020, all activities resumed as per usual. However social distancing measures on premise were introduced during appeal procedures which can only take place upon appointment and under the respect of barrier gestures.</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place Luxembourg continued applying the return and reintegration counselling. It consists in support TCN's informed choice, provide information on logistical arrangements, on reintegration possibilities, fill in the registration and reintegration forms as well as assess any vulnerabilities that have to be taken into account during the pre-departure phase (risk assessment in the case of victims of trafficking (VoTs), family assessment in the case of Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC), in the organization of the travel (need for medical or social escort) or in post-arrival support needed (medical assistance for example). As we mentioned before no returns were carried out between 19 March and 10 June 2020, so these practices were not continued during the pandemic. After the state of crisis, if the return could be carried out, the return and reintegration counselling continue to apply.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained No. No specific contingency measures to maintain access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions were adopted. The measures concerning access to the education system were the same as those foreseen for all minors. It should be noted that schooling is compulsory in Luxembourg from the age of 4 and up to the age of 16. Any child of compulsory school age must be enrolled in school, regardless of the status of the parents. For those of compulsory school age, staying in school respectively homeschooling continued until the effective date of return. For those over the compulsory school age, already in school, staying in</p>
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			<p>school or homeschooling also continued until the effective date of return. As for minors outside compulsory schooling and who weren't enrolled in a school when they received their return decision, they weren't able to integrate a school.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes No. The general system is quite flexible and can be adapted to the circumstances.</p> <p>5. 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Yes. While the identification of the persons concerned continued with the consulates of the countries of origin, more use was made of online meetings via zoom, webex and other tools than Video Conferencing for Identification (VCI). 5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Yes Detainees are daily monitored from a medical point of view and must wear a protective mask if moving outside their unit. If the detainees wish to do so, they will be given some protective masks and gloves when they are removed. See also answer to question 4b.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Yes If a host country requires a test prior to the return, the laboratory commissioned to do so takes a sample of the person at the Detention Centre. The person detained may refuse to take the test, which may, if necessary, jeopardise their return. 5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). N/A</p>
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			<p>Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities have continued but are less easy in the pandemic grape and are increasingly taking place in other ways such as online meetings (see answer to question 5a).</p> <p>In 2020 there was no consular day either at national or Benelux level, which did not facilitate the establishment of personal relations and collaboration with the consular authorities of the countries of origin.</p> <p>6. Yes. In accordance with the evolution of the restriction measures, Luxembourg will adapt to the challenges.</p>																																																																	
	<p>EMN NCP Netherlands</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. # of operated returns:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="824 804 1375 1241"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>310</td> <td>100</td> <td>20</td> <td>unknown</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>270</td> <td>110</td> <td>30</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>220</td> <td>60</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>100</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>40</td> <td>40</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>60</td> <td>50</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>160</td> <td>60</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>150</td> <td>50</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>170</td> <td>80</td> <td>20</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>190</td> <td>70</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>170</td> <td>70</td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>150</td> <td>80</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Repatriation and departure service Please note: The numbers in the table only reflect the total number of returns to the country of origin.</p>	2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	310	100	20	unknown	February	270	110	30		March	220	60	10		April	100	10	0		May	40	40	0		June	60	50	5		July	160	60	10		August	150	50	10		September	170	80	20		October	190	70	10		November	170	70	5		December	150	80	10	
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			<p>2. There were no contingency measures taken in relation to <u>issuing</u> return decisions during the pandemic</p> <p>3. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Number of return decisions issued</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>1.710</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>1.660</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>2.090</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>2.410</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>2.290</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands. Please note: In the Netherlands, return decisions can be issued by different government agencies. So one person can receive several return decisions. The numbers in the table reflect the total number of return decisions issued in the Netherlands, per month.</p> <p>4. 4a Individual assessment: Return decisions and entry bans are still issued as before. There has been no change in this</p> <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention: Pre-removal detention takes place and prioritising for specific target groups such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - third country nationals with a criminal background; - third country nationals who are subject to 1F of the Refugee Convention; - or third country nationals who are a threat to national security has been lifted. The main challenge for pre-removal detention is the necessary cooperation from the third-country national with the COVID-19 test. Third country nationals at reception locations who want to cooperate in their departure, but are unable to do so because of the flight restrictions, can obtain shelter in the freedom-restricted location (or possibly continuation in reception centre). In addition, lighter supervision measures are being used (mainly reporting obligations and freedom-restricting measures or confiscation of travel documents).</p> </p>	2020	Number of return decisions issued	August	1.710	September	1.660	October	2.090	November	2.410	December	2.290
