

REPATRIATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**A comparative overview of the repatriation policies and practices of other EU Member
States**

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1. Introduction

Return migration is a complex process which is determined by various factors. Even in the case of voluntary return, migration is not only a personal issue, but also a decision which has to be explained by institutional and social factors in the country of destination. In addition to the individual social network in the home country, the social, political and economical aspects may have a crucial impact on the decision to return. In a number of countries institutional arrangements have been made to facilitate the return to the country of origin.

This report is trying to summarize and compare repatriation support policies of different countries and to draw conclusions and suggestions for the Estonian repatriation policy. In addition to European Union Member States, Switzerland, Russia and Philippines were analyzed in regard to repatriation policies and practices.

The information used for this report has been obtained from the web pages, publications of different governmental and private institutions and their responses to the inquiries sent to them.

Structure of the study

The study starts with some statistics about the number of people returned to their country of origin and supported by repatriation support in different countries. Thereafter, the reasons for introducing repatriation policies and providing support as well as the legal basis, if available, are presented.

The target group in general is closely connected to the reasons of introducing a repatriation policy. The requirements for receiving repatriation support are therefore presented in chapter 5.

The sixth part gives an overview about the forms of support which can be distinguished in general supports such as the supply with information or the tax-free import of belongings and

vehicles, supports facilitating integration and more elaborated offers which are often linked to financial assistance and social welfare services.

The following part sets forth country-specific approaches to organizing and financing repatriation support. In addition to the missions in foreign countries and technical communication opportunities of the non-governmental organizations more and more attention is paid to supply with information and counselling. Rather than completeness of information the presentation of interesting and innovative measures is the focus in this study.

Former experiences, successes as well as failures and abuses, and prevention measures are described in part 8. As far as known, future plans of different countries are summarized in part 9. Final conclusions and suggestions for the Estonian repatriation policy are drawn and made in the last section.

2. Statistics about return migrants and repatriation support

More than half of the analyzed countries offer repatriation support in any kind.

The countries who do not have special provisions for return support are, with the exception of Hungary, Western European countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Although they might not have special provisions for this type of immigrants, in some of these countries repatriates are covered by general support offers.

Due to the different organization of return support and the different dates referred to, this statistics is not aimed at comparisons, but at obtaining an insight in the volume of return support.

Tab.1. Total population and number of supported repatriates in different countries

	Population (total)¹	Supported repatriates
Estonia	1,342,000	879 (2000-2008)
Lithuania	3,384,800	around 150 families every year
Finland	5,311,211	8,500 (2006/2007)
Ireland	4,239,848	900 (since 2001; only one programme)
Poland	38,115,967	3,596 (2001-2007)
Germany	82,244,000	795,400 (between 1997-2005) ²
Italy	59,131,287	50,000 (every year, without support)
Latvia	2,286,700	497 (between 2005 and the 2nd half of 2007)
Swiss Confederation	7,591,400	3,635 (cases, between 1999 and 2007)

¹ World Economic Outlook Database; [IMF](#), April 2007

² Federal Statistic Office Germany (Destatis)

Between 2000 and 2008 879 **Estonians** and ethnic Estonians were supported in their return by the Estonian Migration Foundation. All together the support corresponds to a sum of 8, 540, 988 Estonian kroons. From 1997 to 2000 additional financial support was given for the Seto repatriation programme^{3,4}.

Around 150 families come every year to **Lithuania** in the framework of its repatriates program.⁵

In recent years (2006 and 2007) around 8,500 Finns have repatriated to **Finland**. During the past 15 years Finland repatriated over 30,000 Ingrian Finns mainly from Russia and Estonia. According to the information given by the Finnish embassies approximately 30 Ingrian Finns submit their application every month. It is estimated that there are at the moment nearly 10,000 Ingrian Finns who are willing to move to Finland as soon as they are allowed to (see special requirements in chapter 5).⁶

According to the Irish Central Statistics Office over 107,000 Irish emigrants returned to **Ireland** since 2003, among those 16,200 in the last year. The vast majority of returning migrants do not request state assistance in making arrangements for their return. The Irish Government supports more than 180 emigrant services organizations across Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada and Southern Africa. Two organizations based in Ireland work especially in the field of return support. The "Safe Home Programme" which supports especially older emigrants has supported approximately 900 older Irish emigrants in securing housing in Ireland since 2001. The Crosscare Migrant Project is an advising and informing organization.⁷

Between 2001 and 2007 3,596 persons arrived to **Poland** on the basis of repatriation visas. The number of persons supported decreased gradually from 1,000 in 2001 to 281 in 2007.⁸

In **Germany** the amount of returnees from former German territories decreased continuously in the last years. While in 1997 still around 130, 000 late repatriates returned to Germany⁹, in 2008 only 4,664 applications were successful.¹⁰

³ Return of Estonians from former Estonian territory now belonging to the territory of the Russian Federation.

⁴ Interview with Mrs. Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 12.03.2009

⁵ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian European Migration Network (EMN) National Contact Point (NCP), 19.11.2008

⁶ Reply of Arja Saarto, Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 21.01.2009

⁷ Reply of Sinead Ryan, Irish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 27.01.2009

⁸ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCPs, 21.11.2008

Since the Italian Unification in 1861, 36 million Italians left **Italy**. Actually almost 4 million of Italian citizens are living abroad and according to estimations there are about 60 million ethnic Italians without Italian citizenship. Nowadays about 50 thousand Italians leave, preferably to Germany, Argentina and Switzerland, and the same number return to Italy every year.¹¹

Between 2005 and the second half of 2007 497 persons returned to **Latvia** as repatriates for permanent residence.¹²

In the **Swiss Confederation** 3,635 cases were supported between 1999 and 2007. This statistic refers to persons who have lived abroad for at least five years and for who the Swiss citizenship law applies.¹³

In **Slovenia** no statistical data is kept about supported repatriates.¹⁴ According to some assessments, half a million Slovenians reside outside of the country, with some 60,000 of those holding Slovenian citizenship.¹⁵

⁹ Web page of the Federal Statistical Office Germany

¹⁰ Web page of the German Federal Administrative Court

¹¹ Reply of Antonio Ricci, Italian EMN NCPs, 29.01.2009

¹² Web page of the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

¹³ Reply of Rahel Schweizer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 16.02.2009

¹⁴ Reply of Natalija Toplak, Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad, 05.12.2008

¹⁵ Slovenian Government, Communication Office, News 11 April 2006

3. The reasoning for repatriation policies

The reasoning for repatriation policies are various and may depend on the history of a country as well as its size and composition of population. The introduction of repatriation policies is not only meant to support the individual in its well-being and future plans, but is also a reaction to the countries' needs in regard to the consequences of the demographic change.

Due to deportations, acts of war and the Holocaust numerous countries suffered losses of population. While a number of people were murdered, some remained in a foreign country due to their resettlement or new demarcations.

During the last century the former Soviet Union Member States were mostly affected by changes in the population structure. After the breaking down of the Soviet Union in 1991, new migration patterns arose in its former member states. In addition to the exiled citizens exiled during the Soviet times, ethnic groups began to depart. The entry to the European Union opened the door for free movement of labour and resulted in further loss of labour force. Furthermore declining birth rates and the connected demographic changes contribute to an additional demand on labour force.

Although not having been former member states of the Soviet Union, Germany and Finland were also concerned with the expansion of the Russian Federation. Both have supported the repatriation of countrymen living on the Soviet Union territory. Finland additionally experienced strong emigration to Sweden.

Speaking about repatriates, some countries distinguish between repatriates who are living on foreign territory as victims of war, resettlement and deportations and repatriates who emigrated voluntary for working and other reasons during the last decades.

In general the reasons for repatriation can be divided in four categories which are demographical reasons in general, lack of labour force in particular, moral obligation and the

attraction of financial investments connected with the use of experiences gained in foreign countries for the reason of innovation.

The motives for introducing repatriation support in **Estonia** are mostly demographic and cultural. The small number of Estonians makes every one important for the nation.¹⁶

According to the principles of migration support of the Estonian Migration Foundation the goal of the repatriation assistance is to support the preservation of the Estonian nation and its culture and to ensure a well-integrated working population.¹⁷

3.1 Demographical reasons and lack of labour force

The demographical change caused by a lower birth rate and a higher life expectation has an influence on the age distribution of the society and its consequences. The decline of population as well as an increasing number of retired people results in a demand for labour force. The aim is to attract all highly qualified people, but also low skilled workers are required.

The basic objective of the **Russian** Repatriation Program is the “compensation for natural loss of population in the country as a whole and its individual regions by attracting immigrants for permanent residence in the Russian Federation.” The “regions for resettlement” are divided in three main categories (A B C) as there are regions of category A which are “strategically important for Russian frontier regions, with a typical decline in population”, regions of category B where “significant investment projects are implemented which require a mass attraction of migrants due to the absence of a respective labour force supply on the local labour market” and regions of category C “with sustainable social and economic development, where in the course of the last three years and more there was a reduction of population and (or) migration flow-out”.¹⁸

In **Lithuania**, where a clear distinction is made between repatriates (mainly people deported during the Soviet period) and return migrants (labour migrants who left Lithuania after the

¹⁶ Reply of Aho Rebas, counselor of Estonian Ministry of Population, 19.02.2009

¹⁷ Estonian Migration Foundation, Principles of migration support, 17.02.2009

¹⁸ Decree of the President of the RF from 22 June, 2006 No. 637 On Measures of Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the RF

independence and are willing to return back to Lithuania), the negative demographic situation as well as the demand on labour force are important reasons for the introduction of return support.¹⁹

Although the problem of brain drain is mentioned in a number of national policy planning documents, including the National Development Plan, there does not exist a centralized governmental policy in **Latvia** yet.²⁰

Due to the lack of young and qualified labour force **Bulgaria** implemented a program which aims to attract Bulgarian citizens and persons of Bulgarian origin living abroad with special emphasis on young and qualified persons.²¹

Finland is already experienced in return support due to the repatriation of Ingrian Finns during the last 15 years. Whereas the past supports can be understood as a moral obligation²², Finland orients its migration policy towards the compensation of labour shortage.²³ Furthermore, Finland hopes to benefit from the network of expatriate Finns in regard to its commercial, cultural and political life. Finland hopes for a brain regain due to the knowledge and skills repatriated Finns learnt abroad.²⁴

3.2 Moral obligation and family reunification

Nevertheless, for some countries repatriation support is supposed to be a remedy for this group of emigrants who are not able to return on their own. This applies particularly to those repatriates who are victims of forced migration due to the Holocaust or deportations in Soviet times.

¹⁹ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

²⁰ Reply of Dana Heidberga, Secretariat of the Special Assignment Minister for Social Integration of the Republic of Latvia, 31.10.2008

²¹ The Bulgarian Government's National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria 2008/2015

²² <http://www.inkeri.com/english.html>

²³ [Government of Finland's](#) Migration Policy Programme. Government Resolution 19.10.2006

²⁴ Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2006-2011

The **Polish** state feels responsible for the repatriation of persons with Polish origins who were, for political reasons, unable to leave the former Soviet Union. For those who remained in the East, especially in the Asian part of the former Soviet Union, as a result of deportations, forced displacements and other national or political persecutions, the repatriation policies of the Polish state is a response to hopes and dreams on return. In addition, repatriation was recognized as a permanent element of Polish migration policy, in the framework of which the settlement in Poland of persons with Polish origins/Polish nationality was supported.²⁵

In the same way **Slovenia** mentions moral aspect and the purposes associated with historical background as the prevailing reasons.

Although repatriation support in **Ireland** is available for emigrants and their families in general, the Irish state especially addresses its repatriation policies to vulnerable and elderly returnees. Most of the Irish emigrants are living in the United Kingdom.

In former times repatriation took place in the **Czech Republic** as a reaction towards victims of extraordinary hardships such as the Second World War and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. Other reasons include the wish of the returnees return due to economic reasons, family reunification and experiences with nationality-based intolerance. Repatriation was organized on repeated requests of Czech communities abroad.²⁶ The current main concern of the Czech Republic is family reunification.²⁷

In the same way **Romania** adopted a few legal acts which mainly concern the repatriation of those who are victims of trafficking and children.²⁸

Germany distinguishes between Germans who have emigrated in recent years and decades and repatriates whose ancestors emigrated in past centuries or who lived in former German territories to the east of the Oder or Neisse rivers. Whereas return support for the first group is meant as an instrument for controlling migration, measures for repatriates focus primarily on addressing the late consequences of the Second World War. Due to the current need for

²⁵ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 21.11.2008

²⁶ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

²⁷ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

²⁸ Reply of Emil Niculescu, Romanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

skilled workers and specialists additionally efforts are taken to attract qualified German workers.²⁹

In the case of the **Philippines** repatriation takes place as a reintegration program for returning Philippines who worked overseas in the framework of an organized labour migration program. The integration program aims to reintegrate the migrant workers into the socio-economic reality of the country of origin and facilitate particularly the economic integration as not all returnees have sufficient savings for covering the whole period of retirement. In the same way the psycho-social integration of the repatriates is supported.³⁰

3.3 Attraction of business, capital and innovation

Returnees who gained experience in a foreign country can be considered as a brain regain for the country of origin. Although it is not mentioned as an explicit reason for the introduction of repatriation policies the gain in form of new ideas and the connection to other countries economies is recognized and valued. The **Philippines**³¹ and **Finland**³² for example stress the value of experiences of the repatriates.

Furthermore, some countries with economical and structural deficits hope for financial investments. The interest in such developmental help is particularly mentioned by **Cyprus**.

²⁹ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 03.12.2009

³⁰ Tomas, Patricia A. Sto. : Protecting Migrant Workers

³¹ Web page of the National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers (NRCO)

³² Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2006-2011

4. Legislation

Repatriation programs are also known as the exercise of the “right of return”. The term “right of return” refers to the principle in international law that members of an ethnic or national group have a right to immigration and naturalization into the country that is considered to be that group’s home country by the destination country, independent of prior personal citizenship in that country.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) article 13 states that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country“.³³ This thought is sometimes reflected in special consideration in a country’s immigration laws.

In the analyzed countries repatriation policies are what concerns the legal level regulated in different stages. In the majority of countries where repatriation support exists, repatriation is at least in some regard based on legal acts. While in a number of countries particular repatriation acts exists, in some countries repatriation is regulated by Acts referring to citizenship and aliens issues. In some countries repatriation policies are a part of national strategies and programmes. No legal basis exists yet in some countries where repatriation policies are in their beginning. On the other hand, in some countries repatriation policies are regulated by law although in practice no cases have occurred yet.

The right of every ethnic **Estonian** and Estonian citizen to settle in Estonia is provided by Section 36 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia.³⁴ In addition two internal documents of the Estonian Migration Foundation ”Application and Procedure for Migration Support“ and ”Principles of Migration Support“ exist and repatriation is a part of the Estonian Programme of Compatriots. The first Programme of Compatriots was implemented in years 2004-2008 and was financed from the state budget through the Ministry of Education and partly (in the last 2 years) by the Office of the Minister of Population Affairs. A second

³³ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art.13

³⁴ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

programme was adopted in 2009 for the years 2009-2013. The second programme, where repatriation support is also included, is implemented by the Minister of Population in cooperation with other ministries like the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Ministry of Culture and Education, the Estonian church and the Estonian Migration Foundation. In addition to repatriation the support of culture, education, history, religion and consular issues of Estonians living abroad are the main goals.³⁵

In the Republic of **Slovenia** the Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], No 43/2006*) foresees the possibility of repatriation of Slovenians which is organized and financed by the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians who live in countries where serious economic or political crisis situations have occurred, and where Slovenians are exposed to various pressures or for Slovenians who can contribute to the development and recognition of Slovenia. The Act also regulates the procedure of such repatriation and the subsequent care of returnees. On a smaller scale, repatriation is additionally regulated in resolutions and sectoral laws.³⁶

In **Poland** repatriation is regulated by *the Repatriation Act of 9 November 2000*. The Act specifies the conditions expected to be fulfilled by the repatriation visa applicant and extended the catalogue of financial assistance offered to repatriates and to relevant local governments.³⁷

Slovakia has not established any repatriation services yet, but has realized the need for repatriation policies due to the lack of labour force. Slovakia is still in preparation for a corresponding legislation and implementation.

