

Fostering Cooperation on Returns and Reintegration

Block four focused on assessing current cooperation on return and reintegration as well as identifying main issues in this field and looking into further ways to improve this cooperation.

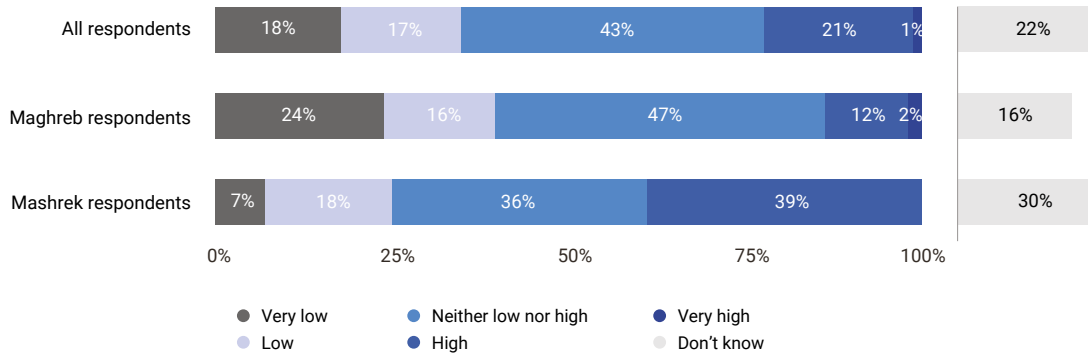
Main findings:

- Perceptions on current cooperation on returns and readmission with the EU tend to differ widely. Consistently with previous observations, Maghreb respondents express significantly more negative views on the state of cooperation than their Mashrek counterparts.
- The lack of policy standards to manage return and reintegration of migrants in the country of return is considered a key obstacle.
- EU support on return would be most beneficial if it focuses on post-return reintegration assistance to countries of return and if it also involves civil society and other community-level actors.
- Bilateral visa facilitation mechanisms are the first option when considering policies that could contribute to improve cooperation on return and reintegration. Post-arrival provisions have a significant acceptance as well.

Question 15 invited respondents to assess the current cooperation on return and readmission with EU countries. Results show a significant percentage of “don’t know” answers (22%). Apart from this, views reflect a predominantly negative opinion of the ongoing cooperation on returns (Graph 23). However, when looking at the answers by geographical origin, there is a clearly differentiated assessment: Maghreb respondents are skeptical on the relationship, reporting 40% of low or very low answers. Contrastingly, about 40% of answers from the Mashrek indicate a positive assessment (graph 23).

GRAPH 23

Q.15 What is your assessment of current cooperation on return and readmission with EU countries?

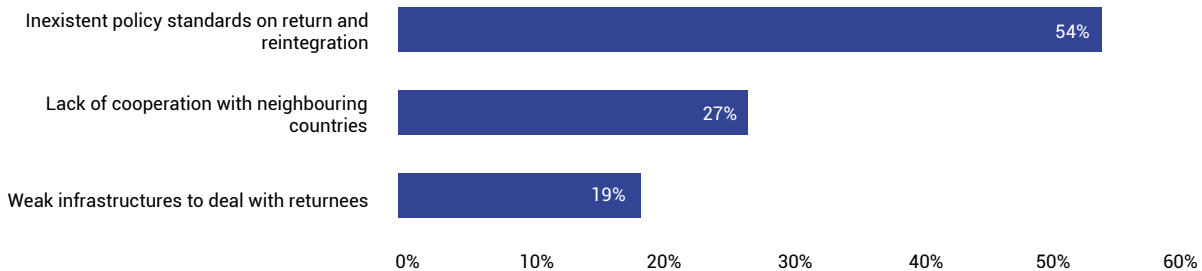


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EMM5-EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

In the open-ended question that followed (Q16), respondents were asked to identify the main issues plaguing cooperation on returns. The input collected is summarised in three categories (see Graph 24). A significant share of comments underline the need to develop more policy standards allowing for an effective return and reintegration in countries of the South Mediterranean.

