EXPERTISE

Expertise von Dr. Katie Kuschminder (Maastricht University and United Nations University-MERIT) für das SVR-Jahresgutachten 2020

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SVR Migration Expert Paper: Return and Reintegration Policy between Europe and Africa

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1) Introduction

Increasing return numbers has been a rising issue in the European Union (EU) since the 1990s and today return enforcement is a central policy issue. In June 2019, the Council of the EU agreed on a partial negotiating position on a new return directive. The objective of the newly proposed return directive is to: "speed up return procedures, prevent absconding and secondary movements, and increase the rate of returns" (EC, 2019). The rate of returns refers to the difference between the number of orders to return issued in a given year and the actual number of returns within a given year. Significant efforts to increase the returns rate began in 2015 with the EU Action Plan on Return. Although these efforts are quite new, their effectiveness has not yet been reflected in the returns rate which did not increase from 2015-2018. The returns rate will be further discussed in section 3 of this report. It is evident, however, that since 2015 return has risen significantly on the EU policy agenda and become a key area of further investment.

The objective of this background report is to provide an overview of the context of returns from the EU and Germany to Africa. This will include first an overview of key terms in the field of returns, second, an overview of return flows from the EU and Germany, third a discussion of factors influencing sustainable reintegration, forth an examination of challenges in return, fifth, suggestions for enhancing successful return and finally, a short conclusion.

2) **Overview of Key Terms**

This section will explain key terms and concepts used in return migration including forced removal, readmission agreement, voluntary removal, assisted voluntary return, reintegration, sustainable return, and sustainable reintegration.

Return and readmission is a central component of the EU Agenda on Migration. The Returns directive distinguishes between three forms of return:

- **Voluntary Return**- voluntary return of legally staying third country nationals
- **Voluntary Departure** – voluntary compliance with an obligation to return of illegally staying third country nationals
- **Removal** – enforced compliance with an obligation to return of illegally staying third country nationals (EC, 2017: p. 12).

The second two categories of voluntary departure and removals are the areas of core political concern in the EU. It is important to note that terminology is inconsistent in the field of return, as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Programmes, refer in fact to both Voluntary Returns and Voluntary Departures. Many of the beneficiaries from IOM AVR programmes are returning as part of compliance with an obligation to return due to their refused asylum claim or illegal stay. This is reflected in the following definition of assisted voluntary return by the European Migration Network (EMN) as: "Voluntary return or voluntary departure supported by logistical, financial and/or other material assistance" (2014a).

Assisted Voluntary Return programmes are the primary policy tool used to motivate individuals without the right to stay to return. The IOM (2015) defines AVR more broadly than the EMN stating:

> [T]he administrative, logistical and financial support provided to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country who volunteer to return to their countries of origin and, where possible, supported with reintegration measures.

This definition highlights that there is a difference between Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) and Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR). In practice, this difference is most commonly that beneficiaries of AVR receive transport to their home

countries and some pocket money at the airport upon departure. Upon arrival in the origin country they are left to their own devices. In AVRR, on the other hand, reintegration support is provided upon return. This can include: social, education, and economic assistance measures provided to migrants in cash or kind and in some cases additional assistance provided to the entire community of return. Packages for AVR and AVRR vary across EU member states and origin states.

The key policy tool for forced returns are readmissions. Readmission is defined as an "act by a State accepting the re-entry of an individual (own national, third-country national or stateless person), who has been found illegally entering or being present in another State." Readmission is facilitated by readmission agreements: "binding bilateral or multilateral agreements between States that establish and facilitate the bases, procedures and modalities for one State to promptly and in an orderly manner return non-nationals who do not or no longer fulfil the conditions for entry or stay on its territory" (Carrera, 2016). Readmission agreements are common at the bilateral and EU level.

Reintegration is a central aim of the above-mentioned return programmes. The IOM glossary on migration (2017) defines reintegration as: "the re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence." This definition is also used by the EMN and accepted by the EU.

The concept of sustainable return or sustainable reintegration, however, is more contentious. The term sustainable return began to gain popularity in the 1990's in reference to refugee return (Black and Gent, 2004). In the 2000s, the term became popular with regards to refugee returns from Europe to Bosnia (Black and Gent, 2004), and then increasingly within the policy environment. In the EU, the EMN Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation of AVR(R) Programmes defines sustainable return as "return which deters new irregular migration of the returnee" (p.9). Essentially, this definition equates sustainable reintegration with the absence of a remigration.

It has been argued by Kuschminder (2017a) that remigration is not a valid indicator for the measurement of sustainable return. Remigration can be considered as either a remigration aspiration, remigration intention, or realized remigration, and

each of these would be measured differently. Figure 1 below shows the narrowing from a remigration aspiration to realized remigration.

Figure 1: Aspirations, Intentions, and Realized Remigration
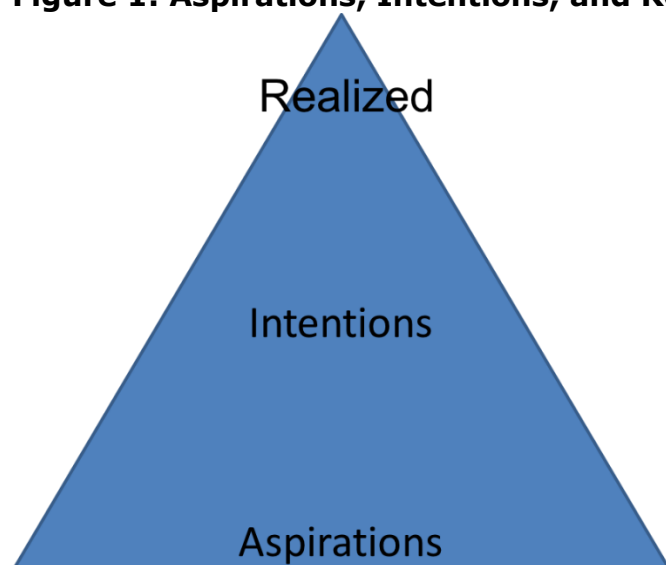
Source: Reproduced from Kuschminder, 2017b.

As an example, in a study conducted with 118 Assisted Voluntary Returnees in six different countries, Kuschminder (2017a) found that 56 respondents aspired to remigrate, but that only 12 had concrete plans to do so, thus reflecting the difference in measurement between a remigration aspiration and a remigration intention. Further to this, Strand et al (2016) reflect on the role of capabilities in remigration and demonstrate that returnees can be both unsustainably returned and at the same time not in a position to remigrate. Unsustainably returned is considered as returnees that do not aspire for reintegration, thus aspiring for remigration, but are unable to remigration (Strand et al, 2016). These returnees are effectively stuck as they are not able to reintegration nor remigration, thus at-risk of being a vulnerable population.

The conceptual challenges of sustainable return have led to the recent change in terminology towards sustainable reintegration. Since 2017, the IOM defines sustainable reintegration as:

> "Reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities,

and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity" (IOM, 2017).