In the **Russian Federation** a *National Programme on Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the Russian Federation* was introduced in 2006, drawn up by the Decree of the President of the RF No. 637 from 22 June 2006. The programme describes the goals and supporting measures of the current repatriation policy.³⁸

³⁵ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

³⁶ Reply of Sonja Ostojic, Slovenian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

³⁷ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 21.11.2008

³⁸ Nozhenko, Maria (2006): Motherland Is Calling You! Motives Behind and Prospects for the New Russian Policy on Compatriots Abroad.

The Czech Republic does not have any repatriation policy set by the law.³⁹ Assistance to the compatriots resettled to the **Czech Republic** has always been provided according to governmental resolutions. Resettlement of compatriots is carried out under the Alien Residence Act (Act No. 123/1992 Coll) which considers compatriots in the same way as any other aliens. The preferential treatment of compatriots currently applied, as compared with the treatment of other aliens, is also based on a governmental resolution and on the related internal guidelines of the governmental agencies concerned.⁴⁰ Important resolutions are No. 1248 of 1 November 2006 which regulates the procedure of Complete Relocation of Persons with Proven Czech Origin (Compatriots) Living in Kazakhstan⁴¹ and the Czech Government Resolution No. 72 of 17 January 1996 on the principles of the Government of the Czech Republic policy in relation to the relocation of aliens with proven Czech origin (compatriots) living abroad in accordance with the programme of relocation of compatriots from distance and menaced territories.⁴² Most of the other resolutions deal with earmarking finances from the state budget for the repatriation programs.⁴³

Although **Latvia** began to deal officially with migration issues in April 1991, a law on repatriation was adopted, due to financial reasons, only in September 1995.⁴⁴ Since then the Latvian Repatriation Law has been modified and completed. The purpose of this law is to create basic conditions and guarantees so that persons of Latvian or Livonian origin may take up permanent residence in Latvia; to promote the voluntary repatriation of other ethnicities to their ethnic homeland; and to specify the functions of State and local government institutions in relation to repatriation and emigration.⁴⁵

As a response to the demographic decline the **Lithuanian** Government adopted the Economic migration regulation strategy in 2007. This strategy seeks to motivate and support Lithuanian citizens to return to Lithuania. Different ministries and institutions form the Economic migration commission that implements the strategy.⁴⁶

³⁹ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

⁴⁰ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

⁴¹ Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (2007): 2006 Status Report on Migration in the Czech Republic

⁴² Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (2004): 2003 Status Report on Migration in the Czech Republic

⁴³ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

⁴⁴ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

⁴⁵ Web page of the Cross-Border Cooperation

⁴⁶ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

Romania adopted a few legal acts for setting up the background for repatriation of Romanian citizens, especially those who are victims of trafficking. An example is the National Action Plan 2008-2010 of 27.08.2008 for the implementation of National Strategy against trafficking of persons for the period 2006-2010 (Official Monitor no.660/19.09.2008) which is meant to strengthen the cooperation with the Romanian diplomatic missions in the destination countries, with the view of identifying and repatriation in good conditions of victims of trafficking. Also, the National Strategy of 13.08.2008 in the field of protection and promotion of the rights of the child 2008-2013 (Official Monitor no. 646/10.09.2008) sets as a priority for the police to unconditionally cooperate for identification of the children who are to come back to Romania by repatriation.⁴⁷

The **Slovak** government adopted the *Strategy of State Policy of Care for Slovaks living Abroad* in September 2008, but has not introduced any law yet.⁴⁸

The **Bulgarian** Government adopted the National strategy on migration and integration 2008-2015 in 2008 which is meant to attract Bulgarian citizens and persons of Bulgarian origin from abroad to settle permanently in the country. Additionally a new and contemporary policy for the acceptance of third country nationals shall be implemented.⁴⁹

In the **Finnish** legislation, Finnish nationality is a central factor in determining the legal rights of Finnish expatriates. Special provisions concerning former Finnish citizens or foreign nationals of Finnish origin exist solely in the Aliens Act and the Nationality Act.⁵⁰ Under special legal provisions, Ingrian-Finnish returnees and other persons of Finnish descent resident in the territory of the former Soviet Union have been able to move to Finland in the early 1990s⁵¹.

In **Germany** repatriation support is mainly based on the “Federal Expellee Law” (“*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*”, BVFG) which is a German federal law of 19 May, 1953 and regulates the rights of German refugees from Central and Eastern Europe and defines who are considered expellees.

⁴⁷ Reply of Mr. Emil Niculescu, Romanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

⁴⁸ Reply of Sona Andrasova, Slovak EMN NCP, 20.11.2008

⁴⁹ Government's National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria

⁵⁰ Finland's Government Migration Policy Programme. Government Resolution 19.10.2006

⁵¹ Web page of the Finnish Ministry of the Interior

On the basis of Article 27 of Law 40/2006 of 14 December on the Statute of **Spanish** Citizenship Abroad the Spanish Returns Office was set up in April 2007. The new Royal Decree 8/2008 of 11 January regulates the health coverage for Spaniards returning to Spain and living abroad. Aid for extraordinary situations of need of Spanish returnees are covered by the Royal Decree 1493/2007 of 12 November.⁵²

Italy does not have an official repatriation policy regulated by the law. Nevertheless specific provisions for acquiring the Italian citizenship are foreseen in the "Law on citizenship acquisition"⁵³. Measures for assisting return were implemented by the regional administrations and in the framework of the Annual Flow Decree regulating admission of foreign workers a specific quota in favour of citizens from Argentina that could claim Italian origin has been introduced.⁵⁴

In **Austria** no general provisions for repatriation support exist, but a small number of programmes for the return of scientist have been established.⁵⁵

Although they do not have any special provisions aimed at repatriating their citizens and ethnic descendants abroad in some countries the costs for language courses are covered or subsidized and general provisions related to social welfare are applied. This is the case for example in **Denmark**⁵⁶ and the **United Kingdom**⁵⁷.

The most important legal regulations related to **Swiss** citizens living abroad are stated in the Federal Constitution Art. 40. The article specifies the Federal State's rights and obligations in regard to Swiss citizens living abroad concerning the exercise of political rights, military and alternative service and access to social welfare services.⁵⁸

The **Philippine** Migrant Workers' Protection Act of 1995 (R.A. 8042) specifically provides for legal, consular and repatriation assistance to all Filipino migrants, whether in regular or irregular status, who are facing problems abroad. This law also establishes an inter-agency

⁵² Reply of Montserrat Lopez Cobo, Spanish EMN NCP, 12.11.2008

⁵³ Law on citizenship acquisition (Law no. 91/1992)

⁵⁴ Reply of Antonio Ricci, Italian EMN NCP, 29.01.2009

⁵⁵ Reply of Maria Temesvari, Austrian EMN NCP, 09.12.2008

⁵⁶ Reply of Christian Pihlkjær Olesen, Danish EMN NCP, 20.11.2008

⁵⁷ Reply of Sarah Poppleton, United Kingdoms EMN NCP, 23.01.2009

⁵⁸ Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation

mechanism for cooperation on policy-making and actual assistance between and among key government agencies dealing with migrant Filipinos.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Republic Act No. 8042 Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995

5. Target groups

Repatriation support is in general connected to basic requirements which have to be fulfilled by the applicant. The main, and in some countries also the only, criteria for receiving return support are:

- the proof of ethnic origin (or citizenship) as well as
- the proof of having lived abroad and
- the intention to live permanently in the country of origin.

Some countries set additional requirements as:

- financial hardship,
- minimum duration of permanent residence abroad,
- language skills,
- health tests,
- minimum age,
- involvement in cultivating own culture abroad,
- individual potential to contribute to the country of origin's development,
- clean police record,
- proof of accommodation,
- proof of having been a victim of the consequences of war,
- proof of the means of subsistence.

Some countries tie the repatriation support with the situation in the country of living. In case of a serious economic or political crisis repatriation support is provided (e.g. Slovenia).

In **Estonia** an applicant for return support must be an Estonian citizen or an ethnic Estonian who holds an Estonian residence permit and who:

- has emigrated from Estonia at least 10 years prior or was born in a foreign country;
- has returned to Estonia permanently within the last six months and has registered his/her place of residence in the Population Register of the Republic of Estonia;

- has preserved a connection with Estonian culture, respects the Estonian state and its constitutional order;
- due to their economic and social situation, are in need for financial support in order to return to Estonia.

The **Estonian** Migration Foundation has the right to make exceptions if the applicant indicates extraordinary circumstances for this.⁶⁰ Non-financial support in form of information and bureaucratic issues is also provided for those repatriates who do not fulfil these criteria.⁶¹

The **Slovenian** Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad (adopted in 2006) encompasses apart from Slovenians with Slovenian citizenship and Slovenians without Slovenian citizenship, returnees without Slovenian citizenship and without status. According to some assessments, half a million Slovenians reside outside of the country, with some 60,000 of those holding Slovenian citizenship. Even those who do not depend on financial support are included in the target group gaining from reintegration support.⁶² However a primary prerequisite for getting return support for Slovenians is a serious economic or political crisis in the country living abroad or holding a position which contributes to the development and visibility of the Republic of Slovenia.⁶³

The eligibility of a person for repatriation is also based on the opinions and proposals of the Slovenian diplomatic and consular representations, the Slovenian expatriate organizations in Slovenia and abroad and Slovenian Roman Catholic missions or missions of other religious communities. Furthermore, potential repatriates must not have been sentenced to imprisonment exceeding one year for a criminal offence, for which the offender is prosecuted ex officio. The status of a repatriated person is limited to the duration of 15 months. After the expiry of this period, a person may not reapply for the repatriation status.⁶⁴

The non-existence of a precise and consistent definition of “compatriots abroad” in its official publications (laws, guidelines, resolutions, declarations) is a serious deficit of the **Russian**

⁶⁰ Estonian Migration Foundation (2008): Principles of migration support, approved with the 08.12.2008 decision of the Council

⁶¹ Interview with Martin Eber, Estonian Migration Foundation, 26.02.2009

⁶² Slovenian Government Communication Office, News 11 April 2006

⁶³ Reply of Sonja Ostojic, Slovenian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

⁶⁴ Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad

Federation in regard to its repatriation policy. Relying on the definition for the “compatriots abroad”, given in the Federal Law of 1999, hypothetically the implementation of the Russian State Program should cover the overwhelming part of the former USSR’s population. Although a precise definition of compatriots is missing, the law provided for a certain mechanism of the precise identification of the target group namely by issuing special documents (certificates) of compatriots.⁶⁵ According to a publication of Radio Free Europe repatriates are also to be tested for AIDS, tuberculosis, or drug use.⁶⁶

In the **Czech Republic** two groups of returnees exist. The first (1) are the returnees who were resettled under organized repatriation, the second (2) are individually repatriated persons. Repatriation from Ukraine and Belarus was organized from 1990 to 1993 ultimately by the ministry of economic policy and development. As the repatriation concerned Czechs living in the area affected by the Chernobyl disaster, the repatriation was in fact a humanitarian evacuation. Repatriation from Kazakhstan (1994–2001 and 2007) was organized by the Ministry of the Interior. Individual repatriation takes place continuously from 1990s on. This concerns Czechs from Rumania, Ukraine, Moldova, former Yugoslavia, Western Europe, USA and South Africa. They do not enjoy any support from the government other than the possibility to apply for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds. Persons who can prove Czech origin and members of their families can apply for permanent residence even if they did not reside in the territory of the Czech Republic before.⁶⁷

In **Lithuania** a clear distinction is made between *repatriates* who are mainly people deported during the Soviet period and *return migrants*. The latter are labour migrants who left Lithuania after the independence and are willing to return back to Lithuania. Both groups get support and assistance from the government.⁶⁸

Among other returnees a special target group supported by the organization “Safe Home” in **Ireland** are “older Irish born emigrants, aged close to or over 60 years who must be living in rented accommodation and must be seeking to return to their county of origin or in a county they have close, verifiable links with“. An important precondition for being eligible to apply

⁶⁵ Nozhenko, Maria (2006): Motherland Is Calling You! Motives Behind and Prospects for the New Russian Policy on Compatriots Abroad.

⁶⁶ Radio Free Europe: Russia: Putin's Repatriation Scheme Off To Slow Start

⁶⁷ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

⁶⁸ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

for the return support is that "they could not provide a suitable accommodation for themselves out of their own resources". The Safe-Home Programme is supported by the Dion Committee, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Irish Abroad Unit (Department of Foreign Affairs) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.⁶⁹

In **Poland** the preconditions for applying for repatriation support are the Polish nationality of at least one of the repatriate's parents or grandparents or two great grandparents and the repatriate's ability to demonstrate links with Polish provenance, in particular by the cultivation of Polish language, traditions and customs.⁷⁰ Provided that the repatriate can prove that s/he has an accommodation in Poland and that s/he is able to cover the subsistence costs s/he can enter Poland on the basis of a repatriation visa. If that is not the case a decision on a promise to issue a visa is provided.⁷¹

The **Bulgarian** repatriation programme distinguishes between Bulgarian citizens and persons with Bulgarian origin abroad (mainly Bulgarians from other Balkan countries or from the former Soviet republics). Persons without Bulgarian citizenship, but with Bulgarian origin, are issued green cards which allow them easier settlement and eventual citizenship in the country of their heritage.⁷²

In **Finland** all Finnish citizens have an opportunity to return to their country of origin and there have been specific provisions to simplify the procedures of former citizens or their descendants to be granted a residence permit or to regain citizenship. The Finnish Immigration Service distinguishes between "former Finnish citizens", "descendants of native Finnish citizens" and "returnees from the former Soviet Union". A person who has previously been a Finnish citizen but is not any longer can be granted a residence permit without being of native Finnish nationality. People who have never themselves been Finnish citizens, but whose parent or grandparent is or has been a native Finnish citizen, can be granted a residence permit in Finland if at least one of the parents or grandparents is or has been a native Finnish citizen. Certain people coming from areas of the former Soviet Union (so-called returnees or Ingrian Finns) are considered to be of Finnish origin or to have other such close connections with Finland and can be granted a residence permit on this basis. On this grounds over 30,000

⁶⁹ Web page of the Safe-Home Programme Ireland

⁷⁰ The Polish Repatriation Act of 9 November 2000

⁷¹ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

⁷² Reply of Ahavni Topakbachian, Bulgarian Ethnic and Demographic Issues Directorat, 16.01.2009

returnees have migrated to Finland during the past 15 years mainly from Russia and Estonia. Close connections with Finland can be based either on ethnic background or on the fact that the person served in the Finnish army during the Second World War or belongs to the group of Ingrian emigrants. A person from the former Soviet Union can be granted a residence permit if the person's *nationality* is Finnish, i.e. he or she is not a Finnish *citizen* but is of Finnish origin in terms of ethnic background. A person is of Finnish nationality if he or she, one of his or her parents, or at least two of the grandparents are or have been registered in the documents as having Finnish origin. A residence permit can also be granted to people who were transferred to Finland during the Second World War in 1943 and 1944 and later returned to the Soviet Union. A permit can also be granted to a person who served in the Finnish army during the Second World War between 1939 and 1945. They do not have to pass any language exam.⁷³ Other requirements for returnees coming from the former Soviet Union are the registration as a returnee, participating in re-entry orientation course, language skills and accommodation in Finland.⁷⁴ There is a long waiting list for Ingrian Finns who want to move to Finland. Priority is given to Ingrian Finns who match with specific labour demands.⁷⁵