GRAPH 24

Q.16 Based on your experience, what are the main issues? (categories developed from the open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EMM5-EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Some of the open-ended answers referred to the lack of policy standards:

One of the most important issues is to have programmes to rehabilitate refugees to return to their countries, protect them and take care of them after their return through international charters and an oversight that does not allow the authorities of their countries to re-displace them or exert various pressures on them.

- Jordanian respondent -

Human Rights capacity development for legal professionals, including support to national training institutions.

- Libyan respondent -

Forced readmission always creates sociopolitical problems, especially in a nascent democracy like Tunisia because public opinion does not want to see its authorities act like “police of frontiers”. They see it as an encroachment on its sovereignty.

- Tunisian respondent -

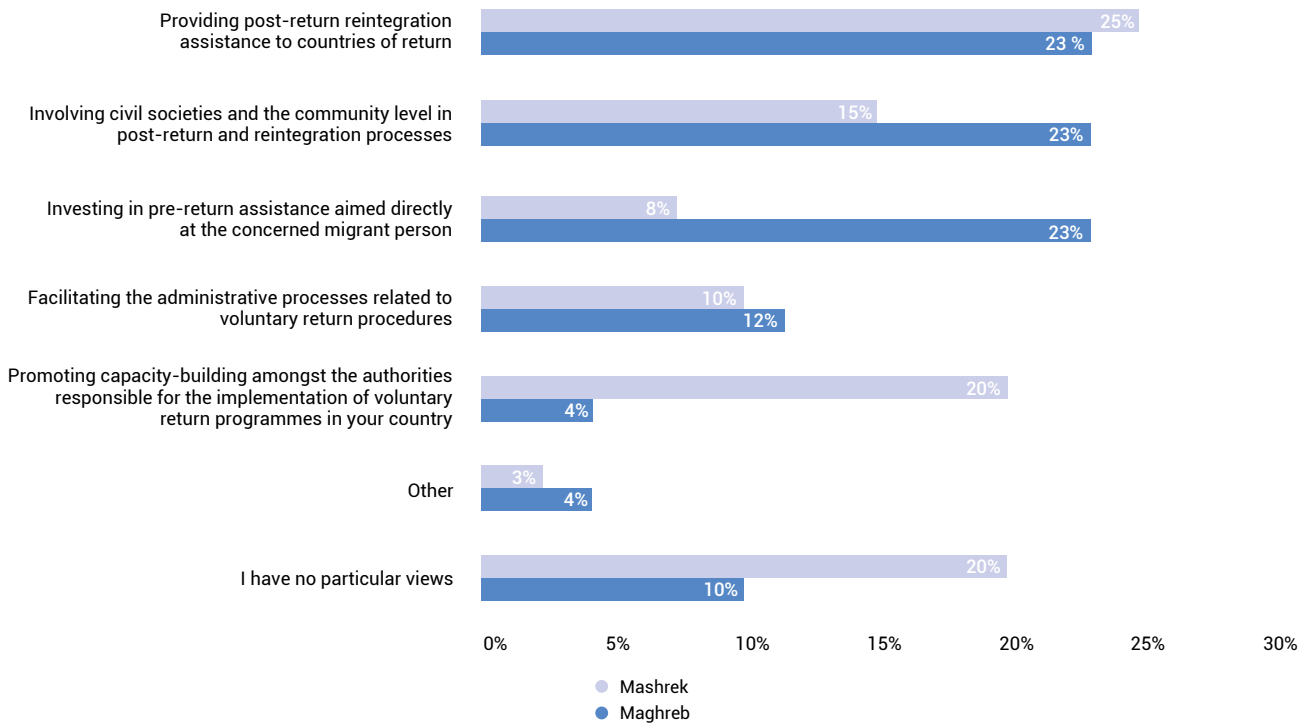
The willingness of some EU member states to dictate the conditions of return and reintegration to countries of transit (mainly in the Maghreb).

