



European Migration Network

Belgium National Contact Point

Policy Event – Migration & Asylum in 2022

Brussels, 21 March 2023

PART 1: LEGAL MIGRATION

1. Economic migration: general
2. Labour market integration: UA

1. Economic migration

1. Larger category of people can apply again for a **single permit** from the Belgian territory
2. **Flemish policy changes**
 - a) Self-Employed: attracting innovation
 - b) COVID-19 Economic Migration: "Your future in Flanders, let's make it work"

2. Labour market integration: UA

FOCUS:

- Direct access to the labour market
- Information provision
- Languages
- Exemption professional card for self-employed

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Jamila El Masbahi (Vlaamse Overheid)

As we saw in the presentation, Flemish policy has increasingly focused on attracting new talent to the Flemish labour market. How will these policies further develop in 2023?

Question 2:

To: Aintzane De Aguirre (Actiris)

Could you briefly present the lessons learned from the UA crisis and tell us how this could be duplicated for other third-country nationals?

Question 3:

To: Jessica Sbrissa (Le Forem)

In 2022, Le Forem has been more actively involved in international mobility projects, such as THAMM. How will you engage with such projects in 2023?

PART 2: PROTECTION

- More than **100 000 persons** applied for protection:
 - 63 356 Temporary protection
 - 36 871 International protection

- Access to the procedure
- Backlog: 17 374 cases
- Afghanistan
- Remote interviews
- Dublin Centre
- Digitalisation
- Resettlement

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Wim Cruysberghs (Immigration Office)

In addition to J-Box (Council for Alien Law Litigation) and the electronic file (CGRS), the Immigration Office developed a new digitalisation strategy. Could you tell us the purpose of this new IT environment, how the different asylum services fit into this system, and what you have developed in 2022 and are planning to do in 2023?

Question 2:

To: Thomas Vancraeynest (Fedasil)

In 2022, we saw that only 71 transfers of resettled persons could be organised. Due to the uncertainty of transfers, Belgium also decided not to conduct further selection missions in 2022 and the 2023 pledge of initially 1 400 individuals was brought down to 500. In 2023, will measures be taken to ensure a (more structural) continuation of the resettlement programme?

PART 3: RECEPTION

Measures to curb crisis (1)

➤ **Measures "Winter Plan"**

- ✓ Convention City of Brussels
- ✓ Increase in number of decisions CGRS
- ✓ Additional staff from other government departments
- ✓ Lifting of code 207 for residents who work
- ✓ Long stay
- ✓ "Emergency reception" measures: Glons and Jabbeke

PART 3: RECEPTION

Measures to curb crisis (2)

➤ Additional measures "Core cabinet of Ministers March 2023"

- ✓ Local Reception Initiatives action plan: better funding, conventions, monitoring places,...
- ✓ Long-stay action plan
- ✓ Expansion convention Brussels (up to 1 500 places)
- ✓ Outflow action plan (increase meal vouchers, extra support, Bordet info point, etc.)
- ✓ EUAA containers
- ✓ Reception by private operators
- ✓ Legislative amendments

What next?

PART 3: RECEPTION



Persons fleeing from Ukraine arrive in Belgium



Emergency reception centre 1 or 2 nights (if necessary)



Registration Temporary Protection



Crisis housing organised by the municipalities



Sustainable housing

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Bieke Machiels (Fedasil)

Fedasil was unable to provide reception to all applicants, received important backlash from the media, was convicted over 6 000 times by the Brussels labour court, saw its furniture being seized for not being able to pay penalties... Could you tell us what kind of impact this had on Agency as an organisation, and on its staff?

Question 2:

To: Mieke Verrelst (Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration)

The Council of Ministers approved a first package of reform measures on 9 March 2023. Could you briefly explain these measures insofar as they have an impact on the saturation of the reception network? In addition to these measures, the Secretary of State is also working on a second package of reforms. What does this package entail, and will the reception network be better prepared/equipped to cope with an increased inflow of applicants for international protection?

A graphic showing two hands in shades of teal holding a white sign with black text. The sign reads 'OTHER TALK' in large, bold, black letters, and 'ON MIGRATION' in smaller, bold, yellow letters on a black background below it.

**OTHER
TALK**

ON MIGRATION

POLARISATION

**Other Talk – Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen and
11.11.11.**

Home Affairs



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QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question:

To: Tine Claus (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen)

In 2022, governments and organisations increasingly paid attention to online hate speech, disinformation and polarisation. Other Talk on Migration is a three-year programme by 11.11.11 and Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, aiming to bring nuance to a polarised migration debate. It operates in three key areas: education, civil society and the media. Could you tell us how Other Talk on Migration will try to make a difference in the area of (social) media this year?

