

**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
MISSION IN KOSOVO**

**Assessing progress in the implementation of the
policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated
persons in Kosovo's municipalities**

September, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews the progress made by Kosovo institutions, in particular municipalities, in fulfilling their obligations under the existing policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons. It follows the publication of an earlier Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Mission in Kosovo (OSCE) report, *Implementation of the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo's Municipalities*, released in November 2009. This follow-up report tracks the changes that have been made to the repatriations policy and institutional framework during the interim period, and assesses their impact at the local level. It is based on the regular monitoring activities of the OSCE in the field of promotion and protection of communities' rights.

This assessment found that some progress has been made in repatriations policy since publication of the 2009 report. Between January 2010 and July 2011, the government approved a revised strategy for the reintegration of repatriated persons and a corresponding action plan based on a needs assessment and a gap analysis undertaken in early 2010. The revised policy framework is intended to guide the co-ordination and management activities at all levels of government with the overall goal of ensuring the sustainable reintegration of repatriated persons into Kosovo society. In order to strengthen co-ordination efforts, the government established an executive inter-ministerial co-ordination board tasked with overseeing and monitoring the implementation of existing policies and co-ordinating reintegration efforts between and across government agencies. Furthermore, at the local level municipal community offices and municipal return officers were given a more solid legal status within the municipal offices for communities and return. Finally, a central-level fund was established and, for the first time, budgetary resources were earmarked for the implementation of reintegration measures.

However, despite tangible progress in policy development and the establishment of institutional mechanisms, implementation of the government strategy continues to lag behind. While efforts have been made by central-level authorities to raise awareness and build up the capacity of relevant municipal officials in relation to existing policies and action plans, in many municipalities these have yet to lead to concrete reintegration measures. Similarly, while initiatives to improve co-operation and co-ordination between central- and local-level institutions, as well as among relevant municipal bodies, have intensified in recent months, municipalities often do not take advantage of available assistance, or lack the political will and/or capacities to implement the policy framework effectively. Consequently, repatriated persons continue to face major obstacles to their sustainable reintegration as a result of their *de facto* limited access to property and housing, as well as difficulties accessing basic services such as education, health care, employment and economic opportunities. Resolute measures at all levels of government are necessary to improve the implementation of reintegration policies and strategies, with the ultimate aim of securing durable and sustainable living conditions for repatriated persons.

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of its mandate to promote and protect the rights of communities in Kosovo, in 2009 the OSCE conducted an assessment of the conditions for the reception and reintegration of repatriated persons¹ in Kosovo's municipalities.² That assessment found that few steps had been taken to implement the existing policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons at the local level. Concrete measures to facilitate this process were lacking in the key areas of health, education, employment and housing, and no associated costs had been included in any municipal budget. Furthermore, the assessment revealed a lack of awareness among relevant municipal officials of their roles and responsibilities in the reintegration process, as well as a lack of effective information sharing and co-ordination mechanisms at the municipal level and between the central and local levels. As a result of these shortcomings, repatriated persons were often left without any meaningful assistance upon their return to Kosovo.

Since the publication of the 2009 report, forced repatriations from host countries (mainly in Western Europe) have continued.³ According to statistics compiled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)⁴, a total of 1334 persons were forcibly repatriated to Kosovo in the first half of 2011, including 336 members of non-majority communities⁵ (303 of whom belong to groups considered at risk and in need of international protection by the UNHCR, namely Kosovo Serbs, Kosovo Albanians in a minority situation at the municipal level and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians).⁶ Again according to UNHCR, the year 2010 saw the involuntary return of 2,910 individuals, in comparison to 2,962 in 2009, 2,550 in 2008, 3,219 in 2007, 3,569 in 2006 and 3,554 in 2005.⁷ Their sustainable reintegration continues to pose major challenges for institutions in Kosovo, in particular for the municipalities.

¹ According to the Revised Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (May 2010), repatriation or forced return involves persons originating from Kosovo who were denied refugee or other legal status in host countries and by official orders or court decisions are repatriated to Kosovo.

² OSCE Report *Implementation of the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo's Municipalities*, November 2009, <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/40180> (accessed 23 August 2011).

³ Since November 2008, the Kosovo government has concluded readmission agreements with several countries in the region and Western Europe, including Albania, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Switzerland, with further agreements being negotiated. Law No. 03/L-208 on Readmission, 12 July 2010, sets forth the rules and procedures pertaining to the readmission process in Kosovo.

⁴ On 6 June 2011, the OSCE signed a Technical Agreement (TA) with UNHCR to further implement the Memorandum of Understanding on the Enhancement of Co-operation between UNHCR and the Secretariat of the OSCE, signed in Vienna on 15 October 1998. The TA provides for a framework of co-operation between the parties in the field of human rights monitoring and protection of persons of concern, including but not limited to refugees, displaced persons, returnees (both voluntary and forced), stateless persons, communities constituting a numerical minority in any given municipality, and other persons of common concern.

⁵ The OSCE Mission in Kosovo takes the term non-majority communities to mean communities which are in a minority at the municipal level.

⁶ See UNHCR, Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo, HCR/EG/09/01, 9 November 2009, and UNHCR, Office of the Chief of Mission Prishtinë/Priština, Statistical Overview – Update as of July 2011 (available from UNHCR).

⁷ Government figures for the same period are: 1569 in 2011 (January–July); 2,095 in 2010, 3,225 in 2009, 2556 in 2008, 2945 in 2007, 2378 in 2006, 2987 in 2006. Department of Citizenship, Asylum

The current report assesses efforts made by institutions in Kosovo to effectively address the shortcomings identified and to put in place the necessary mechanisms to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of repatriated persons in their municipalities of origin. It is based on the regular monitoring activities of the OSCE in the field of promotion and protection of communities' rights between January 2010 and July 2011, and on interviews conducted with municipal officials and community representatives in February–March and in July 2011. It first outlines recent policy and institutional developments aimed at improving responses in the reception and reintegration of repatriated persons and then describes institutional developments at the municipal level, focusing specifically on the offices for communities and return. The following section reviews the impact of these policy and institutional developments at the local level, and examines municipal efforts to implement government strategies. The final section then presents conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving institutional responses to sustainable reintegration.

2. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL

Since the publication of the OSCE report in November 2009, central-level institutions have taken steps to review existing conditions and policies for the reintegration of repatriated persons. They have also made an effort to establish the necessary institutional mechanisms and procedures to co-ordinate sustainable support for repatriated persons.

A) Establishment of the executive board and subordinate institutions

In April 2010, the government established an inter-ministerial co-ordination board (executive board) to oversee and monitor implementation of the policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons.⁸ Membership of the executive board consists of representatives of relevant ministries⁹, and international organizations¹⁰, and its core responsibilities include preparing and overseeing implementation of the government policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons, including designing, proposing and managing the budget for implementation (notably the central-level reintegration fund, discussed below), and setting out areas of responsibility for all central- and municipal-level institutions. It is also responsible for

and Migration (DCAM) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), “Repatriated Persons between 2005 and 31 July 2011”. For more information on DCAM see note 11, below.

⁸ Government decision No. 7/123, 30 April 2010. See also United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)/Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, approved by the government of Kosovo on 10 October 2007, and Government of Kosovo Action Plan for the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, April 2008. For further discussion of the 2007 Strategy see OSCE Report, Implementation of the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo’s Municipalities, note 2, *supra*.

⁹ Key ministries include MIA; the Ministry of Local Government Administration; the Ministry for Communities and Return; the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning; the Ministry of Finance and Economy; and the Office of the Prime Minister.

¹⁰ These are the European Commission (EC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR.

establishing effective mechanisms for the dissemination of information to central- and local-level institutions. Finally, it is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of government strategies at the central and municipal levels, as well as facilitating co-operation with potential donors and other stakeholders. To facilitate execution of its mandate, the executive board is served by two subordinated institutions: an office for reintegration, located in the Department for Citizenship, Migration and Asylum (DCAM) in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and a secretariat.¹¹

B) Revision of the policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons

Among the first decisions of the executive board was the creation of an inter-ministerial working group tasked with assessing the mechanisms in place for the reintegration of repatriated persons. Important recommendations identified during the assessment included revising the October 2007 Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, establishing a fund for the reintegration of repatriated persons, and strengthening the capacities of central- and local-level institutions to manage the reintegration process more effectively. The assessment also recommended that inter-institutional co-operation at all levels be improved and that communication with host countries be enhanced, particularly regarding the direct exchange of information on persons scheduled for repatriation to Kosovo.¹²

Based on this assessment, in May 2010 the Kosovo government endorsed the Revised Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (Revised Strategy)¹³ which sets out the policies and measures to be taken in ensuring sustainable solutions for repatriated persons in the key areas of civil registration, health, education, employment, social welfare, housing and property-related issues. The Revised Strategy also provides for an institutional framework for managing the reception and reintegration of repatriated persons. It defines the roles and responsibilities of central and local institutions during each stage of the reintegration process, and outlines procedures and co-ordination mechanisms to address the needs and promote the rights

¹¹ The office for reintegration (OR) is a team of seven officers based in DCAM, and is the central-level contact point for reintegration issues. Its core responsibilities include: maintaining regular contact with municipal officials, central bodies and other actors working on repatriations; providing training to municipal officials on policy and relevant funding opportunities; preliminary processing of requests for reintegration funds prior to their submission to the secretariat and the executive board; and outreach to repatriated persons. A sub-component of this office is the airport monitoring team, which is staffed on an ad hoc basis by four of the OR officers, and based at Prishtinë/Priština international airport to gather relevant data from repatriated persons upon their arrival (e.g., basic personal information, municipality of destination) and to provide them with immediate assistance (e.g., in relation to access to housing, civil registration and basic services). The secretariat is responsible for co-ordinating the activities of relevant institutions, monitoring implementation of the Revised Strategy and Action Plan (see notes 13 and 15, *infra*), elaborating recommendations for the executive board, and processing administrative requirements related to requests submitted by returnees to obtain benefits made available by the reintegration fund.

¹² See Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Assessment of the mechanisms for reintegration of repatriated persons: Ensuring best possible treatment and respect for human rights to all repatriated persons*, (April 2010).

¹³ Government decision No. 4/126, 26 May 2010.

of repatriated persons. Special attention is paid to the needs of non-majority communities and vulnerable groups.¹⁴

An Action Plan to implement the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (Action Plan)¹⁵ was then developed. It foresees specific activities to be undertaken by relevant central- and local-level institutions in relation to the implementation of the legal and policy framework on migration, repatriation and reintegration; institutional and human capacity-building; communication and co-ordination; and provision of services in the areas identified by the Revised Strategy, within established timelines. Furthermore, it envisages the establishment of a reintegration fund and provides for monitoring and control mechanisms in relation to the implementation of the Revised Strategy.

C) Establishment of a central-level reintegration fund

In line with the Action Plan, a reintegration fund was created by decision of the Prime Minister in 2010¹⁶ and budgetary resources were allocated in 2010 and 2011 to support the implementation of the Revised Strategy.¹⁷ The fund is aimed at providing repatriated persons in need with direct humanitarian assistance (transport, temporary shelter, food and non-food items) and supporting them with regard to accommodation and socio-economic reintegration. The allocation of appropriate funds is key to ensuring that initiatives respond appropriately to the needs of repatriated persons in the priority areas identified in the Revised Strategy and Action Plan. As noted above, the fund is administered by the executive board, which reviews and approves assistance requests for repatriated persons in need.¹⁸

3. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

At the local level, efforts have been made to strengthen relevant institutional mechanisms designed to protect and promote the rights of communities, returnees and repatriated persons. Such efforts are aimed at equipping relevant municipal officials with the necessary financial, administrative and political support to enable them to effectively fulfil their day-to-day responsibilities in relation to the rights of communities and returnees, both voluntary and forced.

