

**“Get Lost!”**

# **European Return Policies in Practice**

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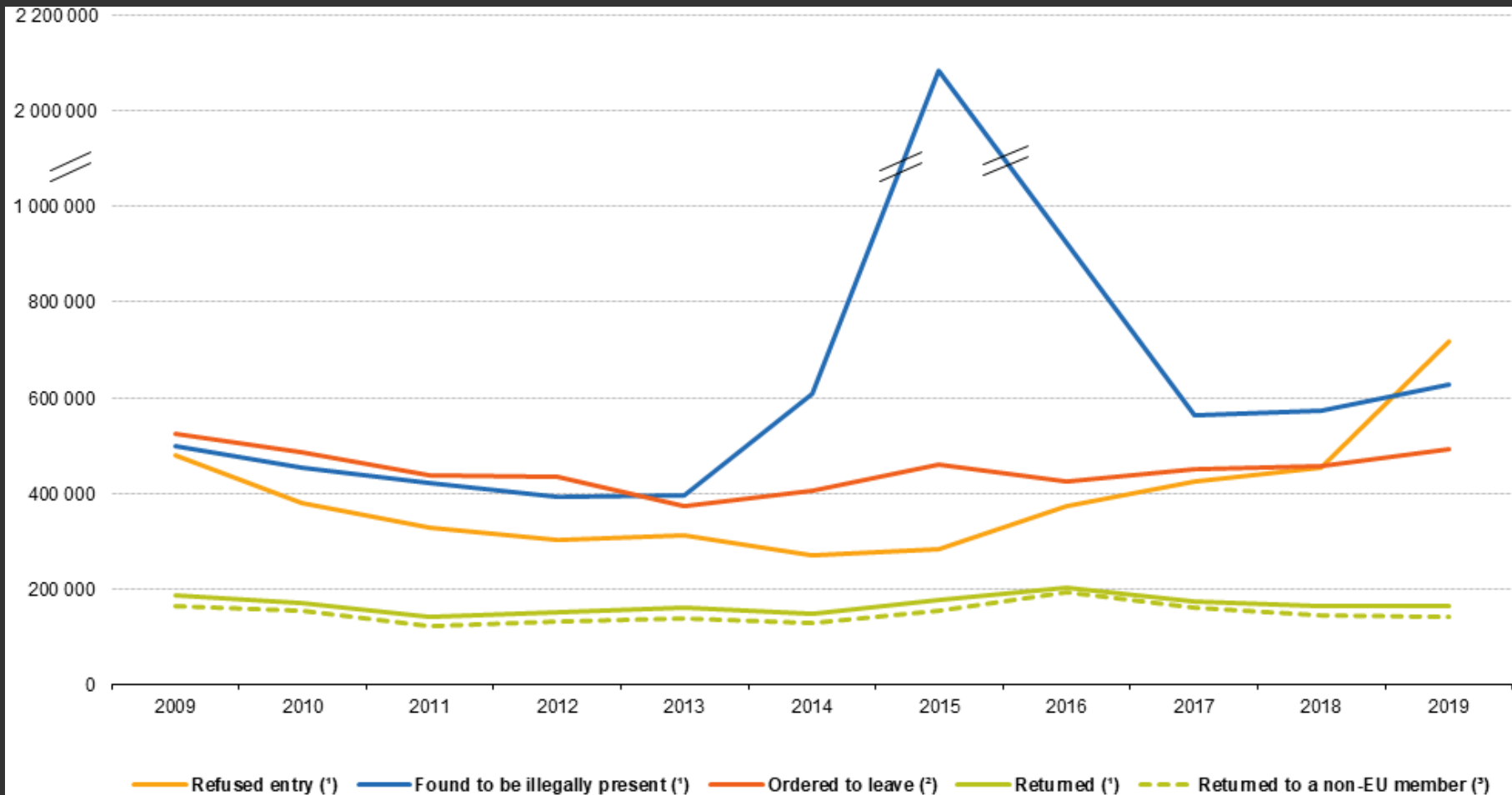
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## Why talk about return policies?

