

IOM EEA Regional Director meets with the Interior Minister of Cyprus



On 4 February 2021 IOM's Regional Director for the European Economic Area, the European Union and NATO Mr Ola Henrikson participated in a teleconference meeting with the Minister of Interior of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Nouris. Mr Nouris informed Mr Henrikson about the migration flow situation in Cyprus and the actions undertaken by the government in order to help alleviate the pressure on the asylum system and the reception centres country wide. In addition, Mr Nouris stressed the importance of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme run by IOM in Cyprus and asked Mr Henrikson for further support as regards the programme's development and reinforcement.

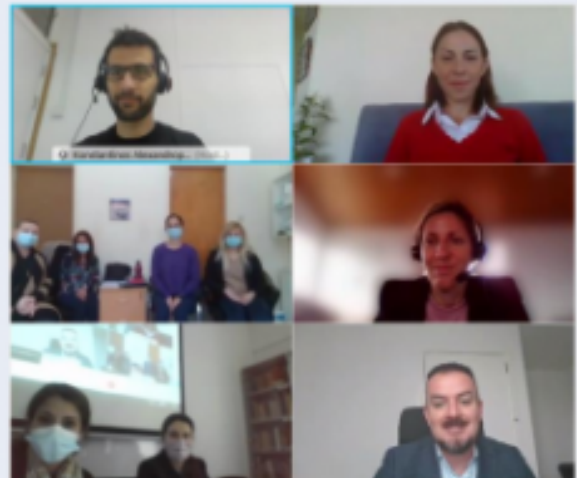
IOM's Regional Director also met virtually with the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. They both agreed to continue working on integration of unaccompanied migrant children.

IOM Cyprus agrees on the expansion of the SIL program



On 2 April 2021 IOM Cyprus and the Social Welfare Services at the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance of Cyprus have agreed on the further expansion of the program "Semi-independent Living for Unaccompanied Migrant Children" into the Limassol district with the creation of 16 new beds. In the same context, IOM has established a multi-stakeholder coordination network, including the office of the Commissioner for the Development of Mountain Communities, highlighting the central role of the communities in migrant integration efforts.

IOM informs legal guardians and promotes lessons learned in the region



With the support of the Republic of Cyprus, IOM Cyprus was invited to present progress on child protection and relevant achievements during the webinar "Young migrants in transition to adulthood", held on 28 January 2021. The main aim of the presentation was to promote lessons learned from the Transition to Adulthood program in the EEA Region.

The webinar was jointly organized by four national contact points of the European Migration Network, EMN Cyprus, EMN Greece, EMN Italy and EMN Luxembourg, and it was joined by representatives of the Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum of Greece and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies of Italy.

IOM key intervention point was that integration should start early and involve both migrants and the host community, as recognized by the National Action Plan on Integration.

As far as internal audiences are concerned, IOM organized a series of online information sessions in March with the participation of Social Welfare Officers from all Cyprus districts, providing them with the opportunity to learn more about the Semi-independent Living for Unaccompanied Migrant Children program's provisions.

AVRR information session with local NGO representatives



On 9 March IOM Cyprus organized an online information session with the participation of local NGO representatives active in the wider migration and social integration sector.

IOM had the chance to present details and the latest state of play regarding the AVRR program and explore ways of operational and outreach support that would benefit interested individuals.

From their side, attendees were able to ask questions in relation to practical elements of the program's implementation, while for many of them it was an opportunity to familiarize themselves with IOM's work. In addition, the session provided an opportunity for participants to discuss updated information regarding assistance provided to migrants island-wide, especially through the pandemic period, and exchanges views on possible areas of collaboration and strengthening of partnerships.

The AVRR program has been implemented by IOM Cyprus since 2016 and has continued incessantly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, from January to March 2021, 128 migrants of 9 different nationalities returned to their home countries. These numbers confirm an increased interest in voluntary returns, which remains a safe return option during the current pandemic conditions, contributing thus to the overall regular migration management.

IOM continues to work with local and international stakeholders in order to ensure the protection of migrants and access to information and services.

The AVRR program is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Republic of Cyprus.

IOM steps up border management support at Point of Entry



Since the beginning of 2021, IOM Cyprus has been working with the Cyprus Police on the completion of IOM's Global Survey on Impacts of COVID-19 at Points of Entry.

This global survey aims to support national immigration and border authorities in capturing the situation and needs of priority PoEs and developing evidence-based interventions while contributing to the global and regional PoE data analysis.

The survey touches upon various key aspects relevant to the COVID-19 preparedness and response at borders, including the operational and technical capacities, interagency coordination at PoEs, particularly with health authorities, and preparedness in terms of Standard Operating Procedures, equipment, logistics and more. The survey is an addition to the analysis on impacts of COVID-19 at Points of Entry that is being published by IOM on a regular basis and on a global level.

This first round of the Immigration and Border Management survey intends to capture fundamental baseline PoE data that is actionable for supporting Member States. Once specific support needs are identified, IOM stands ready to contribute with training and capacity building activities to immigration and border officers.