A) Regulation for the Municipal Offices for Communities and Return

In August 2010, the government endorsed the Regulation for the Municipal Offices for Communities and Return (the Regulation)¹⁹, an essential mandatory mechanism

¹⁴ These include victims of trafficking, single-parent households, children without caregivers, children with special needs, elderly persons without caregivers and persons with disabilities. See Chapter 4, “Vulnerable Groups”, Revised Strategy.

¹⁵ Action Plan Implementing the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, October 2010.

¹⁶ Government decision No. 4/126, 26 May 2010.

¹⁷ In the 2010 fiscal year, a fund of 500,000 Euro was earmarked for this purpose, while according to the government 3.4 million Euro has been allocated for 2011.

¹⁸ See note 11, *supra*.

¹⁹ Government Regulation No. 02/2010 for the Municipal Offices for Communities and Return, adopted on 12 August 2010, and entered into force on 27 August 2010.

designed to protect and promote the rights of communities, including displaced persons and returnees. The Regulation requires that all municipalities establish a municipal office for communities and return, in order to provide an adequate administrative framework to protect and promote communities' rights, ensure equal access of communities to public services, and create conditions for sustainable return and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and repatriated persons. The office replaces previous municipal structures, namely the former municipal community office and the post of municipal return officer, with the aim of facilitating the consistent implementation of government policies and normative frameworks in the areas of protection of communities, returns and reintegration.²⁰

The duties and responsibilities of the municipal office for communities and return include advising and assisting relevant municipal institutions and other public service providers with regard to the implementation of government policies on non-majority communities as well as with specific regard to returns and reintegration policies and issues. The office is responsible for assessing the needs of returnees and repatriated persons; conducting outreach visits; promoting awareness of existing policies among relevant officials and communities' representatives; facilitating access to public services; and developing, implementing and monitoring projects and activities for the protection of the rights of communities, as well as of displaced and repatriated persons. Furthermore, it is responsible for providing returnees with information about their rights and available support structures and assistance, and referring them to other competent offices within the municipal administration. The office shall also coordinate activities with relevant municipal and central government institutions in the field of promotion and protection of communities' rights and the sustainable return and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and repatriated persons.²¹

Municipalities are required to allocate the necessary financial resources and provide logistical support for implementation of the Regulation. Within each municipality, the mayor and the head of the municipal office for communities and return bear the overall responsibility for the establishment and effective functioning of the office.²² Job descriptions and terms of reference regulating the work of the office were approved in July 2011, and have subsequently been distributed to municipal authorities across Kosovo.²³

²⁰ The Regulation merges the former Municipal Community Office and the post of Municipal Returns Officer (Article 12, Transitional Provisions, of the Regulation; see also Article 23.10 of UNMIK Regulation 2007/30 on Self-Government of Municipalities in Kosovo, amending UNMIK Regulation 2000/45 on Self-Government of Municipalities in Kosovo; and the UNMIK/PISG Revised Manual on Sustainable Return, July 2006, pages 18-20).

²¹ Article 7 of Government Regulation No. 02/2010.

²² Article 10.2 of Government Regulation No. 02/2010. See also the letter from Deputy Prime Minister to Mayors, dated 17 August 2010.

²³ Job descriptions and terms of reference were approved by the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) on 4 July 2011, in accordance with MPA Regulation 03/2010. It should be noted that Article 12 of the Transitional Provisions of Government Regulation No. 02/2010 provided that: "Officials employed in the Municipal Community Office and as Municipal Return Officer at the time of entry into force of the Regulation, who upon establishment of the Office are found eligible for incorporation in the Office, will continue to operate under their current job descriptions, salary and post coefficient, until the MCR [Ministry of Communities and Return] issues new job descriptions in accordance with Article 10.4 of [the] Regulation". The same Article 12 stipulated that those officials found to be redundant will continue their contractual relationship with the municipality and shall have the right to transfer in accordance with civil service procedures in force.

B) Establishment of Municipal Offices for Communities and Return

Prior to August 2010, municipal community offices and municipal return officers were in place in most of the municipalities in which non-majority communities live.²⁴ In line with the government Regulation for the Municipal Offices for Communities and Return, these older structures are being replaced or new offices have been established (where no such institution previously existed) in 29 out of 37 municipalities.²⁵ However, only a few municipalities have thus far made reference to the office in their municipal statute as foreseen by the Regulation.

In order to ensure the effective functioning of municipal offices for communities and return, most of the municipalities have included financial resources for them in their 2011 municipal budget indicating the number of staff and financial resources required for wages and salaries, goods and services, subsidies and transfers or capital expenditures. In many cases, however, the proposed budget is not sufficient to implement the prescribed duties and responsibilities of the office.²⁶ For example, the proposed budgets do not cover costs related to the implementation of specific projects and activities under government policies for the reintegration of repatriated persons or other policies aimed at the promotion or protection of communities' rights. Although municipal authorities could temporarily redress this shortfall by accessing the above-mentioned central-level reintegration fund, this should not replace the more sustainable solution of adequate financial planning at the local level.

4. PROGRESS/IMPACT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In many cases, the gap between policy commitments and practical developments continues to prevent the realization of durable solutions for repatriated persons. The ongoing lack of effective policy implementation, in particular at the local level, is primarily the result of insufficient assessment and analysis of the situation in the municipalities, a lack of institutional capacity to address the needs of repatriated persons, and a failure to take advantage of available central-level funding. While some municipalities have taken proactive measures to address these shortcomings, for example by establishing supplementary co-ordination structures²⁷ or launching awareness-raising campaigns to reach out to repatriated persons²⁸, most have yet to

²⁴ Municipal community offices were retained in 26 out of 33 municipalities following the adoption of the Law No. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government, 15 June 2008, while municipal return officers continued to operate in 27 municipalities (see OSCE Report *Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities in Kosovo: Local Level Participation Mechanisms* (December 2009), <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/40722> (accessed 7 July 2011).

