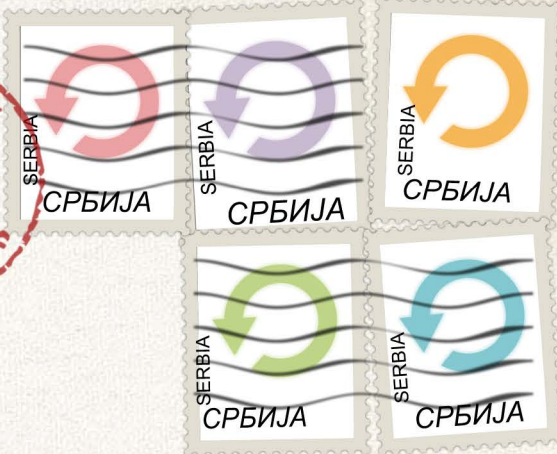


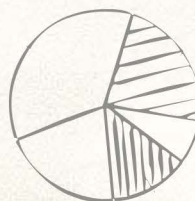


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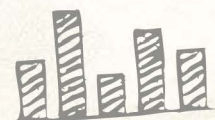
**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



# The survey on status and needs of returnees based on the Readmission Agreement in Serbia in 2019



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# CHAPTER ONE **Introduction**

The 2009 easing of visa restrictions by the European Union (EU) for citizens of the Republic of Serbia resulted in a sharp increase of Serbian citizens seeking asylum in EU countries. With most of these applications rejected as manifestly unfounded, since 2012 many EU Member States have added Serbia on their lists of 'safe countries', which expedited the procedures for returning asylum-seekers to their countries of origin. This made the issue of readmission a matter of considerable political importance. Readmission agreements allowed the return of more than 100,000 individuals from EU Member States to Serbia and resulted in a steady stream of these returnees.

This report, commissioned by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), describes social inclusion of the returnees under the readmission agreement (hereafter returnees) in Serbia in 2019. The picture of their social inclusion is built on detailed description of their needs and experiences in several sectors relevant for their (re)integration upon return to Serbia: access to personal documents, housing, employment, income generation, education, health protection, social protection, non-discriminatory access to social services and local community. Besides that the report also describes capacities of returnees' households with regard to their education and employment as well as with regard to their migration pattern that lead to return and readmission.

In the light of lack of official data about real number and living conditions of returnees, recognized in numerous reports (e.g. Migration Profile published by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (CRM)) and policy documents (e.g. draft Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees Under Readmission Agreements, 2019-2023):



**the aim of this report is to provide better view on returnees population and to allow for detailed assessment of needs and possibilities for their improved (re)integration in Serbian society and economy.**

The report will address different stakeholders dealing with the topic: national and local policy makers, representatives of countries from which they were returned, international organizations, local NGOs and returnees themselves. Based on the findings primarily from a survey conducted with returnees, but also other available resources:



**the report offers recommendations for improved social inclusion of returnees.**

Where possible the report would make comparison with data obtained through a similar survey conducted by International Organization for Migrations (IOM) in 2011 and published in 2012 (Cvejic, 2012).





## CHAPTER TWO

# Policy framework for (re)integration of returnees in Serbia

The increased inflow of asylum seekers who are nationals of Western Balkan countries after the lifting of visa requirements for these nations is a major reason why irregular migrations and the position of migrants upon their return to their countries of origin occupy a significant place in documents governing Serbia's accession to the EU. The latest progress report for Serbia by the European Commission (EC) states that '[t]he readmission agreement with the EU is being implemented satisfactorily. There are 21 implementing protocols signed with the EU and they are well implemented when it comes to the readmission of its own nationals. In 2016, 13 595 Serbian nationals have been ordered to leave the EU territory and the return rate reached 90 % in 2016' (Serbia 2018 Report: 36).

The discrepancy between the number of decisions to repatriate individuals made by EU Member States and the number of registrations at the Belgrade airport office supports the conclusion that several thousand must have returned volun-

tarily. It is also apparent that some have remained illegally in the EU despite being ordered to leave (Jelacic Kojic, Grujicic, 2017). Nevertheless, various indicators monitored by the array of relevant institutions imply the same trend: the number of Serbian asylumseekers in EU Member States has been in decline for a number of years, as has the number of returnees under readmission agreements. Eurostat data for 2015 to 2017<sup>1</sup> show that asylum applications made by Serbian nationals in EU Member States declined from 30,065 in 2015 to 13,185 in 2016 to 8,065 in 2017.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, rejected applications made by Serbian citizens numbered 21,690 in 2015, only to fall to 9,035 in 2017 and still further in 2018. Asylum applications made by Serbians in France outnumbered those filed in Germany for the first time in 2018. The Migration Profile shows that official statistics in Serbia have been revealing a downward trend in the number of returnees. In 2015, Serbia received 9,495 requests for readmission; the number went down to 5,779 in 2016, and then dropped further to 3,485 in 2017.<sup>3</sup> The number of registered returnees also declined: from 4,974 in 2015, to 7,484 in 2016, to 3,933 in 2017; the trend continued into 2018, when 2,489 returnees were registered.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, the latest Migration Profile available relied on 2017 information, which is why we have chosen to present Eurostat data as of that year.

<sup>2</sup> The number has continued to decline, with 6,245 asylum applications made in 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The proportion of applications made in Germany in the total fell from 76% in 2015 and 2016 to 68% in 2017.

Serbia is confronted with a very unfavourable social environment that provides the context for addressing the issue of returnees. Living conditions are poor and the country faces high unemployment rates, widespread poverty, and social services stretched to their limits in seeking to meet the needs of the population. Additional challenges are posed by Serbia's large and socially and economically vulnerable Roma national minority, and the fact that Serbia is the receiving country for many refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as displaced persons from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. Finally, Serbia is located on the so-called Balkan Route, the transit path for many migrants from the Middle East to Western Europe and managing this migration flow requires a significant amount of resources. Large numbers of returnees under readmission agreements have adversely impacted the already sensitive social and economic situation of the country.

The social inclusion of returnees is specifically addressed in the third revised National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAA) (p. 789). Page 954 of this document refers to the Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees as one of the three national strategies that guide the country's migration policy. Chapter 24 Action Plan recommends that local authorities take actions to enhance accommodation, economic empowerment, and access to education for returnees, with the central government providing the required funding (p. 18).<sup>4</sup> Enhancing returnees' living conditions was noted as a major consideration for Component 1 of the 2012 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA 2012), meaning that this issue was incorporated into the National Priorities for International Assistance document (NAD) for the period from 2014 to 2017, with projections to 2020.<sup>5</sup> The NAD considers this matter as part of its Priority 2, Ensuring integrated border management and management of migration flows, Measure 2.2, Improving migrations management mechanisms, It states that 'To prevent secondary migration, additional mea-

asures for successful reintegration of the returnees according to the readmission agreements will be developed and implementation capacities of the institutions at local and national level, that are responsible for the migration management, employment, health protection, local government, internal affairs, social welfare will be enhanced' (p. 69).

If one tries to assess how much was done meanwhile in improving social inclusion of returnees, one could take the 2013 Ombudsman's report on the implementation of the previous Strategy to Enhance the Position of the Roma as a baseline. In this report the Ombudsman states that social reintegration of returnees is hindered by underdeveloped mechanisms and means for co-ordination between the responsible authorities, and that local governments have not been provided with accurate records. The Ombudsman remarked that local trustees of the CRM had failed to implement the Strategy to re-integrate returnees under readmission agreements in the best interest of the returnees. In spite of there being strategies to plan the development of conditions for reintegration, local authorities lacked appropriate action plans to facilitate this process. Enrolling returnee children in formal education proved to be difficult due to the absence of preparation and adjustment programmes, as well as due to inability of most returnees to afford to have school credentials translated and verified. In addition, there was a shortage of housing that could serve as either emergency or permanent accommodation for returnees (Marković, Kostić, 2017). In the intervening period, the CRM with support of foreign donors worked a lot on establishing and regulating institutional mechanism for support to returnees. Consequently, progress has been made exactly in those areas that were identified as issues in the 2013 report by the Ombudsman. 'To date (2017), local action plans<sup>6</sup> have been adopted for 135 municipalities/cities, of which 12 are located in Kosovo and Metohija. A total of 135 municipalities/cities have established municipal/city Migration Councils. These are com-

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<sup>4</sup> Dostupno online [mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/pristupni\\_pregovori/akcioni\\_planovi/akcioni\\_plan\\_pg\\_24.pdf](http://mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/pristupni_pregovori/akcioni_planovi/akcioni_plan_pg_24.pdf) [na srpskom].

<sup>5</sup> Dostupno online [mre.gov.rs/doc/medjunarodna-saradnja/NacPrioritetMedjPom.doc](http://mre.gov.rs/doc/medjunarodna-saradnja/NacPrioritetMedjPom.doc) [na srpskom jeziku].

composed of representatives of various local institutions/organisations that deal with issues of refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees under readmission agreements. As many as 80 percent of municipalities/cities have set up special budget lines that the local authorities have used to co-finance projects with up to 5 percent of their value, depending on their economic strength. Some communities have provided co-financing amounting to 20 or even 30 percent of the total cost of the projects involved. The significance of these local action plans is reflected in the fact that the local governments have used them to develop a detailed inventory of the issues and needs of this population and plan or propose solutions' (Marković, Kostić, 2017: 4). Furthermore, the third revised NPAA states (p. 946) that the project 'Improving the Living Conditions of Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees under the Readmission Agreement in the Republic of Serbia' had been implemented using IPA 2014 funds. Pursuant to Activity 1.5.8 of the Chapter 24 Action Plan, in the four years from 2015 to 2018, a total of 800,000 euros had been provided to local authorities for activities aimed at reintegrating returnees. With regard to the execution of IPA 2014, the Q4 2018 NPAA implementation report states that '[i]n the reporting period, all contracts with grantees (CSOs/LSGs) were signed, public calls for applications by final beneficiaries were issued, and commissions were formed; the drafting of regulations for beneficiary selection is ongoing. This project involves 21 local governments. The value of this segment of the project, implemented by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, is 175,000 euros; it aims to house internally displaced persons and returnees under readmission agreements' (p. 82). The same report also confirms that regular activities designed to facilitate reintegration of returnees had been continued, and that monitoring of activities and spending by local authorities on reintegration of returnees under readmission agree-

ments would continue (p. 95).

Responding to recommendations made by EC experts the CRM has prepared a set of indicators that assess the effectiveness of measures aimed at reintegrating returnees under readmission agreements. The results for these indicators were presented in Migration Profiles for 2015, 2016, and 2017.<sup>7</sup> The indicators provide partial information about performance of institutional support for inclusion of returnees, but returnees' own view is missing, as well as assessment of size of the problems in inclusion.

Finally, the above mentioned conclusion and recommendations led to:



**drafting of new Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees Under Readmission Agreements, 2019-2023, expected to be adopted in autumn 2019.**

<sup>6</sup> These are local action plans (LAPs) to address issues of refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees under readmission agreements, local authorities' strategic and actionable documents that take stock of the needs of these groups and set out measures, activities, and funds required from the local authority to improve their position.