This definition focuses on sustainable reintegration as a multidimension process, wherein the IOM focuses on the three dimensions of economic, social, and psychosocial reintegration. Remigration aspirations are still addressed within this definition, wherein the IOM specifies the importance of returnees having the capabilities to make informed decisions, rather than engaging in remigration as a necessity. This definition has not been universally accepted and organizations such as GIZ work with their own definitions and framework for sustainable reintegration.

The Global Compact on Migration stresses the importance of sustainable reintegration in Objective 21: "Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration". However, no definitions are provided within the Compact. It is important to therefore stress the above discussion that actors have different unresolved definitions of sustainable reintegration. In this report sustainable reintegration will be viewed as a multidimensional reintegration of the returnee within the receiving society. Remigration will be considered separately as either a realized remigration – meaning the refugee has physically left the origin country again- or a remigration aspiration or intention- meaning the returnee aspires or has concrete plans to remigrate.

Finally, there is increasing use of the term 'successful reintegration', yet this term is also highly ambiguous. Given the above discussion, without an agreed definition of sustainable reintegration it is difficult to declare what is successful reintegration.


3) Overview of Returns from Europe and Germany

This section provides an overview of return numbers from Europe, then return programmes from Europe, return numbers from Germany, return programmes in Germany, and finally a short comparative overview.

3.1 Returns Numbers from the EU

Figure 2 shows the total number of order to return and actual returns from the EU28 from 2009-2018, and specifically the total number of orders to return and actual returns from the EU28 to African countries. First, on average from 2009-2018, 20 percent of returns from the EU28 are to Africa each year. Second, Figure 2 clearly shows the rising concern in the EU over the effective returns rate (the return rate is the percentage of actual returns compared to the total orders to leave). On average, over from 2009-2018 the EU returns rate was 44 percent. However, included in the number of total returns is Dublin returns, meaning that some of these returns are within the EU itself. The EU returns rate from 2008-2016 to third countries averaged at 38 percent (Mananashvili, 2017). Figure 2 shows that the average returns rate to Africa is even lower at 26 percent on average from 2009-2018.

Figure 2: Total Orders to leave the EU28 and Total Returns from EU28, 2009-2018
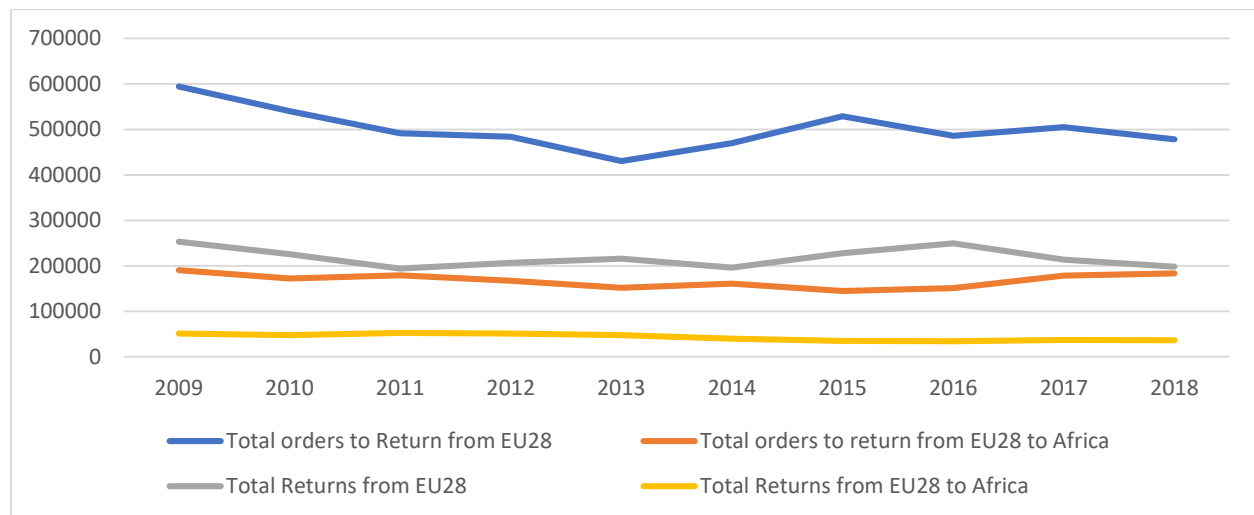
Source: Eurostat, 2019.

Furthermore, Mananashvili (2017) has demonstrated the returns rate is an ineffective indicator in itself for measuring return effectiveness stressing that a: "return decision taken in a given year does not always lead to actual departure or removal in the same year" (p. 5). The result is that some countries appear to have return rates of over 100 percent, which is not accurate. Therefore, by
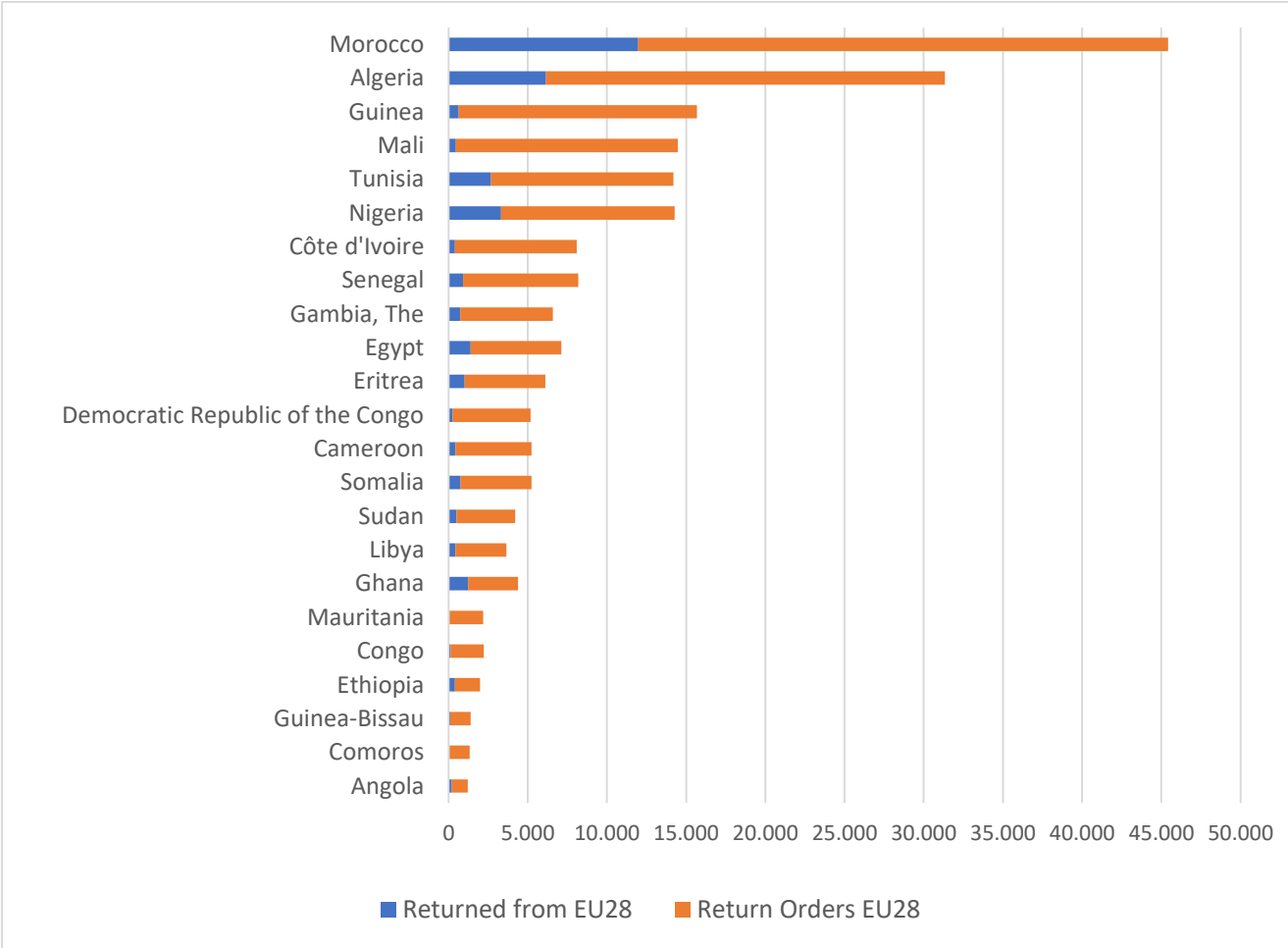
using a multi-annual analysis one can deduce a more accurate returns rate. For example, in 2016 Germany appears to have a returns rate of 100 percent, which clearly appears unrealistic given return trends. By conducting a multi-annual analysis, Mananshivili (2017) finds that Germany actually had a returns rate of 49 percent in 2016, demonstrating a significant difference from the returns rate. This is problematic for policy in that decision-making and comparisons between countries return rates is measured by an ineffective indicator.