In the same way as in Estonia, a prerequisite for repatriation support in **Cyprus** is a permanent residence abroad for a continuous period of at least ten years before the return for resettlement.⁷⁶ What concerns the definition of repatriated Cypriots in regard to their origin a special rule exists. In Cyprus a repatriate is a person of Cypriot descent in the male line, who has Cypriot nationality or may acquire it on settling in the Republic after permanent residence abroad for a continuous period of at least ten years before his/her return for resettlement. In Cyprus the permanent residence abroad can be proved with (a) nationality or passports of the country of settlement, which were issued at least 10 years before resettlement/arrival for taking up permanent residence, or (b) entry stamp of the country of settlement for stay there without time limitations, which was made at least 10 years before resettlement/arrival for taking up permanent residence. For countries, where most Cypriots are settled, more specifically evidence of permanent settlement is accepted. Continuous stay abroad is evidenced by passports. In the case where it is impossible to submit all the passports, indirect evidence is required for the periods where there is uncertainty such as tax returns, payment of

⁷³ Finland's Government Migration Policy Programme. Government Resolution 19.10.2006

⁷⁴ Web page of the Finnish Immigration Service

⁷⁵ Finland's Government Migration Policy Programme. Government Resolution 19.10.2006

⁷⁶ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

social insurance, medical certificates, family passports, certificates from children's schools abroad, receipts of wages, and other relevant official proof.⁷⁷

In **Germany** repatriation support is provided to repatriates with German origin who belong to a German minority living in former German territories in times of the Soviet Union. In addition to basic German language skills obtained in the familiar context repatriates have to prove that they have avowed themselves to their German nationality. Repatriates living in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania have to prove that they have experienced discrimination due to his/her German ethnicity.⁷⁸ Additionally repatriation programmes aiming to attract highly skilled workers are introduced.⁷⁹

In the case of the Republic of **Latvia**, according to the Repatriation Law, a repatriate is a person who on his/her own volition moves permanently to the Republic of Latvia and if he/she is a citizen of Latvia (registered in the Population Register as citizen of Latvian and has received the Latvian citizen's passport) or if one of his/her parents or grandparents is a Latvian or a Livonian and his/her Latvian or Livonian descent can be proved by document.⁸⁰ Repatriates who left the Republic of Latvia before 4 May 1990 have the right to material assistance.⁸¹ Persons who do not have Latvian citizenship and their dependents have to give in additional documents for the application. In addition to the document affirming the Latvian or Livonian descent of the applicant additional documents like a document attesting the health of the individual (including that the person does not have TB), a criminal record of the individual from the relevant authority of the country of citizenship or residence, a written confirmation of the proposed location of residence in the Republic of Latvia and written confirmation of the means of subsistence in the Republic of Latvia are requested.⁸²

In **Switzerland** some support is given to Swiss nationals who have lived in another country for a long time or even have not been to Switzerland yet.⁸³

⁷⁷ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

⁷⁸ Web page Ostalbkreis: www.ostalbkreis.de

⁷⁹ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 03.12.2009

⁸⁰ Web page of the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

⁸¹ Latvian Repatriation Law

⁸² Web page of the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

⁸³ Web page Swiss Federal Office for Migration

The **Philippines'** repatriation program aims to support migrant workers who are to be engaged, are engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a legal resident to be used interchangeably with overseas Filipino worker.⁸⁴

Family members

Together with the repatriate the return of close family members and dependants is usually supported in most of the countries. These are the repatriates' spouse or non-marital partner and dependent children. Instead of a proof of ethnicity or origin a marriage or birth certificate is needed in this case. Some countries require, particular in the case of a non-marital partnership duration of at least 3 years before the return to the country of origin.

In **Estonia** all family members of a repatriate receive non-financial help in form of information and bureaucratic issues, no matter if these are also eligible for financial support or not. However, financial support is reserved to persons with Estonian origin or citizenship only who have lived at least ten years abroad or were born abroad.

What concerns the issue of a residence permit no special regulations, differing from the regulations applicable for other foreigners, exist for non-Estonian family members of repatriates.⁸⁵

The **Slovenian** Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad states that also direct line relatives without any means of subsistence and thus dependent on repatriates are supported.⁸⁶

In **Latvia** family members accompanying a repatriate are in the same way as the repatriate obliged to give in additional documents if they do not have the Latvian citizenship. These are a document attesting the health of the individual (including that the person does not have TB), a criminal record of the individual from the relevant authority of the country of citizenship or residence, a written confirmation of the proposed location of residence in the Republic of

⁸⁴ Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995

⁸⁵ Interview with Martin Eber, Eike Luik and Helina Maasing, Estonian Migration Foundation, 26.02.2009

⁸⁶ Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad

Latvia and written confirmation of the means of subsistence in the Republic of Latvia are requested.⁸⁷

The return of the whole family is especially supported in countries where family reunification is one of the primary goals of repatriation (e.g. **Czech Republic**). For the definition of kinship entitled to receive return support a kinship key was used in the Czech Republic.⁸⁸

In general the return of biological as well as adopted children is supported. In case no other adequate evidence of family ties based on biological kinship is available and if it is possible to obtain material evidence of the family ties through DNA analysis the **Finnish** Immigration Service gives the opportunity to prove the biological kinship with DNA analysis (973/2007).⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Web page of the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

⁸⁸ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

⁸⁹ Finnish Aliens Act

6. Forms of Support

In the same manner as the motives for the return may vary, the individual disposition of the returnees as well as their needs of support is different. According to the stage in the life course and the individual situation the importance of various social welfare schemes as well as the importance of employment opportunities, schools and the offer of repatriation services may differ.

Depending on the country the extent of repatriation support varies. Services can be divided in basic and more elaborated services like integration services and material support. Services may also differ within a country due to distinguished target groups. In the case of the Czech Republic only repatriates returning in the framework of an organized programme are supported financially. Individual returnees do not enjoy any support from the government other than the possibility to apply for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds, they can however, contact the Ministry in case of need for help.⁹⁰

Closely connected to the support of returning compatriots is the support of expatriate communities abroad. In this way the state keeps contact with its expatriates and offers them support in facilitating the practice of cultural customs and language and to convey up-to-date information about the country of origin. These are important preconditions for a successful return to and integration into the receiving society.

6.1 Basic services

Services which belong to the usual repatriation support are the supply with information, the untaxed import of vehicles and other belongings and the granting of a residence permit and citizenship.

⁹⁰ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

6.1.1 Supply with information

The process of collecting information usually takes place before the decision to return is made. Before coming home to the country of origin potential returnees need information and advice on topics as social security and health care entitlements, accommodation/housing, job opportunities and education for children. For persons in working age or young families the availability of suitable employment as well as the recognition of qualifications is a crucial requisite for return.

Another purpose of disseminating information is raising the awareness about the reality in the country of destination and about the changes that have taken place since the emigration of the returnee. In this regard the **Republic of Ireland** also calls attention to possible negative consequences like loneliness and isolation in the first time after remigration.⁹¹

Information on repatriation belongs to the basic supports that countries with an active repatriation policy offer. But even here the extent of information differs.

Information is disseminated through different information channels which are on one hand media and on the other hand institutions.

In **Estonia** information is disseminated by the Estonian embassies as well as by almost 600 Estonian organizations abroad.⁹² Furthermore, detailed information about repatriation support and migration issues is available on the homepage of the Estonian Migration Foundation. In addition the Estonian Migration Foundation offers counselling via telephone, email and in its office in Tallinn.⁹³

6.1.1.1 Media

Information about the countries of origin as well as about return support are transmitted through different media channels as for example magazines, radio, television and internet.

⁹¹ Brian Cowen, T.D. (2002): *IRELAND AND THE IRISH ABROAD* Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

⁹² Reply of Aho Rebas, counselor of Estonian Ministry of Population, 19.02.2009

⁹³ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

In the internet information is provided by web portals and on the official web pages of governmental institutions.

Some countries have published information guides (e.g. 'Returning to Ireland') which provide information on statutory services and entitlements and that is helpful to those giving consideration to return to the country of origin. Guides can be accessed on-line, or in a printed version.⁹⁴

The use of radio and television is not only meant for the dissemination of information, but also as tool for refreshing or improving the language skills of the expatriates.

Cyprus takes advantage of various technical opportunities (satellite, internet) to provide their overseas compatriots with news from Cyprus. CyBC prepares two weekly half-hour programmes: The programme "Cyprus close to you", which refers to the most important cultural, social and sporting events of the week, and the programme "7 days Cyprus" which deals with the political events of the week. Cassettes of the two weekly programmes are sent to countries which do not receive the ET Satellite programme. In the programme "Cyprus hour" themes from the life of Overseas Cypriots in Great Britain are presented. Furthermore three different radio programmes are transmitted, one of them offering Greek lessons for English speakers.⁹⁵

Among others, **Finland** also uses technical instruments for disseminating information. For example, some programmes are transmitted in simplified Finnish so that also persons with a poor command of Finnish would be able to understand them. Additionally, some broadcasts are designed to teach Finnish for those who speak English or Russian.⁹⁶

For **Lithuanian** repatriates information brochures (on taxation, health, pensions, children etc.) are available and TV reportages about returning migrants are published. Furthermore a public survey "How Lithuanians evaluate return migrants" has been conducted and published.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Brian Cowen, T.D. (2002): *IRELAND AND THE IRISH ABROAD* Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

⁹⁵ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

⁹⁶ Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2006 -2011

⁹⁷ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

In **Finland** the publication of Suomen Silta/Finland Bridge is directed towards expatriate Finns.⁹⁸ Adolescent **Swiss** nationals receive a journal called “Schweizer Revue” for free. This journal also communicates important changes in legislation.⁹⁹

In the new **Estonian** compatriots’ programme it is planned in cooperation with Estonian Public Broadcasting to start regular TV and radio broadcasts to introduce the life and activities of expatriates. The latter can follow it over internet.¹⁰⁰

6.1.1.2 Forms and institutions in supply of information

Institutions which provide information about return support and the country of origin are, in addition to embassies/missions in foreign countries, ministries and government offices dealing with migration issues as well as non-governmental organizations.

In Estonia the state foundation Estonian Migration Foundation is the main channel of giving information about return support. In this, the foundation tries to cooperate with Estonian missions abroad, state offices (like the Citizenship and Migration Board), local governments and Estonian associations abroad. Information is disseminated on the web page, in flyers and expatriates can make inquiries by phone or E-mail.

For some countries (e.g. Slovenia, Poland) the missions abroad are the most important information channels as they establish the initial contact and provide information for potential repatriates.

In addition to the governmental institutions civil society organizations dealing with migration issues which are granted government budgetary funds for their activities provide additional information (e.g. **Slovenia**).

In the **Czech Republic** personal contacts with Czechs abroad and their associations exist. Czechs abroad often contact the Czech Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or NGOs.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Reply of Arja Saarto, Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 21.01.2009

⁹⁹ Reply of Rahel Schweizer, Swiss Confederation, 16.02.2009

¹⁰⁰ Compatriots’ Programme for years 2009-2013.

The **Republic of Ireland** recognized the important role of the voluntary sector and therefore supports it in their work in order to enable them to provide coordinated information and advice. In addition to this a monthly newsletter, published by the "Safe Home Programme" as well as information seminars meant for the advising of workers in Irish voluntary agencies in Britain are provided and the exchange of information between the agencies is organized.¹⁰²

In **Lithuania** a wide variety of additional information channels exists. These are labour/information fairs for Lithuanian migrants willing to return in different countries, a toll-free line that provides consultations for Lithuanian citizens willing to return to Lithuania organized by IOM Vilnius and psychological consultations via email, Skype and Mirc for (return) migrants and their family members. In addition to that in Lithuania a network of NGOs (e.g. an Information centre for returning Lithuanian migrants) provides help to returning migrants.¹⁰³

Another form of getting in contact with expatriates is information days or labour fairs. The **Finland** Society organizes for example "Open days" as well as information days for return migrants and about pension abroad.¹⁰⁴ For special issues the Finland Society also has advisors and lawyers for Senior Citizens specializing in e.g. social security, international income and corporate taxation, international employment contracts, and family, employment and estate planning legislation.¹⁰⁵

In **Germany** counselling for emigrants is regulated by law in order to protect emigrants from receiving false information propagated in the commercial interests of companies aiming to recruit personnel. Aspects of the subsequent return are discussed as part of an all-embracing counselling concept. Emigrant counselling services provide personal advice via telephone and internet.¹⁰⁶ This Emigrant counselling services, offered by the Raphaels-Werk is run and financed by the Welfare Organization Caritas.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

¹⁰² Brian Cowen, T.D. (2002): *IRELAND AND THE IRISH ABROAD* Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

¹⁰³ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁰⁴ Web page of the Finland Society

¹⁰⁵ Web page of the Finland Society

¹⁰⁶ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 26.01.2009

¹⁰⁷ Reply of Bernd Parusel, German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 19.03.2009

Furthermore, a number of countries have institutions whose purpose is to strengthen the expatriates' ties to the home country. These organizations offer trips, cultural events, assistance to expatriates communities abroad, educational material etc.

Primarily in the **Nordic countries**, but also in **France, Greece and Switzerland** Expatriate Parliaments have been established. Expatriate parliaments are organized by active expatriates who like to have an influence on political decisions in their country of origin and to represent the expatriates' needs. Common issues discussed in those parliaments relate to citizenship, taxes, inheritance, voting rights, work permits, education, financial support etc. In general the government of the country of origin cooperates with the expatriate parliament as both parties can benefit from such kind of relationship. In Finland the expatriate parliament is economically supported by the state.¹⁰⁸

6.1.2 Untaxed import of vehicles and other belongings

The untaxed import of vehicles and other belongings is a part of the basic services that all European Union Member States offer to their repatriates. This regulation is meant to avoid double taxation and is protected from misuse by several security measurements.

Usually the used goods have to be more than six months old and in some cases receipts are requested (**Ireland**). Some countries have more specified rules (especially with regard to vehicles) in order to prevent possible abuses.

As in every other European Union Member State particular rules concerning the import of belongings exist in **Estonia** for persons coming from a third country. A person coming from a third country who wants to bring along a bigger amount of personal items has to prove that s/he has lived in a third country as well as his/her settlement in the community by submitting relevant documents. Personal items can be sent to the community up to six months before the actual resettlement. Additionally, the personal items of a person going to live in another country can be imported tax free during twelve months from the date when he/she settled in the community. During the mentioned date the personal items may arrive as several separate consignments. Vehicles bought in a third country have to be declared at a customs authority at

¹⁰⁸ Web page of Norway's expatriate parliament

the border and taxes subject to payment upon allowing a vehicle to free circulation have to be paid. In case a third country citizen sells his/her imported car, the buyer of the vehicle shall present a customs declaration to the customs authority of his or her location and pay the customs duty and value added tax during five calendar days in order to take the vehicle into use.

For persons coming from the European Union restrictions on luggage exist only for particular goods (alcohol, tobacco, motor fuel, medicines, arms etc). For vehicles bought from a European Union Member States which are less than six months old or with a mileage less than 6,000 km a value added tax of 18% of the purchase price shall be paid in Estonia.

In **Cyprus** the untaxed import of vehicles is more specified. The tax relief is limited to one vehicle for each family (husband, wife or their dependents) and the vehicle has to be imported or purchased in Cyprus within one year from the repatriate's arrival to take up permanent residence.

VAT is charged if the vehicle is imported from a country outside the EU, if it is brand new or if it is used and VAT has already been paid in a Member State but refunded on exportation.¹⁰⁹ Personal property is allowed to be imported without payment of any duties and VAT, provided that the goods 1) have been acquired on payment of all local duties and taxes and never have been refunded or exempted on exportation, 2) have been in the applicant's possession and actual use outside the Republic for at least six months before their transfer to Cyprus, (3) are brought into the Republic within 12 months from the date of transfer of residence.

Personal properties can be defined as any property for the personal use of the persons concerned or for meeting their household needs, in particular household effects, vehicles, household provisions appropriate to normal family requirements, household pets and saddle animals, portable instruments of the applied or liberal arts, required by the person concerned for the pursuit of this trade or profession.