- Return policies have risen high on the EU political agenda as well as in politicians' rhetoric about migration management
- Despite an overall decrease in the number of migrants arriving in Europe, return remains a focus, with the trend for ever more restrictive policies, laws and regulations
- EU institutions, as well as Member States, are putting greater efforts into building more “effective” return policies ... and still face numerous problems in implementation



Note: coverage for the EU-27 changes over time (see footnotes). Data are provided by the Member States since reference year 2008. The y-axis is interrupted.

(\*) 2009-2012: excluding Croatia.

(²) 2011: excluding Luxembourg. 2009 and 2010: excluding Denmark. 2009-2012: excluding Croatia. 2014: excluding Austria.

(³) 2009-2012: excluding Croatia. 2014-2015: excluding Austria.

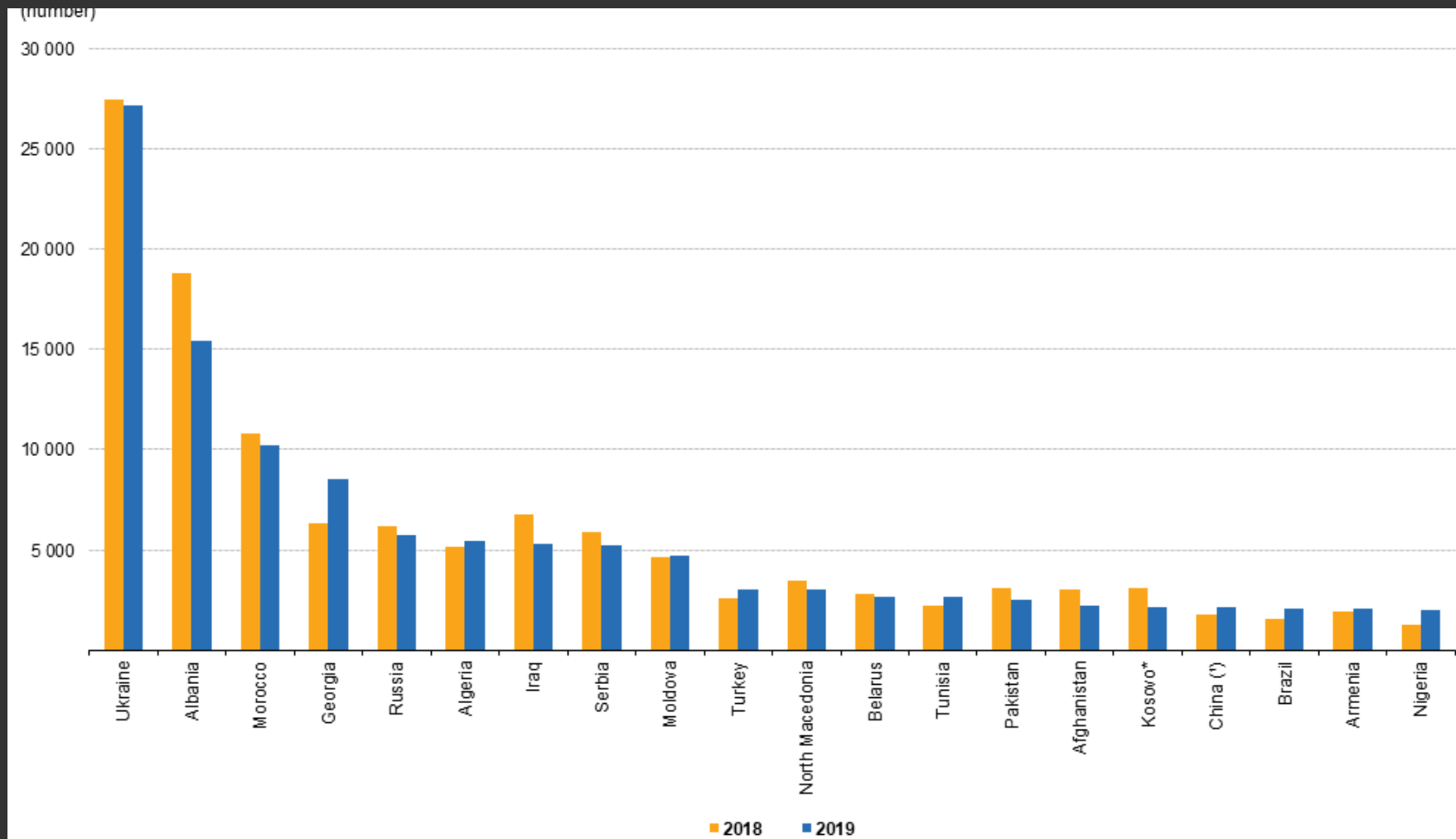
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr\_eirfs, migr\_eipre, migr\_eiord and migr\_eirtn)