²⁵ There are no such offices in Han i Elezit/Đeneral Janković and Kačanik/Kaçanik (Gjilan/Gnjilane region), the three northern municipalities of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region), Junik (Pejë/Peć region), Malishevë/Mališevo and Mamuša/Mamushë/Mamuša (Prizren region).

²⁶ Article 10.1 of Government Regulation No. 02/2010 states that the “municipality shall provide the adequate financial and logistical resources for the implementation of this regulation”.

²⁷ Working groups were established in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Viti/Vitina municipalities; a repatriations board was set up in Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipality; and repatriations commissions were established in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/Kamenica and Rahovec/Orahovac municipalities.

²⁸ Gjakovë/Đakovica, Podujevë/Podujevo and Viti/Vitina municipalities undertook awareness-raising campaigns.

devise any concrete activities to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of repatriated persons in their area of responsibility.

A) General awareness of policies, roles and responsibilities amongst municipal officials

Raising awareness among relevant municipal officials about the revised policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons and working towards its implementation are crucial steps to ensuring an adequate response by municipalities. Although the central-level authorities are making progress in this regard, further guidance and instruction is necessary to promote co-ordinated efforts aimed at assisting repatriated persons in achieving sustainable reintegration.

While initial interviews and discussions with relevant municipal officials²⁹ indicated that awareness and knowledge of the Revised Strategy and Action Plan was limited across Kosovo's municipalities, this gap has been partially redressed through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities undertaken by central-level authorities since June 2010. Efforts were made to distribute the Revised Strategy and Action Plan to relevant municipal officials, to hold workshops and discussions with municipal officials on the revised policy framework³⁰, and to distribute leaflets on the rights of repatriated persons and the assistance available to them³¹. These activities were supported by the OSCE and other international partners.³² A Kosovo-wide follow-up assessment conducted by OSCE field teams in July 2011 showed that a large proportion of Kosovo municipalities had received written guidelines on implementation of the Revised Strategy from the Ministry of Internal Affairs³³, while

²⁹ Among the municipal officials/institutions interviewed were mayors; deputy mayors for communities; municipal directors of administration, urbanism/cadastre, education and health; municipal offices for communities and return; municipal civil registration centres; municipal civil status offices; deputy municipal assembly chairpersons for communities; municipal assembly communities committee; directors of social welfare centres and municipal legal offices. All the interviews took place during the reporting period.

³⁰ For instance, during April and May 2011, the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted a series of trainings with a view to increasing the awareness and capacity of municipal officials concerning the policy framework for the integration of repatriated persons.

³¹ Kosovo government, *Reintegration Guide*, <http://www.mpb-ks.org/?page=2.138> (accessed 23 August 2011) (available in five languages).

³² Between June and October 2010, the OSCE in co-operation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry for Local Government Administration and UNHCR organized a series of workshops on voluntary and forced returns for municipal human rights units and municipal officials dealing with communities and returns throughout Kosovo. Similarly, in February and March 2011, the OSCE, in co-operation with relevant ministries and government bodies, organized regional roundtables aimed at raising the awareness of relevant municipal officials about the policy framework for the integration of repatriated persons and facilitating dialogue and communication between the central and local levels. Speakers included officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry for Local Government Administration and the Office for Community Affairs within the Office of the Prime Minister. During the roundtables, copies of the OSCE Booklet for municipal officials on reception and reintegration of repatriated persons (December 2010) were distributed to participants.

³³ According to OSCE figures, 29 out of 37 municipalities reported receiving the guidelines: Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Hani i Elezit/Đeneral Janković, Kačanik/Kaçanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Klokot/Kllokot, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Viti/Vitina (Gjilan/Gnjilane region), Leposavić/Leposaviq, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Podujevë/Podujevo, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region), Deçan/Deçane, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok, Junik/Junik, Kline/Klina, Pejë/Peć (Pejë/Peć region), Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje,

representatives of over half the municipalities reportedly attended training sessions on repatriations, organized by central-level authorities³⁴. Generally, municipal officers for communities and return showed greater awareness of the existence and content of relevant policy documents as a result of seminars, workshops, trainings or outreach meetings. In contrast, senior municipal officials showed little awareness of, or commitment to, existing policies although there has been an increase in awareness-raising activities targeting, in particular, municipal departmental directors. With few exceptions³⁵, interviewed senior officials stated that they had not received the Revised Strategy or Action Plan and were not familiar with the content of either document. Many pointed to the municipal officers for communities and return as the key focal points for reintegration-related issues at the local level.

The July 2011 OSCE assessment also tracked efforts by central-level authorities to improve municipal awareness of, and access to, the reintegration fund. Results indicated that efforts by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to distribute funding criteria to municipal offices for communities and return (where established) or other relevant bodies had been broadly successful, with 30 municipalities confirming receipt of the criteria, often in both hard copy and electronic format.³⁶

B) Co-ordination and co-operation at the local level and between the central and local levels

Effective co-ordination and co-operation at the local level and between central and local institutions is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of existing policies aimed at facilitating the sustainable reintegration of repatriated persons. Co-ordination mechanisms should be able to develop and implement reintegration

Gracanica/Gračanicë, Lipjan/Lipljan, Obiliq/Obilic, Shtime/Štimlje (Prishtinë/Priština region), Dragash/Dragaš, Malishevë/Mališevo, Rahovec/Orahovac, Suharekë/SuvaReka (Prizren region).

³⁴ Representatives from 20 municipalities reported attending training sessions organized by central-level authorities. These were: Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Hani i Elezit/Đeneral Janković, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Klokot/Klllokot, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Viti/Vitina (Gjilan/Gnjilane region), Vushtrri/Vučitrn (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region) Deçan/Deçane, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok, Junik/Junik, Kline/Klina, Pejë/Peć (Pejë/Peć region), Podujevë/Podujevo (Prishtinë/Priština region), Dragash/Dragaš, Malishevë/Mališevo, Prizren, Suharekë/SuvaReka (Prizren region). It should be noted that this figure is contested by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which claims that the training sessions were attended by representatives of all municipalities except the newly established municipalities, the northern municipalities and Mamusa/Mamushë/Mamuša.

³⁵ For instance, the mayor of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje; deputy mayors for communities in Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica and Skenderaj/Srbica municipalities; directors the of administration department in Ferizaj/Uroševac, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Glllogoc/Glogovac, Podujevë/Podujevo and Prishtinë/Priština municipalities; directors of the education department in Hani i Elezit/Đeneral Janković, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Podujevë/Podujevo and Prishtinë/Priština municipalities; directors of the urbanism department in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality; and the Dragash/Dragaš social welfare centre director.

³⁶ Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Hani i Elezit/Đeneral Janković, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Kline/Klina, Klokot/Klllokot, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Viti/Vitina (Gjilan/Gnjilane region), Leposavić/Leposaviq, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Podujevë/Podujevo, Vushtrri/Vucitrn, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region), Deçan/Deçane, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok, Junik/Junik, Pejë/Peć (Pejë/Peć region), Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gracanica/Gračanicë, Lipjan/Lipljan, Obiliq/Obilic, Shtime/Štimlje (Prishtinë/Priština region), Dragash/Dragaš, Malishevë/Mališevo, Rahovec/Orahovac, Suharekë/SuvaReka (Prizren region).

policies, monitor their implementation and co-ordinate the activities of all actors involved.³⁷

In approximately half of the municipalities, designated officers within the municipal office for communities and return co-ordinate activities in relation to the reintegration of repatriated persons.³⁸ In other municipalities, the appointment of return co-ordinators or officers is pending the establishment of the municipal office for communities and return. Although some municipalities have gone beyond the scope of the policy framework and set up supplementary co-ordination structures – notably, ad hoc repatriations commissions in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/Kamenica and Rahovec/Orahovac municipalities; repatriations working groups in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Viti/Vitina municipalities; and a repatriations board in Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipality – in most cases issues related to reintegration of repatriated persons are discussed in existing mechanisms, such as the municipal working groups on return.³⁹ Senior municipal officials, representatives from other municipal bodies, repatriated persons and the receiving community often do not participate in these fora. Municipal communities and return officers pass information to relevant municipal departments when needed, while repatriated persons are often assisted in an ad hoc manner.⁴⁰ Where there are established and functioning returns-related bodies, the co-operation between these bodies and others responsible for communities issues has often been lacking.⁴¹ Weak co-ordination between relevant local bodies and mechanisms can hamper implementation of initiatives and measures at the local level. In many cases these mechanisms lack the capacity, resources and/or political support to implement any kind of supportive measures.

The weak flow of information and co-ordination between the central and municipal level further exacerbates such challenges. As noted above, local institutions have received some training from central-level institutions on how to implement relevant policies or access programme funds designed to assist repatriated persons with reintegration.⁴² However, most municipalities have yet to establish formal communication and information channels related to the reintegration of repatriated persons with the relevant line ministries.⁴³ In late 2010 and early 2011 some officers

³⁷ See Article 7 of Government Regulation No. 02/2010.

³⁸ For instance in Kamenicë/Kamenica and Štrpce/Shtërpçë (Gjilan/Gnjilane region); southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Skenderaj/Srbica, Leposavić/Leposaviq (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region); Gjakovë/Đakovica, Pejë/Peç and Klinë/Klina (Pejë/Peç region); Gračanica/Gračanicë and Obiliq/Obilić (Prishtinë/Priština region); Suharekë/Suva Reka, Rahovec/Orahovac, Dragash/Dragaš and Prizren (Prizren region).

³⁹ The municipal working groups on return were established under the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)/Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) as the local-level co-ordination and implementation fora for (voluntary) returns-related issues, projects and activities (see UNMIK/PISG Revised Manual on Sustainable Return, July 2006).

⁴⁰ For example, Gjakovë/Đakovica municipality has established a database registering information about repatriated persons and their needs. However, at the time of writing, the database was not shared amongst municipal directorates.

⁴¹ See also OSCE Report *Municipal responses to displacement and returns in Kosovo*, November 2010, <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/73854> (accessed 23 August 2011).

⁴² See generally Section 4(A), “General awareness of policies, roles and responsibilities amongst municipal officials”, above.

⁴³ In most cases, municipal officers for communities and return and/or mayors contact relevant ministries on an ad hoc basis for information. No regular information-sharing mechanisms seem to be in place.

from the municipal office for communities and return received, for the first time, a spreadsheet from the Ministry of Internal Affairs containing information on persons repatriated to their municipalities, accompanied by a request that relevant municipal institutions facilitate their reintegration. For instance, in mid-January 2011, the municipal return officer in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica received information on five persons forcibly repatriated to the municipality. The Ministry requested that the officer meet them and complete a form with additional information. Unfortunately, the contact details were either missing or inaccurate, and the return officer was unable to locate the persons in question. Similarly, the Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje return officer stated that in December 2010 he received information on 96 persons repatriated to the municipality. The Prizren and the Gjilan/Gnjilane municipal offices for communities and return also reported being informed about repatriated persons the day after their arrival in Kosovo. The head of the municipal office for communities and return in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality reported receiving a list of 279 individuals from the Ministry for Internal Affairs who were repatriated to the municipality between January and June 2011. To date, none of the municipalities report having received advance notice of the arrival of repatriated persons and none, therefore, were in a position to make necessary arrangements to accommodate their needs prior to their return.

C) Maintenance of a database/data collection

The effective and timely provision of assistance and protection for repatriated persons requires reliable data, as does an accurate long-term assessment of the sustainability of the repatriations process and related planning activities. The municipal offices for communities and return should maintain databases on repatriated persons, which would include basic personal data and any special needs of the repatriated persons.⁴⁴ In this regard, the office should co-ordinate closely with relevant ministries to ensure that information is received prior to the arrival of repatriated persons in order to adequately address their needs in a timely fashion.