¹⁰⁹ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

The most important criteria for defining personal property is, that it by its nature or quantity does not indicate that it is being imported for commercial reasons.¹¹⁰ In **Greece** also household effects are not allowed to be sold or otherwise transferred for one year.¹¹¹

The avoidance of double taxation applies in **Lithuania** also to legally earned money from abroad.¹¹²

Although **Switzerland** does not belong to the EU, the import of household goods is also duty-free.¹¹³

6.1.3 Residence permit and citizenship

Residence permit and citizenship issues apply mainly to persons who do not have the citizenship of their country of origin. Whereas in some countries citizenship and residence permit are automatically granted to ethnic nationals of that country (like in Poland), in other countries the procedures for being granted are facilitated.

In general, European Union citizens and their family members do not need a residence permit after having moved to another European Union Member State, but can register their right of residence.

In **Estonia** an ethnic **Estonian** with a citizenship of a third country can apply for temporary residence permit if he/she can prove that Estonians are among his/her ancestors. Citizens of EU Member States do not have to apply for residence permit, but just to register their residence in the Population Register. An ethnic Estonian who does not have Estonian citizenship may apply for reinstatement of the citizenship if he/her has lost the Estonian citizenship for some reason as a minor. Otherwise, citizenship can be applied for on the same grounds as a foreigner.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

¹¹¹ http://www.geocities.com/Athens/7243/unofficial_ambassy_customs_duty.html

¹¹² Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹¹³ Web page of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration

¹¹⁴ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

Repatriates returning to **Latvia** and the family members of the repatriate who wish to immigrate to the Republic of Latvia at the same time as the repatriate are issued with a permanent residence permit.¹¹⁵

As already mentioned, **Finland** has several procedures for granting residence and citizenship varying according to different target groups.

The residence procedures for repatriated **Greeks** are facilitated at all stages (entry and residence, long-term permits).¹¹⁶

At the moment of crossing the Polish border, the repatriate (and a minor remaining under his/her parental care – subject to certain conditions) acquires **Polish** citizenship.¹¹⁷

Since the service of the **Swiss Confederation** is meant to support Swiss nationals abroad citizenship and residence permit issues only concern foreign spouses and unmarried partners without Swiss nationality as well as children under the age of 21. Foreign spouses are entitled to a residence permit of one or five (for EU/EFTA nationals) year(s) and are also granted the right to work. Children under the age of 21 may come with their parents to Switzerland; however a permit must be obtained before their immigration.

Unmarried partners have to apply for a residence permit for unmarried partners and are asked for documents proving that the partnership has already existed for some years and meet various conditions. Foreign children of unmarried couples may be granted a residence permit within the framework of the subsequent immigration of families.¹¹⁸

In the Czech Republic the possibility to apply for permanent residence without the requirement of previous temporary residence in the territory of the Czech Republic may be regarded as the only strategy facilitating repatriation.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Latvian Repatriation Act

¹¹⁶ Reply of Penny Tsipa, Greek EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹¹⁷ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹¹⁸ Web page of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration

¹¹⁹ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

6.2 Integration support

At the latest after having arrived in the country of destination usually integration support in the form of adaptation and language courses, the search for employment and educational institutions have to be organised. In most of the countries at least some provisions for integration support exist. This usually also applies for countries where no “repatriation” support is given.

Some countries offer integration support such as language and adaptation courses already in the country of origin. In the same way, also the search for employment can be organized before the final move.

6.2.1 Adaptation and language support

Language and integration courses are of prior importance for people considering return after a prolonged time abroad or for people who have grown up abroad.

Courses are organized in different ways and for different target groups. One can distinguish between courses offered for returnees in the country of origin, language and preparation courses and schools in the country of departure and time limited intensive courses for expatriates and/or their children in the country of origin (holiday courses).

Another possibility to learn or refresh the language of the country of origin is online language courses which are offered in some cases on the web pages of embassies and organizations offering repatriation support.

Furthermore, courses can be divided into free of charge or chargeable courses and can be distinguished by their compulsory character. Whereas in most of the countries language and adaptation courses are voluntary, these are obligatory in Finland.

Estonian language and culture courses outside Estonia might be interesting for Estonian compatriots. In order to support and broaden the teaching of Estonia-related subjects abroad, a development programme for the years 2005 to 2010 has been developed by the Council of Teaching Estonian Language and Culture Abroad and approved by the Estonian Government

on 2 December 2004. The programme sets out a number of activities, including the foundation of and support to new centres for teaching Estonian language and culture at foreign universities. By the initiative of the Council and with the support from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, lecturers of the Estonian language and culture have been sent to universities of St Petersburg (Russia), Vilnius (Lithuania), Göttingen (Germany), Glasgow (United Kingdom), Warsaw (Poland) and to the International Institute of Languages and Civilizations (INALCO) in Paris over the past three years. Furthermore non-Estonian education schools with a large proportion of Estonian lessons and Estonian in-service schools and Sunday schools exist in different parts of the world.¹²⁰

In Estonia there is no practice of state organized language and adaptation courses. However, in last two years the Estonian Migration Foundation has offered free intensive Estonian courses and adaptation trainings with the financial support of the European Social Fund, the Compatriots Programme and the Gambling Tax Board. In addition to the studies of the official language and citizen training that includes lectures introducing Estonian culture and history as well as legislation, the case-based career counselling and introduction of the basic principles of starting-up a business were provided. The volume of the project is certainly not sufficient for taking the Constitution and Citizenship Act exam and Estonian language exam, however, the interactive manner of presentation is very inspiring for the participants giving them high adjusting-readiness for integrating into our society and the wish to continue individual studies.¹²¹

For those persons applying for **Estonian** citizenship who pass the exam in Estonian Constitution and Citizenship Act as well as in Estonian language organized by the National Examination and Qualification Centre is mandatory. The Integration Foundation offers free courses on Constitution and Citizenship Act, which are aimed at the persons who wish to take the exam.¹²² The costs related to studying Estonian language can be compensated by the National Examination and Qualification Centre in case a person is not citizen of Estonia and have passed both exams.¹²³

¹²⁰ Web page of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

¹²¹ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

¹²² Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

¹²³ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

Free **Polish** language lessons can be offered to persons issued a promise to obtain a repatriation visa and their family members. In case that the repatriation status is already issued, other adaptation activities are offered in addition to language courses. Such courses and activities are organized by the ministers relevant for education and for higher education and may also include free accommodation, boarding and transport for the participants.¹²⁴

In **Lithuania** free language courses are offered for everyone who is willing.¹²⁵

The support provided to **Czech** repatriates differs depending on the repatriation period and the target group supported. Language courses were provided to the returnees from Kazakhstan under the repatriation organized from 1994 to 2001.¹²⁶

The Finnish Ministry of Education supports the activities of the **Finnish** schools and cultural institutes and promotes the study and position of the Finnish language and culture in countries with major groups of expatriate Finns. Through the main division of the Ministry of Education, Finnish expatriate organizations, periodicals and other media are supported.¹²⁷ In the case of a return from the former Soviet Union passing a language examination arranged by the Finnish authorities and taking part in the re-entry orientation courses given in the country of departure is a precondition for being eligible for return.¹²⁸

Furthermore the **Finland** Society regularly organizes intensive Finnish language courses for descendants of Finnish emigrants who are planning to move to Finland. The target group of these courses is preferably persons between 18 and 45 years. The foreign spouses of expatriate Finns may also attend the seminar. In addition to the Finnish language instructions held in English the participants obtain information on various aspects of *finnishness* and information about studying opportunities and advice in job hunting in Finland. The seminar is subject to fee.¹²⁹ Another activity organized by the Finland Society is the annual youth camp where also workshops of Finnish culture and language are offered.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹²⁵ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹²⁶ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

¹²⁷ Reply of Arja Saarto, Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 21.01.2009

¹²⁸ The Finnish Aliens Act 301/2004, section 48

¹²⁹ Web page of the Finland Society

¹³⁰ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

In **Slovenia** classes of Slovenian language are also offered for immediate family members of the repatriated person whose proficiency in Slovenian does not meet the requirements facilitating active inclusion in the Slovenian environment.¹³¹

Although there are no repatriation policies, the **United Kingdom** offers British citizens who have never lived in the United Kingdom support with language, literacy, numeracy and vocational skills. This support is delivered by the UK's network of employment centres.¹³²

In **Germany** repatriates arrive directly in a first reception facility where registering and distribution processes take place. Here the repatriates get the first opportunity to get in contact with caricatural and church institutions which offer different measures to help the repatriates to cope with everyday problems. Additionally, repatriates have the opportunity to adjust their first and family name to the German habitual language use.¹³³ During a later stage repatriates are offered integration courses and “migration advice for adult immigrants” as well as, similarly to other immigrants, projects to encourage mutual acceptance between immigrants and the native population and to promote social integration, for example projects focusing on integration in the neighbourhood or the German Olympic Sports Federation's “Integration through sport” programme. Measures especially aimed at repatriates are of help for integration in the labour market and in dealing with everyday problems.¹³⁴ In 2008, a total of 116 such measures received funding and during 2006 to 2007, 254 measures were financially supported.¹³⁵

In the framework of **Philippines** Welfare Office's reintegration program services such as social counselling, family counselling, stress debriefing and training on capacity building and values formation are offered.¹³⁶ Further support of the Philippines offering to their return migrants differ in a way from the usual support. Even before going abroad, migrants and their families are taught financial literacy in pre-departure seminars. These courses are meant to promote among migrants the value of saving and investing their potential income abroad. National Reintegration Centre with local branches has been established to facilitate the

¹³¹ Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad

¹³² Reply of Sarah Poppleton, United Kingdoms EMN NCP, 23.01.2009

¹³³ Web page of the Federal Administrative Court Germany

¹³⁴ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 03.12.2009

¹³⁵ Reply from German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 19.03.2009

¹³⁶ Tomas, Patricia A. Sto. : Protecting Migrant Workers.

readjustment and reinvestment of returnees. In addition, a Commission on Filipinos Overseas engages Filipino diasporas abroad to help promoting the return and reintegration of temporary migrant Filipinos through sharing of knowledge and financial assistance.¹³⁷

6.2.2 Support for finding work and educational institutions

Employment and education are key elements for social and economic integration. In the same way attractive working places and educational facilities are pull factors for young and working-age people and families and a precondition for a decent life.

The analyzed countries offer at least some information about the access to the labour market and present educational institutions. In addition to that, further support like employment services, labour fairs, self-employment schemes, arrangements for labour market integration (qualification courses) and scholarships for schools and studying are offered.

6.2.2.1 Finding work

A common instrument for placing workers is the national training and employment authorities. In addition to that information about other job exchange possibilities is usually given.

In the District Labour Offices (DLO) in **Cyprus** priority is given to Overseas Cypriots who apply for a job or who look for guidance or information. Additionally, Overseas Cypriots may apply for employment in Cyprus, while they are still abroad.¹³⁸

In **Lithuania**, establishments of job places for returnees are financed, and qualification and other courses are organized in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market. This support is said to promote repatriation to a certain degree.¹³⁹

In **Bulgaria**, holders of Green Card are assured equal employment opportunities and equal payment with Bulgarians, on the condition of registering at the Labour Bureau.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Philippine GFMD 2008 Working Paper RT 1.1: Protecting the Rights of Migrants – A Shared Responsibility

¹³⁸ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

¹³⁹ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁴⁰ Government's National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria

A previous campaign in **Latvia** organized by the American Latvian Association was the program “Talcinieki”, which helped some people in the West with jobs in Latvia.¹⁴¹

The vocational activation of a repatriate in **Poland** is the tasks of the communes. If a repatriate is unemployed, the relevant local authority may support him/her via the partial reimbursement of costs incurred by the repatriate for acquiring professional qualifications and/or the partial reimbursement of costs incurred by the employer for creating a post for a repatriate, his/her professional training, salary and other financial benefits (premiums) and social security contributions.¹⁴²

A special information service point called *Finnjobb* within the Finnish embassy in Stockholm offered, mainly to Finns living in Sweden, information for nearly 20 years to those who were planning to move to **Finland**, but was shut down in the end of 2008.¹⁴³ In the Finnish Consulate General in St. Petersburg, a specialist in work administration assists returnees.¹⁴⁴ Two thirds of the Ingrian returnees are in working age and employers in the transport, industry and construction sectors have recently shown an increasing interest.¹⁴⁵

In order to attract highly qualified workers, in particular scientists, several initiatives and measures were implemented by the **German** Länder, federal government departments and various foundations and networks. Measures are programs which offer highly qualified young scientists the opportunity of heading a research group at selected universities, the establishment of research-friendly and internationally competitive terms of reference, the establishment and improvement of structures to reconcile work and family life and grants and research prizes from foundations.¹⁴⁶ The programme of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia to promote the return of highly talented young scientists from abroad is financed by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. In 2007, four highly qualified young scientists, who returned to Germany, received public funding in order to build up research teams at Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia. Even in 2008, four highly qualified young scientists were granted funding.

¹⁴¹ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

¹⁴² Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁴³ Reply of Arja Saarto, Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 21.01.2009

¹⁴⁴ Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2006-2011

¹⁴⁵ Government Migration Policy Programme. Government Resolution 19.10.2006

¹⁴⁶ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 03.12.2009

The funding amounts up to 1,250,000 Euro per research team for a five-year-period. A subsequent tenured position is possible.¹⁴⁷

Similar programmes were introduced by Austria aiming the return of scientists.¹⁴⁸

The **Philippines** has Filipino workers' resource centres that offer migrant workers varied livelihood skills-enhancement and a training program for the time after return.¹⁴⁹ This assistance is particularly helpful as not every returnee ends up with sufficient money covering the whole period of retirement. Some people like to go into some livelihood alternatives like starting a small business.

As regards the recognition of acquired qualifications distinguished experts repatriating to **Slovenia** are not required to take professional or other examinations before taking up employment. However, this does not apply to professional and other examinations which are meant to verify specific proficiency in exact knowledge of circumstances in the Republic of Slovenia (e.g. lawyer's state examination).¹⁵⁰

For **Swiss** expatriates who are searching for work, a special job placement service exists. Announcements can be published in a bulletin "Swiss expatriates looking for work", which is published every second month and is distributed among companies and employment agencies all over Switzerland.¹⁵¹ University graduates may become a member of SwissTalents which is a network of highly skilled professionals living abroad, who are Swiss or have strong ties to Switzerland.¹⁵²

The Czech returnees from Kazakhstan under the repatriation organized from 1994 to 2001 were secured employment in advance.¹⁵³

6.2.2.2 Self-employment schemes for repatriates

¹⁴⁷ Answer from German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 19.03.2009

¹⁴⁸ Reply of Maria Temesvari, Austrian EMN NCP, 09.12.2008

¹⁴⁹ Philippine GFMD 2008 Working Paper RT 1.1: Protecting the Rights of Migrants – A Shared Responsibility

¹⁵⁰ Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad

¹⁵¹ Web page of Swiss Federal Office for Migration

¹⁵² Reply of Rahel Schweizer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 16.02.2009

¹⁵³ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

In addition to placing workers in employment relationships, self-employment schemes are an instrument for professional rehabilitation. In **Cyprus**, loan assistance will be paid to repatriates whose project satisfies certain basic criteria such as financial feasibility, the potential of the employment of the applicant on a full and permanent basis and the professional adequacy of the applicant.¹⁵⁴

Also in **Lithuania** a financial assistance to start small business belongs to the service package.¹⁵⁵

The **Philippines** have two loan programs which are aimed at providing returnees with livelihood, self-employment opportunities as well as entrepreneurial development opportunities. Additionally, the National Reintegration Centre for Overseas Filipino Workers provides support in financial literacy, financial planning and management, savings and special remittance schemes, investment options/livelihood opportunities, business counselling and mentoring. Furthermore, the National Reintegration Centre for Overseas Filipino Workers is implementing an Income Augmentation Training Cum Production Program for Overseas Filipinos Workers to provide self-employment through the establishment of micro-enterprises with training and other support services.¹⁵⁶

6.2.2.3 Educational institutions

What concerns education information about institutions and their entrance requirements are usually given on official homepages. Some countries give additional support in form of scholarships, facilitated entrance requirements for repatriates or their children, sending learning material for the preparation for enrolment in schools, international classes or additional language classes.