<sup>7</sup> Available online at [kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat\\_id=218](https://kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat_id=218).





## CHAPTER THREE

## Methodology

In order to provide reliable evidence about returnees' living conditions, needs and preferences and to complement already existing data on these issues, a survey was organized with returnees residing in Serbia. We used structured questionnaire implemented in face to face interviews in the returnees' households. For sake of comparison with earlier data on returnees, the survey questionnaire design was based on the one used in research of returnees conducted in 2011 (Cvejic, 2012). The questionnaire contained sets of questions about the basic capacities and needs of returnees and obstacles to meeting those needs. The topics covered were:

- *Migration experience and current residence*
- *Household characteristics, including income*
- *Personal socio-demographic data*
- *Access to personal documents*
- *Employment*
- *Housing*
- *Education*
- *Healthcare*
- *Social protection*
- *Social participation and discrimination*

Most questions concerned households and a small number was related to the respondent himself/herself.

Sampling design for this survey made special challenge. The research team had to provide representativeness for the population whose size and geographic distribution were not clearly known. We accepted an estimate from the Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees under Readmission Agreements (2009) that up to 100.000 citizens have been returned to Serbia under readmission agreements. With this population size and confidence interval of 3.5 at confidence level of 0.95 :



**the estimated sample size is 800.**

Since Roma make 75% or more returnees (Migration Profiles, 2015-2017), the research team relied on estimates provided by Roma coordinators and trustees of the CRM from local self-governments (LSGs) about geographic dispersion and approximate number of returnees. Based on this estimates the conclusion was reached that evidence from the Belgrade airport office provided reliable source for regional stratification of the sample, although underestimating real number of returnees in Serbian cities and municipalities.



Serbian cities and municipalities were divided in 3 strata according to the average number of returnees in past 4 years:

- those with small concentration of returnees (annually up to 10) of which we selected 19 LSGs
- those with average number of returnees ( annually 11 to 40 returnees) among which we have selected 13 LSGs
- those with large number of returnees (more than 40 returnees annually) of which we have chosen 11

Survey was implemented by Association of Roma Coordinators, with local Roma coordinators doing systematic household selection in the neighbourhoods with high concentration of returnees. Data collection lasted from March 20 to April 12, 2019.



**Total of 800 interviews were conducted by 22 interviewers on the territory of 44 LSGs in Serbia.**

External monitoring of data collection was organized by GIZ team and the whole process was praised, especially the high commitment of the interviewers.

## Summary of sample realization

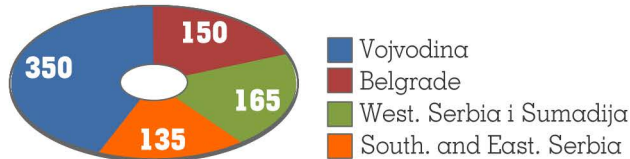
**Table 1.** Local self-governments selected for the survey, stratified by concentration of returnees

No.	Low concentration of returnees	Middle concentration of returnees	High concentration of returnees	
1.	Kovin	Smed. Palanka	Subotica	40
2.	Bela Palanka	Rakovica	Smederevo	
3.	Veliko Gradište	Mladenovac	Kragujevac	
4.	Vrnjačka Banja	Zaječar	Niš	
5.	Loznica	Bor	Vranje	
6.	Boljevac	Odžaci	Zemun	
7.	Negotin	Nova Crnja	Požarevac	
8.	Sombor	Obrenovac	Bujanovac	
9.	Apatin	Prokuplje	Novi Pazar	
10.	Bač	Žitorađa	Čukarica	
11.	Žitište	Vladičin Han	Novi Sad	
12.	Lajkovac	Kraljevo		
13.	Valjevo	Surčin		
14.	Ub			
15.	Kuršumlija			
16.	Čačak			
17.	G. Milanovac			
18.	Raška			
19.	Ruma			
20.	Sopot			
TOTAL		100	260	440

## METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted in all four statistical regions of Serbia, proportionately to their share among returnees registered at the Belgrade airport office.

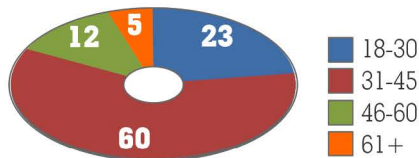
Graph 1. Respondents, by regions



The surveyed sample consisted of **64% of men** and **36% of women**.

They were mostly young and mid-aged.

Graph 2. Age group, in %



They come from households larger than average in Serbia, which is expected under the circumstance that for years now Roma make 80% or more returnees and their households are larger in average. In our sample :



**average size of a returnee's household was 4.7,**

with the highest share of households with 4 and 5 members.

Graph 3. Number of household members, in %



Large share of returnees live in families with children.



**As many as 69% of them have children 0-15 old in their families. On the other hand, in only 10% of returnees' families there is a person older than 65.**



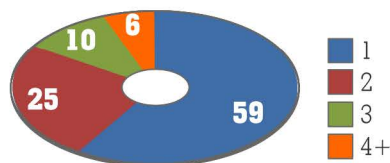
## CHAPTER FOUR

# Results of the survey on returnees

## ■ The experience of migration and return

Almost 2/3 of returnees made only one visit to a foreign country for a longer period (longer than 30 days), the rest made more such stays in last 19 years, since 2001.

*Graph 4. Number of stays in a foreign country longer than 30 days since 2001, in %*



These data are a bit different from those registered in 2011 survey. At that time the question was how many visits the respondents made since 1990, i.e. in 21 year, and 68% said 'once', 20% said 'twice', 5% said 'three times' and the rest said four or more times. Apparently, the share of those who stayed 2 or 3 times increased from 25% to 35% of the sample, which is 40% increase. We don't know if these 'recidivists' asked for asylum and were returned under readmission every

time, but for sure their migrations became more frequent. Nevertheless, this is a smaller part of the sample.



**Around one quarter of respondents in 2019 survey have multiple experience of returning, 18% two times and 5% even 3 or more times.**

We can conclude that the overall number of asylum seekers and returning based on the rejection of their claim has declined in last few years, but the number of those who had multiple experience of this kind slightly increased. However, this increase does not affect the overall trend because:

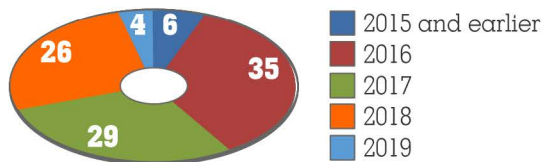


**the number of returns under readmission agreement has declined for almost four times between 2015 and 2018.**

For most of our respondents last stay in a foreign country ended in last couple of years. More precisely, 94% of them returned to Serbia in last four years.

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

**Graph 5.** The year of last return from a foreign country, in %



Duration of stay during last visit to a foreign country varies between 1 and 258 months, with majority of returnees varying between few months and couple of years. One third of returnees stayed between 1 and 12 months, another third between one and two years, next 20% between two and four years and last 15% more than 4 years.

 **Overall median length of stay is 19 months with most typical stay of 3 months.**

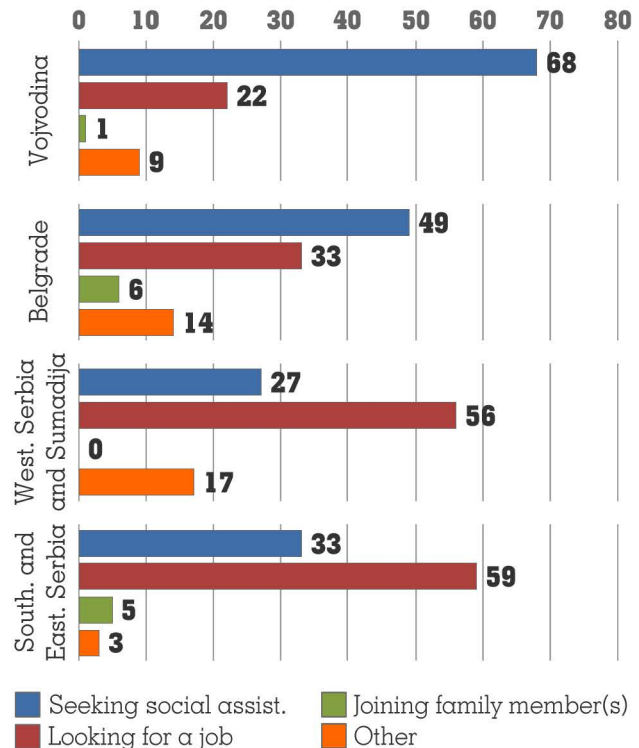
But it varies depending on the year when the visit ended. The median length of stay was 14 months for those who returned in 2019 with most typical stay of 3 months, 20 months in 2018 with most typical stay of 3 months, 22 months in 2017 with most typical stay of 14 months, 18 months in 2016 with most typical stay of 7 and 16 in earlier years with most typical stay of 11 months. Median length of stay is 28 months for returnees to Belgrade and all other regions fall just below the overall median – Vojvodina 18 months, Western Serbia and Sumadija 17 months and Southern and Eastern Serbia 16 months. So, most of citizens of Serbia who were ordered to leave some foreign country after a longer stay returned until 2018,

 **The median and most typical length of stay became significantly shorter in 2019.**

Most of those returned to Belgrade after having in average a

10 months longer stay than returnees from other regions of Serbia.

**Graph 6.** Reasons for visiting a foreign country from which they were returned last time, by regions, in %



When asked about their major motivation to visit a foreign country from which they were returned last time:

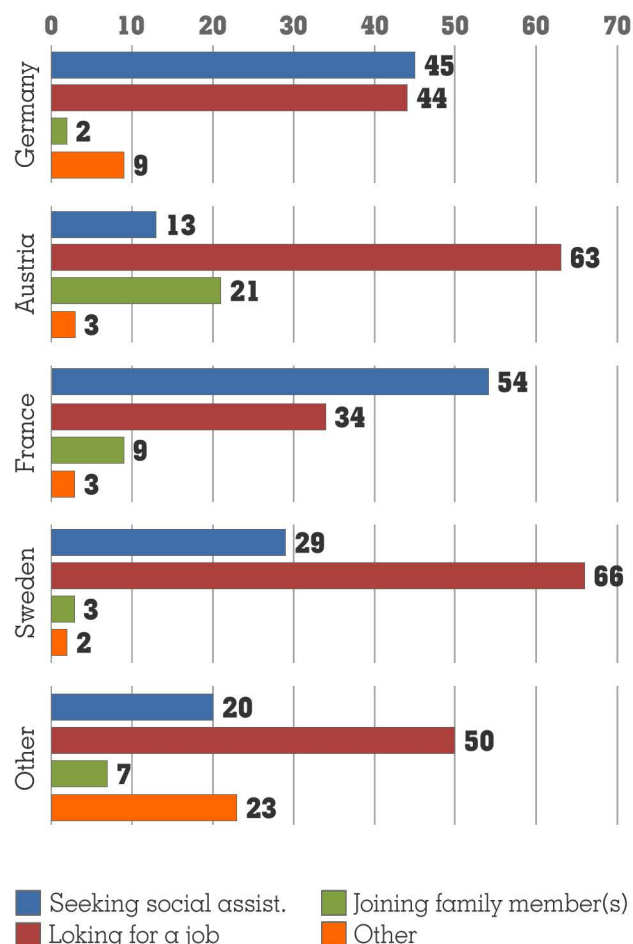
**the respondents state almost equally looking for a job (46%) and seeking for social assistance while waiting for decision about their request for asylum (42%).**



## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

Joining family member(s) and other reasons are much less frequent, 4% and 7% respectively. Here we spotted differences between the regions of returnee's residence – social assistance seeking was the major motivation among returnees from Vojvodina and Belgrade, while job seeking was the major motivation among returnees from other regions.