-Algerian respondent -

Question 17 turned to those areas of the cooperation on return where EU support has been beneficial. The most mentioned area was “Providing post-return reintegration assistance to countries of return” with a 25% of responses followed by “involving civil society and community-level organisations in post-return and reintegration processes” which accounted for 19% of all answers. A breakdown by geographical origin and by kind of institution allows further insight on this result. In the case of Maghreb respondents, three options are equally important, the formerly mentioned ones together with “investing on pre-return assistance”. For Mashrek respondents the second-preferred option is “promoting capacity-building amongst responsible authorities” (see Graph 25).

GRAPH 25

Q.17 In which of the following areas is EU support most beneficial?

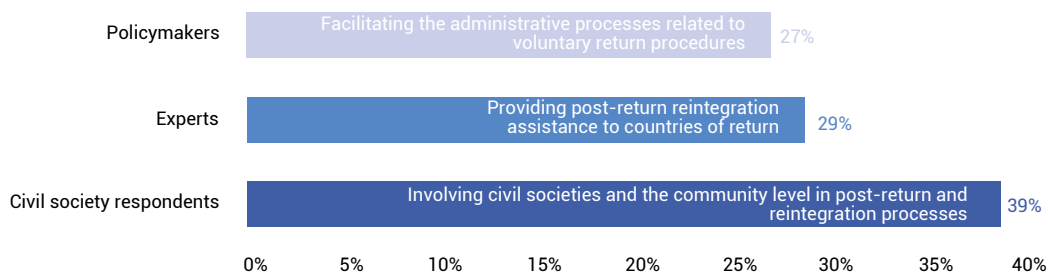


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EMM5-EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

When looking at the answers by kind of institution, experts follow the survey average while civil society answers consider the EU’s support on involving civil society and the local government in post-return and integration processes the most beneficial. Finally, according to policy-makers, it is the european support on voluntary return procedures that is the most beneficial for SPCs.

GRAPH 26

Q.17 In which of the following areas is EU support most beneficial? (% of answers as first option)

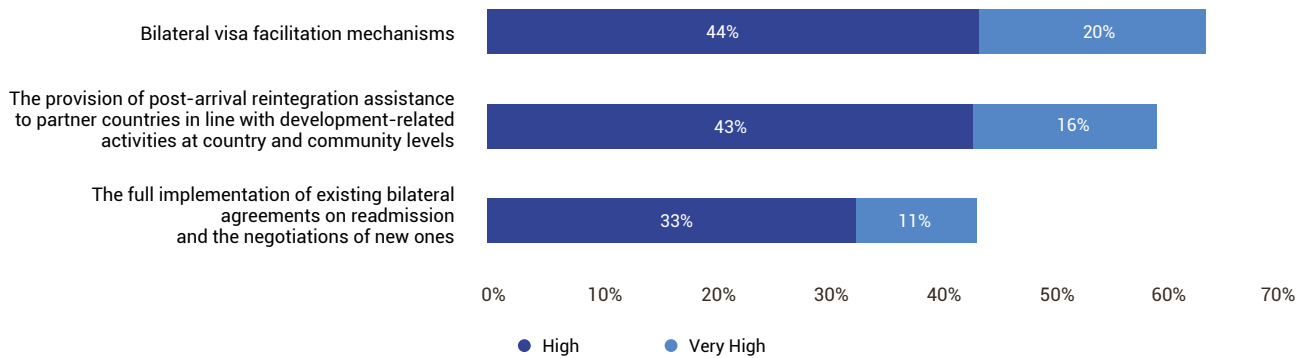


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EMM5-EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Question 18 was focused on the assessment of different options that could contribute to improve cooperation on return and reintegration. Interestingly, all three provided options have an important turnout of positive or very positive answers. Out of three options, respondents indicated an overall preference for the bilateral visa facilitation mechanisms.