## Returns from the EU 28

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total ordered to leave the EU	533,395	493,790	516,115	478,155
Total returned from an EU country (most but not all to a third country)	227,975	250,015	214,175	198,375
Total return rate	42.74%	50.63%	41.5%	41.49%

Source Eurostat, June 2019.

→ In spite of all the legal and executive efforts, the number of actual deportations de facto has not increased.



\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

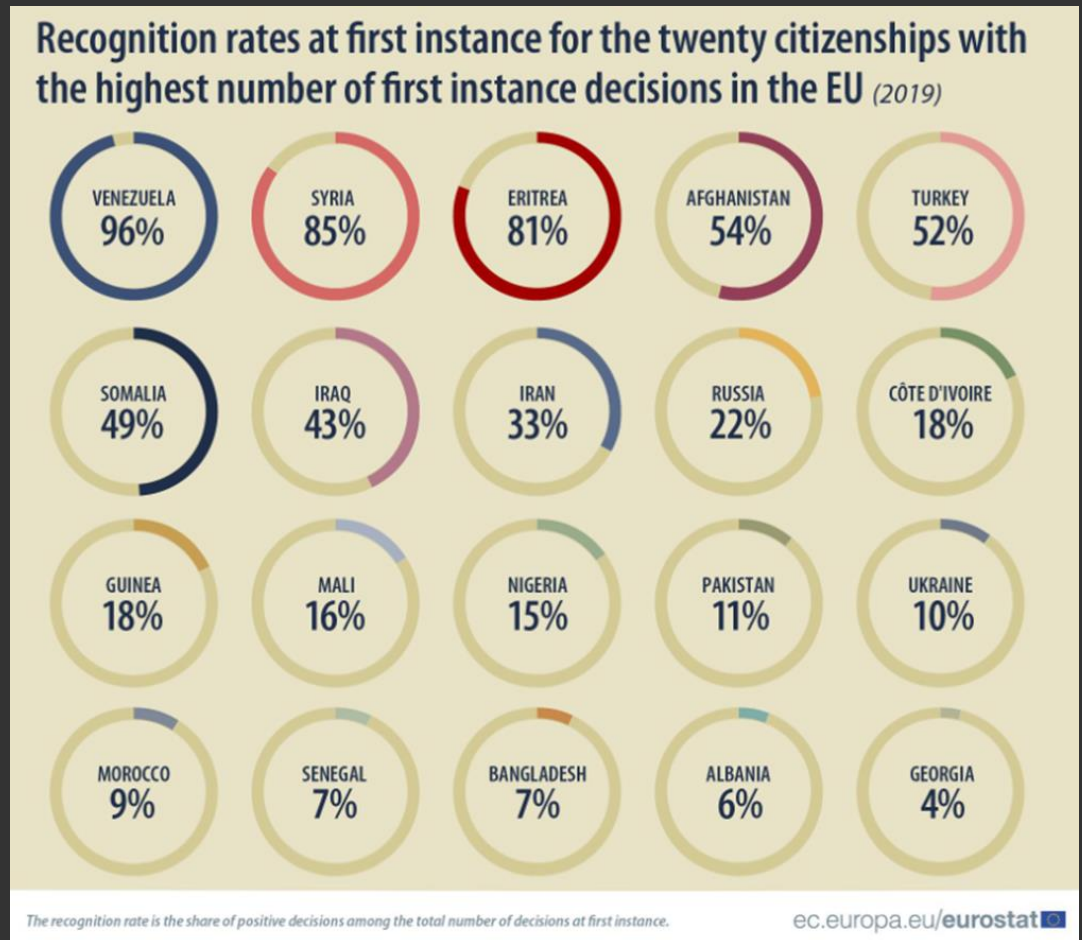
(\*) Including Hong Kong.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr\_eirtn)