Municipal return and communities officers in 20 out of 37 municipalities collect information on repatriated persons for the purpose of planning reintegration activities and returnee monitoring.⁴⁵ The information collected and the methodology used differ from municipality to municipality, with most municipalities only recording information on families and individuals who directly approach the municipal administration. For example, in Gjakovë/Đakovica, the municipal return officer keeps a database which includes information such as the date of return, the number of returnees, their health status, property status, and any request they may have submitted to the authorities or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Similarly, the Leposavić/Leposaviq municipal return officer keeps a record (name, date of birth, current residence and condition of their house) of all persons who are repatriated to

⁴⁴ See Article 7(2) of the Government Regulation No. 02/2010 for the Municipal Offices for Communities and Return, 12 August 2010.

⁴⁵ Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Štrpce/Shtërpçë and Viti/Vitina (Gjilan/Gnjilane region); Gjakovë/Đakovica, Deçan/Deçane, Pejë/Peć, Istog/Istog and Klinë/Klina (Pejë/Peć region); Prishtinë/Priština, Lipjan/Lipljan, Gračanica/Gračanicë, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Obiliq/Obilić and Shtime/Štimlje (Prishtinë/Priština region); Rahovec/Orahovac, Dragash/Dragaš and Prizren (Prizren region), and Leposavić/Leposaviq (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region).

the municipality in a notebook. In Obiliq/Obilić the municipal office for communities and return keeps some notes on previously assessed repatriated individuals or families who approach the office. The Pejë/Peć return officer with the municipal office for communities and return registers the visits of non-majority communities members in a spreadsheet which is shared with all officers of the municipal offices for communities and return. In most cases, however, recorded information is limited to basic personal information, place of residence, date of return and repatriating country, and does not allow for the production of disaggregated data or statistics for planning purposes. Only three municipalities report that there have been no cases of forcibly repatriated persons during the reporting period and as such do not keep records.⁴⁶

D) Identification of priority needs and development of municipal strategies, programmes and procedures

Municipalities are required to reach out and maintain regular contact with returning and receiving communities, as well as to assess the specific needs of actual and potential returnees to the municipality in order to enable the effective implementation of policies and strategies aimed at facilitating reintegration.⁴⁷ The OSCE assessment carried out in July 2011 indicated that almost half of all municipalities have undertaken outreach activities with repatriated persons in their areas of responsibility.⁴⁸ For instance, officials in Skenderaj/Srbica and Leposavić/Leposaviq conducted outreach visits to collect relevant data on Kosovo Albanian and Roma repatriated families, respectively, following their arrival in the municipalities. Gjakovë/Đakovica municipality, together with representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, organized an outreach visit to collect data and assess the needs of several Kosovo Egyptian families repatriated from France, Germany and Sweden. In other municipalities, including Kamenicë/Kamenica, Klokot-Verbovac/Klllokot-Vërboc, Gračanica/Graçanicë and Prizren, municipal communities and return officers regularly meet with repatriated persons to collect information on their assistance needs and conduct follow-up visits where necessary. Podujevë/Podujevo, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Viti/Vitina municipalities have also implemented awareness-raising campaigns. However, such activities appear to take place on an ad hoc or sporadic basis.

A comprehensive and meaningful needs assessment is still an essential first step before effective planning, implementation or evaluation of projects and activities can occur, but to date none of the municipalities have conducted such an assessment and/or established policies or prepared relevant action plans in the area of return and reintegration of repatriated persons. The lack of reliable pre-return information makes it even more difficult for municipalities to develop strategies and programmes or produce accurate beneficiary lists for assistance purposes, taking into account family size, special needs and vulnerability criteria as foreseen by the existing policy framework. Moreover, as mentioned above, funding at the local level is often

⁴⁶ Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok and Podujevë/Podujevo.

⁴⁷ See Article 7 of the Government Regulation No. 02/2010.

⁴⁸ 16 municipalities reported undertaking outreach activities with repatriated persons: Kline/Klina, Klokot/Klllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Štrpce/Shtërpçë (Gjilan/Gnjilane region), Deçan/Deçane, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok, Junik/Junik, Pejë/Peć (Pejë/Peć region), Gračanica/Graçanicë, Obiliq/Obilic, Shtime/Štimlje (Prishtinë/Priština region), Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Viti/Vitina (Prizren region).

insufficient to support meaningful projects or programmes. To date, none of the municipalities have allocated funds in their respective municipal budget to implement specific measures foreseen by the Revised Strategy and Action Plan.⁴⁹

E) Assistance measures undertaken by municipalities

The Revised Strategy and corresponding Action Plan recommend concrete measures to be taken by relevant authorities to address identified reintegration challenges⁵⁰ in areas such as civil registration, education, health, employment, social welfare and housing. However, despite the allocation of a substantial amount of reintegration assistance through the central-level fund, to date municipalities have made limited efforts to develop, implement and monitor projects or to develop concrete initiatives in this regard. Data collected during the OSCE assessment in July 2011 indicated that approximately 160 claims had been submitted by municipal authorities to central-level authorities for allocation of the Reintegration Fund, including requests for humanitarian assistance (food, non-food items), housing, medical assistance, income generation, etc. Central-level sources stated that this figure was 173, with 102 requests/projects approved by the executive board. However, while the number of successful requests does appear to have increased in recent months, it should be noted that during its July assessment the OSCE received complaints from municipal authorities that claims were taking an unduly long time to process or were being rejected without justification by the executive board.