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			<p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place: Activities in the Dutch migration system have been labelled as vital by the Dutch government. This was necessary for the continuation of essential activities, like return and reintegration counselling. The aim of the Netherlands throughout the COVID-19-pandemic has been to continue (the preparation of) voluntary and forced return to MS and third countries. The protection of health and fundamental rights of the third-country national was and is paramount during the COVID-19-pandemic. Return and reintegration counselling with third-country nationals took place at the reception and detention centres in a COVID-19 safe manner or via telecommunication. There is only limited face-to-face contact because most of the activities can be carried out from home.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained: In response to COVID-19 several measures have been taken to ensure continued access to education for all minors in the Netherlands. Because in the Netherlands access to the educational system is available for all minors, without any regard to their residence status, these general measures have also been applicable to children subject to return decisions. The government of the Netherlands has again invested in providing schools with additional devices (like laptops or tablets) in order to allow children to participate in online learning as provided by the schools during the time that schools are physically closed. All schools are obligated to offer online education during the lockdown. Also the schools can offer physical education to those children that are in a vulnerable situation. The schools themselves and the local government decide which children are so vulnerable that they need to physically come to the school. The WiFi capacity in reception centres as well as in centres hosting families that are subject to return decisions has been expanded for this same purpose.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes: The regular financial and in-kind package for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)) has not changed in the past year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM can provide additional assistance if necessary. The additional assistance consists of, but is not limited to, COVID-19 tests prior to departure and additional assistance after arrival such as shelter during a quarantine period</p> <p>5.</p>
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			<p>5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; The Repatriation & Departure Service (R&DS) continued to process return cases where possible. In some cases, it has not been possible to organise interviews with the authority of the country of origin for the purpose of obtaining identity/travel documents, because Embassies are closed. In the meantime, R&DS has arranged to hold interviews in a corona-proof government office.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Throughout the return process health and safety of all parties involved has been the utmost priority. Measures have been taken to make sure that the spread of COVID-19 is brought to a minimum in the case of the return of third-country nationals. For example, Plexiglas screens and hand sanitizers have been placed in the rooms where interviews are being held with the third-country national. Contact between employees and the third-country national are being minimized with for example the help of telecommunication. Social distancing is now the norm and facemasks are mandatory in the facilities where employees conduct their work. Quarantine can be arranged, when demanded by countries of origin, with the customized help of the IOM or R&DS. Again, these measures are customized to the rules of the country of origin or MS and the need of the third-country national. If the third-country national is tested positive for COVID-19, all return activities will be suspended until he or she is tested negative.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Almost all countries require a negative test result prior to return. Before return, the third-country national is asked to undergo a PCR test. In the case of voluntary return, we have noticed that the third-country national is willing to cooperate with a COVID-19 test. The difficulty occurs when the third-country national refuses to cooperate to take a COVID-19 test, this is mostly in the case of forced returns. Currently we are still looking for possible solutions. In some cases, a quarantine period or a second test at arrival is required by the country of origin of the third-country national. If this is applicable to the situation of the third-country national, the Netherlands tries to offer customized support.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return).</p>
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			<p>Since May 2020, contacts with countries of origin and Embassies has been limited. Since then, a number of meetings in-person with Embassy representatives have been organised, as well as through video-conferencing. Contacts in countries of origin have been maintained by the NL diplomatic representations.</p> <p>6. One of the main challenges to organise the return of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic is finding available flights. Furthermore the restrictions of countries of transfer and destination make it complicated to organise the voluntary return. Continuing closure of borders hampers return to most countries of origin, although voluntary return is less difficult to arrange. Where possible, R&DS participates in charter initiatives by other EUMS and Frontex.</p>																																													
	<p>EMN NCP Poland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Voluntary return</th> <th>Forced return</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>January</td><td>1534</td><td>215</td></tr> <tr><td>February</td><td>1785</td><td>174</td></tr> <tr><td>March</td><td>1204</td><td>161</td></tr> <tr><td>April</td><td>165</td><td>67</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>128</td><td>103</td></tr> <tr><td>June</td><td>400</td><td>338</td></tr> <tr><td>July</td><td>551</td><td>332</td></tr> <tr><td>August</td><td>539</td><td>169</td></tr> <tr><td>September</td><td>471</td><td>196</td></tr> <tr><td>October</td><td>492</td><td>194</td></tr> <tr><td>November</td><td>328</td><td>163</td></tr> <tr><td>December</td><td>596</td><td>174</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>8193</td><td>2286</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>10479</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Voluntary return	Forced return	January	1534	215	February	1785	174	March	1204	161	April	165	67	May	128	103	June	400	338	July	551	332	August	539	169	September	471	196	October	492	194	November	328	163	December	596	174		8193	2286		10479	