## Recognition rates

In 2019: protection status for 295.800 asylum seekers

- Germany (116.200 or 39%)
- France (42.100 or 14%)
- Spain (38.500 or 13%)
- Italy (31.000 or 10%)



## Returns in 2020

- During the first half of 2020, less people were returned from the European Union, due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- (However, while the number of returns decreased, the number of push-backs at the borders increased)
- Since mid-July 2020 several EU Member States resumed returns, some assisted by Frontex

## New Pact on Migration and Asylum

*New kid on the bloc*: “Return sponsorship”  
Member State responsible for returning a person on behalf of another Member State of first entry. In case return fails, Member States must receive

Question: Unregulated bilateral influence on country of origin?

*New elder on the bloc* “Returns Coordinator”

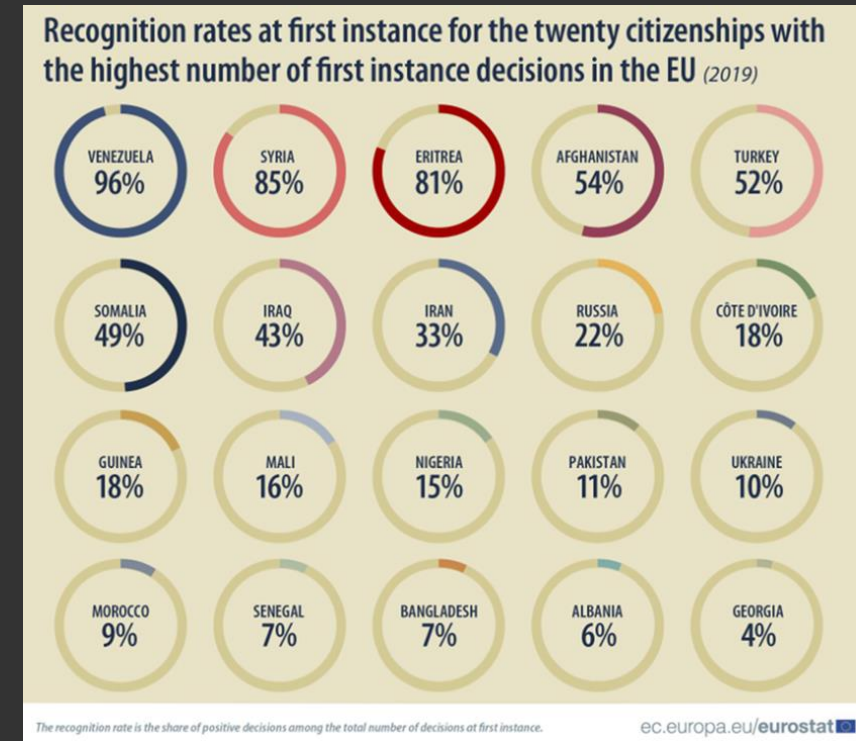




## Recognition data as a basis for selection?

The new pact is suggesting a pre-selection of asylum seekers in an extra-territorial (possibly closed) centre and relies mainly on data concerning recognition (rates at first instance?)

For citizens with rates underneath 20%, the 12 weeks scan is applicable and return shall be enforced no later than 12 weeks after negative conclusion.



