
Summary Conclusions

The fifth meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on Return and Readmission was chaired by the UK Border and Immigration Agency and co-chaired by Polish Border Guards and hosted by the Ministry of Interior and Administration of Poland on 25-26 September 2007 in Warsaw. The previous meeting of the Working Group had been held in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2002. On the initiative of the United Kingdom and Poland, the activities of this Working Group now resumed its work. In the meantime, the topic had been addressed within the framework of the project “Redirection of the Budapest Process to the CIS countries”, financed by the European Commission and the Budapest Process participating States.

The invitation to this Working Group had been very well received by participating States. The meeting gathered representatives from Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, as well as the European Commission, Frontex, the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Eurasian Economic Community, the International Organization for Migration, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe/ODIHR, the United High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, as the Secretariat of the Budapest Process.

The strong participation, the high quality of the presentations delivered, and the active discussion indicated the relevance of the topic and can be attributed to the recent developments in the area, in particular to the conclusion of EC readmission agreements.

The discussions of the meeting focused on two main issues: readmission agreements and their implementation from a policy and operational perspective; and the related issue of Assisted Voluntary Return – AVR in cooperation with international organisations.

In identifying the following priority issues the participants encouraged the continuation of the Working Group on Return and Readmission:

- Support and further promote cooperation between States in concluding and implementing EC readmission agreements, bilateral agreements in line with international legal standards, as well as Memoranda of Understanding in the area of return and readmission.
- Further promote the exchange of experience and Good Practices in the identification and documentation of irregular migrants and returnees;
• Further strengthen capacities to implement readmission agreements by the exchange of experience in priority areas such as legal assistance and developing reception and detention facilities;

• Identify practical ways and means to more effectively implement readmission agreements by improving planning capacities through the exchange of solid estimates of returns to be effected following the entering into force of readmission agreements;

• Monitor and assess the increasing opportunities of modern communication techniques in the context of the effective implementation of readmission agreements at the operational level;

• Foster assisted voluntary return programmes as the preferred option to enhance return and reintegration of returnees;

• Focus on the long-term effects of return by emphasising sustainability aspects in return policies, for instance through linkages to other policy areas and experience exchange on “second generation” readmission agreements.

Starting at the next meeting, the Working Group will focus on these priority issues, with a particular emphasis on their operational and practical dimensions. In advance of the next meeting of the Working Group a short survey will be prepared to obtain a comparative overview of participants’ experiences and challenges specific to return.

UK as the Chair of the Working Group meeting, and the participants thanked Poland as the co-chair and hosting country for the organisation and the hospitality as well as the Secretariat for the preparation of the meeting.