



AD HOC QUERY ON 2019.53 NO EMN AHQ Part II on asylum and improving communication between the authorities and minors

Requested by EMN NCP Norway on 9 May 2019

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

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1. Background information

Background information Part II :

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) has launched a new website to explain the asylum process in Norway to unaccompanied minors as well as children whose families are seeking asylum. On the new website asylbarn.no/ all kinds of information in many languages regarding the asylum process in Norway is presented in a child-friendly manner. The next step for the project is to publish information also meant for children about forced and voluntary return processes.

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Children and unaccompanied asylum seekers represent a large percentage of those who apply for asylum in Norway. In 2018, over 40 per cent of the asylum seekers of Norway were children. In keeping with this data, UDI has incorporated contributions from the children asylum seekers to make all information regarding asylum process the best possible. Because of the large number of children involved in the asylum process, this project is important for the Norwegian authorities. In the light of the above, UDI would appreciate information on whether your MS has created any kind of channel to improve the communication between the authorities and the minors regarding the asylum process.

2. Questions

- 1. Do you have any sources of information/ programs etc that are child-friendly about the return process in your country?**
- 2. Does your MS systematically distribute any information about the return process that is specifically suited to children; where children are the recipients of the information? YES/ NO**
- 3. If yes, in what ways do you inform the minors about the return process?**
- 4. Do you have any kind of feedback from minors or guardians on how to better facilitate the minors understanding of the return process? If yes, please briefly describe or exemplify.**



We would very much appreciate your responses by **3 June 2019**.

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3. Responses

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		Wider Dissemination ²	
	EMN NCP Austria	Yes	<p>1. In Austria, there is a leaflet from UNHCR available: https://www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2019/02/AT_UNHCR_DeinAsylverfahren_D_E_2018.pdf that also covers information on negative decisions.</p> <p>2. There is no information on systematic distribution of the leaflet.</p> <p>3. The information is provided by the legal advisor/ guardian for unaccompanied minor children.</p> <p>4. It is preferred to carry out the clarification about the return process during individual counseling sessions with minors, informational material (leaflets, brochures) was not seen as a good tool to increase the understanding about the return process among minors. ---Source: Ministry of the Interior</p>
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	<p>1. a. Children in a family setting: guidance and information initiatives and tools.</p> <p>a. Brochures</p>

