



THE ONE STOP SHOP PROJECT NEWSLETTER

OSS II: SUSTAINABLE RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN LA; PROMOTING VOLUNTARY RETURN"

The team in charge of developing this project made up of OEI (the Organisation of Ibero-American States), the ACOBE Foundation, ICEI (The Institute for International Economic Cooperation), FEDELATINA (the Catalan Federation of Latin American Associations) and ALCC (Lusosphere Association of Culture and Citizens) is delighted to send you its first newsletter.

The newsletter is an instrument for visibility and communication that summarises relevant and up-to-date information from the project. It will be published biannually and accessed through the project's website or by subscribing via email at ventanillasunicas@oei.es; moreover, through this email address issues, suggestions and doubts can be submitted in order to establish discussion forums on themes related to the One Stop Shop model. We hope it will be to your liking and we welcome its dissemination.

This first copy features information on the current project and the first activities developed on "both sides of the pond", as well as reflecting on the lessons learned from the process of creating a "One Stop Shop", developed over the past two years, which is now beginning a new and innovative execution stage.

INDEX

	The Project: A One Stop Shop for Voluntary Return				Page 2
	Lessons Learned				Page 3
	Main Activities Developed				Page 4
	Successful Experiences in Projects of Sustainable Return in Europe				Page 4

PROJECT CONSORTIUM:





A ONE STOP SHOP FOR VOLUNTARY RETURN

An increasing number of returning Latin American citizens from EU countries, along with the complexity of procedures and a lack of information regarding the services available in the countries of origin, prompted the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI) to begin promoting projects of sustainable return.

The project “Eurolatinamerican System for professional training, return and sustainable insertion (PTRSI)” (2011), funded by the European Return Fund (RF), offered opportunities for return with training and work reinsertion plans using resources in Latin America. This idea formed the basis of the “One Stop Shop” (2012–2014), funded by RF, which fostered sustainable returns, offering initial support, reintegration assistance and accompaniment.

The project also got One Stop Shops (OSS) under way in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Chile and Uruguay for Latin American migrants coming from Spain and Italy. Currently, One Stop Shop II (2014–2016) has 4 offices in Europe (Italy, Portugal and Spain [Madrid and Catalonia]), which work in coordination with the 8 OSSs from Latin America, thus creating a link between both shores.

In Latin America a network of services has been articulated to help with the reintegration of returnees via the design of a plan that responds to their needs. The services offered are: specialised information, social assistance, job hunting and training, branches of public services, NGO support, etc. Financial help is also available, where justified. In Europe there is also a network with diverse organisations to provide information to those people wishing to return.

The aim of the “One Stop Shop II” project is to be available for all EU countries with the presence of Latin American immigrants and in the 16 Latin American countries where OEI operates and develops programmes.

The consortium involved in the project is made up of:

1. The association promoting and coordinating the project:

the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI).

2. The project’s partners:

- The Institute for International Economic Cooperation, (ICEI) Italy
- The ACOBE Foundation, Madrid, Spain.
- The Lusosphere Association, Portugal

3. Associate organisations:

- The Ministry of Employment and Social Security (MEYSS), Spain.
- Rete Italiana per iRimpatri Volontari Assistiti (RIRVA).
- The High Commission for Migration (ACM), Portugal.



LESSONS LEARNED

At this current point in time, shaped by the economic crisis that escalated in 2008, we can observe how migrant workers' rights deteriorate further in times of economic recession, making them a highly vulnerable population that face a European regulatory framework that is more protective and concerned with controlling the labour market and its frontiers. Return migration is linked to fewer opportunities in those countries affected by the crisis and to stronger Latin American economies, yet the return situation is far from easy.

One Stop Shops have worked with public and private organisations that support returnees, facilitating professional and personal reintegration. Certain bottlenecks and/or potential have been observed and are useful for guiding future activities. In short, certain lessons learned have been taken on board, according to the "One Stop Shop I" project.

- ▶ A more in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of "Integrated and inter-institutional work" on a European scale is key to setting up networks between European countries. Equally, the coordination between public organisations involved in the Voluntary Return projects in the country of origin and destination countries is a priority.
- ▶ Defining mechanisms to streamline the recognition of returnees' qualifications issued abroad is necessary, while consulates are asked to be more proactive in providing information about procedures. There is also a need for school heads to be aware of the current regulations, and, equally, informing and providing guidance on the need to accredit work experience performed in Europe is required. There are key documents that are not taken into consideration with urgent and pressing returns and which facilitate the recognition of work skills and work integration.
- ▶ The Return process started in Europe must include accompaniment in countries of origin to ensure sustainable and dignified reintegration, which is how the "One Stop Shop" model is defined and is becoming a reference point in the countries where it is implemented. Institutionalising the One Stop Shop model as a public service policy for migrants is a future challenge.
- ▶ Assistance provided by the Return programmes must be focused on comprehensive support aimed at the family in order to enrich and favour the integration process.
- ▶ Special attention must be paid to minors in the integration process: many have been born in destination countries and, therefore, the return to their parents' country of origin means emigration for them, including all the needs that this entails. Moreover, the situation is worsened because it is a decision made for them.



ACTIVITIES SECTION

We work on both shores: assistance in Latin America continues, while work in Europe is consolidated

IN LATIN AMERICA...

Reintegration plans have been designed for over 100 people, while financial assistance has been provided for the reintegration of over 30 returnees. Furthermore, the One Stop Shops have signed new institutional agreements.

OSS-Paraguay has signed an agreement with the company Jobs, which offers guidance and job seeking, services <https://www.facebook.com/retornoParaguay>

OSS-Peru, in accordance with the project Challenges of the Catholic University, and with ASAHP (the Association of Humanitarian Aid for Peruvians at Home and Abroad), has developed Legal Advice workshops, and, in collaboration with CEDAL (the Centre of Rights and Development), "Basic Accounting Workshops" <https://www.facebook.com/ventanillaunicaretorno>

ONE STOP SHOPS IN EUROPE...

In Spain, 68 users have been assisted and guided towards the OSSs in Latin America, with the support of NGOs managing the Voluntary Return projects. In Catalonia 17 people have received assistance, while in Lisbon the number is 20 and in Italy 13.

Coordination meetings have been held to articulate the service, and the "Information Campaign for Voluntary Returns" has also been launched.

SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES IN PROJECTS OF SUSTAINABLE RETURN IN EUROPE

In 2008 the European Union created the Return Fund. In its first phase (2008–2013) it funded a total of 18 projects, and learning from this first period is key to offering dignified and sustainable voluntary returns. Of the 18 projects funded(1), nine had reintegration as their main objective:

COUNTRY	PROJECT
Bulgaria	Programme for voluntary return of vulnerable persons
United Kingdom	Voluntary return
Hungary	Home Again
Italy	PARTIR II: Assisted voluntary return for migrants living in vulnerable conditions
Lithuania	Reintegration in countries of origin
Malta	RESTART II: Voluntary return and sustainable reintegration in the country of origin
Netherlands	Post-arrival assistance projects
Spain	Sustainable voluntary return
France	Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)

As elements that can be used as a basis for future actions, the most important involve offering comprehensive services and generating an image of trust and seriousness so that those people wishing to return can turn to voluntary return projects and hear stories about the successful reintegration of people that have returned through these programmes.

(1) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/projects/index_en.htm#/c_