Figure 3 shows all African countries wherein the EU issues more than 1,000 orders to return for that country in 2018 and compares orders to return with realized returns. The three largest countries of return orders were Morocco, Algeria and Guinea and the three largest countries of actual returns were Morocco, Algeria, and Nigeria. The return rate per country ranges from the high end of 39 percent with Ghana to only 3 percent with Mauritania and Mali.

The returns rate is the central indicator used by the EU to drive return policy. The low return rate motivated the Action Plan on Return in 2015, and the resulting renewed action plan on return (adopted 2 March 2017), wherein the objective is to enhance returns. Non-governmental organizations have opposed the focus on the returns rate as the central driver of returns policy noting that migrants' human rights, security upon return, and wellbeing must also be prioritized in the return process. Therefore the quality of return must be considered and not only the focus on the quantitative returns rate. In a briefing for the European Parliament, it has been argued that "The increase in rates of return has to be balanced against other considerations, such as development of local economies in partner countries, and regional mobility, as well as levels of protection in countries of transit and origin" (EPRS, 2017). In a resolution of 5 April 2017 on addressing refugee and migrant movements the European Parliament stressed that dialogue on return and readmission must be address the issue of safe return and reintegration[1].

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[1] For more information see: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-action-plan-on-return

Figure 3: Number of Return Orders and Returns to African Countries from the EU28 in 2018

Source: Eurostat, 2019.

The dialogue in the EU regarding returns is slightly shifting from a focus only on the returns rate to a more comprehensive returns approach. With increasing funding from the EU on returns to Africa – through initiatives such as the EU Trust fund for Africa- there is recognition from EU officials for the importance of a comprehensive approach to return and reintegration. Hans Christian Stausboll, Head of Unit for Eastern Africa, Horn of Africa at the EU Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development stated in June 2019:

> "As part of our comprehensive approach to return migration, the EU recognizes that return and reintegration policies are more effective when linked with the protection of migrant rights and development of

opportunities in the country of origin, particularly those that address the drivers of irregular and forced migration" (IOM, 2019).

This stresses the need for comprehensive approaches to reintegration that include local communities and host environments.

3.2   Forms of Return Migration from Europe and Germany

It is important to recognize that return is primarily arranged at the national level, meaning that each country in Europe has its own return governance. The exception to this is EU Readmission Agreements (EURA) and the ERRIN programme- which is a harmonized return programme with multiple EU member state partners. Countries that participate in ERRIN also administer their own return programmes.

The EURA are a central tool of EU return policy and are a formative component of international migration law. At present, the EU has 17 EURA in effect, with one of the partner countries being in Africa, namely Cape Verde. The Council of the European Union has issued a mandate to negotiate seven additional EURA, including with Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, and Tunisia (Carrera, 2016). Several African countries also have bilateral readmission agreements with EU member states. For example, Morocco has signed bilateral readmission agreements[2] (of nationals only) with Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal (Uzelac, 2019). These bilateral readmission agreements may influence the comparably high number of returned Moroccan nationals in the EU as shown in Figure 3.

At the national level, EU member states have their own bilateral readmission agreements with origin countries and their own regimes for forced migration. Research has demonstrated how these 'deportation regimes' work differently within the national contexts (Van Houte and Leereks, 2019).

Within the EU and member states, it is widely accepted that voluntary return is preferable to a forced return. Voluntary return is significantly cheaper than a forced removal at half to one-third the cost, is more palatable and politically appealing, and

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[2] For more details on bilateral readmission agreements in the EU see: The Inventory of the Bilateral Agreements linked to Readmission, which can be found at: http://www.jeanpierrecassarino.com/datasets/ra/

voluntary return is not contested with origin countries (Black, Collyer and Summerville, 2011). Voluntary return is considered as the preferable 'carrot' wherein forced return is the 'stick' of forced removal.

In terms of voluntary return, the EMN has identified 96 different voluntary return programmes in the EU (2014b). The budget for these programmes totalled to an estimated 133 million (EMN, 2014b), which would clearly be much higher today. AVR programmes differ across the EU in terms of eligibility, implementation partners and processes, and the reintegration components. Reintegration packages in the EU vary in terms of amount of renumeration offered, if the package is in-cash or in-kind, the duration of the package (generally being from 3-12 months in duration), and the types of services offered in the reintegration support. For example, some packages only offer a fixed financial in-cash component provided at arrival. Other programmes, such as offered by Caritas in Belgium, focus on providing a holistic approach and working to arrange multiple forms of support for the returnees such as health services, finding accommodation, and skills training. Some new IOM AVRR programmes also have a community support component that seeks to integrate reintegration support within local communities.

It is essential to stress that there is a lack of comparable evaluations on reintegration programmes that would enable an evidence-based approach to establish best practices in this field. In a comprehensive review of the literature on AVR programmes (Fafo, 2018), in discussing reintegration the authors find that cash assistance on arrival is useful to returnees and is what they want themselves. Second, the authors highlight the importance of separating a successful implementation of AVRR from a sustainable return and the decision of the returnee to re-migrate or not. The authors state:

> "On the basis of available research there is little to in-dicate that support schemes for return prevent secondary migration… Return support schemes in host countries cannot be expected to eliminate the willingness to re-migrate after return, and evaluating support schemes in light of such a parameter appears to be inappropriate" (p. 24).