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>In informing about the Voluntary Return (AVR) programme and guiding families who are considering AVR (and those who have already made the decision), brochures are used. Two brochures (one aimed at professionals who work with these families and one aimed at the parents) were developed in collaboration with the City of Ghent and University Gent and aim to reflect on children's needs and perceptions. In addition to "technical" themes such as school-administrative preparation, pedagogical themes such as parenting, participation in the preparation for AVR, saying goodbye and formulating realistic expectations are discussed.</p> <p>A third brochure (Fedasil edition) is aimed explicitly at the children. In this "DIY booklet" children are invited in a playful way to prepare for the return. Themes such as saying goodbye, maintaining contact, etc. are addressed in an age adequate (6 - 12 year) manner.</p> <p>Professionals (reception and return network) were informed about the existence of (all) brochures, know how to use them and where to order. The aim is to implement these tools in the guidance and support task of the AVR consultants.</p> <p>b. Return guidance in the FITT units (family identification return team) Since September 2015, the AVR service of Fedasil provides a weekly consultation in a FITT units. In these semi-closed residential units, families with minor children in irregular stay are taken care of, pending identification for a possible forced return. The FITT units are run by Immigration Office. The objective of these visits is to inform the families about the AVR possibilities.</p> <p>At least three return interviews are planned for each family over a three-week period. In a first interview (in the presence of a FITT coach) the possibility of Voluntary Return (as an alternative to forced return) is presented to the family. It is a purely informative conversation that should allow the family to make an informed decision about its future. The following topics are discussed: obtaining travel documents, the organisation of the return journey, criteria and return premiums, access to reintegration programs and the continuity of medical care.</p> <p>During these conversations, special attention is paid to the place of the children in consultation</p>
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			<p>with the parents and in an age-appropriate manner. The aforementioned brochures / DIY booklet are used in this regard. Themes such as attachment to and saying goodbye to friends in Belgium, school runs and leisure time expectations are discussed. In removing obstacles, if the reality in the country of origin permits, the child's contribution is actively involved.</p> <p>In other words, special attention is given in the counselling to the place and the role of the children. Depending on the age (and maturity), the children are involved in the preparation of the Voluntary Return. The Voluntary Return counselor (expert) tries to make an assessment of the perception and expectations of the child. Building on the expertise of the local partner (in the country of origin), an attempt is made to work out a reintegration-on-child size in this way. Local partners are able to make up-to-date and realistic analyses of what the reintegration can entail for the child. Themes such as school and general psychosocial well-being are paramount here. In the event of an effective return, special attention is paid during monitoring / evaluation to what the reintegration meant for the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UAMs <p>An adapted Voluntary Return programme geared towards UAMs has been developed. It represents the AVR & reintegration possibility as a possible sustainable solution, as a beginning of a new start in the home country, in the best interest of the child. It's a social programme: customised, individual and based on strengths and weaknesses of the youngster (and his family in the home country). It tries to establish a link between the youngsters skills and the possibilities in the home country (education – labour market). During the reception period, youngsters, social workers and legal guardians are informed and guided in a structural way.</p> <p>Within 2 UAM reception centers, the My Future-project was developed. A more regular 'future orientation' as part of the reception trajectory is implemented in all UAM reception structures. The AVR service of Fedasil provides information and training sessions for social workers and legal representatives, developed adapted communication upon UAMs in different languages and provides regional focal points of adapted UAM information.</p> <p>2. YES</p>
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			<p>3. Children in a family setting: social workers know how to include children within the AVR process / preparation, from the moment on the parents took the decision to go back home. Parents must give their permission to involve the children.</p> <p>4. Children in a family setting: the development of the booklet followed the observation made by return coaches that children were often not included by their parents in the return process. To address this issue, the booklet has been developed to better embedded children returning with their parents. UAMs: to facilitate the possibility to give feedback upon the AVR programme for UAMs, legal guardians are invited to participate in so-called 'regional meeting evenings'. These evenings are organised by the AVR Service of Fedasil and are held 4 times a year, all over the country. Legal guardians are invited to add themes to the agenda and to discuss individual cases.</p>
	EMN NCP Croatia	Yes	<p>1. No. Croatia does not have any information program designed especially for children about the asylum process. Information materials in which asylum process and rights and obligations during this process are provided in written form and are the same for all applicants. The main difference is the way special guardians, asylum officers and decision makers deliver this information. Special guardians, asylum officers and decision makers who work with children are specially trained. More time is taken, simplified words are used and we make sure in every step of the way that the child understands the information given to him/her.</p> <p>2. No. All information provided regarding the return process is the same for all applicants. Difference is in way of delivering this information.</p> <p>3. Special guardians are responsible for providing information about the return process and they are trained to do it in child-friendly way.</p> <p>4. No.</p>



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	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. IOM implements the AVRR programme in Cyprus through which individualized counselling is provided to all beneficiaries including unaccompanied and separated children, by counsellors with legal and psychosocial background and with the support of cultural mediators. This also applies to older children who are registered to the programme with their parents. Also, information is provided in writing and IOM has prepared an AVRR information video which presents the return process in a clear way.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. No, in the Czech Republic the return of unaccompanied minors takes place on voluntary basis and if it is in the best interest of the child. Therefore the numbers are almost zero and we do not have any feedback of this kind.</p>
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	<p>1. No, we do not have any programs /information materials about the return process that would be targeted specifically to minors.</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. N/A</p>



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			4. Information not available.
	EMN NCP Finland	Yes	<p>1. We do not have any program / materials about return that would be targeted specifically to minors. A process flowchart for minors' return process has been planned, but this is targeted to the reception center workers who inform minors about the return process. When reception centers have been trained about the voluntary return option they have expressed that they do not want actively inform unaccompanied minors about the voluntary return option but they keep the brochures available and have the ability to inform the minors in case they ask about this.</p> <p>2. No. Aspects of return after negative decision (and possibility to voluntary return) are only briefly informed in the brochures targeting unaccompanied minors. Reception centers have brochures available about voluntary return and if a minor is interested in this option can ask about this option from reception center and they will be informed about return process in person. Unaccompanied minors depend mainly on the return information provided by their parents. What comes to voluntary return guidelines, there is no official guidelines to meet and inform accompanied minors about voluntary return, but in general if family wants to return voluntarily it is advised that their children should be met, informed and their opinion heard if this is suitable according to their age.</p> <p>3. Please see the previous question.</p> <p>4. No, at least there is not anything that would be systematically collected. Finland does not return many unaccompanied minors and there are very few that want to return voluntarily, so returning minors are mainly accompanied minors.</p>
	EMN NCP France	Yes	<p>1. Information is given to rejected asylum seekers about appeal procedures and rejected asylum application, however they are not child-friendly. In OFPRA's information guide dedicated to UAMs who apply for asylum, a dedicated part explains how the remedy and the legal aid work.</p>



