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4.15.5 Efficiency of the return process

While the rate of implemented returns remained relatively low in many EU+ countries,[1215] a number of new initiatives were carried out in 2020 to improve the enforcement of a return and the cost-effectiveness of the process.

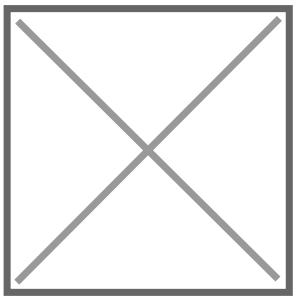
The Austrian Government Programme 2020-2024 places strong emphasis on voluntary return and reintegration, which are provided by the BBU as of 1 January 2021. For the area of return counselling and return assistance, binding work procedures, which define workflows and standards to guarantee efficient and uniform application and enforcement practices in the context of (assisted) voluntary return and reintegration, were developed. As part of a package of measures to encourage voluntary return, financial start-up support was adjusted, information material on return assistance was further developed and the website was relaunched: http://www.returnfromaustria.at

To increase the number of returns carried out in the Netherlands, the 'return track' was launched as a pilot programme in January 2020. The project focuses on enhancing coordination and removing procedural obstacles when third-country nationals submit repeated applications during the removal procedure through a readmission agreement.[1216]

In Denmark, a new legislative proposal amending the return process was under discussion. The new bill proposes more stringent rules on obtaining data to identify foreigners who should be returned. It also put forth procedures to manage occupancy in return centres more efficiently to prevent absconding.[1217]

The Swedish government tasked several national bodies, including the police and the Swedish Migration Agency, to analyse the factors that prevent the enforcement of a decision on a refusal of entry or return. The results of the study, expected in 2021, will present shortcomings in the area of return and improvements for the exchange of data on returnees.[1218]

In Belgium, the commission for the evaluation of policies on foreigners' voluntary and forced return (also referred to as the Bossuyt Commission) put forward over 60 policy recommendations to improve the return process.[1219]



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