Reporting on best practices in reintegration is therefore most commonly highly general. Recommendations include to use a multidimensional approach, to ensure appropriate conditions in the country of return, to enable the return migrant to make choices in their reintegration, and to provide longer term support (Koser and Kuschminder, 2015; Hasse and Honerath, 2016).

3.3 Number of Returns from Germany

Figure 4 shows the total number of order to return and actual returns from Germany from 2009-2018, and specifically the total number of order to return and actual returns from Germany to African countries. The average percentage of returns from Germany being to Africa is 11 percent, however, but there is more variation with only 2 percent of returns from Germany being to African countries in 2014, compared to 13 percent in 2017. As shown by Mananshivili (2017), Germany has a returns rate of 102 percent and 108 percent respectively in 2015 and 2016. The average returns rate from Germany from 2009-2018 is 76 percent. In looking at returns to Africa specifically, the average returns rate is considerably lower at 44 percent.

Figure 4: **Total Orders to leave Germany and Total Returns from Germany, 2009-2018**
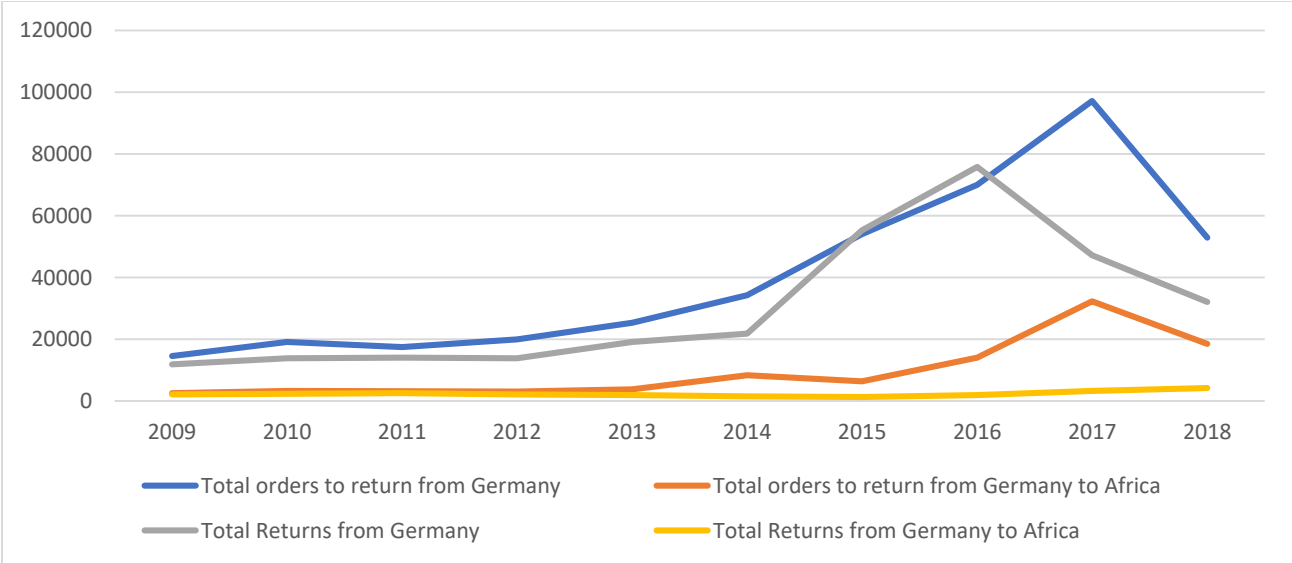
Source: Eurostat, 2019.

Figure 5 shows the number of return orders and actual returns to African countries from Germany for all African countries where there were more than 100 return orders issued in 2018. The three largest countries of return orders are Nigeria, The Gambia and Algeria; and actual returns are Algeria, Morocco, and Nigeria. The return rate per country also varies substantially from Algeria at 60 percent to Cote d'Ivoire at 4 percent.

Figure 5: Number of Return Orders and Returns to African Countries from Germany in 2018
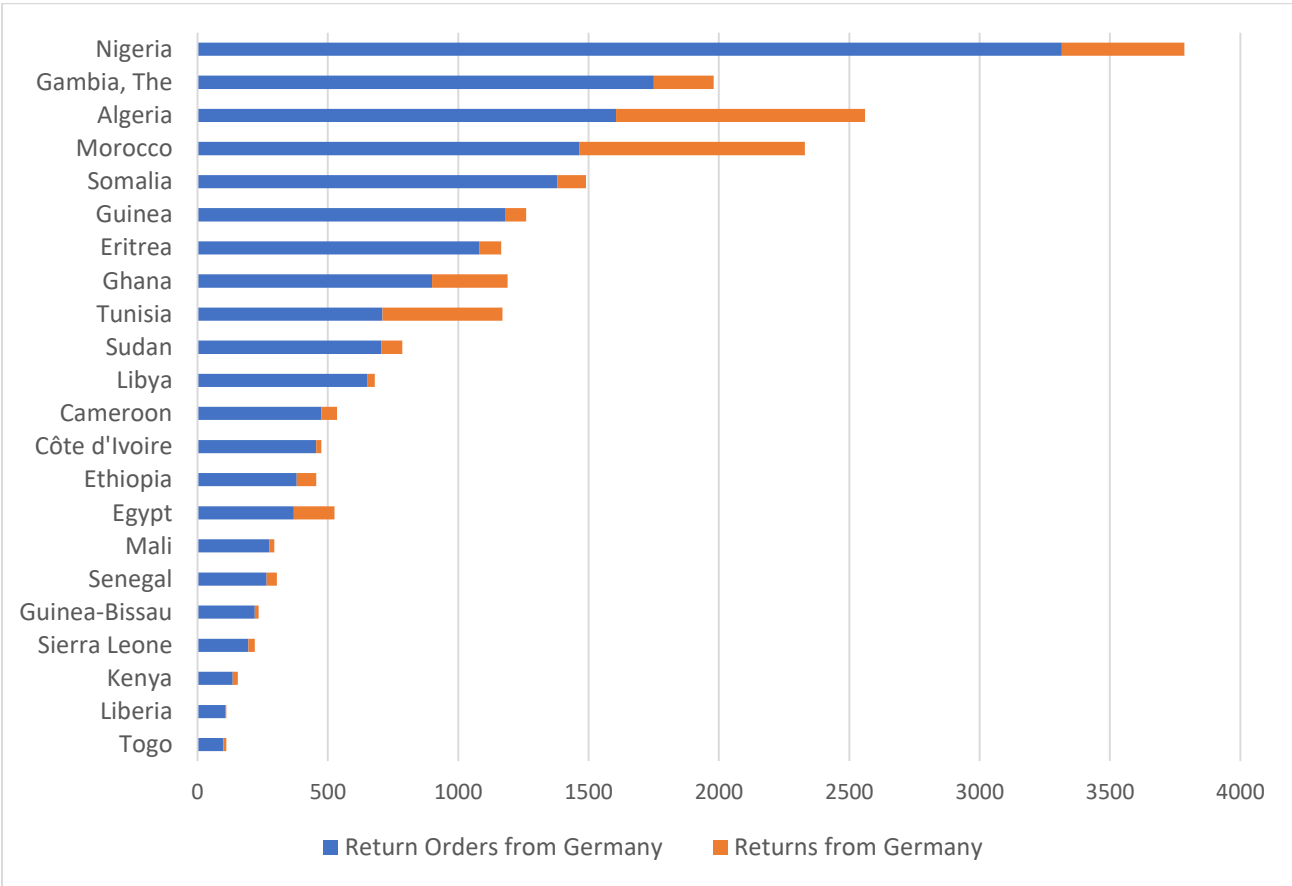
Source: Eurostat, 2019.