In addition to regular **Estonian** primary as well as secondary schools and high schools where courses are given in Estonian schools with only Russian language and special schools with intensive English, French and German studies exist.

¹⁵⁴ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

¹⁵⁵ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁵⁶ Tomas, Patricia A. Sto. : Protecting Migrant Workers.

In schools teaching in a language other than Estonian from the first grade, Estonian language is an obligatory subject. As a national programme Estonia is also implementing language immersion. Language immersion is a study form the aim of which is to improve a child's Estonian language skills as a second language through its active use in kindergarten or schools without harming the child's mother tongue skills. In the immersion classes and groups the volume of studies in Estonian exceeds 50% of the total volume of studies. The language immersion programmes are carried out in 24 kindergartens and in even more schools all over Estonia.¹⁵⁷

The Estonian Ministry of Education has a scholarship competition for youth with Estonian roots who are interested in studying in Estonian higher education or vocational schools. The aim of the scholarships offered by the Compatriots Programme is to support the studies of young expatriate Estonians in Estonian public universities, national institutions of applied higher education and vocational education centres. Applications for scholarships are invited from young expatriate Estonians who have not resided in Estonia on a permanent basis at least during the last 10 years and who possess a secondary or higher education. Every year some 10 youngsters are offered this chance.¹⁵⁸

In **Cyprus** the successful attendance of repatriated pupils is a primary concern. Parents whose children study abroad and wish to prepare them for enrolment to Cyprian schools can apply for the relevant books to the Ministry of Education and Culture citing the age and class of their children.

In cases when repatriated children face problems due to the lack of ability in linguistic skills, the school offers special assistance through lessons in Greek additional teaching periods are given for their language teaching and educational support free of charge.

Children of repatriated Cypriots who come from schools abroad at which the language of instruction was not Greek and who on their arrival in Cyprus will enter classes corresponding to those of the Lyceum at private schools of secondary education, receive a grant for fees of 450 Cyprus pounds (for each child).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

¹⁵⁸ Web page of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

¹⁵⁹ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

The **Russian** compensatory package includes services of the municipal preschool education authorities and services concerning general and vocational training.¹⁶⁰

In **Lithuania**, a special school in Vilnius is specialized in supporting education of repatriates' children. In addition to that several more measures in the field of education have been implemented. These are compensation languages classes for Lithuanian students who returned to Lithuania but have problems with Lithuanian language, special individual programs for returnee students (returnee students get more money from the government during the study year), distance courses in Lithuanian language and history for students who emigrated with their families and course books for students who do not speak Lithuanian. Furthermore, training is organised for teachers on how to integrate emigrant children back in the class. For Lithuanians who have studied abroad and want to study in Lithuanian universities, special admission rules with positive discrimination for these students exists. In the framework of a program on how to return highly qualified nationals special stipends for scholars who return to Lithuania from abroad are available.¹⁶¹

Holders of the **Bulgarian** Green Card have the right to free-of-charge primary and secondary education in the Bulgarian state and municipal school equal to the options offered to Bulgarian citizens.¹⁶²

The single financial aid offered by the **Polish** state is also meant for covering the costs which are related to commencement of education in Poland by the minors.¹⁶³

6.3 Financial assistance

While searching for a job or an educational institution the transfer of ongoing living expenses is an important aspect. Financial support by the country of origin is not for granted, but financial assistance for accommodation and travelling costs is quite common.

¹⁶⁰ Decree of the President of the RF from 22 June, 2006 No. 637 On Measures of Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the RF

¹⁶¹ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁶² Government's National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria

¹⁶³ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

6.3.1 Supply with accommodation

Independent of the age, the availability of an affordable home is one of the most important issues for all return migrants. The offering of housing services is not granted must, but in some countries appropriate provisions or regulations exist.

The accommodation facilities offered vary between temporary and non-temporary accommodation with and without medical help. The cost for housing is partly or fully covered by the commune or the state.

In addition to this, financial help exists in the form of rent subsidies, financial aid for self-help housing, financial aid for purchasing a pre-built apartment or house or low-cost government housing estates, rate subsidy for housing loans, reduction of the insurance contributions up to 50% in cases of house construction and free granting of real estate or parcels of land. Further help is given for the renovation of the apartment.

While in some countries repatriates can choose in which area to live, in other countries they are assigned to areas with free living space. In some countries (Finland, Poland) the proof of being provided with accommodation, for example by the offer of a commune, is a requirement for being granted repatriation.

Accommodation is usually not provided in **Estonia** and has to be arranged independently. For justified social reasons renting of a municipal or social apartment may be applied for from a local municipality. Estonian Migration Foundation can in some cases offer assistance in finding the social accommodation.¹⁶⁴

In **Poland** housing is organized by the communes. In addition to offering an accommodation, the communes may also assist the repatriate in renovation/adaptation of the accommodation premises. Due to the scarcity of housing premises and problems with (permanent) employment offers for repatriates and concerns regarding high costs related to the repatriates settlement these communes are not very keen to engage in inviting repatriates to Poland.

¹⁶⁴ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

However, in case that a commune decides to provide accommodation to a repatriate and his/her family members it becomes eligible for a relevant subsidy from the state budget.¹⁶⁵

Lithuania maintains houses which serve as first accommodation until the state provides them with a living place. For those people who need special care due to sickness or to their advanced age, special living facilities exist. These services particularly apply to those repatriates who had to leave their home countries due to deportations during the Soviet period. In a further step the Lithuanian repatriates are provided with a flat which is free of charge.¹⁶⁶

In cooperation with the mayors of municipalities vacant apartments for the returnees have been localized in the **Czech Republic**. In this regard the Czech Republic benefited particularly from the capacities of former training areas of the Soviet army. The relatively large number of flats facilitated the subsequent integration of the repatriates into society.¹⁶⁷

In **Cyprus**, housing schemes are introduced for those repatriates (displaced persons) who were residents before and up to the time of the Turkish invasion in the territories of Cyprus which today are under the Turkish occupation. These people can choose between a wide variety of housing schemes as there are "Low-cost Government Housing Estates", "Financial Aid for Self-Help Housing on Private Land", "Financial Aid for Purchasing Pre-built Apartment/House", "Financial Aid for Self-Help Housing on Government Land Allocated", "House Renting Allowances" and "Turkish/Cypriot House Allocation". The main criteria for Housing Scheme beneficiaries are the income of the applicant family, the size of the family, and other criteria depending on the scheme's character and the permanent residency in Cyprus.

In addition to the housing schemes offered to special target groups, a rent subsidy scheme is implemented which provides for rent subsidies for the first year of resettlement of those being repatriated and/or those returning to Cyprus, who rent houses, irrespective of whether they are displaced persons or not. With this scheme repatriates are granted the same amount of money as refugees and adversely affected tenants.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁶⁶ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁶⁷ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

¹⁶⁸ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

A general problem with social housing is the scarce availability of apartments and long waiting lists. The **Irish** housing authority focuses every three years exclusively on people whom the authority believes are unable to provide accommodation for themselves, but does not give priority to returning migrants.

A special initiative (Safe Home Programme) to facilitate the provision of social housing for elderly returning migrants has been launched in 2001. To be eligible to apply for housing support, they must be living either in existing social housing abroad or in private rented accommodation and they must not be able to afford suitable accommodation by themselves when returning back.¹⁶⁹

In its program the **Russian Federation** offers repatriates and their family members moving with them a wide variety of financial and social supports. However, the volume of the repatriation supports depends on the category of the chosen destination region. The largest volume is anticipated for the regions of category “A”, the lowest for category “C”.¹⁷⁰

In addition to the travelling costs, the payment of a state tax for the official registration of documents will be refunded. Furthermore, a lump sum for arrangement will be paid. Although the repatriates has the right to choose the territory of their choice, the realization of the move depends on the regions` specific demands on labour force and willingness to accept repatriates. The provision of housing is a part of the government guarantees and is carried out under regional programs. Housing costs may be subsidized by the state.¹⁷¹

Also in **Latvia** the local governments are involved in the resolution of issues associated with the integration of repatriates and provide assistance to repatriates in resolving housing issues. Repatriates may be granted parcels of land to use for the building of houses if there are free parcels of land available in the administrative territory of the local government. A repatriate who left the Republic of Latvia during the period up to 4 May 1990 has the right to material assistance. Those repatriates who in escaping from the terror of the communist and fascist

¹⁶⁹ Brian Cowen, T.D. (2002): *IRELAND AND THE IRISH ABROAD* Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

¹⁷⁰ Nozhenko, Maria (2006): *Motherland Is Calling You! Motives Behind and Prospects for the New Russian Policy on Compatriots Abroad*

¹⁷¹ Decree of the President of the RF from 22 June, 2006 No. 637 On Measures of Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the RF

regimes left Latvia as refugees or who have been unjustifiably repressed or deported have a prior right to material assistance.¹⁷²

The **Hellenic Ministry** of Interior implemented a large scale project for housing of repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Union. According to this, applicants got housing support in various ways such as: rate subsidy for housing loans, free granting of houses, provision of rent subsidies, reduction of the insurance contributions up to 50% in cases of house construction and free granting of real estate.¹⁷³

With the help of *The Catalogue of Land Plots Assessed for Settlement* optimal conditions for settling in regions around the country are assured in **Bulgaria**. Furthermore, a reduction of fees connected to establishing residency is planned for the holders of the Bulgarian Green Card.¹⁷⁴

Although **Finland** does not provide any accommodation facilities, information on housing can be given.¹⁷⁵ In the case of Ingrian Finns the proof of having found an accommodation is a prerequisite for returning.¹⁷⁶

In **Germany** repatriates (Spätaussiedler) arrive directly in a first reception facility where registration and distribution processes take place. According to a distribution key the repatriates are allocated to different federal states. In this process family ties as well as employment and training opportunities are taken into account.¹⁷⁷ Repatriates from the former USSR who were born before 1 April 1956 receive a fixed financial compensation for the detention to which they were subjected during and after the war.¹⁷⁸

In the **United Kingdom** returnees are assisted in fulfilling practical needs as for example social housing by the network of local authorities.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷² Latvian Repatriation Law

¹⁷³ Reply of Penny Tsipa, Greek EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁷⁴ Government's National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria

¹⁷⁵ Reply of Arja Saarto, Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 21.01.2009

¹⁷⁶ Web page of the Finnish Immigration Service

¹⁷⁷ Web page of the Federal Administrative Court Germany

¹⁷⁸ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 26.01.2009

¹⁷⁹ Reply of Sarah Poppleton, United Kingdoms EMN NCP, 23.01.2009

In **Slovenia** accommodation and meals are offered to repatriates and their immediate family members in an immigration centre. Repatriated persons who have significant own funds at their disposal are expected to contribute a proportional part of the costs. Repatriated persons who are not accommodated in the immigration centre are also entitled to co-funding under the same conditions.¹⁸⁰

Swiss repatriates are free to take up residence wherever they desire. The commune chosen is also responsible in case that a repatriate is in a financial distress and in need of social welfare assistance.¹⁸¹ If there is no possibility to live together with relatives or friends, repatriates have to indicate the commune where they would want to live. This commune is assigned then to find an appropriate accommodation. Old, ill or disabled repatriates who want to live in an adequate institution have to provide a detailed medical certificate.¹⁸²

In the **Czech Republic** returnees under the repatriation organized by the Ministry of the Interior are provided with housing in municipal rental flats. Housing, assistance during the first months of residence, cash for the first month of residence and finances for household equipment were provided to the returnees from Kazakhstan repatriated in 2007.¹⁸³

6.3.2 Travel support

The reimbursement of travel costs is part of the support of countries with an active repatriation policy. This especially applies to countries whose repatriates are victims of deportations. In some countries restriction are made in regard to the amount of money for travel support.

In **Estonia** travel costs can be (partly) applied for from Estonian Migration Foundation, if the repatriate needs it due to his/her economical and social status and answers certain criteria (like being living abroad for at least last 1 years).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad

¹⁸¹ Web page of the Swiss citizens living abroad organization

¹⁸² Web page of the Swiss Confederation's Justice and Police Department

¹⁸³ Interview with Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.migfond.ee/index.php?page=1349&lang=eng>

The **Latvian** state provides an allowance linked to travel costs incurred with the permanent move to Latvia, provided that the associated documents proving the expenditures are submitted within one year of receipt/ issuance (up to 500 lats per person).¹⁸⁵

In **Poland** the travel costs (train ticket(s) II class) and additionally a sum equal to one II class train ticket to cover the costs of transport of belongings are provided.¹⁸⁶

The **Russian** government refunds travel costs on the condition that a repatriate lives and works at least two years in his/her new home region. Otherwise he/she has to reimburse the cost of his/her repatriation.¹⁸⁷

Due to its character of “humanitarian evacuation” the first resettlements to the **Czech Republic** took place as a mass movement of the entire groups of expatriates with the assistance of busses and trucks.¹⁸⁸ The relocation of repatriates who came later within the framework of a programme supporting relocation on individual basis was financed from the budget of the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁸⁹

In **Lithuania**, returning deportees receive assistance in covering travel expenses.¹⁹⁰

Swiss citizens living abroad can apply for the reimbursement of travel costs if they are intent on staying in Switzerland and if, in case they have a second citizenship, the Swiss citizenship is predominant. Repatriates have to choose for the most beneficial and most appropriate means of transport. Costs of transport for household and personal effects can be refunded if their value is in due proportion to transport and recovery costs. Two estimations of costs and a list of the household and personal effects designated for transport are required by the responsible authority.¹⁹¹ Since the travel support is offered in the framework of social assistance only those who are not able to pay the return by themselves, are supported. Further

¹⁸⁵ Web page of the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

¹⁸⁶ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁸⁷ Radio Free Europe: Russia: Putin's Repatriation Scheme Off To Slow Start

¹⁸⁸ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

¹⁸⁹ Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (2007): 2006 Status Report on Migration in the Czech Republic

¹⁹⁰ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

¹⁹¹ Web page of the Swiss Confederation's Justice and Police Department

requirements are that the time having lived abroad should be at least five years and that the Swiss citizenship law is predominant.¹⁹²

According to the Migrant Workers and Overseas **Filipinos** Act of 1995 the repatriation of the returnee and the transport of his/her belongings shall be the primary responsibility of the agency which recruited or deployed the worker overseas. In cases of catastrophes the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) undertakes the repatriation.¹⁹³

6.3.3 Unemployment insurance, health insurance and other social welfare services

Social security is in addition to employment and housing one of most important requirements for repatriates. Particularly, if people have not found a job in the country of origin before departure and in the case of social hardship bridge money is needed.

With the introduction of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of the Council of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community and its corrigendum (EEC) No. 574/72 the access to social security for moving families within in EU Member States has been improved.¹⁹⁴ Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 applies to all legislation relating to the social security branches concerning sickness and maternity benefits, invalidity benefits, old age benefits, survivors' benefits, benefits in respect of accident at work and occupational diseases, unemployment benefits, family benefits and death grants. The Council Regulation (EC) No 859/2003 of 14 May 2003 extended this regulation to nationals of third countries and their family members who are not already covered by those provisions solely on the ground of their nationality as far as the person concerned is already legally resident in the territory of a Member State.