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			<p>2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that resulted in significant travel restrictions as well as the functioning of national authorities issuing visas and residence permits, Poland, like other Member States, adopted appropriate legal regulations under national legislation aimed at legally staying in the country for persons, who want to pursue the current purpose of stay or cannot leave Poland due to the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus.</p> <p>These solutions include, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extension of validity of national visas and residence cards by operation of law • extension of the deadlines for submitting applications for legalization of stay • recognition as legal stay of foreigners staying on the territory of Poland on the basis of short-term residence permits (including Schengen visas and visa-free travel), • moreover, the deadlines for leaving the territory of Poland after receiving final decisions on legalization of stay as well as period for voluntary return specified in decisions obliging the foreigner to return have also been extended - until the end of the 30th day following the revocation of the state that will be binding last (state of epidemic threat or state of epidemic). <p>The above solutions apply to situations in which the last day of legal stay of a foreigner in the territory of the Republic of Poland will fall within the duration of the state of epidemic threat or state of epidemic. The foreigner will therefore be able to fulfill the current purpose of stay in Poland, as well as be able to leave Poland without the risk of entering into illegal stay</p> <p>3.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Decisions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>681</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>734</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>609</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>479</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>705</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>3208</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>4. The voluntary return programme implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in cooperation with the Border Guard has never been suspended despite the introduction of the epidemic situation.</p>	Month	Decisions	August	681	September	734	October	609	November	479	December	705		3208
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			<p>The IOM has endeavoured to adapt the voluntary return programme to the prevailing situation by, on the one hand, introducing flexible solutions which allowed a quick response to individual cases (searching for the most convenient and possible connections) and, on the other hand, introducing new elements, i.e. remote working, digital tools for contact with foreigners or packages consisting in reimbursing returnees for costs related to quarantine in the country of return. Flexibility and adaptability have proven to be key in dealing with the impact of the pandemic.</p> <p>Below you will find answers concerning types of challenges still faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges in relation to the following activities:</p> <p>a) Issuance of identity and travel documents; Foreigners who have been qualified for the voluntary return programme implemented by the IOM in cooperation with the Border Guard apply through the IOM employees for the issuance of travel documents. Travel documents are issued to foreigners assisted by an IOM employee.</p> <p>At the same time, there are individual cases when foreigners apply in person for issuing travel documents and then apply to the IOM for organisation of voluntary return. After the state of epidemic was announced some of the diplomatic missions have limited their activities to a remote mode while others have suspended their activities at all. During the first days of the pandemic, diplomatic posts restricted access for their citizens who were applying for or wishing to collect travel documents. In addition, contact with diplomatic missions was based mainly on e-mail and telephone correspondence.</p> <p>b) Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Foreigners which return as part of voluntary return assistance are provided with travel packs by the IOM staff, which should include personal protective equipment such as protective face masks and disposable rubber gloves. At the same time, new reintegration packages have been introduced due to the COVID - 19 pandemics. These packages are intended to address the financial problems associated with the higher cost of living in the countries of origin, the so-called emergency funds at the time of “lockdown” once again. This kind of additional financial resources can be used in case when the mandatory quarantine in the country of origin is required.</p>
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			<p>c) Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; The IOM arranging the return of a foreigner contacts the Organization's office in the country of return (and transit countries) to determine what requirements in the context of coronavirus prevention the returnee must meet (including quarantine measures upon arrival). If a negative COVID-19 test is necessary, the test will be financed by the voluntary return programme funds. The test is carried out before departure from Poland. In case the returnee has to undergo obligatory quarantine after his/her return to the country of origin all costs are cover by the IOM. The foreigner is informed about all possible quarantine measures before leaving the territory of Poland.</p> <p>d) Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). As part of the implementation of assisted voluntary return programme the IOM, despite pandemic, remains in constant contact with the consular services of the countries whose nationals constitute the most numerous group of returnees (Ukraine, Georgia, Russian Federation).The IOM, thanks to well-developed cooperation with its local country offices and third-country national authorities mediates in the exchange of information concerning current requirements related to COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures.</p> <p>The IOM staff maintain regular contact with consular posts of countries of return in order to qualify the returnees on the repatriation flights. Unfortunately, according to the information provided by the specific (e.g. Vietnamese) diplomatic mission as a rule the priority is given to the members of diplomatic and consular staff, students, scientists etc. It should be stressed that the IOM is informed at short notice before the flight to the country of origin that the returnee is on the list of passengers. The above mentioned may have a negative impact on the process of organizing the return.</p> <p>The realisation of assisted voluntary returns in 2020 due to the COVID - 19 pandemic in relation to 2019 has decreased by 56%.</p>
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			<p>Comparing the period from 15th March to 31st December in 2019 to the same period in 2020 the scale of assisted voluntary returns has dropped by 70%.</p> <p>The SARS-CoV-2. epidemic made it necessary to introduce special legal solutions for foreigners who were staying on the territory of the Republic of Poland on the day of declaring an epidemic emergency and could not leave the territory of the Republic of Poland due to, among others, the suspension of international air and rail connections.</p> <p>Following the declaration of an epidemic emergency and then an epidemic, special solutions for foreigners staying on the territory of the Republic of Poland entered into force. The introduced legal regulations enabled, inter alia, the extension of the deadline for foreigners to leave the territory of the Republic of Poland, as well as the extension of the deadline for voluntary return in decisions on the obligation to return. They will be extended until the expiry of the 30th day following the day of cancellation of the state (epidemic threat or epidemic) that was in force last.</p> <p>In connection with the guidelines of the Main Sanitary Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration for the Border Guard on the conduct of officers and employees who have contact with persons suspected of being infected with the new type of coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 of 28 February 2020, as well as previous instructions of the Border Guard Commander-in-Chief, control and verification activities with regard to foreigners have been reduced to the necessary minimum since mid-March. Due to a gradual easing of restrictions, at the end of May, while maintaining safety conditions, some tasks falling within the competence of vertical the foreigners were resumed, i.e. verification and inspection activities were carried out only on an ad hoc basis and within a necessary scope, after a prior preliminary analysis and assessment of the legitimacy of such activities. At the end of June 2020, the control activities concerning the legality of foreigners' residence in the territory of the Republic of Poland and the legality of performance of work by foreigners, performance of economic activity by foreigners, commissioning work to foreigners were resumed in full scope. Due to the epidemic situation in the country, from 09 October 2020 to the end of January 2021, again the control and verification activities with regard to foreigners were limited to the necessary minimum.</p>