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			<p>2. NO During the interview with the UAM, the case worker will systematically explain orally to him/her how the remedy work and can give him/her OFPRA's information guide dedicated to UAMs who apply for asylum.</p> <p>3. Since UAMs who apply for asylum must, under French legislation, be assisted by their legal representative, this representative is in charge of providing such information to rejected asylum seekers UAMs. UAMs may as well be assisted by a lawyer or a social worker from an association which has been agreed by OFPRA.</p> <p>4. OFPRA's group of referents on children applying for asylum is the contact point for any NGOs or social workers dedicated to support UAMs who want to provide OFPRA with feedbacks.</p>
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. n/a</p> <p>4. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Hungary	Yes	<p>1. Hungary has limited experience in expulsion and return of minors and families. The IOM Budapest Office runs an assisted voluntary return programme which ensures escort for the unaccompanied minor for the whole journey. The IOM Budapest cooperates with the IOM Office in the destination country and monitors the return and the reception by the family or by the reception institution. IOM provides tailor-made information material (booklets and posters) for children in the framework of the "Protecting children in the context of refugee and migrant crises in Europe" project. IOM booklets and posters contain information about rights and obligation of the child, for instance, the participation</p>




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			<p>of the child in the process, available reception conditions, basic information about asylum procedure and information about age assessment. These child-friendly information materials are available in 7 different languages: English, French, Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, Arabic and Hungarian.</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. Special rules apply to vulnerable groups (eg. unaccompanied minors, women who are considered the head of their families) which ensure that such groups receive adequate protection, assistance and care throughout the whole asylum and immigration procedures. According to Hungarian law unaccompanied minors may be expelled only if adequate protection is ensured in their country of origin by means of reuniting them with other members of their family or by state or other institutional care.</p>
	EMN NCP Ireland	Yes	<p>1. No. This applies to both forced and voluntary return.</p> <p>2. No. This applies to both forced and voluntary return.</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<p>1. n/a</p> <p>2. Yes, only for UAMs</p> <p>3. When unaccompanied minors get in reception centers they receive all the necessary information regarding the legal procedure they must undertake when applying for international protection. To this</p>



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			<p>end, several NGOs and government organizations support reception centers in the provision of informative material. They are:- UNHCR- IOM ItalyNational Institute for the Promotion of Migrant's Population Health. In the majority of cases, these organisations inform minors about the asylum process through human interaction and frontal lessons that takes place in reception centers.</p> <p>4. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. No. There was no identified need for this information as minors make up a very small number of persons in the return process.</p> <p>2. NO</p> <p>3. N/a</p> <p>4. No</p>
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. No.</p>

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			<p>2. N/A.</p> <p>3. N/A.</p> <p>4. N/A.</p>
	EMN NCP Malta	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. No</p>
	EMN NCP Netherlands	Yes	<p>1. These questions provided by the Dutch NCP are answered by The Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V), who is responsible for expediting the voluntary and forced departure of foreign nationals who are not allowed to stay in the Netherlands and by the Dutch IOM (International Organisation for Migration).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied minor are provided with information about the return proces in the Netherlands from the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V). This information is mostly provided during the conversations held with the unaccompanied minors by the supervisors departure of the DT&V. During these conversations, the age of the minor is taken into account. A legal guardian will usually be present during these conversations. Also, as with all conversations held by the DT&V, an interpreter will be available (by phone) if necessary. • Accompanied minors don't get information about return processes directly from the DT&V, because of the role and responsibility of the parents. • The IOM works with 3 specialized UMC counsellors, appointed IOM field officers who work with UMC in