It is evident that return rates vary significantly across African countries from Germany.

3.4   Forms of Return from Germany

This section will first examine forced removals, then voluntary returns, and finally reintegration. In Germany, Landerns are responsible for enacting removals. These removals are then communicated to the Federal Police, whom are responsible with the Interior Ministry for Illegal Migration and provide data on forced removals via information requests[3] (Kreienbrink 2007). Considering that Landerns are responsible for enacting removals, rates also differ across Landerns. Figure 6 shows the different number of removals from Landerns.

Figure 6: Deportations from Germany by Landern (2010, 2014, 2015)

Source: https://www.dw.com/en/things-to-know-about-deportations-in-germany/a-39119049
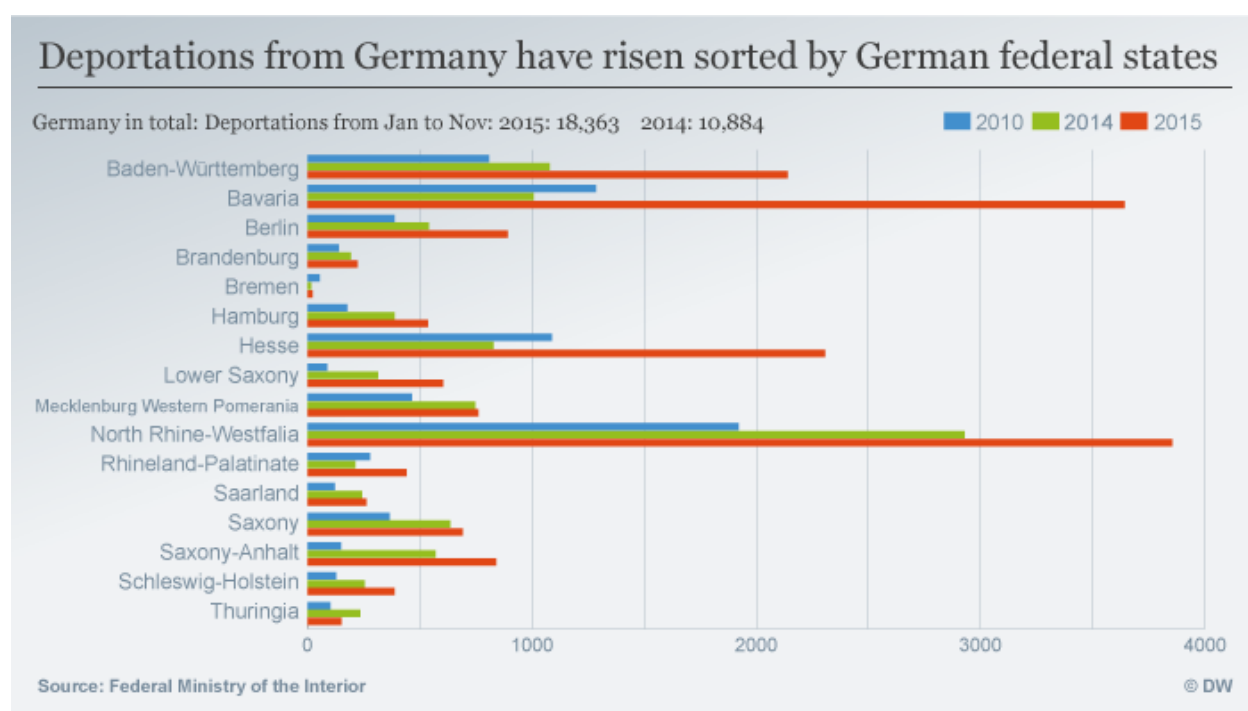
It is clear that the number of forced removals varies quite significantly across Landerns in Germany. It is important to note that different Landerns have different numbers of asylum seekers as well. This is an area for further research and

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[3] An information request was not completed for this report.

assessment of how the deportation regimes converge and diverge across Germany's Landerns.

Currently, there are three main voluntary return programmes from Germany[4]:

1) Reintegration and Emigration Program for Asylum-Seekers in Germany (REAG) / Government Assisted Repatriation Program (GARP) programme
2) Start-up Cash Plus (StarthilfePlus)
3) European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN), a joint return and reintegration network of several member states[5]

The REAG/ GARP[6] programme is administered by IOM. Under this programme beneficiaries are able to receive travel costs, financial assistance of up to €200/ person over 18 years (€100/ person under 18 years), medical costs up to a maximum of €2,000 up to three months after arrival, one-time financial start-up assistance of €1,000 per person over 18 years (€500 per person under 18). Voluntary Return under REAG/GARP is not supported to Libya, and is supported in limited cases to Eritrea and Somalia. Individuals interested in the programme can apply at centres across Germany. Individuals that eligible for the programme include: "asylum seekers, persons who have received a negative asylum notice, persons with a residence permit (e.g. recognized refugees), victims of forced prostitution or human trafficking" (BAMF, 2019).

Further to the REAG/GARP programme, from February 2017 returnees from 40 countries can apply for additional financial assistance under the Start-up Cash Plus programme (Kuschminder, 2019). The amount of the start-up assistance that an individual is eligible for depends on the outcome of their asylum proceedings:

- "Level 1: before conclusion of the asylum proceedings (1,200 Euro)
- Level 2: after rejection of the asylum application (800 Euro)

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[4] This overview of voluntary assisted return programmes in Germany show which programmes operate in different origin countries:
http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Downloads/Infothek/Rueckkehr/laenderuebersicht-rueckkehr_en.html

[5] ERRIN partners include: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. There are 17 countries of origin involved in the project, mainly from Africa and Asia.

[6] Additional information available at: https://www.returningfromgermany.de/en/programmes/reag-garp

- Level S: after granting of a protection under German law (refugee protection, entitlement to asylum, subsidiary protection) (800 Euro)
- Level D: for persons from Albania or Serbia who have been tolerated for at least two years in Germany (500 Euro); in addition reintegration support, depending on need, can be granted in kind" (BAMF, 2018).

An evaluation of this programme is currently in progress (Kuschminder, 2019).