GRAPH 27

Q.18 To what extent do you consider that the following avenues could contribute to improve cooperation on return and reintegration?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EMM5-EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Comments on this question show a variety of arguments on how bilateral visa facilitation mechanisms could improve the cooperation on return and reintegration:

Facilitating legitimate alternatives is always the shortest way to eliminate illegitimate parallel alternatives.

- Egyptian respondent -

The mechanisms currently adopted, both in their conditions and processes, for granting visas do not respect the essence and philosophy of true cooperation. They need to be thoroughly revised to be compatible with the terms of international human rights conventions.

- Moroccan respondent -

Visa facilitation will help those who have already spotted some real job opportunities in receiving countries to benefit from these opportunities through legal means. Establishing some shortlists of jobs where there is a shortage of labour in the EU is recommended.

- Syrian respondent -

The second option considered as a positive avenue to improve cooperation is the provision of post-arrival reintegration assistance to partner countries. In the open comment section, respondents have pointed out how to optimise chances of successful reintegration:

Giving prospects for integration with concrete support can considerably facilitate the reintegration of the migrant in the country of origin, provided that adequate accompaniment is provided until the desired result is achieved.

- Algerian respondent -

It can convince returnees that there is in fact a good reason for them to stay in their country. Training is also very important in this respect because many illegal migrants have abandoned school early and have not made any training, so they see migration as their only way out.

- Syrian respondent -

Open answers commenting on the “Full implementation of existing bilateral agreements” shed interesting light on these agreements’ importance, improvement or limitations:

In order to improve cooperation in terms of return and reintegration, both civil society and those affected must be involved in the implementation of bilateral agreements.

- Moroccan respondent -

This will contribute to the development of government policies - as it represents a good mechanism for follow-up and provides better protection for returnees- enhancing confidence in the intervention, protection, and support systems.

- Libyan respondent -

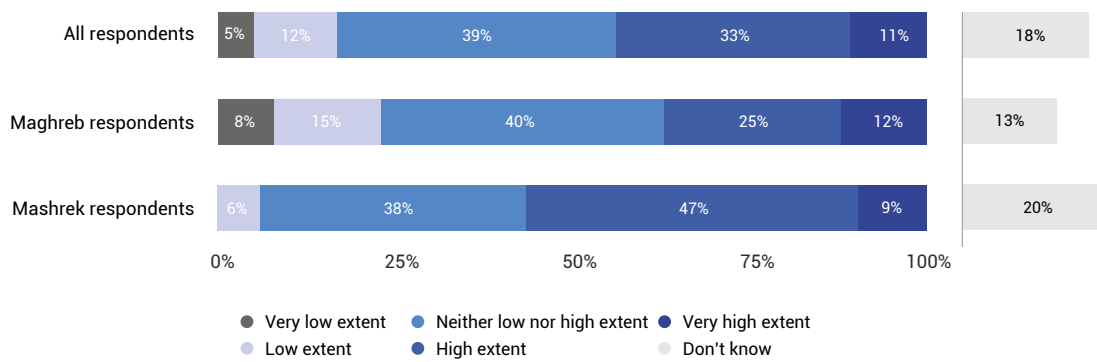
As long as conditions in the country of origin are not improved, agreements have a limited effect on the determination and desperation of migrants.

- Algerian respondent -

Finally, results sorted by geographical origin depict a similar pattern than previously described, with answers from the Mashrek being generally more positive than Maghreb ones. This divergence can be very significant: Promoting the “Full implementation of existing bilateral agreements on readmission and the negotiations of new ones” gathers twice as many positive answers from Mashrek respondents than from the Maghreb in percentage points (see Graph 28).

GRAPH 28

Q.18 To what extent do you consider that the following avenues could contribute to improve cooperation on return and reintegration? A. Full implementation of existing bilateral agreements on readmission and the negotiations of new ones



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EMM5-EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey