

UN agency assists nearly 100,000 migrants return home in 2016

11 July 2017 – The United Nations migration agency reported today that it helped nearly 100,000 migrants return home voluntarily last year, a 41 per cent increase over 2015. This assistance was provided through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes and highlighted in its 2016 [Key Highlights](#) report. In a corresponding news release, IOM notes that the people assisted in 2016 from 110 countries were returned to 161 countries and territories of origin.

According to the report's findings, nearly one third of migrants assisted by IOM AVRR programmes were female and nearly one quarter were children. Of the total assisted, 1,253 were unaccompanied migrant children, 995 were migrants with health-related needs, and 895 were identified as victims of trafficking.

"The current migration dynamics show that assisted voluntary return and reintegration has to be part of any comprehensive and effective migration governance," said Anh Nguyen, Head of IOM's Migrant Assistance Division.

As in 2015, the European Economic Area (and Switzerland) was the region from where most migrants returned (83 per cent), while south-eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Central Asia remained the region to where most migrants returned (49 per cent).

Germany was the host country from where the largest number of migrants assisted by IOM returned (over 54,000 migrants), followed by Greece (6,153) and Austria (4,812). The number of returns from these countries increased in 2016, in comparison to 2015, and together accounted for nearly two thirds of the total.

With approximately 17,976 migrants assisted, Albania remained the country to where the largest share of migrants returned, followed by Iraq (12,776) and Afghanistan (7,102). West and Central Africa, East Africa as well as the Horn of Africa are regions which registered important intraregional flows.

The report provides an overview of global and regional trends for 2016, and a comparison between 2015 and 2016.

It also highlights concrete activities related to key themes, which were of particular significance in 2016: AVRR from transit countries, innovative initiatives to assist migrants in vulnerable situations, partnership and cooperation projects conducted to enhance the provision of assistance to migrants, and research and evidence-based programming applied to AVRR. Voices of returnees are also echoed through direct testimonies shared in the report.

"The impact that return has on host countries, transit countries, and countries of origin, and most importantly on migrants and their communities,

cannot be neglected. AVRR remains one of IOM's core assistance and represents a win-win situation for all concerned, as it provides a humane, dignified, and cost-effective way to return home and to reintegrate within communities," concluded Mr. Nguyen.