PART 4: INTEGRATION & INCLUSION

1. Launch of the Flemish Plan **Living Together**
2. Developments with regards to **civic integration programmes**
 - a. Flanders
 - b. Brussels-Capital
 - c. Wallonia

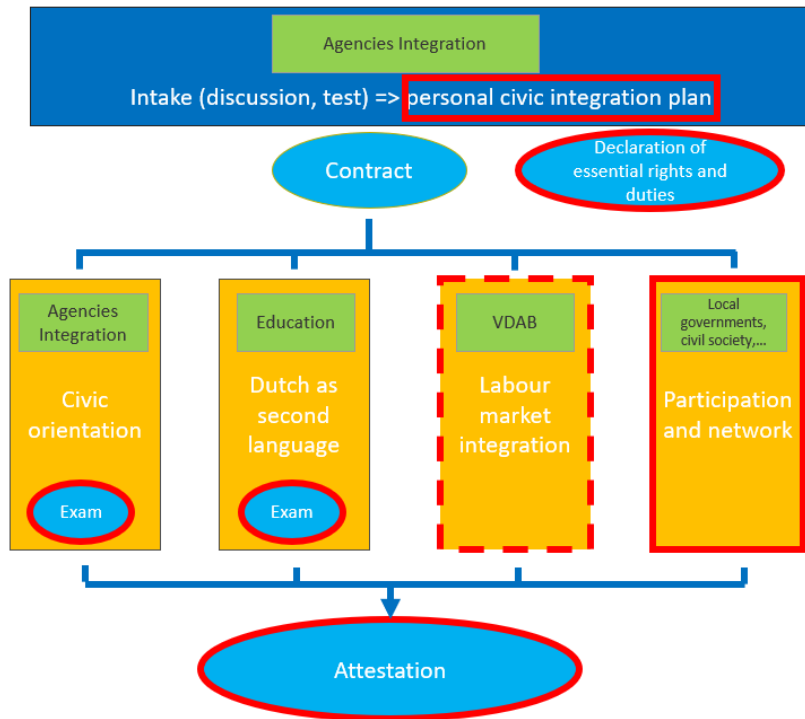
1. Launch of the Flemish Plan Living Together



- Support local governments to promote living together in diversity
- Financial (matching scheme) and capacity building support
- 7 objectives and 24 actions:
 - increasing safety and quality of life
 - strengthening Dutch
 - strengthening competences
 - guiding towards the labour market and entrepreneurship
 - strengthening citizens' networks
 - fighting discrimination and exclusion
 - strengthening diversity at school, in the youth movement, etc.
- <https://www.vlaanderen.be/plan-samenleven>

2. Civic integration programme (1)

Amendments to Flemish civic integration decree: what changed/will change?



- the **target group**: persons with permanent residence status
- tailor-made civic integration **trajectory**
- emphasising the importance of **shared values** and standards, incl. the introduction of a statement of rights and obligations
- **expansion and strengthening** of civic integration programme:
 - compulsory registration with public employment service
 - the participation and networking process (01.01.2023)
- completion of the social orientation course with a **standardised test**
- introducing **fees** for course and test societal orientation (01.09.2023)

2. Civic integration programmes (2)

- In **Brussels-Capital Region**, the civic integration programmes became mandatory as of 01.06.2022 for third-country nationals:
 - Registered for the first time in Brussels with a residence permit (> 3 months)
 - Aged 18-65 years old
 - Legally residing in Belgium for **less than 3 years**
- **Exempted** from this obligation: TPD beneficiaries

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Tom De Bruyn (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur – Vlaamse Overheid)

Two important initiatives were taken by the Flemish government in 2022: the Plan Samenleven and the amended civic integration programme. Could you tell us more about the Plan Living Together and the amendments to the civic integration programme?

Question 2:

To: Nicolas Contor (Centre régional d'intégration de la Province du Luxembourg et Dispositif de concertation et d'appui aux centres régionaux d'intégration de Wallonie)

Civic integration programmes are now mandatory across the country for third-country nationals who are newcomers to Belgium, yet this obligation does not apply to beneficiaries of temporary protection. Could you tell us more about the measures that have been implemented to facilitate the integration of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine, in comparison with the integration regime applicable to other third-country nationals, and give us some perspectives as to how this duality of regimes could evolve in the future and the impact it would have on integration?

PART 5: BORDERS, VISA & SCHENGEN

- ✓ Ratification **US preclearance** treaty
- ✓ Increased **air passenger data** collection
- ✓ Implementation **SIS Recast**
- ✓ Preparation upcoming **EES**
- ✓ Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism (**SEMM**)

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Philippe Rosseel (Federal Public Service Home Affairs)

Could you please elaborate on what is happening at European level when it comes to border police collaboration in the fight against irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking?