It should be mentioned that this regulation only applies to workers and its dependants and persons who are studying or are undergoing vocational training and to their families moving within the Community. To unemployed persons this regulation applies within certain limits and is subject to strict conditions. However persons living outside of the EU border and

¹⁹² Reply of Rahel Schweizer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 16.02.2009

¹⁹³ Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995

¹⁹⁴ COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 859/2003 of 14 May 2003 extending the provisions of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 and Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 to nationals of third countries who are not already covered by those provisions solely on the ground of their nationality

returning to an EU Member State are not covered. Additionally it does not apply to medical or social assistance or benefit schemes for war victims. Consequently persons living in the Russian Federation due to the Holocaust and deportations during the Soviet Union period are not covered by these regulations.

In addition, benefits given by the different Member States may vary and do not guarantee that it is enough to live on. The entitlement to welfare services may also depend on bilateral agreements between sending and receiving country, the constitution, former contributions to the social welfare system and the residence permit status.

Social welfare entitlements do not necessarily depend on the fact that a repatriation policy exists or not. In some countries repatriates can at least expect the amount of services asylum seekers are entitled to.

Since **Estonia** is a European Union Member State the above mentioned regulations also apply for ethnic Estonians and Estonian citizens who have worked in another EU country. In addition to that, Estonia has co-operation agreements for pension with Canada, Ukraine and Russia. The agreements concluded with Canada and Ukraine provide payment of pension under the same conditions as in the European Union Member States. The agreement concluded with the Russian Federation provides that Estonia pays pension also to the Russians living in Estonia and the Russian Federation pays pension to the Estonians living in its territory.

Aliens receive pension from Estonia in case they have worked in Estonia during at least one year before retiring. In such case pension is given for the time worked in Estonia. On the basis of the respective co-operation agreements, the service length of the pre-pension age persons who have gone to live abroad may be recalculated.¹⁹⁵ A small social benefit for retired repatriates and their family members is foreseen in case no social security contract exists with the country of departure and if their income is smaller than the national pension. This pension is paid up to five years until repatriates are entitled to a national pension.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

What concerns health insurance no special regulations apply for repatriates. The right to have health insurance has a person for who the social tax is paid or who pay the social tax for themselves (i.e. sole proprietors), pensioners and all young people under 19, irrespective of the fact if their parents are working or not.¹⁹⁷

Every person who has at least a temporary residence permit has the right for benefits. The family benefits include among other things a single childbirth benefit, monthly child allowance, monthly child care allowance, monthly single parent's child care allowance and school allowance. The parent benefit covers the income not received due to raising a small child. The amount of the benefit in a month is, as a rule 100 % of the average income per calendar month in preceding calendar year subject to social tax.¹⁹⁸

In **Poland** repatriated persons have the same rights as Polish citizen with this regard, i.e. they are subject to the same social security schemes as every other unemployed Polish citizen. In case the repatriate status is granted the period of employment abroad is taken into account in establishing the repatriate's disability and old age pension rights.¹⁹⁹

In case of unemployment the **Latvian** state provides an allowance equivalent to 90% of the minimum wage. To receive it, within one year of moving to Latvia the repatriate has to submit an application to the Latvian Repatriation Office and has to register with the State Employment Service as unemployed person. The allowance is paid out monthly for a period up to six months, while the repatriate is unemployed. The repatriation office may also provide material assistance for the repatriates in other cases regarding the adaptation and integration, examining the circumstances at the repatriate's residence place.²⁰⁰ Repatriated pensioners have the right to receive a pension in accordance with the Law on State Pensions.²⁰¹

The **Finnish** government compensates municipalities for the costs of returnees, e.g. expenditure on income support and integration support, up to a period of six months. In

¹⁹⁷ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

¹⁹⁸ Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

¹⁹⁹ The Repatriation Act of 9 November 2000

²⁰⁰ Web page of the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

²⁰¹ Latvian Repatriation Law

special cases, income support and expenditure arising from chronic illness or disability can be compensated for up to five years.²⁰²

The **Russian** compensation package for repatriates includes a list of social support measures like health service, social support and employment services. The cost of the compensation package is implemented at the expense of respective budgets and the volume of services depends on the destination region.²⁰³

Germany has concluded social security agreements with various countries with regard to pension insurance. Stints spent working abroad can be included in insurance periods.²⁰⁴

As soon as a **Swiss** national who has lived a longer or shorter time abroad returns to Switzerland s/he has the same rights as every Swiss national living in Switzerland. However, social welfare assistance is only paid to those who are threatened in their existence and is provided by the cantons. There might be single services for which repatriates are not eligible to apply for due to their short time of residence within a canton.²⁰⁵ Swiss nationals, who have lived in a non-EU/EFTA country for more than one year and have worked there for at least six months, may be eligible to unemployment benefits in Switzerland under certain conditions. They can claim unemployment benefits if they can prove at least twelve month of dependent personal services in the last two years.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Swiss repatriates may apply under certain circumstances for a small flat loan which can be used as a financial bridge over or for reintegration offers such as language, computer or adaptation courses. A requirement is that the return to Switzerland is not longer than one year ago.²⁰⁷

In addition to meals and lodging **Slovenian** repatriates are provided with free healthcare for duration of 15 months. Repatriated persons with no income or other earnings and who have no persons liable for and capable of providing are entitled to financial assistance. This entitlement should not last more than 15 months. If a repatriated person takes up employment s/he loses the right to financial aid. Additionally, special permanent recognition allowances

²⁰² Web page of the Finnish Ministry of the Interior

²⁰³ Decree of the President of the RF from 22 June, 2006 No. 637 On Measures of Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the RF

²⁰⁴ Reply of Marie-Luise Bräunlein, German EMN NCP, 26.01.2009

²⁰⁵ Reply of Rahel Schweizer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 16.02.2009

²⁰⁶ Web page of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration

²⁰⁷ Swiss citizens living abroad organization: Returning to Switzerland (Leaflet)

are granted to older repatriated persons who have significantly contributed to the maintenance and development of Slovenian tradition and language abroad and to teachers of supplementary classes in Slovenian language who received no payment for giving lessons on that subject.²⁰⁸

In **Ireland** a wide range of income supports such as the provision for unemployment, illness, maternity, widowhood, retirement and old age are covered. Other provisions include employment supports for jobseekers and people at work on low pay and a range of secondary benefits such as free travel for pensioners. The access to certain social welfare assistance payments and Child Benefit however depends on the successful fulfilling of the Habitual Residence Condition. "This condition took effect from 1 May 2004 and affects all applicants regardless of nationality."

Criteria to be considered as a Habitually Resident are:

1. the returnee's residence in Ireland (or the Common Travel Area)
2. the returnee's reasons for leaving Ireland (or the Common Travel Area)
3. the returnee's employment record in Ireland and abroad
4. the main centre of interest (i.e. close family in Ireland, a home, a job, friends)
5. the future intention to remain in Ireland (Has the returnee arranged a job? Has he/she bought a house? Signed a rental agreement?)²⁰⁹

Nevertheless, persons which are not normally eligible to receive assistance under the Supplementary Welfare Scheme may be granted an Urgent Needs payment which covers food and clothes.

²⁰⁸ Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians abroad

²⁰⁹ Crosscare Migrant Project: Benefits and Entitlements

7. Organization and financing of the return support

7.1 Institutions and organizations offering repatriation support

Return migration issues are usually under the responsibility of governmental authorities such as the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Very often these work together with NGOs which are supported by the government.

This is also the case in **Estonia** where repatriation support is implemented mainly by the Estonian Migration Foundation, which is the state foundation with the rights of the executor of the Ministry of Interior. But also the Minister of Population should take more initiative here, as by the coalition agreement she is responsible for creating a working programme of inviting expatriates back to Estonia. Some non-financial help and counselling for compatriots living abroad is offered by Estonian embassies abroad and the Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board. A small social benefit for retired repatriates and their family members is foreseen under special circumstances organized by the Estonian Social Insurance Board. Two NGOs, one small grassroots NGO in Tartu – Balti Integratsiooni Liit - leaders of which are repatriates from Georgia and Greece and a compatriot NGO from Crimea, Ukraine have tried to become active in this field asked for governmental support.²¹⁰

An example for a network of repatriation support is Ireland the government of which supports about 180 emigrant services organizations across Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada and Southern Africa.²¹¹ One of the recommendations given to the Irish government by an independent team of experts is the consideration of contracting specific services from second line organizations, and some of the larger front line organizations. Additionally, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs focuses on the improvement of coordination and the establishment of closer cooperation with other organizations and Government Departments providing services which have an impact on the target group in order to avoid any duplication

²¹⁰ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 05.03.2009.

²¹¹ Reply of Sinead Ryan, Irish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 27.01.2009

of service. In addition to the coordination between the governmental departments this particularly implies “closer cooperation between statutory and voluntary agencies in Ireland and abroad” and the increase of the “capacity of the voluntary agencies to engage effectively with central and local authorities in the host countries”.²¹²

In countries where no repatriation support is offered a number of private companies offer their services for a fee. These services are usually broader and shaped to the individual needs of the returnees. However the high fee suggests that socially disadvantaged persons cannot afford these services.

In **Switzerland** also a private organization offering repatriation support is financially supported by the state.²¹³

7.2 Financing of the repatriation support

In **Estonia** repatriation support is offered through the Estonian Migration Foundation (EMF) which is a state foundation with the executor of the right of the founder being Minister of Interior. EMF has to apply Ministry of Interior for the allocation from the state budget every year. Decision of how much of this allocation may be spend on repatriation support, is decided by the council of the foundation. 2007 and 2008 repatriation activities have been financed in a smaller amount also by the Programme of Compatriots, which is under the responsibility of the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs. EMF has also applied for funding from the European Social Fund and Estonian Gambling Tax Board for certain activities (adaptation and language trainings as well as labour market assistance for repatriates and their family members).

In **Latvia** in accordance with article 19 and 20 of the Repatriation law the budget for the financial support to the repatriates is 51 thousand lats per year and it is financed from the state budget. The Repatriation Division of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of the

²¹² Irish Department of Foreign Affairs: Statement of Strategy 2008 – 2010

²¹³ Reply of Rahel Schweizer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 16.02.2009

Ministry of Interior of Latvia examines the applications submitted by the repatriates regarding material support and other kind of assistance.²¹⁴

In **Poland** there is a special purpose state budgetary reserve "Assistance for repatriates". Financial means are launched by the Ministry of Finance on application of the Ministry of Interior and Administration and transferred to budgets of relevant voivodes (local authorities). Each year in the budgetary act there is a certain amount of financial means allocated for implementation of tasks resulting from the act on repatriation (section: expenditure of the state budget - purpose reserves). For 2007, the financial means allocated in the state budget for the purpose of repatriation amounted to 12 mln PLN / year; for the two following years - 10 mln PLN / year. The amount was decreased due to lower numbers of repatriates and consequently lower expenditure related to different forms of assistance in this area.²¹⁵

In Switzerland the repatriates' travel costs²¹⁶ are reimbursed by the Swiss State from its general tax revenue. According to tradition the Federal Law and Police Department organizes and pays the travel cost with the help of the Swiss missions abroad. There is a designated budget that has never been used to its full amount. In case the budget should not last, a supplementary loan should be applied for.²¹⁷

In **Germany**, due to the diversity of initiatives aiming at supporting the return or the (re-) integration of German citizens and repatriates to Germany, the funding of every single programme is different. Because of Germany's federal structure, programmes may be financed from federal budgets, state (regional) budgets and / or both levels or by welfare/charity organizations and foundations, which in turn, sometimes receive subsidies from state or federal budgets.

For example, the funding for the initial reception and integration of German repatriates who emigrated in past centuries or who lived in former German territories to the east of the Oder or Neisse rivers, is estimated on a yearly basis and provided by the budget of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. The amount of the funding is adjusted according to the number of

²¹⁴ Reply of Mara Prah, Latvian Ministry of Interior, 25.02.2009

²¹⁵ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration, 02.03.2009

²¹⁶ Travel costs are reimbursed if a person finds himself/herself in an emergency situation. This support is only given if financial help from the returnee's relatives, friends and acquaintances can be excluded.

²¹⁷ Reply of Rachel Schweizer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 06.03.2009

eligible persons. In 2009, approximately 5 million Euros will be provided for the initial reception of repatriates.

Additionally, an estimate of approximately 4, 331, 000 Euro will be provided as “fixed integration aids” ("pauschale Wiedereingliederungshilfen") to repatriates from the former USSR, who were born before 1 April 1956.

There is also a number of integration projects aiming specifically at repatriates and addressing issues such as help in dealing with everyday problems or integration into the labour market. In 2008, a total of 116 such measures received funding in the amount of 750, 000 Euro. In 2006 through 2007, 254 measures received a total of approximately 1, 300, 000 million euros.²¹⁸

In **Ireland** the vast majority of returning Irish emigrants does not request State assistance in making arrangements for their return. The Department of Foreign Affairs provides assistance to those who do require support through the direct funding of organizations which support returning emigrants, and through the provision of advice and support via our global network of Embassies and Consulates.

Through the Emigrant Support Programme, the Government allocates funding to voluntary sector organizations to support a range of services to Irish communities abroad, as well as to returning emigrants and to Irish citizens considering emigration. Many of the frontline welfare organizations in receipt of Government funding do advise and counsel Irish emigrants considering a return to Ireland, with a number of them focusing specifically on this area.

The Government Emigrant Support Programme is coordinated by the Irish Abroad Unit, a dedicated Unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Programme, which is State funded, is allocated an annual budget, which, over the past three years, has remained at a little over €15 million. Organizations and projects, including those targeted at supporting returning emigrants, apply directly to the Irish Abroad Unit for Programme funding, with applications considered on an annual basis.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Reply of Bernd Parusel, German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. 19.03.2009

²¹⁹ Reply of Bryan Cahill, Irish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 19.12.2008

8. Experiences with former strategies

Some changes in repatriation policies have been reported and are mainly concerned with changes in legislation, restrictions and broadening of the support offers and the change in definition of the target group. In some countries (e.g. **Slovenia**) where repatriation policies are a new development no former experiences exist.

In general repatriation support can be organized on a permanent basis or within the framework of temporary programmes.

Ongoing repatriation support was offered among others by **Estonia** and **Germany**. In both countries support measures and target group have been restricted respectively over the years. In Estonia financial assistance to returnees has been offered steadily since 1992, as well as information providing and counselling in some amount. Since 2005 more importance has been paid to non-financial support like counselling and trainings.

After having had the lowest number of applications in 2005 **Estonia** experienced a rising number of return applications. The reason for the increase in the number of returnees can definitely not be explained by a single aspect rather than by different ones. One explanation is that the rules for return support changed. Whereas in earlier times only persons who left Estonia before regaining independence could apply for support henceforward also the persons who have lived at least ten years abroad (that means also persons who left in the 1990s) belonged to the target group of return support. Other reasons might be information campaigns or the development of the Estonian society and economy to a state that could have been perceived by youth with Estonian roots a state offering new development potentialities. With regard to the life course approach another explanation may be that people who left in the beginning of the 1990s, got tired of travelling and living abroad or their children got to school age. No significant relation could be assessed between the amount of support and the number of applications.²²⁰

²²⁰ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

After the Second World War Germany implemented an integration program for repatriates with German origin living in former German territories to the East of the rivers Oder or Neisse. The return of these persons was financially supported and a broad range of social welfare services and integration measures were offered. However after the break down of the former Soviet Union the amount of repatriates increased to such a high level that restrictions in regard to the amount of repatriates per year as well as steep cuts in the integration programme were introduced in 1992. At the same time the population of repatriates coming to Germany changed. While at the beginning repatriates came mainly from Poland, former Czechoslovakia and Rumania and had a good command of German later repatriates came from the CIS states and had a poor German knowledge. Steep cuts in the integration programme therefore took place when actually more support was needed.²²¹ In relation to the democratization processes in the Eastern Europe it was discussed in public if German minorities abroad still can be regarded as a victim of the consequences of war. As a result applicants had, according to the new law, to prove being a victim of discrimination. However, this regulation does not apply to the repatriates with German origin coming from former Soviet Union States.²²² Since 1997 a proof of German language skills is required for a successful repatriation application. Consequently the amount of returnees to Germany has decreased.²²³

An example of temporary programmes is the repatriation policy of the **Czech Republic**. In total there were three completed operations since 1946 during which the return of a number of repatriates was supported. These operations were primarily a response to the victims of extraordinary hardships as the Second World War and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. These exceptional humanitarian evacuations have to be considered separately from following programmes where the repatriation from selected areas of the former Soviet Union were based on the basis of an individual application for permanent residence permit which requires the fulfilment of the conditions formulated in Act No. 123/1992. Assistance was mainly focused on helping with administrative steps as well as ensuring housing and employment. In the fourth stage – “the completion of resettlement”- in 2007 compatriots from Kazakhstan who

²²¹ Jan Schneider (2000): Integration. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Ed.): Aussiedler

²²² Ute Heinen (2000): Zuwanderung und Integration in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. In : Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Ed.): Aussiedler

²²³ Lena Khuen-Belasi: Warum Spätaussiedler in Deutschland zwischen allen Stühlen sitzen. In: Frankfurter Rundschau, 27.09.1999

had not taken advantage of the opportunity in the past were resettled with the help of the state.²²⁴

An example for changes in legislation and the extension of support offers in **Poland** and the **Russian Federation**.