*Graph 7. Reasons for visiting a foreign country from which they were returned last time, by country, in %*



Differences with regard to motivation to visit a foreign country were spotted among the countries from which they were returned, too.



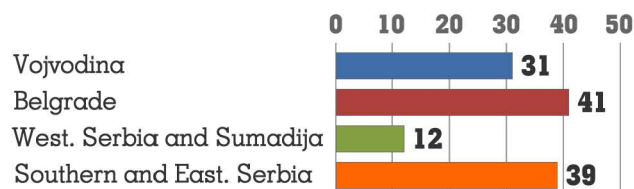
**In the case of Germany social assistance seeking and job seeking are equally strong motivation.**

In France citizens of Serbia look more for social assistance and in Austria, Sweden and other countries they look more for a job. Joining family member(s) is quite relevant for visits to Austria.

One third of returnees have members of close family (parents, siblings, children, a spouse) living in the country from which they returned. This makes an increase compared to 25% such returnees in 2011 survey. Having this and the above graph in mind it was no wonder that the largest share of family tied returnees came back to Serbia from Austria – 50%. Among returnees from Germany there was 33% of those having a close family member living in that country, in France this figure was 34% and in Sweden 40%.

Regional distribution of returnees having close family member in the country from which they returned is presented in the following graph.

*Graph 8. Returnees having close family member in the country from which they returned, by region, in %*



Family was considered in yet another aspect of returnees' migration path.



**12% of them traveled with their family members to the country from which they were returned. This is a huge change when compared to 2011 survey**

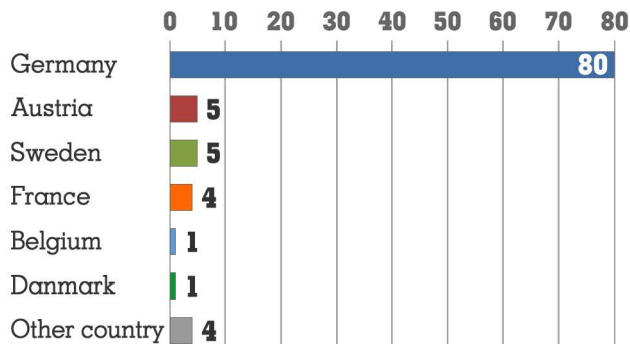
when as much as 77% of respondents were accompanied by one or more family members during their last stay abroad! Single traveling is much more common in recent migrations of this kind.



**Large majority of returnees came back to Serbia from Germany.**

Large majority of returnees came back to Serbia from Germany. This is in accordance with official data. The novelty is that asylum applications made by Serbians in France outnumbered those filed in Germany for the first time in 2018. Still, knowing that in 2011 survey 68% of respondents claimed that their last return to Serbia was from Germany (Sweden was second most frequent with 18% of cases), we can state that other countries were a bit more successful than Germany in reducing false asylum seeking and returning under readmission agreement with Serbia.

*Graph 9. Country from which they were returned upon last visit, in %*



Survey data revealed that the peak of return from Germany and Sweden was in 2016 and 2017 when more than 2/3 of returnees from these countries got back to Serbia. More than 70% returnees from France came back to Serbia in 2017 and 2018, while more than 72% of returnees from Austria returned in 2018. The returnees' path is probably shifting in accordance with changes in social assistance provisions and labor market opportunities in different countries of EU.

Return to Vojvodina, Belgrade and Southern/Eastern Serbia has been pretty evenly distributed over last 4 years, while in Western Serbia and Sumadija 85% of readmissions happened in 2016 and 2017. It is also noticeable that share of 2015 returns in Vojvodina is higher than in other regions. The same is the case with 2019 returns – they make 7% of all returns to Vojvodina and to Southern/Eastern Serbia, 0% to Western Serbia and 2% of all returns to Belgrade. This tells that returnees paths could be endemic in Serbia, too, being more stable in Southern/Eastern Serbia and Belgrade and more unpredictable in Vojvodina and especially Western Serbia and Sumadija.



**Almost all returnees, 96% of them, returned to the municipality in which they resided before emigration.**

All of those who returned to another municipality originated from Kosovo. Most of them returned to Subotica (38%), Zemun (35%) and Kragujevac (21%). Two thirds of them returned from Germany, 21% from Belgium and 7% from Sweden and France each. For ¾ of them this was deportation after more than 2 years of living abroad.

The next important issue is the mode in which these people returned after their claim for asylum was rejected.



**Survey data tell that 49% of them were deported, while 51% returned voluntarily.**

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

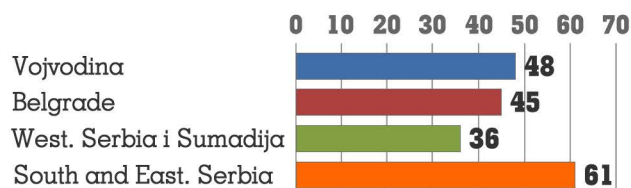
This indicates the real number of returnees as compared to officially registered – we can tell that there is approximately double more returnees under readmission agreement than officially registered. For example, if official data in 'Migration Profile' told that in period 2015-2018 there was around 19,000 registered returnees and we assume that among them there were 25% of secondary migration cases, the figure of 15,000 persons should be doubled.



**there were 30,000 returnees in the period 2015-2018, around half of them unregistered.**

There are statistically significant differences between the regions of residence in Serbia with regard to voluntary return vs. deportation. While Vojvodina and Belgrade are around the sample average, there is much more voluntary returnings in Southern and Eastern Serbia and much more deportations to Western Serbia and Sumadija.

*Graph 10. Share of voluntary returns, by region, in %*



The same stands for the countries from which returnees came back to Serbia – there are those from which returnees are mostly deported and those from which most of them return voluntarily. Return from Germany is close to average picture, but there is much more voluntary returning than deportations from Austria and France.

Only around a half (exactly 48%) of returnees from 2019 survey got the 'refusal document' from the authorities in the

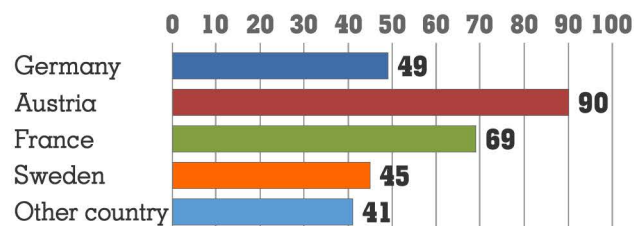
country in which they claimed asylum. Although it was not only them who were deported, frequency of such official procedure was higher among the deported than among those who returned voluntarily – 86% of those who were deported were issued 'refusal document' compared to 12% of such cases among those who returned voluntarily.



**Based on survey respondents claim, most of those who were deported without being issued 'refusal document' returned from Germany (83%) and Sweden (7%).**

The frequency of such cases is higher in the region of Western Serbia and Sumadija than in other regions.

*Graph 11. Share of voluntary returns, in %*



**Most of returnees got back to Serbia in their last return by bus, 50%, while 30% returned by airplane, 19% by private car and 1% by other means of transportation.**

There are significant differences between regions in this regard.

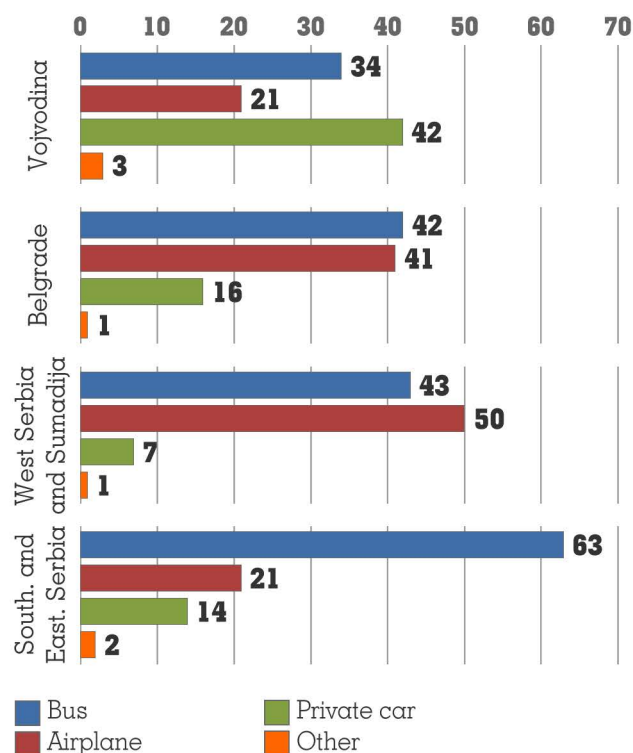
Returnees from Vojvodina use private cars far much more often than returnees from other regions. On the other hand, in Western Serbia and Sumadija where there was more de-



## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

portations airplane was used more frequently. Bus is most typical means of transportation for returnees from Southern and Eastern Serbia. As expected, return by airplane was much more frequent in cases of deportation (48% compared to 36% by bus and 15% by car) than in cases of voluntary return (airplane 12%, bus 63%, car 22%).

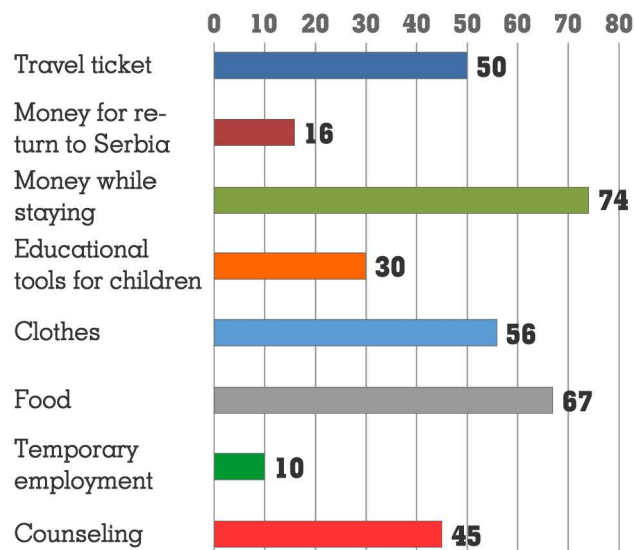
**Graph 12.** Means of transportation at last return to Serbia, by regions, in %



We asked the survey respondents if the authorities in the country from which they returned had provided some kind of assistance to them during their stay or at the moment of return. As many as 74% of them got financial assistance

during their stay in foreign country. Only 16% received money as assistance for their return.