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			<p>Due to the temporary limitation and suspension of control and verification activities against foreigners, as well as the introduction of special legal solutions for foreigners, the number of applied alternative measures to detention decreased by 68.3% compared to 2019. In 2020, alternative measures were applied to a total of 524 foreigners.</p> <p>Due to the epidemic condition in force on the territory of the Republic of Poland in 2020, alternative measures to detention, in the form of reporting at specified intervals to a Border Guard authority were implemented in a manner limiting the possibility of direct contact. In accordance with the adopted practice, foreigners were informed of the necessity to contact a competent Border Guard authority by phone in advance in order to agree on the date and conditions for the implementation of an alternative measure to detention. In addition, upon arrival at a competent organisational unit of the Border Guard, all actions towards foreigners took place with observance of the sanitary regime.</p> <p>In addition, the Border Guard runs a broad information campaign for foreigners in the scope of current legal solutions resulting from the epidemic still existing on the territory of the Republic of Poland. All necessary information for foreigners is updated on the website of the Border Guard Headquarters on a regular basis. There is also a hotline dedicated to foreigners, through which also persons who were subjected to alternative measures to detention have the possibility to obtain information on the procedure for their execution.</p> <p>5. During organising the forced return of the foreigner to the country of origin, the Polish Border Guard constantly monitors the current information related to the requirements of the authorities of the country of origin and of the airlines in the context of coronavirus prevention. Each time before return operation all the information that might have the impact on the realization of the operation are verified and updated, especially the knowledge regarding sanitary requirements (including quarantine measures upon arrival). There are a variety of different requirements concerning the period of performing the test before the flight and concerning the test devices and methods of examination. Increasing number of countries and air carriers request a negative test result (for the presence of the SARS-Co-V-2) prior to arrival/ boarding plane. All airlines strictly follow the checking procedures. The result is also prepared in</p>
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			<p>English version to be presented to the relevant authorities. Additionally the foreigner to be readmitted and escorts participating in the return operation are obligatory equipped with personal protection measures (set) such as protective face masks, disposable rubber gloves and disinfecting liquids.</p> <p>It should be stressed that the requirements of the specific third countries regarding the COVID testing are very restrictive. Some countries request to carry out the test no earlier than 72 or 48 before boarding. In case the lack of direct flight connection the transit via another EU member states or third countries is necessary. This significantly extend the entire operation what occurs the risk that the test result, which possesses the readmitted person, will expire during the trip.</p> <p>In case organizing the return of foreigner under escort, getting the positive result excludes the BG officer from the return operation automatically. Taking into account the above-mentioned risk the Polish Border Guard implemented the practice of testing of the additional number of escorts as “a reserve pool” who in emergency situation will be able to replace infected officers without the necessity of cancelation or delaying return operations. This solution minimizes the risk of return cancelation or postponement.</p> <p>According to the Polish national law there is no obligation to undergo by the foreigner a test related to COVID-19. There were no refuses by the foreigner to be readmitted to undergo a COVID-19 test before departure so far.</p> <p>Moreover, in some countries, in addition to a negative test result, requiere the registration of the foreigner on the indicated website with the obligation to provide the address of residence in the country of origin or an indication of place for quarantine upon arrival (e.i. India, Gambia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Vietnam). Furthermore, other countries requeire another COVID-19 test to be preformed as soon as a foreginer arrives to his country of origin (e.i. Joradnia, Vietnam). Until now, the Polish side has not encountered any difficulties in this regard.</p> <p>The Afghan direction is undoubtedly the area with an increased phenomenon of illegal migration. In 2020, the highest number of Afghan citizens residing illegally in territories was recorded - 165 people. They are mostly single men aged 18-35 traveling without valid travel documents, which implies the necessity for the Border Guard to implement identification procedures. They are carried out by Unit II of the Foreigners</p>
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			<p>Department of the Polish Border Guard Headquarters, in cooperation with the Afghan Embassy in Warsaw. Good cooperation with the institution and short waiting periods for confirmation of the identity of persons should be emphasized. In 2020, 134 applications were sent to the Afghan Embassy, of which 120 were approved. Despite the fact that the Afghan embassy does not issue travel documents for foreigners, the return of persons for whom administrative and judicial procedures have been completed is possible on the basis of the Border Guard and under the agreement between the European Union and Afghanistan "Joint Way Forward on migration issues" honored by the Afghan authorities. Thus, in 2020 1 lead was completed. This number was undoubtedly influenced by the situation related to the development of the Covid 19 epidemic, implying a limited number of air connections and sanitary and epidemiological restrictions. Returns are carried out both using the so-called Joint Return Operations (JRO) and as part of Scheduled flights - procedures financed and organized with the support of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency "Frontex".</p> <p>6. See point 5.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Portugal</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please see attached document ahq81umbrella_inform_ahq_return_finalpart_2_-_reg_practioners_and_ncps.pdf 2. No contingency measures were put in place. 3. Please see attached document ahq81umbrella_inform_ahq_return_finalpart_2_-_reg_practioners_and_ncps.pdf 4. 4a Individual assessment When the third country national stays in a temporary detention center (following a judicial order), s/he is obliged to a 14 days quarantine, and will be tested again before his/her removal. Some assessments and interviews were videocalls, resorting to different platforms/apps, such as Skype, Whatsapp and Messenger. No changes from August onwards.