## For example: Afghanistan

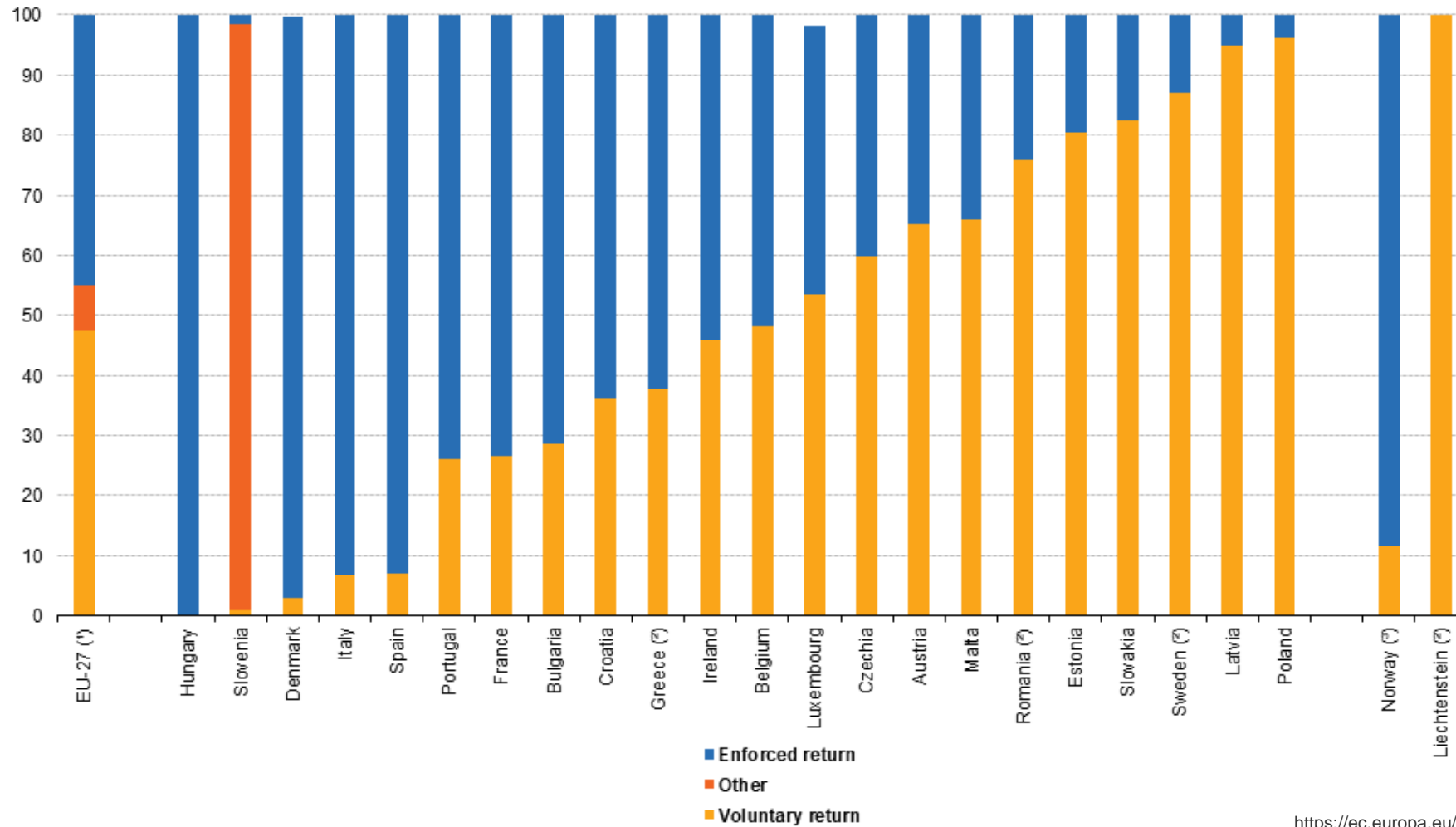
- Readmission agreement since 2016
- Afghan nationals are among the highest group seeking international protection. However, Afghan nationals also faced the largest variation in recognition rates (**from 6% to 98%**) (ECRE 2019)
- Ten countries carry out forced deportation to Afghanistan: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Greece and Switzerland (NOAS 2018)

## „Voluntary“ return

- While forced return is not “effective”, efforts to raise the numbers of “voluntary” returns are being enforced: Between 2014 and 2018, 116.723 persons received assistance from EU funds to return “voluntarily” to their country of origin

Non-EU citizens returned outside the EU-27 or EFTA countries, by type of return, 2019

(%)



Note: Germany, Cyprus, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Finland, not available.