**Graph 13.** Assistance provided to returnees in the country from which they returned, in %



Returnees who were deported do not differ significantly from those who returned voluntarily in any of aforementioned items but those related to moment of deportation/return. There is more of those who received money for return to Serbia and especially who received travel tickets among deported returnees than among voluntary ones. Fifty seven per cent of deported got money to travel back while among voluntary returnees this percent was 43. On the other hand, 66% of deported got a travel ticket while this figure among voluntary returnees is 34%.

Share of returnees who got financial assistance while staying in a foreign country was highest in Germany and Sweden, 76% and 71%, respectively. This figures were 58% in Austria



and 60% in France. Money for return to Serbia was provided for 23% in France, 18% in Sweden, 15% in Germany and 11% in Austria. Travel ticket was provided for 53% in Sweden, 51% in Germany, 40% in France and 16% in Austria. Employment was provided to 14% of returnees who stayed in France, 11% of those who stayed in Germany, 8% in Austria and 5% in Sweden. Finally, counselling was provided to 57% returnees from France, 45% from Germany and Sweden, each and 34% of those returning from Austria.

Secondary migrations are especially important topic with this category of migrants. That is why we asked them if they intended to travel abroad for a stay longer than 30 days again.



**Half of them said 'they intended to travel abroad again', which is a slight decrease in comparison to 2011 survey's 59%.**

Those who returned from Germany or Sweden at their last irregular stay are around this rate (50%), but those who were in Austria are more inclined towards secondary migration – 73% of them. Presence of family members in Austria and higher rate of voluntary return from this country complement description of this mode of irregular migration. Still, we have to remember that return from Austria makes only 5% of total returns. Those who intend to go abroad again are a bit more frequent in Southern and Eastern Serbia (60%) and a bit less frequent in Vojvodina (37%).

### Returnees' capacities for active inclusion

In this chapter the report considers capacities of returnees' and their households to cope with challenges of social inclusion. We will present their education and skills, employment status, household composition and income structure.

As stressed earlier, average size of a returnee's household is 4.7, with the highest share of households with 4 and 5 members. This is 40% more than in Serbia in total, where average size is around 2.8. Large share of returnees live in families with children.



**As many as 69% of them have children 0-15 old in their families. On the other hand, in only 10% of returnees' families there is a person older than 65.**

Nevertheless, this gives quite large share of dependent members in the families, which decreases activity rate and increases risk of living in a jobless household. Forty three percent of returnees' households have one in four, one in five or less household members who are dependent on members being in active age. Another 35% have one in three or one in two dependent members. The remaining 22% households have more than a half members dependent.

Such situation is worsened by the fact that returnees' households suffer low employment and high unemployment rate.



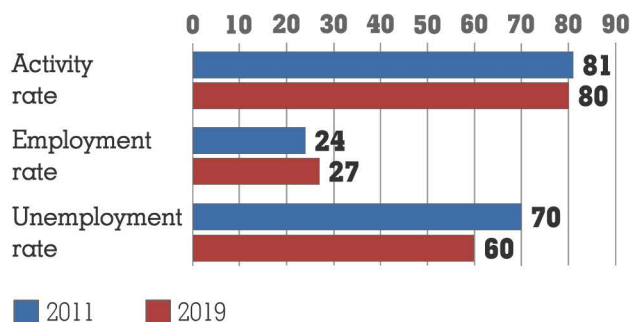
**As many as 38% of households have none of their members employed, while 47% have one employed member,**

additional 12% have 2 employed members and 3% have 3 or more employed members. On the other hand, 10% of retur-

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

nees' households have no unemployed members. Labor market indicators show just a small improvement from year 2011 to 2019, primarily in decrease of unemployment rate. Still it is almost 5 times higher than Serbian average.

**Graph 14.** Labor market indicators 2011 and 2019 survey of returnees, in %



The unemployment rate varies just slightly between the regions of residence of surveyed returnees, being 55% in Western Serbia and Sumadija and 68% in Southern and Eastern Serbia. On the other hand, there is no statistically significant difference in this regard between the countries of last deportation of returnees.

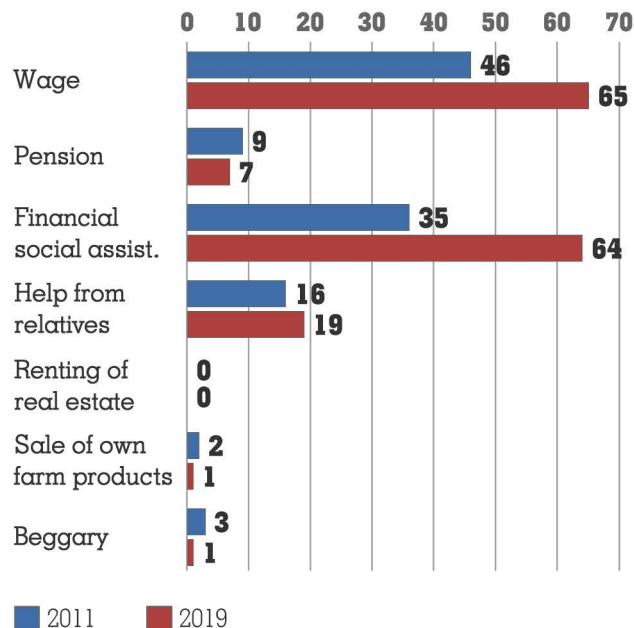
Such a bad position on labor market reflects on income structure of returnees' households. First of all:

 **there is 2% of returnees' households that don't make any income.**

48% makes income from a single source and 41% from two sources. The remaining 9 % makes income from 3 or more sources. When we talk about single sources, wage and financial social assistance dominate. Consequently, these two sources of income make the most typical combination for multi-source incomes. This is possible if the wage comes

from informal, unregistered employment and thus does not jeopardize conditioning for financial social assistance. Significant change occurred in 2019 structure of income of returnees' households when compared to 2011 survey.

**Graph 15.** Income from different sources, returnees surveys 2011 and 2019, % of households



■ 2011 ■ 2019

 **In 8 years economic situation of returnees improved to some extent.**

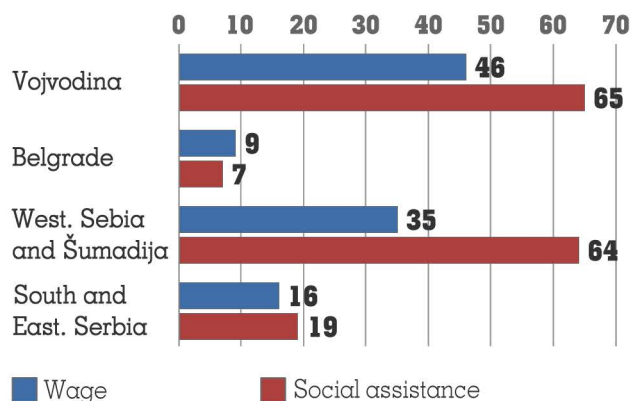
Not only that they got more employed, thus earning more wages, but also more families have received some kind of financial social assistance (parents allowance, family allowance, child allowance, etc.).

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Here we noticed difference between the regions in Serbia in the way that returnees to Western Serbia and Sumadija make income from wage more frequently and income from financial social assistance less frequently than other regions.

Similar variation could not be recorded with regard to country from which they returned or with regard to mode of their return (deported or voluntary).

**Graph 16.** Making income from wage and/or financial social assistance, by regions, % of households



Weak position at labor market and unfavourable income structure keep returnees at low economic position.



**43% of their households have total monthly consumption below minimum wage in Serbia, which was 26,040 RSD at the beginning of 2019.**

Average monthly consumption for the whole sample was 30,469 RSD, with an average consumption per household member of 7,598 RSD. Still, this indicators show that slight

slight improvement in employment and income structure of returnees' households has produced slight increase in their economic position as compared to 2011. Survey conducted in that year showed that 48% of households were below minimum wage in monthly consumption (5 percent points more than in 2019). In 2019 there was 22% of households whose members fall below 60% of median monthly consumption (3,750 RSD), while this figure for 2011 was 50%. This means that inequality in consumption among returnees has significantly decreased. Still, such economic position is not sufficient for decent living of returnees and most of them (96%) complain that their household income is insufficient to cover basic needs such as food, payment of bills, health care, hygiene, education and local transport.

When asked to choose one answer to the question about the type of assistance that would improve economic status of their household the most:



**the respondents most often chose finding a job, same as in 2011 survey.**

Having in mind high activity rate among the returnees and rather high share of those who migrated with intention to find a job abroad, it is extremely important to put efforts in employment support to returnees in Serbia.

The next issue to be described with regard to returnees' capacities is their education and skills. Returnees have rather low education:



**a half of them has elementary education, 1/3 didn't complete even elementary, 16% has secondary school completed and 1% has university education. This is even worse picture than in 2011 when there was 25% of returnees with secondary school completed.**

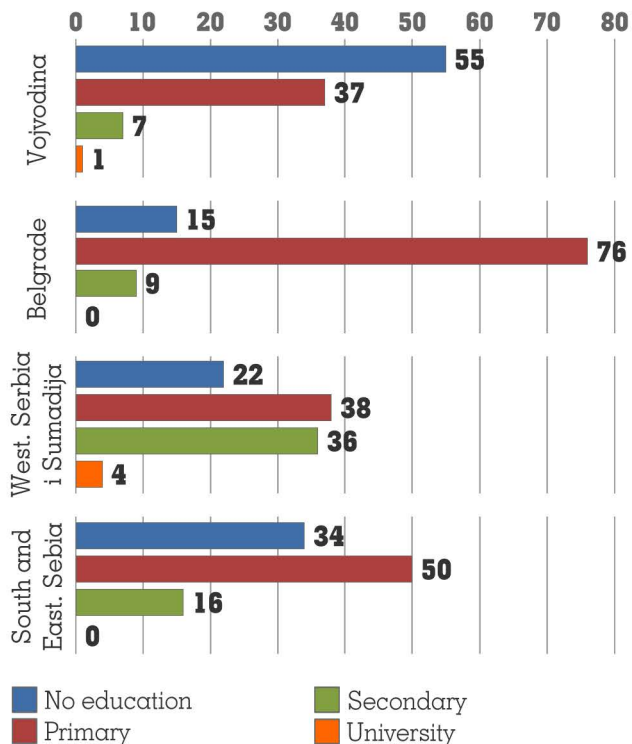


## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

This was probably due to higher share of returnees in 2011 survey who grew up or even were born abroad, completed education and returned to Serbia with their parents after many years of living abroad.

There are certain disruptions from presented distribution of education when disaggregated by regions in Serbia. There is more uneducated returnees in Vojvodina and more of those with secondary education in Western Serbia and Sumadija. No significant variation in educational level was spotted with regard to the country from which they returned or to the mode of return (voluntary or deported).