Question 2:

To: Maarten Minschart (Federal Police)

Which trends have been detected in 2022 by the Belgian border police when it comes to irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking? Are there any new initiatives planned in 2023 by the Belgian border police to tackle irregular migration?

PART 6: HUMAN SMUGGLING & TRAFFICKING

- ✓ New SPOC **website** "Stop Human Trafficking"
- ✓ Reform **sexual criminal law**
- ✓ Interception vehicles with equipment to cross **English Channel**
- ✓ Labour trafficking case **Borealis**
- ✓ Special **Parliamentary Commission**

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Barbara Vangierdegom (Federal Public Service Justice), Mara Ioriatti (PAG-ASA) and Patricia Le Cocq (Myria)

The experts of the Special Trafficking & Smuggling Commission submitted a draft report on 8 March 2023. This is not yet the final report of the Commission, since parliamentarians who are a member of this Commission can still amend the draft report. Could you tell us a bit more about the recommendations in the draft report?

Question 2:

To: Barbara Vangierdegom (Federal Public Service Justice), Mara Ioriatti (PAG-ASA) and Patricia Le Cocq (Myria)

What are according to you the lessons learned from the Borealis case? Are there follow-up measures planned in 2023?

PART 7. INFORMING AND GUIDING IRREGULARLY STAYING MIGRANTS TOWARDS LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

- Expansion of the network of **Individual Case Management (ICAM) Coaches**
- Piloting small-scale **Shelter and Orientation projects** for homeless migrants that have been living in a prolonged irregular situation

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Ellen Verheijden (Immigration Office)

In 2022, Individual Case Management (ICAM) regional offices of the Immigration Office's 'Alternatives to Detention' Department opened in various cities to support irregularly staying migrants towards a long-term solution, either a legal stay in Belgium or a return. However, the engagement of ICAM coaches to register arrivals from Ukraine (Heyzel) hampered their work. What are the Immigration Office's activities planned in 2023 to harness the full potential of ICAM desks in various cities?

Question 2:

To: Eva Goossens (Fedasil)

Fedasil started small-scale Shelter and Orientation projects for homeless migrants living in a prolonged irregular situation. Can you tell us a bit more about these projects? Is Fedasil planning to scale them up in 2023?

PART 8: RETURN

- **COVID-19 pandemic** impacted the organisation of forced return
- The number of **assisted voluntary returns** increased
- Frontex's **Joint Reintegration Service (JRS)** project

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Koen Van Rompaey (Fedasil)

In 2022, after two years marked by the pandemic, the number of assisted voluntary return increased remarkably (10% higher than in 2019 and 36% higher than in 2021). Fedasil provided return assistance to 2 673 people willing to return voluntarily to their country of origin. The number of migrants returning with reintegration support has also increased remarkably. What are the prospects regarding voluntary return rates in 2023? What activities will Fedasil take to further strengthen its voluntary return programme?

Question 2:

To: Fien Vanhees (Caritas)

As of 2022, Fedasil joined the Joint Reintegration Service (JRS) project of Frontex. Caritas International Belgium has signed a four-year partnership agreement with Frontex and operates as one of the reintegration partners within this project. What does this agreement mean for Caritas operations in 2023? Will it lead to a further increase of the return rate with reintegration support?

PART 9: MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Strategic Note** on migration as a lever for development
2. Pilot **mobility projects**

1. Strategic Note on migration as a lever for development

Strategic objectives:

1. To support and promote the **good management of migration**;
2. To **promote public debate on the migration-development nexus**;
3. To promote the **protection and respect of human rights**, as well as the well-being and resilience of migrants, refugees and host communities;
4. To use and promote the **potential of migration for sustainable development**.

2. Pilot mobility projects

1. **ENABEL: Project for Entrepreneurial Mobility between Ivory Coast and Belgium (PEM-CIV)**

- a) Circular mobility opportunities to 120 talented entrepreneurs
- b) Follow-up PEM WECCO

2. **IOM: Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E) project**

- a) Test displaced talent mobility pathways
- b) Jordan + Lebanon
- c) Healthcare sector

QUESTIONS & SPEAKERS

Question 1:

To: Raffaella Greco-Tonegutti (Enabel) and Elisabeth Palmero (IOM)

How will the recently developed programmes (IOM's DT4E and Enabel's PEM-CIV) develop in 2023? Are there any other projects in the pipeline?

Question 2:

To: Sarah Lavrysen (Office of the Special Envoy for Asylum and Migration)

How will the Strategic note on migration and development impact the Special Envoy's work?

Stay in touch!

 European Migration Network (EMN) Belgium

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