**EMN report: The return of rejected asylum seekers is challenging**

*For Finland, the most difficult are returns to the main countries of origin.*

According to a report published recently by the European Migration Network (EMN), there are many challenges related to the return of rejected asylum seekers from Finland to their home countries.

Factors that may complicate return include the returnee’s lacking identity documents, floundering cooperation with the authorities of the receiving country as well as the returnee’s negative attitude towards return. Especially the authorities of the main countries where asylum seekers come from, that is, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan, may refuse to accept involuntary returnees.

“In order for returns to succeed, it is crucial to cooperate with countries of origin and transit. Lately, both the Finnish government and the EU have striven to conclude readmission agreements. They are a key tool in preventing irregular migration,” says Minister of the Interior **Paula Risikko.**

**Finland has an excellent opportunity to keep up the good work**

From a European perspective, Finland does not have a large group of irregular migrants. According to the study, the police have so far executed removals efficiently. Finland has also issued temporary residence permits to persons whose return has been deemed impossible.

The situation may change, as after the legal amendment of July 2015, Finland may no longer issue a temporary residence permit to a foreign national if the return is prevented due to reasons caused by the returnee him-/herself.

“Now Finland has a unique opportunity to keep up the good work as the number of returnees is rising. Our return system requires constant development so that the number of people living outside society does not increase. The system should support the returnees’ well-being in their home countries, with the aid of reintegration training, for instance,” comments Senior Adviser **Suvi Tiainen**, the author of Finland’s national EMN report.

**A fair return policy is a more sensible option than coercion**

From January to September 2016, a little under 2,500 asylum seekers have cancelled their applications in the middle of the process and have expressed their wish to return to their home countries. At the same time, approximately 3,500 asylum seekers have returned to their home countries, either after cancelling their applications or after their application has been rejected.

“Effective migration policies require a systematic fairness-based approach. That is especially true for smaller countries like Finland that will have difficulty forcing countries of origin into complying with return procedures.” says Professor **Arjen Leerkes** of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, who has researched returns in Holland.

The report (EN/FI language version) is available at <http://www.emn.fi/files/1425/FINAL_EMN_Returning_rejected_asylum_seekers_EN_FI.pdf>

EMN organised the “Return of rejected asylum seekers” seminar on 30 September 2016. More information on the topic can be found at [www.emn.fi](http://www.emn.fi/ajankohtaista/invitation_to_the_emn_national_seminar_2016)

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| **About the EMN**  The Finnish National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN) operates in connection with the Finnish Immigration Service. National Contact Points have been set up in each EU Member State, as well as in Norway, which also participates in the network. The network is chaired by the EU Commission.  The task of the EMN is to support policy-making in the European Union by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum. In addition to politicians and government officials, information is also disseminated to the general public.  Among the most important outputs of the EMN are annual reports on the development of the immigration policies of EU Member States and institutions, as well as various thematic studies on topical migration issues.  Finland’s national EMN website is at [www.emn.fi](http://www.emn.fi/). |