The ERRIN programme is managed by the Netherlands and provides reintegration assistance in kind upon return. The following amounts of support are possible in-kind:

- "Voluntary return per person: up to 2,000 EUR
- Voluntary return for a family group: up to 3,300 EUR
- In case of identified vulnerability: a one-time amount of 500 EUR
- Forcibly-returned/repatriated persons: up to € 1,000"

It is notable that the ERRIN programme also provides support to forced returnees. The assistance provided is in kind and this can include:

- Post-arrival counselling
- Assistance with finding a job
- Support setting up a business
- Basic equipment for an apartment
- Advice and support on medical and charitable institutions (BAMF, 2019)

In addition to the official return programmes there are several opportunities to receive pre-departure assistance in Germany. This includes access to vocational training programmes, self-employment training, and business and financial training.

Further to the above, Germany also provides further reintegration support in origin countries through the Returning to New Opportunities Programme. This programme is implemented by GIZ on behalf of the BAMF and includes two main strands: 1) Programme on Migration and Development (PME) and 2) existing GIZ bilateral programmes with additional funding to support returnees (Kuschminder, 2019).

The PME has three components of: 1) Information, counselling and qualification in Germany, 2) Advice in the countries of origin through Advice Centres, and 3) Cooperation with civil society organizations to implement reintegration support measures (Kuschminder, 2019). The Migration Advice Centres are currently

operational in the African countries of Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Morocco and Tunisia. An Advice Centre in Egypt is currently planned.

Migration Advice Centres operate so that returnees can voluntarily come to the centres to receive support services, meaning it is a self-referral programme. Returnees from all countries in Europe can come to the centres, not only German returnees. Services offered include short-term training programmes, such as how to develop a CV and do a job search, and referrals to other programmes that provide assistance.

GIZ has existing Bilateral Programmes that are a complex package of work designed together between GIZ and the origin country. From 2016, a reintegration add-on component has been added to 39 existing bilateral programmes (Kuschminder, 2019). The central focus of the bilateral programmes is on the integrated approach to employment promotion (GIZ, 2015), wherein technical and vocational education and training (TVET) plays a big part. TVET programmes can range from short courses to three-year programmes. Within the reintegration ad-on component GIZ tries to match returnees to these existing programmes. In addition, there are some projects available on social reintegration and basic education, but this is not the core focus of the programme.

3.5   *Germany within a Comparable perspective*

In a recent analysis, Van Houte and Leerkes (2019), comparted deportation regimes in different EU member states. Figure 7 shows the estimated average return rates (2013-2017) for 12 EU+ country by type of return for 8 EU+ countries (forced vs. assisted).

Figure 7: Estimated average return rates (2013-2017) for 12 EU+ country by type of return for 8 EU+ countries (forced vs. assisted)

	Returns related to asylum applications rejected and withdrawn				Returns related to return decisions		
	Total average return rate (returns / rejections)	Estimated forced return rate (returns/ rejections)	Estimated assisted return rate (returns / rejections)		Total average return rate (returns / return decisions)	Estimated forced return rate (returns/ return decisions)	Estimated assisted return rate (returns / return decisions)
1. Netherlands	44.0%	23.8%	20.2%	1. Austria	55.7%	10.9%	44.8%
2. Norway	40.3%	31.7%	8.6%	2. Germany	38.8%	-	-
3. UK	37.5%			3. Sweden	33.0%	10.2%	22.8%
4. France	35.0%	22.1%	12.9%	4. Netherlands	20.3%	-	-
5. Sweden	15.4%	4.8%	10.6%	5. Norway	15.1%	11.9%	3.2%
6. Austria	12.9%	2.5%	10.4%	6. Finland	11.9%	-	-
7. Belgium	12.4%	4.5%	7.9%	7. UK	9.8%	-	-
8. Finland	12.3%			8. Belgium	8.4%	3.1%	5.3%
9. Germany	7.9%			9. Denmark	8.0%	6.9%	1.1%
10. Italy	4.9%	4.2%	0.8%	10. France	7.4%	4.7%	2.7%
11. Denmark	4.7%	4.1%	0.6%	11. Italy	5.5%	4.6%	0.9%
12. Spain	4.3%	0.8%	0.2%	12. Spain	3.3%	3.1%	0.2%

Reproduced from: Van Houte and Leerkes, 2019.

The analysis shows that Germany has a comparatively high return rate when looking at returns related to all return decisions, however, Germany has a much lower return rate when looking at returns specifically related to asylum applications rejected and withdrawn. This is most likely due to the large number of returns that Germany enacts to Western Balkan countries each year. Van Houte and Leerkes (2019) suggest that two elements effecting the returns rate in Germany may be first, the bureaucracy required due to the federalist system, and second, the challenges of public resistance to removals.

4 Sustainable Reintegration

Reintegration after return is a difficult process for both forced and voluntary returnees. Within deportation studies, the term reintegration has been challenged as it implies that the individual experienced some level of integration prior to starting the migration and therefore some level of 'home' (Khosravi, 2018). This contestation is recognized; however, the term reintegration will be used in this report to apply to both voluntary and forced returnees.

Empirically, limited research has been conducted to systematically test the variables influencing reintegration. Research has illustrated that there are several different factors that can influence the reintegration process. Koser and Kuschminder (2015) conducted a literature review[7] of factors influencing reintegration in the context of AVR shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Factors influencing sustainable reintegration, known and potential influencing variables

	Variables from literature review
Returnees' characteristics	Age
	Sex
	Ethnicity
	Religion
	Rural/urban
	Sexual orientation
Experiences before exile	Pre-migration accommodation
	Pre-migration education
	Pre-migration employment status
	Pre- migration job
	Previous migration history
	Remittances received pre-migration
	Socio-economic status
	Number of dependents
	Sense of belonging
Decision-making factors in migration	Migrated via a smuggler or not
	Individual or collective decision
	Reason for migration
	Cost of migration
	Goals of migration
	Voluntary or rather forced migration (trafficking)
Experiences in country of destination	Migrated alone or with family
	Language learned
	Children educated
	Income
	Employment
	Discrimination
	Feelings

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[7] This review is available online at: https://www.iom.int/comparative-research-assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration-migrants

	Perceived value of experiences abroad
	Maintained ties to country of origin
	Sent remittances
	Freedom of movement
	Education
	Extent of social integration/friendships
Public policy on asylum	Legal status in country of destination
	Accommodation status in country of destination
Conditions of return	Return to pre-migration community
	Return alone or with family
	Ability to bring back assets and belongings
	Receipt of return assistance
	Receipt of reconstruction assistance
	Follow-up from return organisation
	Assets regained
	Acceptance within community
	Remaining migration debt
	Employment
	Household vulnerability
	Safety and security
The decision to return	Willingness to return
	Reasons for return
	Sources of information about return
	Influences in the return decision
	Threat of forced returns/forced removals

Source: Koser and Kuschminder, 2015, p. 17

This table reflects a life-cycle approach to sustainable reintegration that recognizes both individual and structural characteristics that influence reintegration, as well as examining conditions before migration, during the migration experience, and post-return conditions in the reintegration process. Koser and Kuschminder examined correlations between factors influencing the multidimensional return and reintegration index they developed to test sustainable reintegration outcomes and found that the following variables were correlated with being reintegrated upon return:

- living conditions in the destination country (those living in asylum or detention centers were less likely to be reintegrated upon return),
- those returning to the same community as prior to migration were more likely to be reintegrated,

- the initial reason for the migration (individuals that migrated for political-security reasons were less likely to be reintegrated), and
- individuals receiving a negative decision on an asylum claim were strongly correlated with not being reintegrated.