(\*) Based on available data for EU-27 Member States. Includes 2018 data for Greece, Romania and Sweden.

(†) 2018.

(‡) 2017.

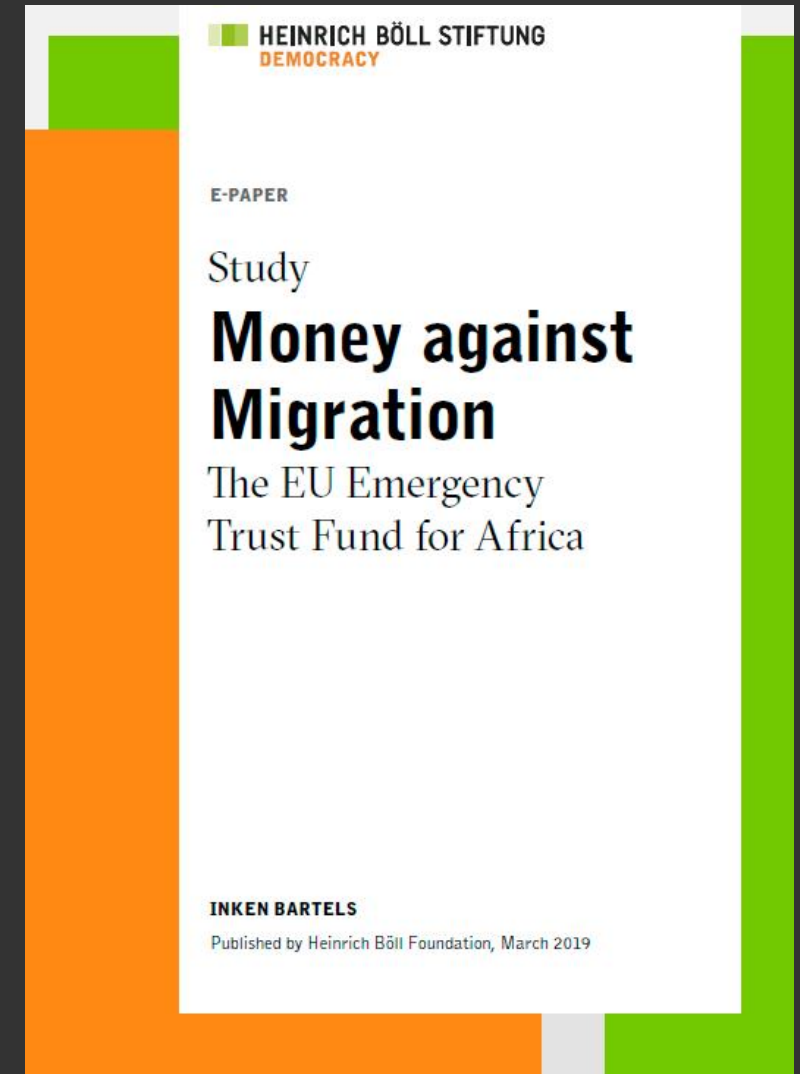
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:EU\\_citizens\\_returned\\_outside\\_27\\_or\\_EFTA\\_countries,\\_by\\_type\\_of\\_return.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:EU_citizens_returned_outside_27_or_EFTA_countries,_by_type_of_return.png)

## Financing for “voluntary” return

- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)
- European Return Fund
- Facility on Sustainable and Dignified Return and Reintegration in support of the Khartoum Process (EUTF Contribution of EUR 55.000.000, implementing partner IOM)
- European Readmission Capacity Building Facility (EURCAP)
- Germany: REAG/GARP (Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany/Government Assisted Repatriation Programme); partly financed by AMIF