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			<p>counselling sessions and their network relations. They noticed that UMC hardly read any information written on leaflets or websites. The most important information material for UMC are their visit cards with the message to call or send WhatsApp messages whenever needed. Written UMC information material is mainly developed for legal guardians or other referral parties and our regular information leaflet (IOM can Help/Travel Guide) has been developed for all returnees. See attachments: IOM can Help, Travel guide, Legal guardian flow chart, 18 plus. IOM the Netherlands has an additional component for UMC in the regular AVRR program that contains extra support on top of the regular support for all returnees, meaning: EUR 1500 (regular) + EUR 1000 (UMC) in kind and EUR 500 in cash.</p> <p>2. • The Repatriation and Departure Service does distribute specific information about the return process that is specifically suited to children. This information is distributed verbally, only to unaccompanied minors. At the moment, there is no brochure specifically aimed at children. Currently the development of such a brochure is being considered though.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To our knowledge, some NGOs in the Netherlands do have communication material regarding the return process specifically aimed at children.• IOM does not systematically distribute any information about the return process. IOM aims to develop child specific material at the moment for migrant families. <p>3. See above. IOM informs minors through IOM counsellors (directly or via parents/guardian).</p> <p>4. Based on a questionnaire the IOM recently circulated under migrant families the following aspects were highlighted to be used to improve the return process;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brochure with advice how to communicate about the topic of return with children;- Child friendly information material on return (Child friendly in a way that the information material fits in with children's experiences, such as a book of friends, a game, comic, etc.)- Possibility for parents to seek advice from a return counsellor;- Possibility for children to talk about return with a return counsellor;- Support from school teacher.
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	<p>EMN NCP Poland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. In Poland there is no special information/programs dedicated for children that are child-friendly about return process.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. No.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Slovakia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. As for the return process, Bureau of Border and Foreign Police PFP (BBFP PFP) which is responsible for the return agenda of migrants who are illegally staying in the Slovak Republic does not provide specific child-friendly information or carry out programs. In the case of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) program implemented by IOM, UAMs are mostly returned together with their parents. There is no specific type of child-friendly information provided to UAMs during the AVRR process. The socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship body in the Slovak Republic (which is later appointed as legal guardian of a minor) informs every UAM on the possibilities of return and reunification in other country. This is carried out after the arrival to the Children and Family Centre with specialized groups for UAMs (former Foster Home for UAMs, hereinafter referred to as Centre) where the UAM is placed. Subsequently, IOM is contacted for further stages. Similarly to BBFP PFP, the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior, responsible for asylum procedure and applications, does not distribute any particular material about the asylum process/return process specifically suited to children. However, as mentioned in our response in the previous ad hoc query by Norway, information material in the form of printed leaflets and brochures called „My life in Slovakia“ (Môj život na Slovensku) created by an NGO Human Rights League for the unaccompanied minors is available in the Centre (former Foster Home for UAMs in Medzilaborce). Brochure also informs about the family reunification and on return. It is available in Slovak, English, Romanian, Russian, Dari and Hindi.</p> <p>2. See Q1</p> <p>3. See Q1</p>



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			4. No.
	EMN NCP Spain	Yes	<p>1. No. Accompanied minors are returned together with their parents, who should best be able to explain the situation to them. UMs undergo a special return procedure, with wide possibilities to obtain information from their guardians (belonging to the regional administrations) and the Prosecutor for Minors, apart from the written information provided by the Government Delegation when initiating the administrative procedure.</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. No</p>
	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	<p>1. Yes, this is included in both the written material and in the app “Stories”.</p> <p>2. Yes, this is included in the written material which is distributed at the beginning of the asylum process.</p> <p>3. In written material at the beginning of the asylum process, and verbally by the case officer who informs the minor of a negative decision.</p> <p>4. We have studied a report by Save the Children, in which minors returning to Afghanistan describe the support and information they wished for. The children specifically asked for the following support to be provided by returning countries: information about Afghanistan, how to find a job, access to education and return support, psychosocial support and counselling, vocational training, language courses, help in transferring and translating grades. Children also prioritised the support they need in Afghanistan:</p>

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			access to good-quality education, financial support, access to healthcare and psychosocial support, access to community support and social networks, help with documentation, family reunification, re-adaptation classes, language classes for returnees, access to a lawyer and legal advice.
	EMN NCP United Kingdom	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have designed the 'Getting Ready to Leave the UK booklet' that we provide to explain return to children in the Family Returns Process. 2. Yes, the booklet above is given to children. 3. See Q2. 4. We do not at this time.
	EMN NCP Norway	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Norway has information in written form about the return process and we are in the process of creating a new video about this topic. The goal of this video is to explain the return process in a simplified language in order to demystify the process and reduce fear and concern among minors. 2. Yes 3. Norway has information in written form about the return process and we are in the process of creating a new video about this topic. The goal of this video is to explain the return process in a simplified language in order to demystify the process and reduce fear and concern among minors. 4. N/I as yet.

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