Bilgili, Kuschminder and Siegel (2018) found that in return to Ethiopia (with various types of return migrants) that the migration experience abroad was the most important factor influencing the return experience and that returnees that had a longer duration abroad and felt integrated abroad were more likely to have a positive feeling of their return. This reflects the notion from Cassarino (2004) that returnees need to be able to develop preparedness for their return by acquiring the resources and information necessary for their return and reintegration. Often both forced returnees and assisted voluntary returnees do not have the ability to do this as their migration cycle is ended due to their irregular status rather than their choice to return.

Second, social networks and links to the community have been found to be an important element in reintegration (Strand et al., 2016; Koser and Kuschminder, 2015). In the study conducted by Koser and Kuschminder (2015) it was found that returnees that returned to the same community they left were more likely to be sustainably reintegrated (as shown above). There are cases wherein returnees cannot return to their original communities. This may be because of shame or they are not accepted back by their families. Schuster and Majidi (2013) find in the case of Afghanistan that deportees experience high levels of 'shame and contamination' meaning that they are stigmatized for not being able to succeed in the migration and are ostracized upon return. Returnees can also be rejected by family when the debt from their initial migration has not yet been paid and their return creates problems for the family with the money lenders. Being ostracized by family and community upon return creates added levels of vulnerability for returnees (Schuster and Majidi, 2013).

Third, the economic situation of a returnee upon return is vital to their reintegration. ICMPD (2015) found in an evaluation of return to Kosovo that poor economic conditions in Kosovo left returnees without any long-term employment,

making reintegration challenging. It has been found that frequently reintegration package support to start a business or a invest in a new job do not turn out to be sustainable and income generating in the long term. This can be due to a misalignment with local needs, an important piece of equipment failing, or the returnee not have having the right skills.

Forth, research has also demonstrated that reintegration is a subjective process (Strand et al., 2016) and that both objective and subjective indicators are important for assessing sustainable reintegration. Arguably, if an individual does not feel reintegrated, this will be an impetus to leave again or create a situation of vulnerability for this individual. There is a growing body of research on subjective reintegration and perceptions upon return, however, findings differ across country contexts and the forms of return.

A final important consideration in reintegration is how reintegration processes change over time. Lietaert (2016) conducted a qualitative longidudinal analysis with assisted voluntary returnees in Armenia and Georgia over two years. Lietaert (2016) found that for different returnees' situations either improve, worsen or stay the same over time, often being impacted by normal life course events and changes in perceptions over time. Lietaert (2016) stresses the vulnerability of returnees is that those who appear to be doing well in the study at time one are considerably worse off at time two because the household has no ability to deal with shocks, such as crop failure or a household death. This study stresses the need for further longitudinal perspectives of reintegration to understand how processes change with time.

Lastly, it is important to reiterate that the evidence base is too small to provide robust conclusions on the variables influencing sustainable reintegration. Furthermore, the weight and extent to which different variables affect sustainable reintegration is little known.

5   Challenges in Return

There are several notable challenges in the process of return.

Challenges in Forced Return include:

- **Return Effectiveness**- as discussed in the previous sections return effectiveness is a critical issue. The use of the returns rate as the single most important indicator for return effectiveness is insufficient, and often even inaccurate. A new approach is necessary for determining return effectiveness in the EU.

- **Detention-** Detention, and in particular child immigrant detention, continue to be an unresolved issue in the EU. In order to remove an individual there are several steps that must be taken. After the period of voluntary departure has finished, member states make efforts to prevent absconding. These can include: regular reporting to officials, requiring a security deposit, handing over of ID or travel documents, order to take residence at a certain place, inspection of residence, electronic monitoring, or an obligation to inform authorities should a change in residence be considered (EMN, 2016). The preceding lists can be considered as alternatives to the final measure of detention.   Objective 13 of the Global Compact on Migration states: 'Use immigration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives'. In relation to child immigrant detention it states: 'working to end the practice of child detention in the context of international migration' (para 29(h). The campaign to end child immigration detention still calls on the EU to end this practice within the EU.

- **Effecting Removals-** The EMN Has identified the main challenges that member states face in effecting returns (2016). These include:
    - resistance of the individual to return, which can include self injury or absconding;
    - renewal of the asylum appeal;

- lack of cooperation from the origin county including refusal to readmit their citizens, refusal to issue travel and identity documents for the return procedures, or issuance of travel documents with very short validity that make the return difficult;
- other challenges in acquiring the return documents
- administrative and organization challenges
- medical reasons

Further challenges identified in the process of effecting removals include public resistance, securing flights and agreement with airlines, and political pressure and special considerations for vulnerable persons. In Germany there has been active public resistance to removals and resistance from airline pilots that have refused to fly with deportees onboard.

- **Maintaining Human Rights in Effecting Removals**- It has been argued by De Bono et al. (2015) that even when member states do everything possible to safeguard human rights within the removal process, the process itself is not humane. The long periods of limbo lead to deprivation which violates human rights (De Bono et al., 2015). This has been exemplified in Sweden, where the condition of 'resignation syndrome' has been declared for children whose families are issued with an order to return that go into deep comatose states (Aziz, 2017). The Swedish Board of Health and Welfare acknowledges in their advice that a patient will not recover until their family has been granted permission to live in Sweden (Aziz, 2017).

- **Post-Return Experiences** – Deportees experience challenges in return such as strong stigmatization (Schuster and Majidi, 2015). This includes notions of being contaminated as a failed migrant, or suspicions of criminality. Stigma creates ostracization and vulnerability amongst deportees making it difficult for them to reintegrate (Khosravi, 2018; Schuster and Majidi, 2015). Deportees also often have less access to support in their return than assisted voluntary returnees. These negative experiences can lead to re-migration.

Challenges of Voluntary Return:

- **'Voluntariness' in Assisted Voluntary Return**- AVR programmes have been extensively criticized by academics and civil society for not being 'voluntary'[8]. This continues to be an issue of contention and AVR has been referred to as 'soft-deportation' (Leerkes et al., 2016), or coerced return (Cassarino, 2014). Norway has changed the language of its return programme to 'assisted return', which acknowledges and respects that return is not voluntary.

- **Uptake into AVR**- Voluntary return is the preferred option of the EU and member states over forced removals, however, uptake into AVR is not a preferred levels, resulting in a continual challenge. Brekke (2015) finds that uptake into applying for assisted return from Norway is higher if a person had a partner or family. Leerkes et al. (2014) found that AVR uptake from the Netherlands is higher in individuals not returning to (post)-conflict countries. Different member states have used different approaches such as specific methods of return counselling, using native counselors (ie: co-ethnics), or decelerating benefits models (AVR money decreases with time) to increase uptake in AVR (Kuschminder, 2017b).