**Graph 17.** Educational structure of returnees, by region, in %



Control over a foreign language could be important resource for finding a job. However, having control over Serbian language is also important for integration in Serbia. Among the interviewed returnees there is less than 1% of those who don't speak Serbian.



**On the other hand, there is 79% of returnees speaking Romani. As for the world languages, German is being spoken by 37% of returnees.**

However, only 11% of them can read and write in German. English language has been spoken by 10% of returnees, and French by 4%. Here we find again important variation between regions in Serbia: while the share of returnees who speak German makes 25-30 percent in Belgrade or other two regions in central Serbia, in Vojvodina German speaking returnees make 51% of total number.

In the era of informational and communicational technologies it is important to assess digital literacy of returnees, too. We used two simple questions as a proxy in this regard: 'Do you use regularly (at least two times a week) Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel or another program for organizing and displaying of digital information?' and 'Do you use regularly (every day) some of social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Viber or similar) on your mobile phone or computer'.



**We found only 16% of returnees in our sample who use Word of Excel regularly.**

Again, there was more returnees with developed skills of this kind in Western Serbia and Sumadija (30%) at the cost of lower than average share in Vojvodina (9%) and Belgrade (12%). On the other hand, 78% of returnees uses regularly some social network, equally in all regions of Serbia.

Possession of valid driving license could also be a valuable



resource when looking for employment.



**There is 39% of returnees who have one.**

This share is again higher in Western Serbia and Sumadija (52%), while in Vojvodina this figure is 34%.

Finally, we asked our respondents if they were skillful in some craft.



**48% Forty eight percent of them said they were skillful in some craft.**

again Western Serbia and Sumadija is ahead of other regions with this regard with 73% being skillful in a craft. The share is the lowest in Southern and Eastern Serbia (38%).

**The most frequent crafts are: painter, cook, builder, locksmith, tailor and musician.**



## Access to personal documents

We asked the respondents if all members of their household can obtain major personal document/statuses. Great majority said yes for most of the documents.



**There was less than 1% of respondents who said their household members couldn't obtain citizenship status and appropriate certificate for this or record in birth book and certificate for this.**

A bit more of returnees, 2% of them, said their household members couldn't obtain ID, passport or employment record. Finally, there was 4% whose household members couldn't obtain health insurance document, 12% couldn't get marriage certificate and 9% couldn't get an education certificate. Major reason for obstacles in obtaining this documents was:



**that actually they never tried to get them because they didn't need them.**

Still, if they would look for some help in trying to obtain personal documents the most preferred one would be money to pay tax, followed by explanation of procedure as the second most preferred.

## ■ Employment

When discussing income and consumption of returnees households we asked what would be the preferred support to improve their economic position.



**Largest majority of them said that preferred support would be employment (72%), 17% said housing, 6% humanitarian aid and 4% financial social assistance.**

The question is than how to support returnees in looking for a job. When describing their capacities we already stressed low education level and high unemployment rate of returnees, although both characteristics improved between two surveys (2011 to 2019). The problem is that the growth in employment brought precarious jobs to returnees since only 11% of their households have one or more members formally employed and 54% have one or more informally employed members. One fifth of these have 2 or more informally employed members and one can only suppose that waste collection dominates in such cases.



**When describing quest for a job, we stress once again high activity rate and high unemployment rate among returnees.**

Many of unemployed are registered with National Employment Service (NES), which doesn't mean that all of them are really looking for a job, because registering with NES is precondition for getting health insurance and financial social assistance. On the other hand there are those who are not registered with NES, but who actively look for a job. There are two major reasons for not registering with NES. One is lack of personal documents needed to register, which affects 37% of such respondents. The second major reason is mis-

trust in NES as employment mediator, stressed by 35% of respondents who avoid NES when actively looking for a job. We asked such returnees which kind of support they would need to register at this institution. Around half of them said they would need counseling in this regard. A half of them said they would need to get some personal documents. 31% said they would need mediation of a thirdperson in passing administrative procedures. Finally when asked which kind of support is the most valuable for registering with NES, most of returnees (43%) said they need support in obtaining missing personal documents. 32% said they need someone to explain the procedure and 18% said they would need someone to speed-up the procedure.

Under such circumstances it is worth knowing that returnees are willing to learn and gain qualifications that would improve their chances to find a job.



**When we asked them if they would like to attend a training 40% said 'yes'.**

They mention more than 20 different occupations of their interest, but the most frequently singled out preferred occupation for which they require training is that of



**hair-dresser, followed by welder, painter and driver.**

When asked which form of employment they prefer the unemployed returnees equally choose:

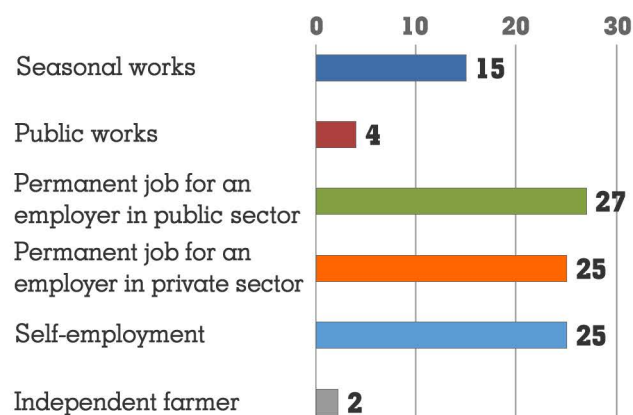


**self-employment, permanent job in private company and permanent job in public sector.**

There is certain number of them who would prefer seasonal work, while becoming a farmer or participating in public works is not interesting form of employment for returnees.

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**Graph 18.** Preferred forms of employment, unemployed returnees, in %



This differs from 2011 findings in seasonal works being more popular now. In 2011 only 3% of unemployed returnees were interested in this form of employment. Some preferred forms of employment are more typical for some levels of education – returnees with secondary education prefer self-employment more frequently, those with completed elementary school prefer permanent job in private sector, while those without formal education prefer seasonal works more than returnees with some formal education.

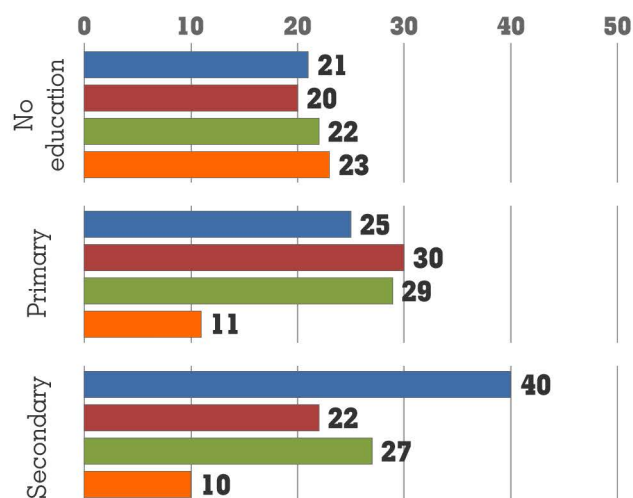
The following data show that programs of support in employment for returnees should be diversified and include:



**private and public employers, as well as support for self-employment.**

Those who start their own business could also become employers for certain number of returnees.

**Graph 19.** Preferred form of employment, by level of education, in %



■ Self-employment  
■ Job in private sector  
■ Job in public sector  
■ Seasonal works

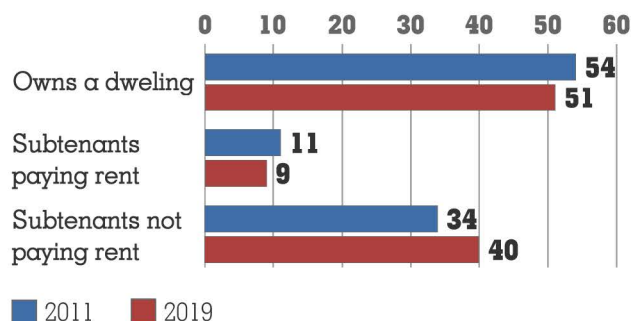
## Housing

As stressed earlier in the report, housing is the second most needed kind of support to returnees, after employment support. In our research we asked several questions about current housing status of respondents, about quality of their housing, about needs in this regard and about preferred support.

**Large majority of returnees' households live in a dwelling intended for housing, 94% of them, a bit more than in 2011 when this figure was 89%.**

Their ownership status is similar to that of 2011 sample – around a half of them own the object they live in, of which 1% under a mortgage, another 40% live in premises they don't own, but don't have to pay for, and 9% are subtenants.

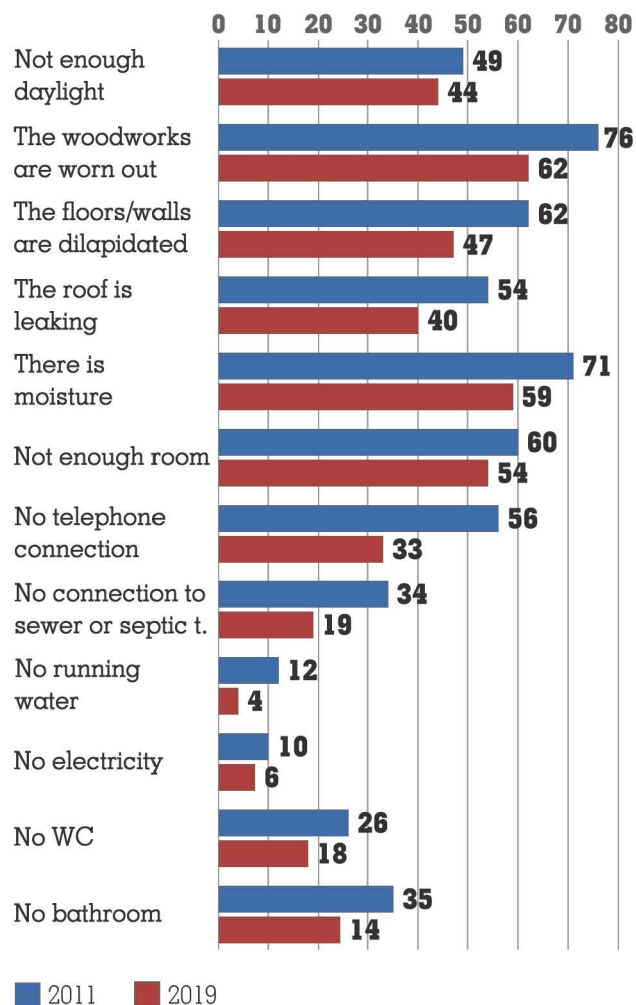
*Graph 20. Housing ownership status, returnees surveys 2011 and 2019, % of households*



This means that, although many returnees got housing support in last couple of years, the housing programs for returnees are still needed. There is no significant variation between the regions in 2019 with regard to housing ownership status of returnees.

Concerning the quality of housing conditions, we asked about several indicators of construction quality and infra-structural equipment. Here we present these items comparatively for 2011 and 2019 surveys.

