**OPEN Summary of EMN Ad-Hoc Query**

# Asylum - Improving Communication Between Authorities & Minors

# Part II

August 26th 2019, prepared by NO EMN NCP

# **key points to note**

* 3 MS (BE, SE, NO) provide information materials on return appropriate for children: BE has “My future” project, SE has started testing an app “Stories” and Norway is working on videos. These MS have routines for conveying information suitable for children in families as well as UM seeking asylum. BE has an especially comprehensive program and project.
* The UK has produced a special booklet specifically aimed at return of children with their families.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* 4 MS (AT, CY, HU, NL) report that they make use of materials for UM produced by IOM and UNHCR. In Italy information on return is not provided because unaccompanied minors cannot be returned[[2]](#footnote-2). The remaining 14 MS do not have any routines in place, a number of these MS report that there are very, very few voluntary returns of minors and no forced returns. FI reports that reception center staff do not like providing information about return to minors and only do so if asked by a minor.
* Hungary reports having materials translated into 7 languages though they also report having almost no experience with return of minors.
* BE provided the following list of topics for adults to convey to UM:
  + school-administrative preparation;
  + pedagogical themes such as parenting;
  + participation in the preparation for AVR, saying goodbye and formulating realistic expectations 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;
  + school and general psychosocial well-being upon return.

# background and context

On the 4th of May 2019, the NO NCP launched an ad-hoc query on asylum and improving communication between authorities and minors.

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.  A wide array of information regarding the asylum process in Norway, in many languages, is presented in a child-friendly manner on the new website asylbarn.no/. The next step for the project is to publish information also meant for children about forced and voluntary return processes as well as receiving a negative decision.

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. This is a 2-part query.

# 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.

# MAIN FINDINGS

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, Norway (23 in Total).

Clearly not as many MS give priority to providing information to children about the return process as compared to the number who provide information about the asylum process. It is also clear that most MS do not give priority to providing information to accompanied minors involved in the return process – some explain that it is expected that the parents will provide this information. In previous EMN AHQs it has been reported that there are a number of MS who do not practice return of minors.

1. UK - 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Italian law does not allow for the return of unaccompanied minors in their country of origin. The only exception to this rule can occur in the case in which, the tracing process has been successful and the minor and his/her guardian are in favor of a return based on the firm belief that reuniting the minor with his family is the best way to guarantee the child’s interests. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)