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			<p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention Contingency measures only apply to removals resulting from judicial orders (as described in our answer to question 4a). No changes from August onwards.</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place In Portugal, online assistance was reinforced, in order to minimize impacts. No changes from August onwards.</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained Yes. However, minors are not subject to return decisions (unless returning to his/her origin country proves to be in his/her best interest). While removal decisions from family relatives are yet to be executed, and detention does not apply, children maintain the same right to education they already had prior to the removal decision being issued. Should a minor stay, by any reason, in a detention center, educational activities are assured through a protocol with the NGOs on the site. No changes from August onwards.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes No adaptations were made to financial packages. No changes from August onwards.</p> <p>5. 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Preferably, requests for identification and issuance of documents were made online and priority was given to the issuance of EU Laissez Passer, when accepted.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Third countries were contacted through their Portuguese Liaison Officer, so that quarantine could be exempted for escort officers whose COVID 19 tests were negative and conducted until 72 hours before.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Protocol with the Portuguese Red Cross to test returnees and escorts when necessary. Intervention by liaison officers in third countries to ensure quarantine exemption for members of the escort.</p>
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			<p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). Preferably, requests for identification and issuance of documents were made online and priority was given to the issuance of EU Laissez Passer, when accepted. Protocol with the Portuguese Red Cross to test returnees and escorts when necessary. Intervention by liaison officers in third countries to ensure quarantine exemption for members of the escort.</p> <p>6. Yes. Some air routes were cancelled by TAP (Portuguese Flying Company), which requires more transit requests to be made to other MS and third countries and the need for more escorts, since sometimes the existence of an escort is essential to approve transit.</p>
	<p>EMN REG Practitioners Slovakia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No information available</p> <p>2. We accommodated the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic within existing procedures.</p> <p>3. No information available</p> <p>4. 4c) Due to COVID-19 restrictions, IOM is increasingly providing assisted voluntary return counselling services via telephone lines, e-mail, WhatsApp and Viber applications or social networks both to migrants residing outside of Mol facilities, as well as for those residing inside of those facilities. E.g. for migrants residing in facilities of the Ministry of Interior remote counselling has been provided using IOM supplied tablet with internet access. In order to overcome the potential language barrier, IOM has been using verified professional interpreting services during virtual counselling sessions through a conference call. To a greater extent, postal services are also currently used, especially in the case where a migrant's signature is required and personal contact is reduced due to safety reasons. Since the use of remote counselling has in general proven to be an effective alternative, especially for non-vulnerable cases, IOM continues to use this option whenever possible.</p>

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			<p>IOM keeps contact with all registered applicants and provides information on possibilities of humanitarian assistance to be provided by local NGOs which is available to migrants who are stranded in the Slovak Republic and unable to return home due to travel restrictions.</p> <p>Despite COVID-19 related restrictions, throughout the second half of 2020, IOM Slovakia was able to provide assisted voluntary return and reintegration counselling services also in person. Most of the time counselling was provided in locations where migrants were residing, e.g. accommodation facilities for migrant workers, where majority of counselling was provided, but also in apartments, asylum centers, etc. In addition to that counselling was carried out also via telephone lines, e-mail, WhatsApp and Viber applications or social networks. IOM also keeps contact with all registered applicants and provides information on possibilities of humanitarian assistance to be provided by local NGOs which is available to migrants who are stranded in the Slovak Republic and unable to return home due to travel restrictions.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes NO</p> <p>5. 5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Cooperation and relations with third-country authorities continue as usual.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Returning migrants are provided with masks, disinfectant gels and other personal protective equipment in order to protect themselves and to prevent spreading of COVID-19.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Testing for COVID 19 is available for every returning migrant if transit country, country of origin or if airline company require so.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return).</p>
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			<p>Cooperation and relations with third-country authorities continue as usual.</p> <p>6. 6. Did your country experience any challenges upon adapting or lifting travel restrictions? Yes/No. In you answer please address the types of challenges faced, and how any measures taken have addressed those challenges.</p> <p>YES. As of 31st DEC 2020, the extraordinary situation declared on 11 MAR 2020 was still in place. The state of emergency was reintroduced on 1st OCT 2020 and further extended on 29 DEC 2020 to last for another 40 days. Due to worsening of epidemic situation, a nationwide lockdown was introduced on 24 OCT 2020 and with various degrees of severity continued until 31 DEC 2020 with further extension into 2021.