

READMISSION TO GEORGIA

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IN FOCUS

Georgia has successfully introduced the Electronic Readmission Management System

The key achievement of this project in Georgia has been the successful introduction of the Electronic Readmission Management System into the day-to-day cooperation between Georgia and EU Member States for managing individual readmission cases. Georgia has thus become the first country that has introduced readmission management in a secure web-based portal.

In recent years, IOM has provided direct support to the Georgian authorities in developing a web-based portal for the uploading and processing of requests for readmission. Through promoting the direct bilateral interaction between Georgian authorities and their interlocutors in EU Member States, IOM has contributed to the development of an advanced electronic management system for dealing with readmission, which replaces the system of sending readmission requests based on hard paper copies. The Georgian system is unique in that it provides a secure environment for covering the full readmission process, starting from the uploading of requests for readmission of Georgian nationals by EU Member States, followed by the processing of those requests by the Georgian authorities and, ultimately, the communication of the actual transfer data of the person to be readmitted. This system also connects the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees, which is responsible for coordinating the

reintegration of readmitted migrants, thus enabling the ministry and its partner IOM to offer reintegration assistance to these migrants.

The first request for readmission was uploaded onto the electronic system on 30 January 2014 by Polish immigration authorities and other EU Member States have subsequently followed suit. Up until 31 August 2014, 176 requests for readmission were uploaded in the portal by 5 EU Member States (Poland, Germany, Belgium, Austria and Bulgaria). According to the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other EU Member States have requested their Georgian counterparts to send the necessary log-in credentials and are expected to start using this system in the near future.

No official evaluations about the performance of this system have yet been conducted, but informally IOM has learned from two EU Member States that they are positive about the introduction of this electronic management system and that it represents a marked improvement on the way readmission management was processed

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previously. IOM is keen to promote this system in other countries that are also implementing readmission agreements with the European Union, as an example of a good practice of managing the challenges of migration.



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Capacity building on return management

In June 2013 and April 2014, IOM organized two workshops in Tbilisi that were dedicated to assisting the Georgian authorities in developing policies for the humane return of migrants and the management of migrant holding centres

Based on the new law “On the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons” that Georgia introduced on 1 September 2014 (see page 4 of this newsletter for more information), and in line with Georgia’s commitments outlined in the Visa Liberalization Action Plan and the Agenda of the Association Agreement, Georgia has undertaken to develop policy mechanisms to facilitate return of migrants from Georgia to their countries of origin, as well as the management of migrant holding centres. In that context, IOM is offering technical assistance to the Georgian authorities to ensure policies are developed in line with best international practices and with full respect for human rights.

IOM invited officials from immigration departments of four EU Member States (Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Poland) to share with their Georgian counterparts

detailed examples of policy development and implementation, highlighting effective practices of managing return of migrants and migrant holding centres, and also demonstrating practical solutions to identified challenges in protecting migrants’ rights.

In between these two workshops, IOM organized two study visits for nine Georgian government officials to Poland, the Netherlands and Belgium. These visits were successful in showing how EU Member States deal with the return of irregular migrants in terms of policy development and managing the many intricacies of holding migrants in temporary accommodation centres prior to their departure. During the study visits IOM emphasized the operation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programmes that it operates in all three countries. The Georgian authorities have appreciated this

component and proposed to IOM to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the incorporation of voluntary return as a key element of Georgia’s policy and institutional framework for the return of foreign nationals.

These workshops and study visits will be followed in October 2014 by training delivery by a British expert, who will guide officials of the newly established Migration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the specifics of managing migrant holding centres. For this purpose, IOM Georgia will make use of the extensive standard operating procedures that the same expert developed in Armenia and Azerbaijan as part of the project “Supporting the Establishment of Effective readmission Management in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia”.



The statistics of readmission to Georgia

Thanks to data supplied by the Migration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, IOM presents an update on the statistics of readmission management in Georgia and the trends in comparison to updates that IOM released in previous newsletters

Immigration departments in the majority of EU Member States continue to make active use of the readmission agreement with Georgia and regularly submit requests for the readmission of Georgian nationals. In the course of 2012, the number of EU Member States that approached the Georgian authorities showed a marked increase and after 18 months of implementation the monthly average submission figure reached 83 applications. Comparing that to the latest available statistics (see below table), which demonstrate the updated figures 42 months into the implementation of the readmission agreement, the monthly average rate has remained stable (85 applications per month).