- **The Relationship between AVR and development** – A contentious issue has been if AVR leads to development outcomes. Some EU member states have made the argument that assisted voluntary returnees can contribute to development through micro-level engage in activities such as starting their own businesses upon return (a common package offered in AVR programmes). Kuschminder (2018) argues that the relationship between AVR and development can be explored in three ways: 1) if AVR is counted as official Overseas Development Assistance (ODA); 2) if the AVR is funded by development funds (either from national or EU level); 3) if there is evidence

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[8] See for example: Webber, F. (2011) "How voluntary are voluntary returns?" *Race and Class* 54(4), 98-107; Blitz, B., Sales, R., and Marzano, L. (2005) Non-voluntary Return? The Politics of Return to Afghanistan. *Political Studies 53*(1): 182-200; Cassarino, JP (ed) (2014) Reintegration and Development, San Domenico di Fiesolo: European University Institute (EUI), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

of the relationship between AVR and development. Through an analysis Kuschminder (2018) finds that Austria, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland included AVR as part of their ODA expenditures, as is permitted by OECD under in-country refugee costs (OECD, 2016). Regarding national development funds, the Netherlands funds reintegration packages to priority development countries from development funds via the Ministry of Foreign Affiars (Kuschminder, 2018). This had led to criticism regarding the Netherlands use of development funds (van Houte, 2014). Finally, an evaluatuion by Te Wildt, Greco Tonegutti and Heraud (2015) for EU Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) on AVR found that projects funded by DG DEVCO had little relevance to the migration and development framework guiding DG DEVCOs work. This highlights the argument that the it is quite exceptional to expect AVRs to contribute to development in their countries of origin and there is no evidence to demonstrate that they are able to do this (Kuschminder, 2018).

Challenges of EU Return policy:

- **Lack of policy coherence across member states regarding return policies**- Important initiatives are underway to increase policy coherence in the EU regarding returns and the renewed policies focus specifically on creating harmonization across member states. Most notably, this includes the ERRIN network and the RIAT tool. The ERRIN seeks to strengthen cooperation between migration authorities and is a joint initiative of joint initiative of 15 EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA / FRONTEX) and the European Commission. ERRIN has agreements with 17 countries of origin and the network is currently conducting a further mapping of all return practices in Europe. Considering the significant variability in return programming identified by the EMN (2014) and other research, this is an important direction to address the lack of policy coherence in return.

- **Lack of data, monitoring and evaluation of return** – It has been recognized that there is a critical lack of data in return. Eurostat has increased reporting on return since 2017, however, many EU countries are not reporting with the new variables. A recent report on monitoring and evaluation post-return found that there are very different methods of evaluation and monitoring applied across member states (Kuschminder, 2019). On the whole there is very little external evaluation (Kuschminder, 2019), and the differences in monitoring practices result in a lack of comparable data. The IOM has developed a new approach to monitoring and evaluation that aims to resolve this issue across its caseload. The Reintegration Impact Assessment Tool (RIAT) of the ERRIN project also aims to address this issue as it will utilized in the first harmonized return project of the EU. The RIAT is both a case management and monitoring tool.

- **Misconceptions in Return -** This lack of data is problematic as anecdotal information influences policy, wherein there is no systemic evidence. For example, the concept of 'return shopping' has been declared problematic in return policy from the EU, but there is no evidence from research that returnees engage in 'return shopping'. A second important misconception is that the notion that voluntary returns are more sustainable than forced removals. Although this makes rational sense, research has demonstrated that outcomes between voluntary returns and forced removals result in similar outcomes within the reintegration process (Lietaert, 2017; Majidi, 2014).

6 Enhancing successful return

Determining what leads to successful return and reintegration is difficult due to the lack of research and evidence in this area. It is important to stress that many member states conduct evaluations of their policies, but that these may not be public. Promising practices have been identified by different actors that will be summarized in this section.

Enhancing successful removals:

- **Readmission agreements**- Readmission agreements are recognized as central in facilitating removals.

- **Priorities, budget, and effective coordination** – Van Houte and Leerkes (2019) identify that prioritizing return, having adequate budget for return, and establishing a system of effective bureaucracy and coordination are all important in influencing the return rate from destination countries.

- **Public Perceptions of Return** – In relation to the above, Van Houte and Leerkes (2019) also identify that public perception and support for returns is important in effecting returns.

Enhancing voluntary return:

- **Stick and Carrot**- It is quite accepted that AVR only works as a 'carrot' when the 'stick' of a forced removal is present (Black, Collyer and Summerville, 2011).

- **Decreasing Finance Model**- Switzerland found that using a decreasing financial model for the AVR package increased uptake into the programme. This model is now used in Germany and other member states.

- **Counselling Processes**- It is recognized by several actors that return counselling is central in destination states. Norway has found that using 'motivational interviewing' techniques has increased uptake into assisted return (Holm, 2017). Belgium is recognized by EMN to have the most developed counselling process across member states. In Belgium there is a focus on the whole person and working to build relationships of trust that can last over time (Kuschminder, 2019).

Enhancing Reintegration:

- **Multidimensional process**- It is accepted by several actors such as IOM and GIZ that reintegration is a multidimensional process encompassing economic, social and cultural dimensions. Reintegration processes must therefore be multifaceted and not only focus on economic components.

- **Community based reintegration processes**- It is also recognized that communities must be engaged in the reintegration process, however, there is little research on this process. IOM has recently piloted a new community based reintegration process in Morocco. Within their study they recommend:
  - "Conduct an in-depth study of local needs and the operating environment to ensure the viability of the community-based project type being considered.
  - Organize consultations during the development of community-based projects, involving as much as possible all the segments of the local community (e.g. through steering committees).
  - Select community beneficiaries on the basis of clearly defined vulnerability criteria.
  - Develop partnerships with public authorities, the private sector and civil society.
  - Prioritize the types of activities and sectors that are favorable to community-based projects.
  - In the case of beneficiaries living below the poverty line, give priority to grants to microfinancing and revolving loan funds." (IOM Morocco and Altai Consulting, 2017, p. 6-8).

- **Creating Partnerships in Reintegration**- AVR is often funded by national governments, and therefore it may not always be possible to have community-based reintegration programmes. Another option is to establish partnerships with other organizations in origin countries that already work in areas of need for return migrants. This can help to increase reintegration.

- **No one size fits all approach**- It is also increasingly recognized that there is no size fits all approach to reintegration and returnees must be given support for different options within their reintegration processes.

7 Conclusion

This report has sought to provide a high-level background of return dynamics from the EU and Germany to Africa, the challenges of return, and possible strategies for increasing the effectiveness of return. A core challenge in return that cannot be solved by policies or programming is the context that a returnee experiences upon return. Many returnees, regardless if forced or voluntary, experience negative stigmas upon return that lead to shame. Conditions in the country of return continue to be challenging in regards to economic opportunities and in some cases, safety and security. These challenges are generally beyond the reach of return policy and programming, and the core factors that instigate remigration aspirations, and possibly realized remigration. With increasing investments into return, it is essential to recognize that success in sustainable reintegration may therefore be beyond the scope of policy levers.

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