</p> <p>In general, following removal of travel restrictions, IOM Slovakia faced the following challenges: Limited availability and reliability of transportation connections resulted in a lower number of return modalities Because of high degree of uncertainty in terms of actual date of return, provision of pre-departure services such as accommodation or food was also negatively affected, because AVRR does not cover extended periods of stay stretching over several weeks or months without having the actual date of return in sight, Land transportation routing required a higher degree of coordination with countries of transit and origin carrying an increased level of risk as more variables were included (e.g. COVID-19 travel restrictions changing PCR test requirements, need to rent buses with crews, risk of quarantine for migrants and IOM staff, escort requirement, etc.), COVID-19 returns were also marked by higher intensity of logistics and consequently costs including costs for PCR tests, for personal protective equipment for staff and returnees, The increased unpredictability and volatility in terms of return logistics necessitated higher need for contingency planning and immediate reaction to new situation, e.g. in cases of migrants testing positive, especially in case of larger groups, Planning of returns under these conditions (as described above) inherently carried higher risk of cancellation fees and other costs associated with returns not being implemented (need for additional accommodation, food, etc.), In case of vulnerable migrants, the complexity of return planning was not only higher, but it also resulted in additional vulnerability arising from risk of testing positive on COVID-19, IOM staff planning returns was exposed to higher workload demands because of additional planning, logistics and contingencies arising from new situations, but also to risk of being exposed to COVID-19 resulting in quarantines and subsequent need for additional staff to carry out planned tasks.</p>
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	<p>EMN NCP Slovenia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. See attachment. table_1_inform_reg.docx</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Number of return decisions issued</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>84</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>59</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>table_2_inform_reg.docx</p> <p>4.</p> <p>4a Individual assessment Individual assessments and return related activities (identification, submission of requests for emergency travel documents to third country authorities, etc.) have remained unaffected.</p> <p>4b Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention Pre-removal detention is performed with following sanitary measures in detention facility against COVID-19: newly detained returnees are quarantined for 10 days with the option for being tested after 5 days in quarantine. Alternatives to detention is arranged if there is no risk of absconding or if there is no option to return the country of origin (no flight, travel restrictions due to COVID-19, etc.).</p> <p>4c. Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place Return and reintegration counselling is performed in person (if migrant is in detention) and on-line as well (AVR programs).</p> <p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained Education system is harmonized and adapted to COVID restrictions for all pupils and students in Slovenia. Since 26.10.2020 all schools have been closed. There is only on-line teaching organized and performed.</p>	2020	Number of return decisions issued	August	37	September	47	October	84	November	44	December	59
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			<p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes. No changes were introduced.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>5a. Issuance of identity and travel documents; Cooperation with third country authorities has remained challenging in the pandemic time. Exception is cooperation with Western Balkan countries. They were cooperative and active in solving any pending case as regards confirmation of nationality and issuing the emergency travel documents.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); Before and during return operation sanitary measures have to be followed by COVID-19 measures. Returnees are tested before the operation and they will receive protective gears like masks and disinfection kit.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; All returnees are tested before the return operation to their home country takes place.</p> <p>5d. Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities (consular services and national authorities in the country of return). The return authority in Slovenia has remained in active relation with consular and other authorities of third countries where return operation are envisaged. Most of third countries have not changed their policy as regards issuing emergency travel documents for those citizens who return home on voluntary basis. More difficulties appear in making travel arrangements due to restrictions in air traffic.</p> <p>6.</p> <p>Travel restrictions still exist (e.g. to certain third countries or limited flights...) New measures, which were introduced to address challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All returnees are tested for COVID-19, • Chartered flight can be arranged, • Return on land routes if possible (Western Balkan countries)
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	<p>EMN NCP Spain</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please find the information in the attached document umbrella_inform_ahq_return_finalpart_1_-_reg_practioners_es.docx 2. Administrative procedures for issuing return decisions are not suspended anymore, as they were in March-April. Detention centres are open for those cases where there is a reasonable prospect of enforcing return. Response protocols are in place to prevent and react to the appearance of COVID-19 in those centres. There are still difficulties in having the returnees interviewed by the authorities of the countries of origin, readmissions being accepted, transfers being approved and finding commercial flights. 3. Please find the information in the attached document 4. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The individual evaluation has been carried out, both in person and online, with non-face-to-face formulas. b) Detention has been limited and protocols against COVID-19 are in place. c) The counselling activities of the entities that manage voluntary returns are carried out telematically, by telephone or by any other form of remote work. d) No changes. e) PCR tests and other expenses incurred as a result of COVID have been considered eligible expenses. 5. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) No changes. Results are still worse than before the pandemic. b) As determined by the country of destination. Most countries require a negative PCR test 72 hours before the flight. In case of not providing it, either they don't allow to fly, or they demand a quarantine in the country of destination at the expense of the interested party. c) As determined by each country of destination. PCR tests are paid by the state and are considered an eligible expense d) Efforts are made, results are still below pre-COVID-19 standards. The Programs continue operating but with many difficulties: many commercial flights were cancelled but some flight seats have been achieved through the embassies and consulates. Consulates also inform us about the entry requirements in different countries due to COVID. 6. Yes. Sea and air connections with the countries of origin are still lacking or involve multiple stop-overs.