*Graph 21. Indicators of housing quality, 2011 and 2019 surveys, % of returnees' households*





## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

Three quarters of dwellings owned by returnees are legalized (46%) or in the process of legalization (29%), while 26% is not in the process of legalization. On the other hand, 21% of subtenants who pay a rent and 26% of tenants who don't pay a rent own a piece of land intended for construction. Here we found significant variation between the regions – in Belgrade and Western Serbia/Sumadija there is 35% and 34% of subtenants owning a piece of land, respectively, while in Vojvodina this share is only 7% and in Southern/Eastern Serbia 23%.



**The preceding graph and data show that there has been advancement in each indicator of quality of housing of returnees.**

The same, of course, stands if we measure deprivation in housing conditions applying indexes based on items related to infrastructure and quality of construction<sup>8</sup> - based on the first index, 15% of households are rated as deprived of infrastructural equipment which is almost double less than 27% in 2011, and based on the other, 58% is deprived of quality construction conditions, which is significant improvement from 71% in 2011. Still, the fact that more than a half of returnees live with more than two problems like lack of space, moisture, leaking roof or lack of daily light deserves attention of policy makers in the future.

Certain variation was registered in housing deprivation when disaggregated by regions and country of deportation/voluntary return, while the status of return was not relevant in this regard. Deprivation in infrastructure is significantly higher in Vojvodina (25% deprived households) than in other regions (10-16%). On the other hand, there is much less deprived households in terms of both infrastructure and quality of construction among returnees who returned from Austria (8% and 38% respectively) than among those who returned from other countries. This is yet another peculiarity related

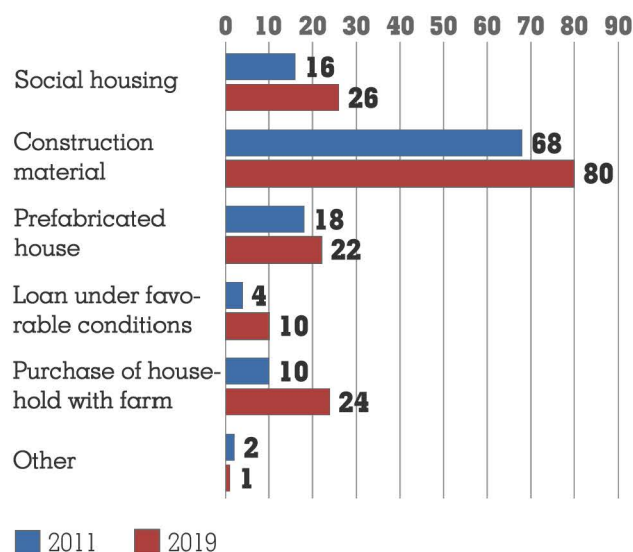
to returnees from Austria indicating a specific migration pattern.

When discussing possible forms of housing support we have to stress first that half of respondents selected only one form as acceptable, 28% accepted two offered forms and a bit more than 20% would accept 3 or more types of support.



**he most frequently chosen support was construction material and this is not different than in 2011.**

*Graph 22. Acceptable forms of housing support, returnees surveys 2011 i 2019, % of households*



Any kind of housing support is more acceptable to returnees now than it was in 2011. The highest growth of preferences

<sup>8</sup> The maximum score for each index is 6; classified as deprived were households that lacked 3 or more units at the infrastructural equipment index and that reported more than 2 problems relating to the housing quality index.

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is related to purchase of a farm with house and social housing, the two models of housing support that have been applied a lot in practice between the two surveys and became better known to returnees.

Like in 2012 report here we again split between the owners of dwellings and subtenants (whether they are paying the rent or not) in order to see if they differ in preferences. The results in the next table are presented comparatively for 2011 and 2019.

Table 2. Preferred housing support (multiple choices) – in %

	Owners		Subtenants	
	2011.	2019.	2011.	2019.
Social housing	2	16	33	37
Construction material	89	88	45	70
Prefabricated house (if they already own land)	11	19	26	24
Loan under favorable conditions	5	9	3	11
Purchase of the household with farmstead	2	15	19	32
Other	0	2	2	3

The table shows that in 2019 largest majority of returnees who own a dwelling prefer support in construction material.

As for the returnees who are in status of subtenant, the largest increase in 2019 compared to 2011 is in acceptance of construction material, but this information should be taken precautiously because only 32% of them owns construction land. However, farm houses and loans under favorable conditions are getting in popularity. After all, we asked survey respondents which of the offered forms of housing support would fit their preference the most, and 81% of owners said it was construction material, followed by prefabricated house (7%). On the other hand, if we cancel the preference for construction material to those returnee subtenants who don't own a piece of land for construction, social housing and purchase of house with a farm are equally the most preferable forms of housing support for this group. Finally, there are two regional variations in housing support preferences worth describing. Namely, returnees from Belgrade are much less prone to purchasing a house with a farm and more prone to get social housing. On the other hand, returnees from Western Serbia and Sumadija are more prone to prefabricated houses and rural houses with farm and less to construction material.



However, significantly larger number would accept prefabricated house or house with a farm or especially social housing than in 2011.

## Healthcare

Between 2011 and 2019 huge improvement occurred regarding health insurance of returnees. In 2011 survey we found 11% returnees who didn't have health insurance,



**In 2019, rate of returnees who don't have health insurance is 1.8%.**

For sure this is a positive consequence of 2 important policy measures implemented meanwhile: introduction of health mediators for Roma communities in 2009 and change in legal framework in 2011 by which Roma can get health insurance by simply contributing statement on their ethnicity.

In 2019 survey there are 43 out of 800 households (5%) that have at least one member without health insurance. More precisely, 4% have one member lacking health insurance, while the remaining 1% have 2 or more such members. Almost all of them state that the main reason for lacking health insurance is:



**that they lack another document needed to register with health fund.**

Consequently, 50% of them states that provision of such documents is the preferred form of support with this regard, while 23% believes it is counseling about procedure of obtaining health insurance and another 18% claims it is the presence of a mediator during the process.

The next issue related to healthcare of returnees is their health condition. In the survey we asked about members of households who have serious health condition requiring constant care and assistance in daily functioning. The share of households who have such member(s) is lower than in 2011, 17% compared to 25%.



**We found total of 164 persons with serious health condition in sampled households, which makes 4.3%.**

This rate is below national level, which is expected having in mind that returnees are younger population than national average and that persons older than 65 make only 10% of sampled households. The share of returnees having officially verified disability is 2.8%, located in 11% of sampled households.

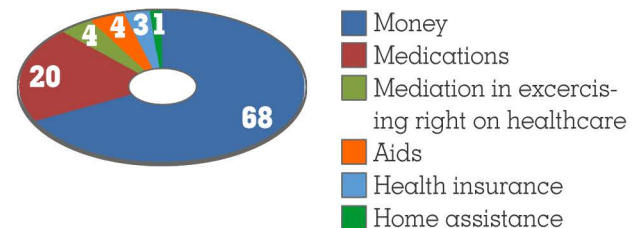


**There were 2% of households who have 2 members with officially verified disability.**

All of these figures are somewhat lower than in 2011 survey when returnees with officially verified disability might be located in 13% of households, making 4% of total population.

Same as in 2011, most returnees with serious health condition need money as support, followed by medication.

*Graph 23. Urgent support for household members with serious health condition, % of returnees households*





## Education

Concerning education, we aim at detecting major obstacles to access to education services for children from youngest age to 18, which is covered by kindergarten, obligatory one year pre-school, elementary and secondary school.



**First of all, we detected as many as 27% of households with children younger than 5.5 who don't attend a kindergarten.**

The share of households with children of age 5.5-6.5 who don't attend obligatory pre-school education is much smaller – 4%. However, by the law there should be zero households with children not attending obligatory preschool.



**Taken together, 60% of children old 0-7 don't attend education.**

Primary and secondary school age children were taken together, we asked respondents if in their household there was children old 7-18 who don't attend school. There was 10% of households who had children of this age not attending school.



**This makes 18% of all returnees' children of respective age omitting primary or secondary school.**

There is no statistically significant variation in kindergarten, pre-school or school attendance between regions of Serbia or between deported and voluntarily returned citizens of Serbia.

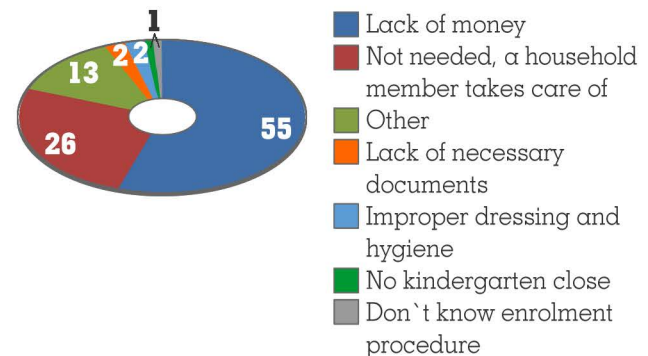
When asked what are the major reasons for children not attending kindergarten our respondents put:



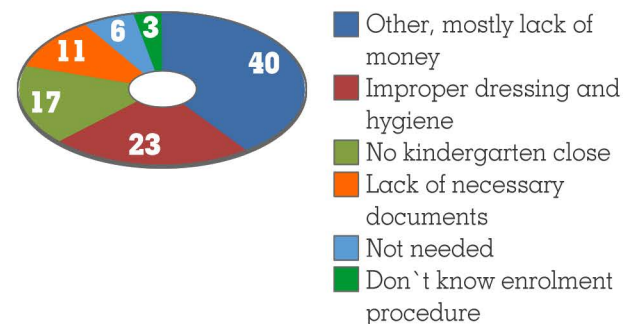
**lack of money on the first place,**

and then that it is not needed because a member of household takes care of the child.

*Graph 24. Major reasons for children younger than 5,5 not attending kindergarten, in %*



*Graph 25. Major reasons for children old 5,5-6,5 not attending obligatory pre-school, in %*

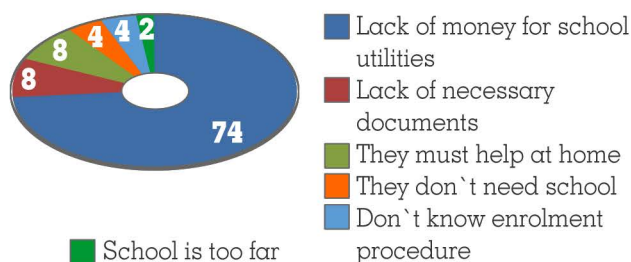






**Lack of money continues to make major obstacle also to children of school age to enroll and attend primary or secondary school regularly.**

*Graph 26. Major reasons for children old 7-18 not attending school, in %*



It is worth mentioning that answer 'teachers and/or children don't accept him/her' was offered too, at all three levels, but respondents never chose that answer.



