

# Newsletter No.1 2023

**Transnational Exchange VI project kicked off in October 2022. The three-year project offers a platform for exchange and trainings for European AVRR counsellors. The trainings include workshops, online conferences and field trips to European counselling partners. Transnational Exchange VI is implemented by the Caritas Association for the Diocese Augsburg, Germany, and is co-funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).**

## Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF) presenting Talk 2Connect

The Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF) supports European Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in their return and reintegration programs. The aim of RRF is to establish a wide community of practice including return counsellors from state agencies, non-governmental organizations as well as service partners in countries of origin. The project is funded by the European Commission (DG HOME) and implemented by ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development).

In March 2023, RRF introduced a new concept called Talk2Connect. T2C is a digital platform that liaises return counsellors with post-arrival realities and individual return stories to enable information flows between pre-departure and post-arrival actors.

In line with the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration, Talk2Connect provides AVRR counsellors with relevant and first-hand information from the ground. This insight is shared through three different formats: live webcasts, interactive webinars and podcasts.

Watch the previous webcasts [here](#) or [sign up](#) for RRF newsletter to join the next webcasts live online!



The Transnational Exchange VI project team from left: Riikka Schenk, Verena Salz and Salomé Maxeiner (Project Manager)

### COLUMN

#### In the end, it's all about people

Within this project, we talk a lot about systems, methods and helpful data but as organizers we are motivated by the people who benefit from our offers. In this column, we want to share impressions about the amazing people we meet at our events.

During our last field trip to Greece, we got to meet a lovely counsellor, middle-aged, who shared with us her journey to the AVRR counselling field. She started her career by working for two airlines in different roles for approximately ten years. This experience made her realize that she wanted to learn more about other cultures and work more closely with people. Therefore, she entered university to study anthropology.

With her new Master's degree in her hands, she continued her professional path working with people – but not quite yet with returnees. She made tourists' dreams come true as a travel designer until she discovered that she would like to work more closely with migrants – when one trip changes an entire life. Since 2019, she has been working for IOM as an AVRR counsellor making a difference every day. Working with airlines runs like a golden thread through her life – now as a counsellor when she books tickets for returnees and works inside the airport as an airport assistance. You know who you are – and you are inspiring!

# Up-coming Transnational Exchange VI events

Transnational Exchange VI is organizing a workshop with the title “New tools for AVRR counselling in Europe”. The workshop will take place in Augsburg from 2nd to 4th of May 2023 with 35 return counsellors participating from all over Europe. The registration for this event is already closed.

The next field trip will take place from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 and will be heading to Belgium. More information coming in June – stay tuned!

## Launch of new project homepage in summer 2023

A new homepage with comparable information on AVRR counselling systems in Europe and the Transnational Exchange VI project will be launched in summer 2023. An interactive map with an overview of all the European AVRR systems offers European AVRR counsellors up-to-date information about different counselling structures, AVRR actors, return numbers and top countries of return as well as financial- and reintegration support.



## Fieldtrip in Greece

Transnational Exchange VI project organized a field trip to Greece from 7th to 10th of March 2023, with six European return counsellors from Finland, Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany.

The aim of the trip was to get a good overview of the Greek immigration and assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) counselling system and to compare it with other European systems.

One unique aspect in Greece is the Open Center (OCAVRR) for returnees in Attica, run by IOM Greece. The OCAVRR provides temporary accommodation, meals and services for (vulnerable) returnees. Read more about the Greek AVRR system and the trip on our report.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



## Voluntary return to Turkey, report available online

The first workshop of Transnational Exchange VI with the topic „Voluntary return to Turkey“ took place online on the 8th of December 2022. A focus of the training was labour market reintegration as well as Turkish minorities returning to Turkey. The report from the workshop is available online:

[DOWNLOAD](#)



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