Civil registration continues to be one of the main concerns for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. A number of municipalities⁵¹ report having taken steps to facilitate civil registration and the issuance of documents and certificates to repatriated persons from these communities. Initiatives include: providing general guidance and advice on civil registration procedures⁵²; co-operating with UNHCR's legal aid implementing partner and other organizations in facilitating civil registration for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities members⁵³; and exempting non-majority communities and other vulnerable groups from administrative fees for the issuance of documents. For example, in Skenderaj/Srbica, Deçan/Deçane, Junik, Klinë/Klina, Istog/Istok, Prishtinë/Priština, Lipjan/Lipljan, Obiliq/Obilić and Shtime/Štimlje municipalities repatriated persons do not pay administrative fees for the issuance of documents by the civil registration and/or civil status offices. In addition, several municipalities in co-ordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in a Kosovo-wide civil registration information campaign, including distribution of posters and leaflets on registration procedures. In other municipalities,

⁴⁹ See Section 3 of this report, "Institutional Developments at the Local Level", above.

⁵⁰ See Action Plan, Chapter 4, "Guaranteed Services".

⁵¹ Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Skenderaj/Srbica (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region), Kamenicë/Kamenica and Štrpce/Shtërpçë (Gjilan/Gnjilane region), Kline/Klina and Istog/Istok (Pejë/Peć region), Gračanica/Gračanicë and Lipjan/Lipljan (Prishtinë/Priština region) and Prizren (Prizren region).

⁵² Guidance is usually provided by municipal offices for communities and return, municipal civil registration centres and municipal civil status offices, while only a few offices have made efforts to reach out to persons concerned in order to promote access to municipal services.

⁵³ On behalf of UNHCR, the NGO "Civil Rights Program Kosovo" (CRP/K) began implementing a civil registration campaign targeting Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo in September 2006. It has concluded memoranda of understanding with a number of municipalities to ensure flexibility with regard to civil registration procedures and exempting members belonging to these communities from payment of administrative fees.

no significant action has been undertaken, and repatriated persons in many cases are not considered a separate category in need of specific assistance measures.⁵⁴

In the area of **education**, the Revised Strategy and accompanying Action Plan aim to facilitate the reintegration of repatriated children into the Kosovo education system. During the reporting period, municipal activities were mainly focused on (or limited to) the provision of information on educational opportunities and services available, as well as guidance on the procedures for recognition of diplomas and certificates. In Obiliq/Obilić and Rahovec/Orahovac, municipal departments of education have provided the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with information about the school enrolment status of repatriated children following their return. In other cases, municipal authorities, in co-operation with or supported by local and international organizations, have assisted returning children or vulnerable cases by donating textbooks or other school materials free of charge. For instance, in Gračanica/Gračanicë, the Roma Education Centre – mainly funded by the NGO “Balkan Sunflowers” – provided Roma children, including repatriated persons, with catch-up classes in Serbian language, free textbooks and assistance with school enrollment. In Junik, the municipal department of education is supporting three pupils with special needs who were repatriated in 2009 by reimbursing their daily school trips to Prizren where their school is located. However, repatriated children are usually dealt with on a case-by-case basis in most municipalities, and no specific programmes and/or measures have been developed to address their particular reintegration needs in any municipality. For instance, none of the municipalities has developed or implemented specific projects, such as language courses and catch-up classes, to facilitate the reintegration of repatriated children and/or limit their drop-out rate from school.⁵⁵

In relation to **health**, the Revised Strategy and Action Plan aim to facilitate access of repatriated persons to the healthcare system in Kosovo, including by reaching out to affected persons and addressing their specific health needs. In a few municipalities, health facilities are placed within or close to non-majority communities’ neighbourhoods, or public healthcare services have been made more easily available to communities. For instance, in Pejë/Peć the municipality, with the support of the Italian NGO “Intersos”, equipped a mobile team which serves isolated villages/districts and non-majority communities. Some municipalities have carried out healthcare promotion campaigns⁵⁶ and/or have conducted field visits to settlements inhabited by non-majority communities⁵⁷. However, measures in this field are usually not specifically targeted at repatriated persons, and to date no special programmes or initiatives have been developed to address the particular needs of repatriated persons in this area.

⁵⁴ In Pejë/Peć, CRP/K submitted a request to the municipality several months ago to exempt members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities from paying the administrative fee for the issuance of civil documents. At the time of writing, however, that request remains unanswered.

⁵⁵ See also UNICEF Kosovo and the German Committee for UNICEF (Verena Knaus, Peter Widmann), *Integration Subject to Conditions - A report on the situation of Kosovan Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Germany and after their repatriation to Kosovo*, 2010. http://www.unicef.org/kosovo/RAEstudy_eng_web.pdf (accessed 23 August 2011).

⁵⁶ In most cases, awareness-raising campaigns were not specifically targeted at repatriated persons or returnees but rather at the entire population.

⁵⁷ For instance Gjilan/Gnjilane, Viti/Vitina and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipalities.

In relation to **employment and social welfare**, the main goal of the Revised Strategy is to support the socio-economic reintegration of repatriated persons by facilitating access to employment opportunities and available social schemes. However, no concrete steps have been taken at the municipal level to implement specific measures in these areas. Most municipal departments of health and social welfare, centres for social welfare, and regional employment and vocational centres treat repatriated persons equally to any other in need of socio-economic support and/or social benefits. There are no programmes or measures targeted specifically at repatriated persons. Instead, repatriated persons are often referred to international organizations for reintegration support.⁵⁸

Finally, lack of **housing and accommodation** for repatriated persons remains a major obstacle to sustainable reintegration, while also being a largely neglected area foreseen in the Revised Strategy and Action Plan. At the time of writing, few municipalities have taken steps towards finding temporary or durable housing solutions for repatriated persons.⁵⁹ Existing strategies have yet to lead to specific projects aimed at addressing the housing needs of vulnerable cases and/or those without a durable housing solution. For instance, there has been no specific action taken by municipalities to develop housing programmes in accordance with the Law on Financing of Special Housing Programs⁶⁰ or to submit related proposals to relevant central institutions or donors for (re)construction of houses for this purpose. Also, there are no reported cases of municipalities seeking assistance through the rental scheme managed by the Kosovo Property Agency⁶¹. Repatriated persons in many cases find temporary accommodation with their relatives or in collective centres and displaced persons camps but not all find adequate housing or, for a variety of reasons, are able to access social or alternative housing schemes. For instance, in Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality, repatriated persons live in Kamen village and in the Roma camp, while some families live in makeshift houses. In Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, nine Roma families were forcibly repatriated from third countries in 2010 but left shortly afterward for Bujanovac in southern Serbia due to lack of housing and assistance available in Kosovo.⁶²

⁵⁸ The director of the regional employment centre in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica pointed to the recently-established migration bureau within the employment office, which will focus on repatriated persons. The office opened on 9 March 2011 and its staff have attended a training in Prishtinë/Priština. The office will inform repatriated persons about available procedures and possibilities for employment. While repatriated persons are referred to the migration office, due to limited financial and personal resources, the migration office may still refer them on to the International Organization for Migration office which has so far supported repatriated persons on employment issues.