In **Poland** scarcity of the legal regulations in this resulted in a pragmatic, expedient solution, based on interpretation of the existing law resulted in the introduction of the Act of foreigners and the concept of the ‘repatriation visa’ and the rules of its issuance in 1997. Since 1 January 2000, the aforementioned regulations have been replaced by the Act of 9 November 2000 on repatriation. With its repatriation Act, introduced in 2000, Poland extended the catalogue of financial assistance offered to repatriates and to relevant local governments. In 2004 an amendment to the Act included the rules on professional activity of repatriates and introduced certain advantageous changes for spouses of repatriates who are not of Polish origins – in the current legal framework, they are entitled to a permit to settle in Poland, which gives them a possibility to work without a permit and to health and social assistance.²²⁵

Before the implementation of its program in 2006 the **Russian** repatriation policy was quite restrictive and repatriation assistance was only meant to be provided in cases of discrimination “in the domain of human rights and freedoms and the rights of minorities” as well as in the event of military conflicts in places of their residence “which would cause threat to “their rights to personal security”. Russia primarily concentrated on protecting the human rights of their expatriates as well as on fostering the integration of its Russian compatriots living in former Soviet States.²²⁶

8.1 Successes

Successes of repatriation policies have sparsely been reported. When talking about “successful” repatriation policies we have to define what is meant by this term. Is it the number of repatriates attracted by repatriation support or their successful integration into the

²²⁴ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

²²⁵ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 24.11.2008

²²⁶ Nozhenko, Maria (2006): Motherland Is Calling You! Motives Behind and Prospects for the New Russian Policy on Compatriots Abroad

receiving society? It should be evident that both aspects are very important when talking about successful repatriation practices.

What concerns the quantity of returning migrants it could be observed that with the help of the program “Talcinieki” which paired people in the West with jobs in **Latvia** a small minority of compatriots could be attracted to come home.²²⁷

Germany experienced a big inflow of repatriates since the enacting of the Federal Expellee Law in 1953. One current opinion about the big inflows is that the return is primarily motivated by the amount of monetary incentives and the better economic situation in Germany compared to the former Soviet Union States. Despite a big number of integration measures Germany failed to integrate this huge amount of returnees in an appropriate way.²²⁸

Finland experienced a large return movement of over 10,000 Ingrian Finns to Finland within a couple of years when the former Finnish President Mauno Koivisto raised the issue of ethnic Finns living in the Soviet Union, declaring that the same criteria of return migration should be applied to Soviet Finns as to ethnic Finns returning from Sweden (or other Western countries).²²⁹

In **Poland** the increase of applications is explained by the increasing difference between living conditions in Poland and in the Eastern countries where Polish minorities reside.²³⁰

During the 1980s the government of the Pan **Hellenic** Socialist Party (PASOK) introduced a repatriation policy aiming at Greek workers in Germany as a consequence of a negative population growth. The Hellenic government offered an attractive package of incentives which consisted of large financial inducements as well as promises of special reabsorption schools for the children, offering bilingual education. Although there were inadequate numbers of schools and places for the returnee children, the program was very successful and significant numbers of Greeks in Germany did repatriate in the 1980s. Together with the

²²⁷ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

²²⁸ Ute Heinen (2000): Zuwanderung und Integration in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. In : Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Ed.): Aussiedler

²²⁹ Kyntäjä, Eve (2003): Towards the Development of an Integration Policy in Finland. In: Friedrich Heckmann, Dominique Schnapper (Ed.): The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies: National Differences and Trends of Convergence, Lucius & Lucius DE, 2003 :192

²³⁰ Web page of the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration

home country inducements the fact that Greece joined the European Community in 1981 and could claim full membership privileges in the late 1980s played a significant role. In this case a return to Germany was possible.²³¹

As regards the *integration* of repatriates successful approaches reported refer to strategies which aim the integration into the labour market and educational system. In addition to language skills which are an important precondition, success in the labour market and educational system are key factors of social and economical integration.²³²

In **Lithuania** several strategies for settling and integration in the labour market and educational system are reported to be successful.²³³ In the field of education these are schools specialized in supporting education of repatriates' children, compensation languages classes for Lithuanian students who returned to Lithuania but have problems with Lithuanian language, special individual programs for returnee students (returnee students get more money from the government during the study year), distance courses in Lithuanian language and history for students who emigrated with their families and course books for students who do not speak Lithuanian. Furthermore, training for teachers on how to integrate emigrant children back in the class is organized. For Lithuanians who have studied abroad and want to study in Lithuanian universities special admission rules with positive discrimination for these students exists. In the framework of a program on how to return highly qualified nationals special stipends for scholars who return to Lithuania from abroad are offered.²³⁴

As regards the integration into the labour market **Lithuania** finances the establishment of job places for returnees and organizes qualification and other courses in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market. Furthermore Lithuania offers financial assistance to start small businesses.²³⁵

²³¹ Ruth Mandel (1995): The Turkish Diaspora in Germany. In Sharon Stephens (ed.): Children and the Politics of Culture, Princeton University Press

²³² Esser, Hartmut : Integration und ethnische Schichtung. Zusammenfassung einer Studie für das „Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung“

²³³ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

²³⁴ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

²³⁵ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

In the **Czech Republic**, both organized and individual repatriation results in inflow of persons who can integrate well and who are of benefit for the country. It is reported that there were only few troublesome individuals, but of inconsiderable percentage.²³⁶

8.2 Failures

In the same way as the successes of repatriation the failures have to be considered by both criteria quantity and the problems faced concerning the integration of repatriates.

Failures of repatriation practices having been reported by experts often refer to different hindrances in regard to financial issues and social security systems, family relationships and language difficulties, a lack of information and difficulties in the recognition of qualifications. Wrong expectations towards the country of origin as well as overreaching expectations towards the returnees are further problems. Finally, a lack of incentives due to limited capacities and a lack of money in the communes keep expatriates from returning to their country of origin.

In regard to its last national compatriots program **Estonia** failed due to the lack of a common agreement between the different institutions. More activities were planned than were in reality implemented. Neither action plan nor a common budget plan existed and every ministry or organization had their own activities in their field. A second problem is the lack of money and the attention of higher officials in the responsible ministry.²³⁷

8.2.1 Social security schemes

The acceptance of repatriates requires an opportunity structure which offers repatriates at least a place to live and a workplace for repatriates in working age. Furthermore the acceptance of repatriates results in ongoing costs if these cannot cover their own living expenses. Thus communes are reluctant to accept returnees if appropriate opportunities are not available.

²³⁶ Reply of Jan Rychlik, Czech EMN NCP, 09.03.2009

²³⁷ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

Due to the fact that in the **Russian Federation** regions are only partly subsidized by the government, a number of regions that have to cover most of the expenses themselves are unwilling to accept repatriates at least during the initial phase of the plan. Another hindrance in this connection is a high rate of unemployment.²³⁸ The same is observable in **Poland**.²³⁹

But even if financial support for travelling and housing is given by the commune the provision for ongoing expenses is not for granted in every country and can depend for example on former social security contributions. This insecurity in regard to the future livelihood is especially a problem for middle-aged or older people who may have problems in finding work as well as people in pension age.

This obstacle also hindered **Latvian** compatriots who were deported to Siberia during the Soviet occupation of Latvia and decided to continue to live in Northern Russia.²⁴⁰

In **Estonia** the lack of affordable or social accommodation is probably the main obstacle of return for less insured expatriates.

Since May 2004 the access to social assistance payments in **Ireland** requires the "habitual residence" of a person which have to be evidenced by "a regular physical presence enduring for some time, beginning at a date usually in the past and intended to continue for a period into the foreseeable future. It implies a close association between the applicant and the country from which payment is claimed and relies heavily on fact". However, "habitual residence cannot be determined simply by reference to a specific period of residence in a country". The length and continuity of a person's residence must be considered along with other factors like the:

- Length and continuity of residence in Ireland or in any other particular country
- Length and purpose of any absence from Ireland
- Nature and pattern of employment
- Applicant's main centre of interest
- Future intentions of applicant as they appear from all the circumstances.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Radio Free Europe: Russia: Putin's Repatriation Scheme Off To Slow Start

²³⁹ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 24.11.2008

²⁴⁰ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

²⁴¹ Irish Citizens Information Board: „ Residence requirements for social assistance in Ireland“

For Irish repatriates the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) has become of crucial importance. According to the information of the Crosscare Migrant Project 1684 applicants (February 2008) failed to pass the test since the implementation of this test and are therefore refused state support. That is more than one person every day on average. The majority of returning Irish emigrants have no immediate need to access the welfare system as they either enter the labour market, have made adequate social insurance contributions and via bilateral social security agreements or have qualified for a pension on their return to Ireland. However there is a group of persons who do not apply to these options and also fail the HRC despite clear connections with the country and state support is required.²⁴²

8.2.2 Family relationships and language difficulties

Compatriots who left their country of origin in their younger days or were even born in another country may have established a family and married a partner of a foreign nationality. Family relations in the country of residence may therefore operate as a pull factor and hinder the return to the country of origin. In addition, a partner of foreign nationality can be faced with problems in terms of adaptation in the country of origin, especially in the case of insufficient language skills.

In addition to the non-existence of a social security system and the small pensions, family relationships in the country of residence is one of the main reasons why the number of deportees who have returned to **Latvia** in the 1990s is quite small.²⁴³

With regard to the integration of its repatriates and family relations the **Czech Republic** experienced another kind of problem. Here problems observed by the Czech Republic refer rather to the compatriots who could *not* return to the country of origin due to different reasons and experienced a breakdown of their family due to the time limited repatriation support.²⁴⁴

With respect to language skills **Latvian** compatriots living in western countries faced a special problem. Due to the Russian-speaking majority which does not speak Latvian, these

²⁴² Issues and Proposals of Crosscare Migrant Project for the Joint Committee on Social and Family Affairs on the Habitual Residence Condition and its implications for returning Irish emigrants February 2008

²⁴³ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

²⁴⁴ Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

people concluded, much to their dissatisfaction, that they must learn Russian in order to function in Latvia.²⁴⁵

8.2.3 Lack of information and (wrong) expectations

Whether integration can be described as successful or not, is not a question of the expectations of the repatriates as well as the receiving society. The case of **Latvian** repatriates returning from western countries showed that wrong expectations and information from both sides can lead to quite substantial contradictions between the local population and returning migrants. After the regaining of independence Latvia campaigned actively for the return of Latvians living in Western countries which have been active in many squares of life and have particularly helped to make substantial changes in Latvia's educational system. Due to the dissemination of information and the help of the program "Talcinieki" (sponsored by the American Latvian Association) that paired people in the West with jobs in Latvia a small number of ethnic Latvians were ready to come home. Arrived in Latvia many of those who returned had difficulties to reintegrate. The Latvian government could not offer any specific policy for integrating the western repatriates, but a lot of challenges and possibilities for talented and skilled people in the area of reform programs. Hoping for refreshing inputs from Western experience the local Latvians had to be disaffected as not every repatriate was as hard-working and skilled as expected. Moreover, most western Latvians maintained dual citizenship and were accused to be ready to leave Latvia if the situation become worse. In the same way the interest of western Latvians declined, especially due to the increasing cost of living in Latvia. A lack of information and contacts with Latvian institutions was just another problem.²⁴⁶

A problematic relationship between potential repatriates and the receiving society may also be a reason for little response to repatriation services in **Russia**. The apparent reluctance of many Russians to accept newcomers is shown by a survey conducted in 2006 by the Moscow-based VTsIOM polling institute. According to the results of this survey 49 percent said they believed Russia should accept repatriates only if it would be economically profitable. In rural areas, only 37 percent of respondents said they were ready to accept newcomers.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

²⁴⁶ Juris Prikulis (1997): Migration and Repatriation Issues in Post-Soviet Countries: the Latvian Case. Riga

²⁴⁷ Radio Free Europe: Russia: Putin's Repatriation Scheme Off To Slow Start

In addition to adolescence returnees also children may be victims of xenophobic tendencies as it is shown by the experiences made by the **Greek** and **Turkish** returnees' children returning from Germany.²⁴⁸

8.2.4 Lack of incentives

Another reason why the repatriation policy of the **Russian Federation** does not show any success can be explained by the fact that it imposed too many conditions on potential applicants. Among these requirements are the obligation to live and work at least two years in their new home region, or to reimburse the cost of their repatriation, to bear the cost of the resettlement of any disabled relatives, or to be tested for AIDS, tuberculosis, or drug use. According to the analyst Yatsenko the repatriation scheme came too late and had too few economic incentives "as most of the active compatriots have already moved to countries with a more favourable economic and political environment".²⁴⁹

8.2.5 Recognition of qualifications and documents

The recognition of qualifications and professional experiences as well as the driving licenses obtained abroad has been asserted by several countries (e.g. **Ireland**) as a significant hindrance for some people who like to return to and also work in their country of origin. The issue of recognition is quite complicated as it is not only a question of legal acts but also of professional bodies which are not directly subject to Government control.²⁵⁰

At EU level one can distinguish between academic and professional recognition. What concerns academic recognition of a title or of a period of study abroad in order to continue studying in the country of origin, each member State is responsible under the Amsterdam Treaty for its own educational content and organization. Secondly, there are no Community provisions imposing mutual recognition of diplomas (except for certain regulated occupations).

²⁴⁸ Ruth Mandel (1995): *The Turkish Diaspora in Germany*. In Sharon Stephens (ed.): *Children and the Politics of Culture*, Princeton University Press

²⁴⁹ Radio Free Europe: *Russia: Putin's Repatriation Scheme Off To Slow Start*

²⁵⁰ Brian Cowen, T.D. (2002): *IRELAND AND THE IRISH ABROAD* Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

As regards recognition for professional purposes, it is important to distinguish between professions that are regulated from the standpoint of qualifications and non-regulated professions. A profession is defined as regulated if it is a statutory requirement to hold a diploma or other occupational qualification in order to pursue the profession in question. If a person who is seeking recognition of their diploma in order to pursue a regulated profession in a Member State other than the one in which s/he obtained the qualifications, the issue is covered by Community law. The two directives applicable are Directive 89/48/EEC and Directive 92/51/EEC.