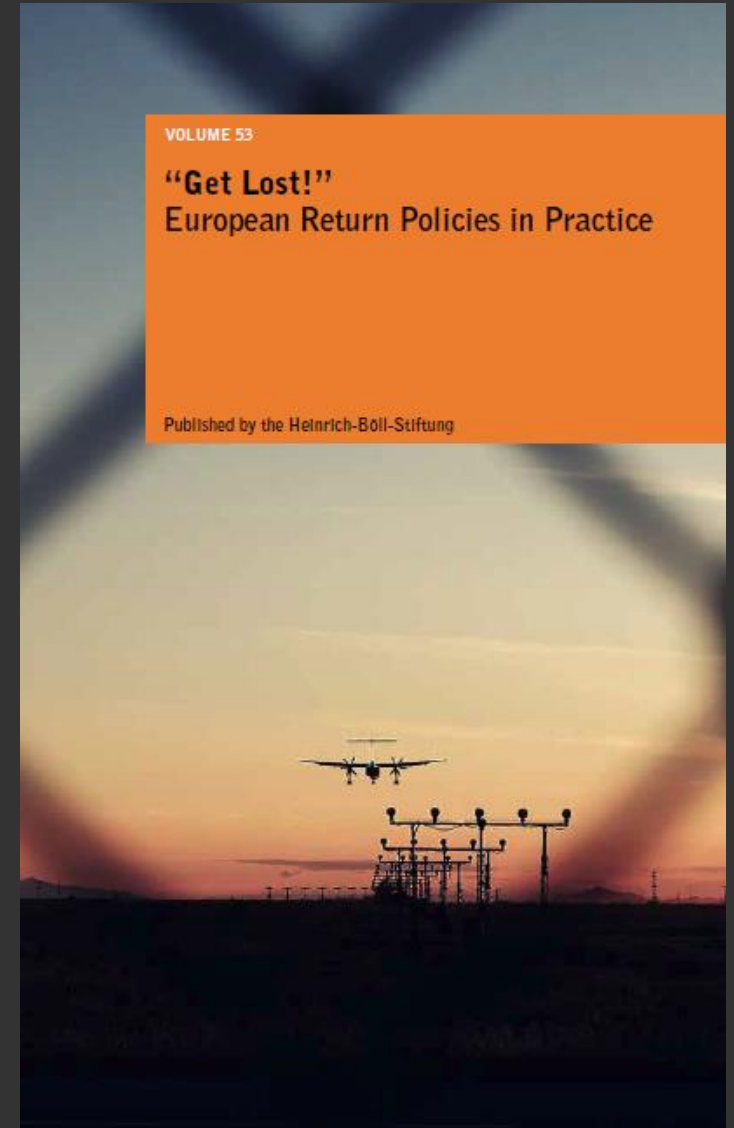
## EUTF

- 10% of funding for “improving cooperation on return and sustainable reintegration” of migrants from Europe
- 1% for “advancing legal migration and mobility possibilities”



## Why this publication in English?

- Change of Perspectives: What happens to deportees or “voluntary” returnees in their countries of origin?
- Shed light on the at times dramatic realities for deportees (Afghanistan and Syria)
- Insights on realities of reintegration efforts (Tunisia, Senegal and Kosovo)/ returnees from Germany and else





**Migration as  
the normal not  
to be stopped  
but regulated  
in a humane  
way and in a  
triple-win  
manner**





## What we say is a clear NO to forced returns into unsafe situations!

- Deportations to Afghanistan which are executed by different European Member States, clearly ignore the situation on the ground and severely endanger the lives of the individuals
- The discussions over potential safe returns to Syria equally ignore the situation on the ground and threats and dangers to the individuals

# Current reintegration programmes need improvements

## Main questions:

- How voluntary are these returns when the alternatives are either forced return or becoming “illegal”?
- Are the current reintegration efforts suitable for meeting the individual and structural challenges of return?

**Thanks you for your  
attention!**