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			<p>The Voluntary return situation is complicated because many countries currently do not allow international flights departing from Spain: most were cancelled, but some of them were allowed to fly with many restrictions and requirements such as PCR or blood tests, even preventive isolation in the destination countries. There have been months like April or May with hardly any returns due to the lack of flights. The execution of the grant ended on June 30, 2020, but due to the current situation the mentioned execution has been extended for three months (until September 30) since few flights have been allowed in this period. Therefore most of the entities extended the execution until September 30. Moreover the last 2020 grant for Voluntary return was published on June 18 (http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/Subvenciones/AreaIntegracion/retorno_voluntario/index.html) At present we are working on its award. The Programs continue operating but with many difficulties: commercial flights were cancelled but some flight seats have been achieved through the embassies and consulates. In addition, the entry requirements in the countries of return are frequently modified, without prior information, receiving it at the airport before boarding, which causes a lot of lost flights. Flights, being few, are currently very expensive, which increases the cost of returns. The rest of the organizational activities of the entities that manage voluntary returns are carried out telematically, by telephone or by any other form of remote work.</p>																																								
	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	<p>1. The numbers have been updated for the whole period Jan-Dec 2020. Please observe that the number of escorted and non-escorted only cover forced return. There are no data regarding number of escorted and non-escorted in the field of voluntary return.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>645</td> <td>369</td> <td>87</td> <td>282</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>754</td> <td>339</td> <td>88</td> <td>251</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>439</td> <td>377</td> <td>67</td> <td>310</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>66</td> <td>203</td> <td>31</td> <td>172</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>54</td> <td>162</td> <td>41</td> <td>121</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>257</td> <td>130</td> <td>29</td> <td>101</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>537</td> <td>146</td> <td>35</td> <td>111</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	645	369	87	282	February	754	339	88	251	March	439	377	67	310	April	66	203	31	172	May	54	162	41	121	June	257	130	29	101	July	537	146	35	111
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			<p>August 587 154 16 138 September 892 319 27 292 October 766 283 40 243 November 729 348 12 336 December 506 319 48 271</p> <p>2. No new instructions or measures have been introduced during the period Aug - Dec 2020. The decision to reduce the number of visitors and that contacts should primarily be made by email telephone or through e-services was taken by the Swedish Migration Agency in the beginning of March. To comply with the rules set up by the Public Health Agency, the Swedish Migration Agency enables homeworking and redirect services to digital channels in order to reduce the need for travel for both staff and visitors. Key challenges are still Covid 19 related restrictions such as closed border, quarantine upon arrival and confirmed negative Covid 19 tests within 24/48 or 72 hours before departure. The number of airports and available flight routes have increased but they are still limited. Conducting safely interviews still remain a challenge that is to ensure physical distance between the persons concerned such as the asylum seeker, the handling officer and the legal counsel. Actions taken have been to enable online interviews and, if not suitable, to use physical barriers such as Plexiglas barriers in the investigation rooms.</p> <p>3. 2020 Number of return decisions issued August 1414 September 1260 October 1161 November 1253 December 1095</p> <p>4. 4a) Individual assessment: No new measures have been introduced. An assessment is always made on a case by case basis to assess if a return can take place and to decide which measures are needed based on the individual circumstances. Guidelines were issued by the Swedish Migration Agency in August to support the Reception Officers (BESLUT SC/028/2020/PoK Beslut om revidering av Allmänna stöd och riktlinjer med anledning av coronaviruset -</p>
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			<p>återvändande) regarding measures such as detention, the period of voluntary departure and the daily allowance. The guidelines entered into force the 3 August until further notice but could be amended if appropriate.</p> <p>4b) Pre-removal detention and alternatives to detention: No new instructions have been introduced. The number of detention places are reduced from 520 to 285 to comply with the rules set up by the Public Health Agency. This has implied a more extensive use of alternatives to detention by the Swedish Police Authority such as the use of supervision to prevent the risk of absconding. The Swedish Migration Agency does not detain returnees if the return decision cannot be enforced in the foreseeable future. Visits are limited to ensure safety for the people in detention and staff. To enable some visits, digital media is used and visitor rooms are designed to limit the risk of transmission of infection.</p> <p>4c) Ensuring that return and reintegration counselling took place: No new instructions have been introduced. Video conferences have been used in separate rooms to ensure physical distance during the meetings that have taken place. Other developed methods to ensure physical distance are the use of Plexiglas barriers between the reception officer and the third-country national concerned. The development of different methods have led to the counselling being carried out to almost the same extent as before the pandemic at the Swedish Migration Agency. In the light of the experience gained, the face-to-face interactions are however difficult to replace, to meet the third-country national concerned. To facilitate the meeting and to put further emphasis on the counselling, some of the information that is normally given during the meeting is currently sent via post on beforehand to the third-country national concerned. This gives the reception officer more time for return and reintegration counselling. The Swedish Police Authority stopped all the visits at the detention centres. Contacts have instead been maintained by telephone or by videoconferences. Return and reintegration counselling is however also provided by the Detention officers at the detention.</p> <p>4d) Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained: No new instructions or supportive documents have been introduced. In March 2020, the government decided that schools that must be closed following recommendations by the Public Health Agency of Sweden may adapt their educational activities to, for example, remote or distance learning. It was recommended that Sweden's upper secondary schools and higher education institutions provide distance learning until further notice. The primary school has however been opened during the pandemic provided that recommendations by the Public Health Agency are followed, education that minors subject to return decisions are entitled.</p> <p>4e) Adapting the financial package of return and reintegration programmes: There have been no specific measures or changes made during the second half of 2020. The number of applications for both in-kind re-integration support via ERRIN and cash re-establishment support did however gradually increase during the second half of the</p>