As already mentioned there is no list of diplomas recognized at European level since a diploma is not recognized for its intrinsic value but according to the profession to which it gives access in the country which awarded it. It is for the person concerned to submit an individual application specifying clearly which occupation s/he wishes to pursue. Automatically recognized are professions are doctor, dentist, nurse, veterinarian, and pharmacist, mid-wife and architect in so far as they fulfil the minimum training conditions laid down by community legislation. In case the profession which is wished to pursue is not regulated the recognition of the diploma is subject to the market.²⁵¹

In **Estonia** (like in every other European Union Member State) a driver's license issued in another Member State are accepted. If a license was issued outside the European Union, it must be established if the license was issued and formalized according to the principles of the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic or 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic and their subsequent agreements and supplements to the Conventions. A driver's license complying with the mentioned requirements is valid in Estonia for 12 months from the settling in Estonia of the owner of the license or issue of the residence permit. Such license must be replaced with a driver's license issued in Estonia by the mentioned date (12 months from arrival to Estonia). This can be done without passing the exams if the owner of the license has been conducting properly in the traffic and has not violated the traffic rules during a year.²⁵²

8.3 Abuse of return support and its prevention:

²⁵¹ European Commission: Recognition of diplomas in the European Union

²⁵² Web page of the Estonian Migration Foundation

Where social and especially financial support is distributed the danger of abuse of these supports always exists. The repatriation services offered by the different countries are manifold and the control of abuse, especially due to different legal territories, is not easy to be carried out.

Therefore the authorities responsible for repatriation issues implemented some instruments rather made policies in order to avoid misuse. Basically the fulfilment of the requirement for getting support has to be proven with corresponding documents handed in by the applicant. While the applicant's origin belongs to the facts that are easier to check out information about the financial situation, possible discrimination and the commitment to the country of origin and its culture are more difficult to prove. In countries where repatriation support depends on economical hardship the check-up of the applicant's financial situation is all but impossible.

No trustable information can in generally be given about the real intention of the applicant for permanent residence. Thus in some countries migration support is awarded not until the applicant already has moved to the country of origin (like Estonia). In addition to the declaration some countries require proofs of permanent residence as for example a rental agreement, the purchase of a house or shop, a certificate of employment, or school certificates of children before they grant any financial support or housing aid (e.g. **Cyprus**).²⁵³ As already mentioned in **Ireland** the intention of permanent residence is checked by the Habitual Residence Condition Test.

Although the vast majority of applicants in **Estonia** are honest there always have been some persons who have tried to cheat a little bit since they are neither Estonian citizen nor of Estonian ethnicity, have stayed abroad too little time or have not applied for financial support in right time, or have actually not returned to Estonia for permanent residence. The control can be performed through different registers and documents.²⁵⁴

Further possibilities of abuse relate to the duty free importation of vehicles, the award of scholarships for private secondary education schools and travel costs.

²⁵³ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

²⁵⁴ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

Concerning the importation of Duty Free Vehicles several restrictions are made. For example, vehicles have to be registered, are not allowed to be loaned, sold, pledged, hired out, assigned, exchanged or otherwise disposed without the prior permission of the Director of the Customs & Excise Department. Transfer of the vehicle is not permitted until three years after its registration. Additionally the use of the vehicle is restricted to the person entitled, his wife/her husband and their children who live in the same town or its suburb or in the same community as the owner. The contempt of these rules will lead to severe penalties.²⁵⁵

Furthermore in **Cyprus** the scholarship scheme for private secondary education schools is handled in a very controlled procedure. Documents have to be reached in by the parents every academic year. If eligible, the applicant will get a cheque issued on the name of the eligible applicant and has to confirm the reception of the cheque.²⁵⁶

From **Italy** it has been reported that in recent years ethnic Italians from Latin America returned to Italy in order to request the Italian citizenship which can be granted due to specific provisions foreseen by the “Law on citizenship acquisition”.²⁵⁷ After having been granted EU citizenship some of them who speaking Spanish as first language preferred moving on to Spain.²⁵⁸

If a repatriate in **Latvia** has lost his or her repatriate status within a period of five years from the day when the decision has been taken to grant repatriate status, he or she has to repay the funds received from it for material assistance.²⁵⁹

Despite, or possibly due to, these security measurements a misuse of the repatriation support was only reported by **Italy** and **Lithuania**. In Lithuania it happened that repatriates after being afforded with dwelling/ flat (free of charge) simply sell it and emigrate once again. Such behaviour of “repatriates” forces the government to revise assistance programs, so that only people who are really in need are supported.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁵ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

²⁵⁶ Web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus

²⁵⁷ Italian Law on citizenship acquisition (Law no. 91/1992)

²⁵⁸ Reply of Antonio Ricci, Italian EMN NCP, 29.01.2009

²⁵⁹ Latvian Repatriation Law

²⁶⁰ Reply of Mantas Jersovas, Lithuanian EMN NCP, 19.11.2008

9. Future plans of countries concerning return support

Future plans are usually based on former experiences and country-specific problems. Additionally, changes in the composition of government may result in a shifting in regard to repatriation policies.

For countries whose repatriation policy is still in its beginnings (e.g. Slovenia) the implementation of the relevant acts is the priority objective.²⁶¹ However for the Czech Republic which organized repatriation in form of time-limited projects, repatriation is with the “completion of resettlement” in so far terminated now.²⁶²

In the following known future plans of several countries are presented.

Estonia

Estonia has already many plans. These are:

- creating work group(s) to solve administrative hindrances of repatriates (e.g. with documents, citizenship, customs etc)
- offering scholarships to grown-up repatriates to attend retraining or continuous education courses
- organizing language and adaptation courses for repatriates
- offering scholarships to young Estonians who have studied abroad so they would continue their education or career in Estonia
- shortening the time of living abroad from 10 years to 7 or 5, increasing sums of financial support
- providing more specific information and counselling in form of folders, booklets and info visits to bigger communities
- creating database of municipal accommodation possibilities and job offers
- empowering organizations of expatriates to start working with repatriation assistance, increase cooperation with them

²⁶¹ Reply of Natalija Toplak, Government Office of the Republic of Slovenian for Slovenians Abroad, 05.12.2008

²⁶² Web page of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

- doing researches and polls among returnees and expatriates

Due to the financial crisis it is expected that only those activities might be carried out in the upcoming years which do not need any extra money.²⁶³

Ireland

According to the Statement of Strategy 2008-2010 of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs Ireland aims “to coordinate support for Irish organizations providing welfare to vulnerable Irish emigrants, and to work with voluntary agencies at home and abroad that assist Irish emigrants, including those who wish to return to Ireland.” In detail this means that the recommendations in the “Value for Money and Policy Review of the Support for Irish Emigrant Groups”²⁶⁴ carried out in 2007 are planned to be implemented. The recommendations made mainly refer to the allocation of and application requirements for grants given to social and welfare projects as well as to the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for the ongoing projects. Furthermore the department is recommended to consider contracting specific services from second line organizations, and some of the larger front line organizations.

Additionally the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs focuses on the improvement of coordination and the establishment of closer cooperation with other organizations and Government Departments providing services which have an impact on the target group in order to avoid any duplication of service. In addition to the coordination between the governmental departments this particularly implies “closer cooperation between statutory and voluntary agencies in Ireland and abroad” and the increase of the “capacity of the voluntary agencies to engage effectively with central and local authorities in the host countries”. A primary target Ireland intends to continue working on are undocumented Irish in the United States whose position should be resolved and concerning whom arrangements for future migration streams between Ireland and the United States should be established. Finally the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs plans to ensure that “funding is directed to organizations that reach the most vulnerable Irish people abroad, in particular the elderly”.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Interview with Ede Teinbas, Estonian Migration Foundation, 17.02.2009

²⁶⁴ Available on the web page of the the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

²⁶⁵ Irish Department of Foreign Affairs: Statement of Strategy 2008 – 2010

Finland

Finland will mainly concentrate on going on with keeping in contact with its expatriates and strengthening their ties to Finland. In detail they plan:

- To develop Finnish Schools abroad and to give support for basic education to children residing abroad. Measures applied are the support of electronic distance learning projects and the improvement of the opportunities of obtaining teaching in Finnish or Swedish or teaching of the Finnish or Swedish language. In addition European schools, the study of the Finnish language and culture at foreign universities and school attendance, study and training in Finland should be promoted.
- To support organizational activities arranged by expatriate Finns and the more efficient dissemination of information to expatriate Finns,
- To improve the legal rights of expatriate Finns. Certain rights as social security and obligations such as taxi liability concern Finnish nationals residing abroad only to a limited extent as these are residentially based,
- To encourage re-obtaining Finnish citizenship. Finland's current Nationality Act allows for multiple (or dual) citizenships. The processing charges, which deter expatriate Finns from the re-acquisition of their Finnish citizenship, shall be reduced.
- To increase voting activity on the part of expatriate Finns and to safeguard the operations of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament,
- To support social security and public health care of expatriate Finns,
- To support liaisons between economic and financial life and expatriate Finns with the help of events, the contacts of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and Finland's honorary consul network,
- To support the prerequisites of expatriate Finns' return migration,
 - o e.g. to intensify the dissemination of information to expatriate Finns on central issues related to remigration in collaboration with various public authorities and the Finland Society,
 - o To inform employers operating in Finland about the possibilities of hiring returnees,
 - o To encourage those studying abroad to return to Finland at the end of their studies by actively informing them about work, training and continued education, opportunities as well as the labour market situation and employment possibilities,
 - o To establish any legislative and administrative problems and obstacles which slow down remigration and to eliminate these problems,

- To support research on Finnish migration and expatriation²⁶⁶

In January 2009 a working group was set up to draft the measures how to develop the repatriation policy of the Ingrian Finns.²⁶⁷

Poland

The future of the Polish repatriation policy is still in discussion by the Task Group on repatriation operated by the Inter-ministerial team on Polonia and Poles from abroad.²⁶⁸

Slovakia

Currently no support to facilitate the repatriation of Slovak citizens or ethnic Slovaks is provided. In September 2008 the Slovak Government adopted the Strategy of State Policy of Care for Slovaks living Abroad which will be valid until 2015. In relation to the support of return of Slovaks living abroad (especially in connection with the labour market), the strategy proposes to establish mobility centres in chosen foreign countries which will inform citizens (and potentially also nationals of the country) about the opportunities of working in or returning back to Slovakia. The creation of the centres is in the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office for the Slovaks Living Abroad. The proposed measure should be implemented by 2010.²⁶⁹

Bulgaria

Within the framework of the *National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria 2008/2015* the Bulgarian Government formulates a number of future measures and goals.

These are:

- maintaining stable relations with the Bulgarian communities abroad,
- attracting Bulgarians abroad with significant presence in the social, cultural and economic life of the countries where they reside permanently
- expanding the network of services in employment and social affairs

²⁶⁶ Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2006-2011

²⁶⁷ Reply of Arja Saarto, Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 21.01.2009

²⁶⁸ Reply of Ewa Golik, Polish EMN NCP, 24.11.2008

²⁶⁹ Reply of Sona Andrasova, Slovak EMN NCP, 20.11.2008

- study of the challenges young Bulgarians are faced with and their attitude towards return and their future career plans
- continuing action to protect the rights of Bulgarian citizens residing and working in other countries
- attracting young Bulgarians and business organizations from abroad for consulting and direct business relations with Bulgarian partners,
- initiation of job fairs, helping to launch business in Bulgaria, incl. job creation
- information dissemination of existing mechanisms and facilities in Bulgaria for money transfers,
- study of the experience of similar institutions abroad in attracting young compatriots,
- annual forums on issues of Bulgarian youth organizations abroad,
- updating the existing database of the Bulgarian diaspora as well as the periodical updating of existing maps of the Bulgarian community abroad,
- establishing the legal possibility of around 100 existing educational institutions outside of Bulgaria to be provided with textbooks and teachers
- monitoring the children of Bulgarian immigrants abroad; opening of the Bulgarian schools abroad and organising of courses
- strengthening the positive image of Bulgaria abroad,
- facilitating procedures for the establishment and social integration of persons of Bulgarian origin
- concluding bilateral agreements on employment and to be included in a bilateral contract for social security
- assuring optimal conditions for settling in regions around the country, as per the Catalogue of Land Plots Assessed for Settlement, with the goal of getting people to settle outside the big three of Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna ²⁷⁰

Slovenia

According to programme priorities of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenes Abroad 2009, Slovenia intends to concentrate on maintaining, strengthening and developing the Slovenian identity of Slovenians living abroad and to develop a common plan for Slovenia's future development.

²⁷⁰ The Bulgarian Government's National Strategy for Migration and Integration of Bulgaria 2008/2015

Additionally there is a need for modifying or amending some provisions in the Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad as some of these have not been defined precisely enough.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Government Communication Office: Programme priorities of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenes Abroad in 2009, 21.01.2009

10. Conclusions and suggestions for Estonia

This comparative analysis is meant to give an overview about repatriation policies and practices in different (European) countries and to draw conclusions about potential useful strategies for the Estonian repatriation policy. It is not easy to draw conclusion about the introduction of the “right” measurements without knowing enough about the needs of the potential returnees and possible hindrances. This not only requires an analysis about former repatriates in regard to their age, education, language skills, return motives and finally their more or less successful integration in the Estonian society, but also information about Estonia citizens and ethnic Estonians living abroad. Too little is known about return tendencies and possible obstacles hindering the return.

In the same way we cannot assume that Estonian citizens and ethnic Estonians living abroad know about the Estonian repatriation support. An inquiry about return willingness in Estonian communities living abroad would not only give some hints about useful repatriation support but also would serve as a kind of advertisement and might give the Estonians abroad the idea of returning if this thought is not already existing. A similar effect could be achieved if politicians and state officials would talk more about repatriation in public. The need for further research is also shown in the Finnish and Bulgarian future plans.

Experiences (as for example of Germany) have shown that not only the quantity of returnees but also their integration into the receiving society is an important indicator for a successful repatriation policy. Thus, Estonia should focus on the integration into the labour market and the educational system as well as on language courses if sufficient language skills are missing. Since the lack of labour force is one of Estonia’s future challenges it is advisable to campaign among expatriates for vacant positions in the Estonian labour market and to attract qualified workers.

An opportunity to get in contact with future employees is projects connecting potential employer and employees like job fairs and mobility centres such as “Finn Jobb” in

Stockholm. Employers in Estonia should be informed about the possibility to hire ethnic Estonians and Estonian citizens living abroad.

In the same way the successful access to the Estonian educational system for the children of repatriates has to be ensured. In order to prepare the children of repatriates in the Estonian education system the provision with learning material and e-learning courses are an opportunity. For children who already have moved to Estonia, international schools with bilingual education, language support and specially educated teachers should be ensured.

A way to attract young educated persons is to facilitate the access to tertiary education and practical placements opportunities. In addition to scholarships positive discrimination in the admission procedure for university are conceivable. In the same way special programs for the return of talented scientists could be introduced as far as needed and money is available.

A hindrance concerning repatriates from the former Soviet Union member states, which do not belong to the European Union, is the lack of social welfare system support. Above all this concern repatriates do not have any relatives in Estonia who could accommodate them. In this case the provision with temporary accommodation might be useful.

Due to the requirement of minimum duration of ten years abroad, returnees from European Union Member States belong to the minority within the group of Estonian repatriates. Since this requirement is not very common compared to the repatriation policy of other European countries, the liberalization of this requirement could be a point of discussion. However, probability of misuse of repatriation support might increase.

In order to avoid wrong expectations from both sides more has to be known about the returnees' motives of return, their language skills, their social structural characteristics as well as their needs for a successful integration. News in the media about the misuse of repatriation support does not contribute to the acceptance of repatriates and should be avoided.

On the other hand more information about Estonia has to be disseminated by different channels. This study has pointed out different channels which vary from on the spot support to the allocation of information support by different media. Above all technical communication ways gain in importance. As Estonia is well-developed in communication

technologies these channels could not only be used for disseminating information but also for teaching or refreshing Estonian language skills.

Primary goal should be keeping in contact with Estonian communities living abroad and increasing their interests in their country of origin.

Unfortunately, to be really effective and successful, repatriation support activities need much more money and attention of higher officials in ministries. Also, the current situation, when on one hand the Ministry of Population is responsible for developing the repatriation support programme and on the other hand the Ministry of the Interior is financing and supervising the implementation of the return support, the situation is not supportive. The Financing and responsibility should be aggregated into one institution in order to be more effective.

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