⁵⁹ In Lipjan/Lipljan, on 20 April 2011, the head of the municipal office for communities and return, in agreement with the mayor, submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs a request for funds together with a detailed project for the construction of three collective centres that would accommodate repatriated persons in the municipality. Each centre would host five families.

⁶⁰ Law No. 03/L-164 on Financing of Special Housing Programs, 12 March 2010.

⁶¹ Among other tasks, the Kosovo Property Agency is mandated to supervise the rental of abandoned property in Kosovo, managing a rental scheme for properties under its administration. This scheme makes it possible for the property right holder to receive a fixed income from the property by authorizing the Kosovo Property Agency to rent it out until s/he decides to utilize the property in another way. See Section 1.1(b) of UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/23 on the Establishment of the Housing and Property Directorate and the Housing and Property Claims Commission, 15 November 1999.

⁶² According to the Gjilan/Gnjilane municipal office for communities and return, their houses were not habitable as they were destroyed during the 1999 conflict.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Revised Strategy and its Action Plan are the main policy documents guiding government efforts aimed at ensuring sustainable and long-term solutions for repatriated persons. These policy documents require renewed commitment by both central- and local-level institutions to ensure their effective implementation.

To date, progress can be noted in the area of development and adoption of policy documents aimed at ensuring adequate conditions for the reception and sustainable reintegration of repatriated persons. However, implementation lags behind expectations, especially at the local level. An institutional framework tasked with overseeing co-ordinated efforts by the government to implement the Revised Strategy and Action Plan is now in place and government funds have been allocated to provide reintegration services; however, despite some notable exceptions, in most municipalities these commitments have yet to translate into concrete action and initiatives. In addition to the need for greater awareness and knowledge among relevant municipal officials about existing policies and available resources, it is necessary to continue to strengthen communication and co-ordination between the central and municipal levels as well as within municipalities to ensure adequate municipal responses to the reintegration needs of repatriated persons. Moreover, clear lines of responsibility and accountability must be provided. At the same time, in close co-operation with relevant central-level bodies and mechanisms, municipalities need to ensure adequate reintegration support for those in need, including by pro-actively reaching out to, and facilitating access to services for, repatriated persons.

Gaps in assistance and support often leave vulnerable persons without adequate care upon their arrival in Kosovo, and place individuals and families in a situation of extreme vulnerability upon their return. Lack of *de facto* assistance in the areas of housing, schooling, and economic opportunities has serious consequences for the sustainable reintegration of vulnerable persons, in particular those with protection needs, including non-majority communities, women and children.⁶³ Resolute measures at all levels of government are necessary to improve the implementation of reintegration policies and strategies, with the ultimate aim of securing durable and sustainable living conditions for affected persons.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the central-level institutions:

- Renew the commitments outlined in the Revised Strategy and Action Plan by ensuring that adequate resources are made available at all levels of government, notably for the newly-established municipal offices for communities and return, and for the implementation of targeted programmes and projects in key areas such as civil registration, health, education, employment and housing, in close co-operation with municipalities;

⁶³ See also UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines for assessing the international protection needs of individuals from Kosovo, *supra* note 3.

- Take further steps to ensure that municipalities are informed in a systematic and timely manner about the arrival of repatriated persons in their area of responsibility and about the procedures to follow when applying for reintegration funds allocated by the central government;
- In co-operation with relevant international stakeholders, provide further training and capacity-building to local institutions to strengthen outreach, information and awareness-raising activities in relation to existing reintegration policies, strategies and programmes, and support municipalities in promoting awareness and disseminating information on the rights of repatriated persons and available assistance;
- Ensure effective co-operation and co-ordination between relevant ministries responsible for health, education, employment, social welfare and housing, as well as between central- and local-level institutions by strengthening relevant inter-ministerial co-ordination and communication mechanisms.

To the municipalities:

- In accordance with the Revised Strategy and Action Plan, ensure effective co-operation, co-ordination and communication between relevant municipal offices and departments, and central-level institutions, and pro-actively seek out information and support from relevant ministries regarding municipal responsibilities;
- Identify the most urgent needs of persons returning to the municipality and prioritize related activities accordingly, including through the urgent allocation of adequate funds and immediate action on all non-budgetary activities;
- Provide municipal offices for communities and return with adequate political, administrative and financial support to enable them to discharge their functions;
- Effectively reach out to repatriated persons in order to facilitate and support contact, dialogue and information-sharing among receiving and returnee communities, and between communities and institutions.

To the international community:

- UNHCR: Continue to provide guidance to relevant authorities in host countries and to Kosovo institutions on the international protection needs of individuals from Kosovo, and to monitor the repatriation process to ensure it is carried out in line with international human rights standards;
- Host countries: Take due consideration of the conditions for reception and reintegration in Kosovo's municipalities prior to making a decision on repatriation. If return is to take place, ensure that the rights of repatriated persons are fully safeguarded and that the return is conducted in a dignified and safe manner; and

- Other international stakeholders: Encourage and support the Kosovo institutions to promptly and fully implement the existing policy framework for the reintegration of repatriated persons, including through capacity-building of relevant officials, awareness-raising amongst all stakeholders involved, and providing technical assistance to relevant institutions and co-ordination structures.