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			<p>year as more flights became available and more returns were possible. The numbers are however still below normal levels, due to ongoing travel restrictions.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>5a) Issuance of identity and travel documents: During the period August – December 2020 some embassies have opened and begun to increase their services. The Swedish Migration Agency had video meetings with various embassies to discuss general procedures in relation to the issuance of travel documents during this period. The Swedish Police Authority was able to make appointments with some embassies and successfully conducted video interviews with the embassies of Afghanistan and Libya. Difficulties remain however in obtaining travel documents with some embassies.</p> <p>Video interviews of individual returnees were not possible during this period due to information security concerns according to the Swedish Migration Agency but work has been ongoing to resolve this and the hope is that it will be possible for embassies to carry out video interviews with returnees in the not too distant future.</p> <p>5b) Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process: The same challenges which were highlighted for the period January – July 2020 were experienced during the period August – December 2020. Health protection measures that apply upon arrival have been perceived as a challenge especially quarantine costs that in some countries entail excessive costs. In order to effectively assist the returnee, the Swedish Migration Agency decided the 7 September (BESLUT Plan/012/2020 Tillämpning av anslag 1:7 Utresor för avvisade och utvisade) to reimburse costs incurred due to the pandemic such as the costs for Covid 19 tests and the quarantine costs in the country of destination. A decision that will enable returns to take place even if the third-country national concerned has no means to pay the costs incurred due to the pandemic.</p> <p>5c) Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return: Similar challenges to those experienced during the period January – July 2020 were experienced during the period August – December 2020. The number of countries requiring negative tests increased during the course of 2020. One development which has occurred since July 2020 is that some countries now require negative tests even for those only transiting through their airports.</p> <p>The Swedish Migration Agency is still looking into the possibility of procuring medical expertise in order to increase the testing capacity of returnees before departure. The work involved in this is time-consuming and no procurement has taken place yet.</p> <p>As mentioned in the answer to this same question for the period January – July 2020, the Swedish Migration Agency has developed a document which provides a comprehensive overview of about 160 countries of return and</p>
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			<p>their testing and quarantine requirements. This overview continued to be used and updated daily during the period August – December 2020.</p> <p>The Swedish Police Authority has made agreements with various test centers and a routine has been established to take the test at short notice. Each Police region is responsible for issuing the tests. The testing has however become a key challenge, as returnees cannot be forced to take the test. Readmissions have been cancelled due to returnees not taking the test.</p> <p>5d) Cooperation and maintaining relations with third-country authorities: As mentioned under question 5a above, the Swedish Migration has, during the second half of 2020, had video meetings with various embassies. The purpose of these meetings has been both to discuss general procedures in relation to the issuance of travel documents and to maintain good relations.</p> <p>6. As mentioned in relation to question 5c above, some countries have introduced testing requirements even for those only transiting via an airport.</p> <p>One challenge connected with the lifting of travel restrictions during the period August – December 2020 was dealing with the backlog of returns built up since the beginning of the pandemic. As part of the strategy to handle this backlog, the Swedish Migration Agency carried out two charter flights to Georgia during the fourth quarter of 2020. The Swedish Migration Agency continues to explore the possibilities for carrying out further charter flights to other countries of return.</p> <p>A further challenge has been the increasing number of countries, which require returnees to quarantine post-arrival. As mentioned under question 5b above, the Swedish Migration Agency can reimburse quarantine costs in the country of destination however it has been challenging to obtain up to date information in relation to quarantine requirements and costs. To address this challenge the Swedish Migration Agency has been using the overview document mentioned under question 5c above. The document is updated daily with new information received regarding the situation in the various countries of return.</p>															
	<p>EMN NCP Norway</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Voluntary</th> <th>Forced</th> <th>Escorted</th> <th>Non-escorted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>13 (-4 AVR)</td> <td>135</td> <td>28</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>17 (-2 AVR)</td> <td>154</td> <td>46</td> <td>108</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2020	Voluntary	Forced	Escorted	Non-escorted	January	13 (-4 AVR)	135	28	107	February	17 (-2 AVR)	154	46	108
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			<p>4d. Ensuring access to the education system for minors subjected to return decisions was maintained No extra measures were implemented.</p> <p>4e. adapting the financial packages of return and reintegration programmes No, but returnees are provided with a package / travel kit with face mask, etc. when return travels again started up. In addition, if quarantine measures were being set up by destination countries, and the returnees must cover the quarantine set up themselves, the costs can be covered in such cases (organized through IOM).</p> <p>5.</p> <p>5b. Health and sanitary measures in place during the entire return process (including possible quarantine measures in the countries of origin); The police use every precaution during an arrest as well as during an escorted return. Continuous observation of any symptoms of Covid-19 of persons is necessary. Any indications of Covid-19 or other infectious diseases would mean an interruption of the return. As a part of the assisted return service offered from Norway, IOM can organize covering of costs related to quarantine in CoO after return. IOM (Norway) pays for quarantine in CoO: IF /when the returnee must cover such costs for quarantine, as decided by the CoO authorities.</p> <p>5c. Arrangements to test returnees where countries of origin may request a negative test result prior to return, or the respect of a quarantine period upon arrival; Yes. We do test escorted returnees if the country of origin requires this. No such steps are taken on assisted returns. IOM follows up on this as a part of organizing of the return and requires in CoO.</p> <p>6. The number of flights to third countries are still limited, which affects the number of returns as well. We also experience difficulties with cooperation with authorities in third countries (embassies, consulates etc.) when it comes to verification requests and issuance of travel documents. Travel restrictions within EU/SAC also affect our contact with different embassies which are not located in Norway.</p>
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