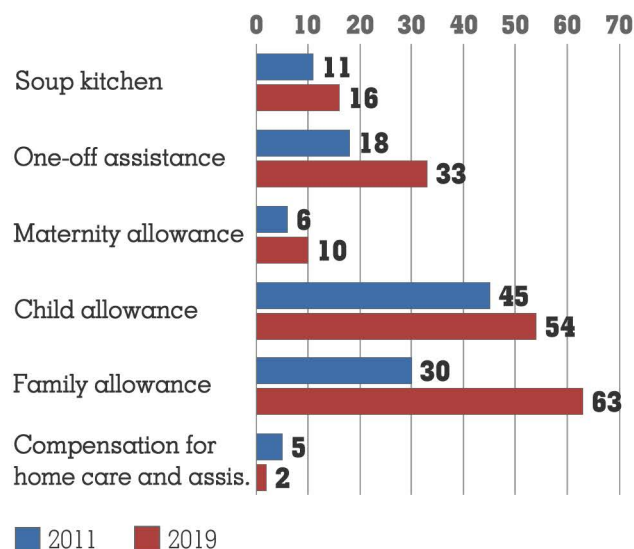
**Poverty is by all means the major reason for children omitting education.**

Obligatory pre-school and primary education in public schools are for free and available on the whole territory of Serbia. However, there are significant costs related to education and they grow as a child gets older. Lack of documents shouldn't be a problem to enroll a child in pre-school or elementary school, as the Ministry of Education has put in practice procedure for fast enrolment of returnees' children in classroom, but some parents obviously don't know that. Consequently, not knowing the procedure of enrolment is actually bigger obstacle than presented in the graphs. Although small in size, the problem with parents who believe that their children don't need school or should stay at home and help is still important and needs proper institutional reaction.

## Social protection

Social protection measures are important instrument of economic survival and social inclusion of returnees under readmission agreements because they suffer high poverty and unemployment rates and have high dependency ratio in families. The share of families receiving some kind of monetary assistance or access to soup kitchen is high, much higher than in Serbia in general.

*Graph 27. Beneficiaries of different kinds of monetary financial assistance or access to soup kitchen, returnees surveys 2011 and 2019, % of households*



**Between two surveys the coverage with monetary assistance has increased to a great extent.**

In 2019 there is double more returnees' families receiving

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family allowance and 20% more families receiving child allowance than in 2011. One-off assistance, usually provided by local administrations, also increased almost double. Few variations were noticed in analysis of social assistance measures in 2019. First, returnees in Western Serbia and Sumadija receive family allowance somewhat less frequently than others, 53% of them compared to 64-66% in other regions. Next, returnees in Belgrade receive child and maternity allowance less frequently than those in other regions, especially Southern/Eastern Serbia (37% and 63% for child allowance,

respectively). With one-off financial assistance difference is noticeable between deported returnees who got it in 27% of cases, compared to 38% among those who returned voluntarily. Finally, soup kitchen was less frequently used by returnees in Vojvodina, 4% of households, compared to 24% in Belgrade as the highest score.

In order to improve targeting and effectiveness of social protection it is important to see the major reasons for not receiving main forms of financial social assistance.

**Table 3.** *Reasons for not receiving main forms of financial social assistance*

Reason (in %)	Compensation for home care	Family allowance	Child allowance	Maternity allowance	One-off assistance	Soup kitchen
Don't need	70	25	54	64	23	54
Didn't pass income census	4	17	11	7	10	4
Didn't qualify in other reasons	15	44	23	19	35	24
Lack of necessary documents	6	12	9	7	5	5
Employees in CSW don't speak returnees language	0	1	1	0	0	0
Can't apply independently (illiterate, old, ill)	0	1	0	0	1	1
Don't know where to apply	1	1	1	1	7	2
Never heard of the program	4	0	1	1	21	10

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

Having in mind that only a quarter of returnees households think they don't need family allowance or one-off financial assistance it is important knowing why they don't get it. Looking at the whole table first general conclusion is that it is not about returnees not knowing where and how to apply, except to a certain extent for one-off assistance. Lack of necessary documents jeopardizes right on social assistance for a small number of families, but this is an obstacle that should be completely eradicated.



**The final and the strongest reason for not receiving any kind of social assistance is either that they don't need one or they didn't qualify for some reason, including income census.**

Concerning non-financial aspects of social protection, we asked our respondents if they face some of such problems in their family. They also answered if they received assistance in this regard and if not why.

The share of families who report social problems is not large and it has declined since 2011. The largest problem is still the presence of an old person that cannot take care of him/herself. Like in 2011 here we construct the social vulnerability index out of items presented above, where every household having more than one problem is considered vulnerable.

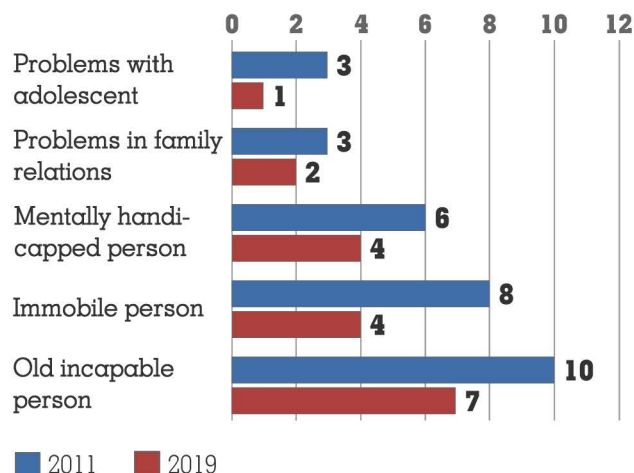


**In 2011 there was 7% of socially vulnerable returnees' families, while in 2019 this figure has dropped to 3%.**

In 2019 88% of families have no such problems and 9% have one of the listed social problems. This vulnerability rate is equal among deported and voluntarily returned emigrants, but there is slight variation between regions in the way that Vojvodina has 6% of socially vulnerable returnees' families,

double more than overall sample.

**Graph 28.** Presence of social problems in family, returnees surveys 2011 and 2019, % of households



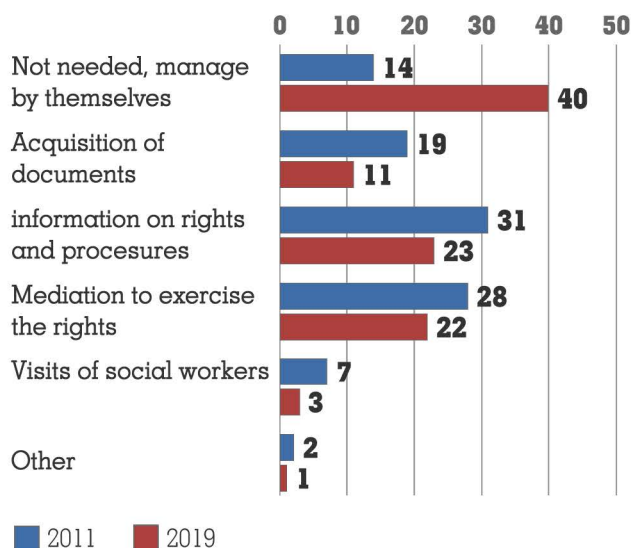
Concerning the support provided for the problems mentioned above, we can tell about old incapable persons, immobile persons and mentally handicapped persons. Other problems appear in statistically insignificant numbers. Only 30% of families who have an old incapable person got assistance, all from local public institutions (CSW, local administration, healthcare center). Half of those who didn't receive assistance related to this didn't ask for one and another half were rejected as unqualified. Assistance was provided to 36% of returnees' households who have an immobile person. The assistance in this case was also provided by local public institutions, most of all CSW and healthcare center. If not, the major reason was that they didn't qualify for the service. Finally, 62% of returnees' households who have a mentally handicapped member got assistance, approximately one half of them from local administration, one quarter from CSW, one quarter from healthcare center and around 5% from

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON RETURNEES

church humanitarian organization. If they didn't receive assistance related to this issue, this was mostly because they didn't qualify for the service, then because the location for service provision was too distant and finally because they simply didn't ask for assistance.

Finally we come to the issue of most needed form of help to access social protection services. The same question with offered answers was asked in 2011 and 2019 surveys.

**Graph 29.** Most needed help in access to social protection services, returnees surveys 2011 and 2019, % of households



**In 2019 there is 3 times more returnees who don't need help when dealing with social problems in family than in 2011.**

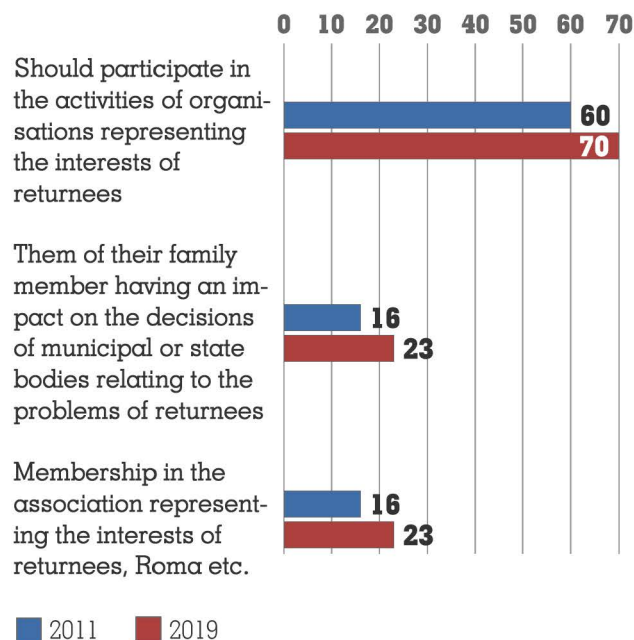
Still, if they need some help, it is mostly information on rights and procedures and mediation in exercising these

rights. Acquisition of needed documents is still an important issue with more than 10% of respondents raising it.

## Social participation and discrimination

A few questions were raised both in 2011 and 2019 surveys with intention to see if returnees felt they can affect decision making on local or national level and were ready to engage in activities of civic organizations.

**Graph 30.** Social activism, returnees surveys 2011 and 2019, in %







**First general impression is that activism of returnees has risen since 2011.**

This is relatively young population and it is not wonder that the rate of membership in associations is higher than among general population in Serbia (general surveys usually record 2-3%). Especially encouraging is the rise of feeling among returnees that themselves or their family members might have influence on the decisions of administrative bodies, because many activities related to their improved social inclusion will be designed and implemented by local institutions and in cooperation with civil sector.

At the end of survey we investigated discrimination as possible obstacle to social inclusion of returnees. We raised the question if the respondent has felt in last one year that someone outside his/her family humiliated him/her and in which institutions and situations it occurred.