Germany continues to top the table when it comes to the number of readmission applications submitted, followed by Greece, France, Austria and Belgium. Over the past year, Greece and France in particular have increasingly reverted to the readmission agreement with Georgia, whereas the applications lodged by

countries such as the Netherlands and Poland (important destination countries of Georgian migrants) increased at a much slower pace.

The percentage of positive decisions on requests for readmission has further increased. In March 2012, that percentage was 90.2 per cent,

whereas by December 2012 this figure had risen to 92.5 per cent, rising even further to the current 92.6 per cent. This clearly shows that the Georgian authorities continue to be dedicated to cooperating with their interlocutors in the EU on readmitting migrants whose Georgian nationality has been confirmed.

Readmission Statistics (period: 1 March 2011 – 31 August 2014)

Requesting state	Number of requests	Approved	Declined	% of positive decisions
Germany	869	798	71	91,83
Greece	527	503	24	95,44
France	388	338	50	87,11
Austria	346	322	24	93,06
Belgium	315	304	11	96,51
Sweden	206	181	25	87,86
the Netherlands	202	168	34	83,17
Lithuania	201	201	-	100
Spain	155	148	7	95,48
Poland	145	142	3	97,93
Italy	120	108	12	90
Hungary	25	25	-	100
Cyprus	20	20	-	100
Bulgaria	13	13	-	100
Portugal	10	9	1	90
Czech Republic	8	7	1	87,5
Finland	9	9	-	100
Romania	8	8	-	100
Slovak Republic	7	7	-	100
Estonia	6	6	-	100
United Kingdom	4	4	-	100
TOTAL	3584	3320	264	92.6%

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

In Perspective: IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return from Georgia and Reintegration Programme

Since the beginning of January 2013, IOM operates the Assisted Voluntary Return from Georgia and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme. This programme offers a dignified return opportunity for foreigners, who, for various reasons and circumstances, have become stranded in Georgia without any resources to return home. Until August 2014, 115 foreigners have benefited from this programme, which consists of services ranging from pre-departure humanitarian assistance, travel arrangements to country of origin, and reintegration assistance after return home. The majority of those 115 migrants returned to Iraq (46), Nigeria (32), Cameroon (15), and Ivory Coast (14).

IOM continues to offer these AVRR services for stranded migrants and other migrants in need. IOM has embarked on negotiations with the new Migration Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia to enter into an official cooperation agreement with this Ministry for the purpose of facilitating access to the Voluntary Return programme for irregular migrants residing in Georgia who wish to return home, including those foreigners who will be accommodated in the new migrant holding centre.

Georgia introduces a new immigration code



The Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons came into force on 1st September 2014. One of the purposes of the new legislation is to effectively regulate inter alia the issues of admission and visa issuance in line with existing best practices. A particularly positive aspect of the Law is greater clarity that will be achieved by introducing easily identifiable categories of persons who need to obtain visas as well as types of visas for various purposes: tourism, business and study. The corresponding residence permits issued in-country have also been streamlined. In its interaction with the Government of Georgia IOM will continue to advocate best practice in immigration and border management to ensure that the correct balance is achieved between the facilitation of bona fide travel and the control of irregular migration

About the Project

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to the further development of effective mechanisms for the management of readmission in Georgia. This project focuses particularly on the following issues:

- Capacity building of Georgian government officials in the area of return management as well as developing policies in the field of managing migrant holding centres;
- Assist the Georgian authorities in completing the Electronic Consular Management System, including the Electronic Readmission Management Module (see the front page of this newsletter);
- Inform the Georgian population, including Georgian migrants residing abroad, of the new Consular Service Portal that will be available from 2015 onwards;
- In cooperation with a local NGO, to introduce mechanisms for the structural monitoring of the implementation of the readmission agreement, in particular its human dimension;
- Develop a national programme for the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration for foreigners residing in Georgia who wish to return to their home countries.

For more information on this project visit our website: www.informedmigration.ge

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