**As many as 46% of returnees gave positive answer, but not all of them answered where it happened.**

Out of those who did:



**81% was humiliated at more than one place or situation.**

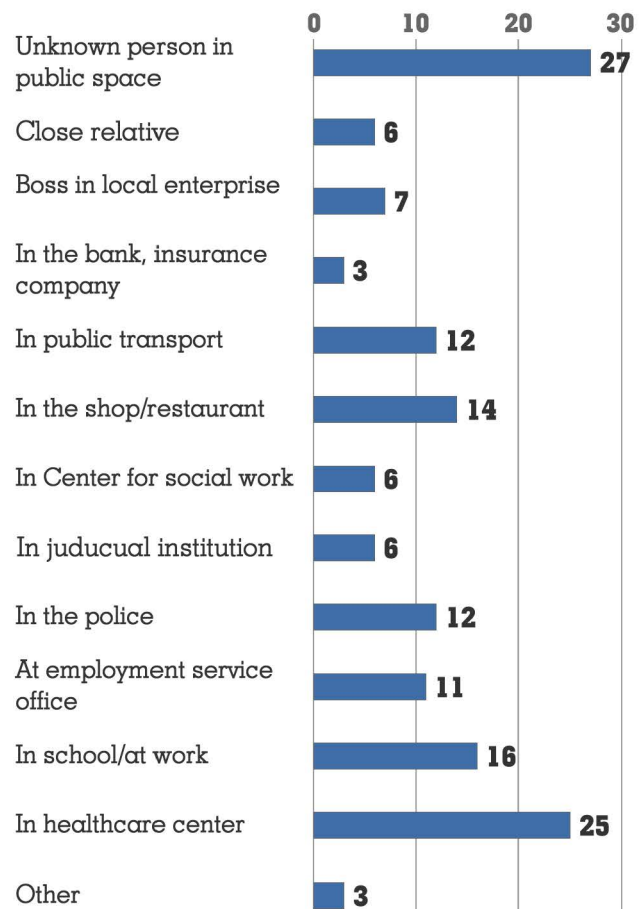
19% was humiliated once, but two thirds more were humiliated between 2 and 5 times.



**The most of discriminatory experience occurs where people spend most of time or get into official communication most frequently: in public space, in social service institutions like healthcare centers, schools, police, in public transportation and in shops/restaurants.**

It is worrisome that cases of humiliation of returnees happen in public spaces so often, but it is equally worrying that public institutions, being by themselves guardians of public moral, carry such a high capacity for discriminatory practices. There is no difference between deported returnees and those who returned on their own will regarding humiliation experience. However, regional differences exist.

*Graph 31. Spots/situations of humiliation in last one year, in %*



*Grafikon 32. Humiliation experience in last one year, by regions, in %*



The fact that in Western Serbia and Sumadija region there is 51% of returnees that don't speak, read or write Romani, while this figure is only 6% in Souther/Eastern Sebia, explains the finding in the graph. This discrimination doesn't have to do a lot with returnee status, but with ethnic origin – it is Roma people that are being humiliated more than others.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# Conclusions and recommendations

## 1.

## Conclusion:

Number of returnees to Serbia under readmission agreements has been falling down in last couple of years. Data show that a half of returnees come back to Serbia voluntarily. If we in accordance with this double the registered number of returnees as presented in Migration Profile and subtract the estimated number of secondary (and tertiary) returns, we come to an rough assessment of 30,000 persons returning to Serbia in period 2015-2018. Migration paths of these migrants are also shifting. Based on official statistics presented in Migration Profile, for the first time in last 10 years in 2018 number of returnees from Germany was not the highest, there was more citizens of Serbia returning from France.

## Recommendation:

It should be continued with simultaneous implementation of policy measures towards push and pull factors in order to prevent irregular migration. Countries

of destination should demotivate immigrants from Serbia as a safe country by shortening time for administrative procedures and increasing efficiency of deportation. Central and local administration in Serbia should provide more support to social inclusion of former and tentative irregular migrants. More detailed recommendations with this regard are presented below.

## 2.

## Conclusion:

Some emigration/return paths are rather peculiar, like higher concentration of better educated returnees (secondary school) in Western Serbia and Sumadija who much less frequently than others have relatives in the country from which they were returned (most usually deported). They have higher probability of going to Sweden or Austria, looking for a job. Or a small number of returnees from Austria, who more frequently than returnees from other countries have

relatives there and who often come back to Serbia voluntarily, by their own car, but are, at the same time, very inclined towards secondary migration.

### Recommendation:

There should be more bilateral cooperation between referent governmental bodies in Serbia and individual countries of high interest to irregular migrants in order to coordinate policy measures towards pull and push factors. More detailed analysis of peculiar migration paths should be conducted in order to improve targeting of policy measures.

## 3.

### Conclusion:

Almost half of returnees traveled abroad in order to find a job, supposedly a seasonal one, since the share of those who travelled with family members dropped from 77% to 12% between 2011 and 2019. Large majority of them are active at labor market in Serbia, too. However, a lot of them are unemployed and with low education. Consequently, poverty is very high among returnees.

### Recommendation:

Major measures of support to inclusion should be directed toward empowering of their capacities and employment. Urgent one-off financial assistance in critical cases should be continuously provided under transparent and ordered conditions.

## 4.

### Conclusion:

Returnees are very prone to find a job and this is the major field of support they require. Their unemployment rate declined as compared to 2011, but it is still very high and the jobs they have are mostly informal, without a contract and often seasonal. Extremely small number of them runs own business, they mostly perform unskilled jobs for an employer. Returnees equally choose self-employment, permanent job in private company and permanent job in public sector as the preferred solution for their unemployment. Also, education among returnees improved since 2011, but it is still very low, with only 1/6 of them having secondary or tertiary education. However, more than a half of returnees have control over a skill or two that could be utilized in the labor market (foreign language, computers, driving license, etc.) and 40% of them are prone to attend training and improve skills in order to be more competitive in labor market.

### Recommendation:

Support in employment of returnees goes in two directions. One is capacity building of returnees through lifelong learning and/or trainings. Attending basic education for adults would improve overall literacy of returnees and increase their chances for social inclusion. Trainings in different skills should be organized to improve their employability. The most frequently singled out preferred occupation for which they require training is that of hair-dresser, followed by welder, painter and driver. A separate line in trainings should be intended for business skills development.



Second direction for employment support to returnees is provision of jobs. Since they are equally interested in 3 forms of employment (self-employment, private employer, public employer), measures of support should also go in these 3 directions. As for the self-employment, grant schemes for start-ups should be established, followed by business mentoring support. A special form of this support should be grants for establishment of social cooperatives, also followed by business mentoring support. This form is suitable for work integration and advanced social inclusion of beneficiaries, thus being suitable for this vulnerable group. As for private and public employers, since the returnees are to a great extent already on the NES list of vulnerable groups who have advantage in employment, it would be beneficial to organize additional informative campaign that would motivate employers to employ returnees and thus exercise their corporate social responsibility.

### 5.

#### Conclusion:

Almost all returnees have almost all basic personal documents. There is less than 1% of those who said their household members couldn't obtain citizenship status and appropriate certificate for this or record in birth book and certificate for this. A bit more of them said their household members couldn't obtain ID, passport or employment record. Finally, there was 4% returnees whose household members couldn't obtain health insurance document. Some returnees lack money to pay tax for obtaining a document or they don't know procedure.

#### Recommendation:

Support in provision of missing personal documents should tackle both issues mentioned above. As for the taxes, relevant regulation should be changed as to relax returnees from paying such taxes. Concerning troubles with procedure, CSOs should be supported in providing cost free legal aid and counseling to returnees, or even in mediating in provision of personal documents.

### 6.

#### Conclusion:

Housing support is the second most preferred form of support among returnees. Housing situation of returnees improved since 2011, but it is still difficult and needs further intervention by public administration. Meanwhile both service providers and returnees as beneficiaries learned more about advantages of different types of housing support, which lead to returnees accepting variety of offered models. This lead to rise in popularity of provision of houses with farmstead.

#### Recommendation:

Programs of housing support to returnees should be continued. Major types of offered support should be social housing, construction material and houses with farmstead. Construction material should assume also reconstruction of already existing objects.

### 7.

#### Conclusion:

Issue of health insurance is almost completely solved, since the share of returnees not having health insurance has dropped from 11% in 2011 to 1.8% in 2019. Those who lack one are actually missing relevant personal documents needed in administrative procedure.

#### Recommendation:

Support CSOs to assist returnees in completing documentation and completing procedure of registering with Health Insurance Fund.

Provide humanitarian aid to returnees' families who have member(s) with serious health condition.

### 8.

#### Conclusion:

Problem with drop out from education system is still very high among returnees. Based on their assessment of major obstacles it seems that 'free education' in Serbia bears too much costs for returnees' households. This is related also to answers like 'lack of clothes and poor hygiene' or 'no school/kindergarten in proximity' (which bears higher transportation costs).

#### Recommendation:

Make financial social transfers conditional upon

children's regular school attendance and simultaneously provide additional in-kind support for returnees' children in cloths, books and other school utilities. Introduce stipend for 1-2 ending grades of elementary education and one-off financial incentives for the most vulnerable households.

### 9.

#### Conclusion:

Different forms of financial social transfers cover population of returnees much better than in 2011 and it looks like this right has been fully implemented, which is one important achievement in dealing with migration push factors. Still, there is small number of returnees' families who don't receive financial social support because they lack some personal document or need assistance in application procedure.

#### Recommendation:

Establish cooperation between CSWs, CRM trustees and Roma coordinators in detecting and supporting returnees' families who might have right to financial social support.

### 10.

#### Conclusion:

The share of returnees' families who report social problems is not large and it has declined since 2011. The largest problem is still the presence of an old person that cannot take care of him/herself.

### Recommendation:

Establish cooperation between CRM trustees, Roma coordinators, CSWs and local healthcare centers in detecting and supporting through 'help in home' returnees' families who have an old person that cannot take care of him/herself.

## 11.

### Conclusion:

Returnees' social activism has increased since 2011 and is higher than in Serbia in general.

### Recommendation:

Returnees' and especially Roma associations should be empowered for and then utilized in designing and providing support services to returnees.

## 12.

### Conclusion:

Humiliation of returnees is highest in Southern/Eastern Serbia where most of returnees (94%) are Roma. That is why we suppose that this humiliation is actually discrimination of Roma. It is very worrying that almost half of returnees had experience of humiliation and especially that 81% of those (40% of total) were humiliated in more than one place/situation. The most of discriminatory experience occurs where people spend most of time or get into official communication most frequently: in public space, in

social service institutions like healthcare centers, schools, police, in public transportation and in shops/restaurants.

### Recommendation:

Continuously conduct public campaigns against discrimination and anti-ziganism. Organize info sessions for employees in public services (social work, health care, education, police, etc.) on discrimination and anti-ziganism.

## 13.

### Conclusion:

The above presented conclusions explicitly or implicitly show that social service positions introduced in order to support social inclusion of Roma in Serbia, health mediators, educational assistants and Roma coordinators, have led to significant results in this regard. There are other fields but healthcare, education and political presentation in which such mechanism could be beneficial.

### Recommendation:

Provide sustainable functioning of existing institutional mechanism for support to Roma inclusion and extend it to other fields of high vulnerability by introducing positions of Roma social mediators within Centers for Social Work and Roma policemen in municipalities with high share of Roma population.





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