



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HOME AFFAIRS

Directorate C: Schengen

EUROPEAN RETURN FUND 2008-2013¹

COMMUNITY ACTIONS CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2013

Deadline for application

**The completed application and annexes must be submitted to the
Commission by**

04 October 2013 at 12.00 CET

Applications submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected

¹ The European Return Fund 2008-2013 was established by Decision No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Objectives

The European Return Fund was established by decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No 575/2007/EC of 23 May 2007 for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows"² (hereafter 'the Decision').

The objective of the Fund is to support the efforts made by the Member States to improve the management of return in all its dimensions through the use of the concept of integrated management and by providing for joint actions to be implemented by Member States or national actions that pursue European Union objectives under the principle of solidarity, taking account of European Union legislation in this field and in full compliance with fundamental rights.

In accordance with Article 6(1) of the Decision, the Commission may use up to 7% of the Fund's available resources to finance transnational actions or actions of interest to the European Union as a whole (hereinafter referred to as 'Community actions').

The Community Actions 2010 targeted voluntary return and reintegration activities. The call for proposals under the Community Actions 2011 was mainly designed to practically implement the best practices identified in the studies on forced return monitoring, return of minors and interlinking of reintegration measures, undertaken under previous RF Community Actions. The 2012 work programme was as an opportunity to consolidate and replicate the experience gained so far by encouraging exchange of experience between different actors of the return community.

The 2013 Community Actions are seen as an opportunity to build upon the experiences and results gained so far by encouraging the continuation of EU wide information exchange of all relevant stakeholders on voluntary return.

Secondly, in order to provide continued encouragement to best practices in forced return monitoring, including those identified in the study³ conducted under the Community Actions 2009, the 2013 Community Actions re-affirm the objective already launched under the 2011 and 2012 Community Actions: an effective, independent forced-return monitoring system provided for in Article 8(6) of the Return directive⁴ in order to ensure that return operations are carried out with respect to the dignity of returnees.

Another objective of the 2013 Community Actions are reintegration measures accompanying the return of returnees, requiring tailored assistance and support prior to and after return, in order to make return sustainable. This builds upon the 2011 call for proposals which aimed at sustainable measures protecting vulnerable or disadvantaged people after return and the 2012 call which focused on victims of trafficking. The call for

² OJ L144, 6.6.2007, p.45

³ Comparative Study on Best Practices in the Field of Forced Return Monitoring, available on DG HOME website:http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/immigration/docs/studies/Forced%20Return%20Monitoring%20Study%20Final%20Report.pdf

⁴ Return Directive (2008/115/EC)

proposals 2013 will aim to provide for tailor-made approaches including the categories of returnees covered by the 2011 and 2012 calls, but not limited to these.

Furthermore, return operations could be enhanced through a better cooperation between Member States and countries of origin by deploying return coordinators operating on behalf of several Member States and assisting in the different tasks like contributing to identification of returnees, acquisition of travel documents and assistance in third countries upon arrival of the returnees.

The budget for Community Actions for 2013 amounts to **EUR 12.985.000** of which **EUR 4.485.000** is reserved for the current call. This amount may be increased (subject to budgetary availability by the time the award decision is taken).

The funds shall be used for the following priorities defined in Article 6(2) (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Decision:

- (a) further Community cooperation in implementing Community law and good practices;
- (b) support the setting-up of transnational cooperation networks and pilot projects based on transnational partnership between bodies located in two or more Member States designed to stimulate innovation, facilitate the exchange of experience and good practice and improve the quality of return policy;
- (d) support studies, dissemination and exchange of information on best practices and all other aspects of return policies, including on the use of state-of-the-art technology, in particular to encourage more comparative research relating to the impact of past and present return programmes;
- (e) support pilot projects and studies exploring the possibility of new forms on Community cooperation and Community law in this area;

1.2 Access to the programme

This call for proposals is addressed to:

- public authorities from the 27 Member States participating in the Fund⁵;
- International Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations registered in one of the above mentioned 27 Member States, provided that they all work on a strictly non-profit basis and have proven experience and expertise in the fields covered. EU Agencies may participate in the actions on non-cost basis as associated partners.

Proposals must be submitted by an entity from one Member State together with **at least one partner** entity from a different Member State.

Attention has to be paid to ensure optimal synergy with programmes carried out at EU and national level by EU Agencies, the Member States and international organisations.

⁵ Denmark does not participate in the European Return Fund.

This will require effective information sharing about the activities so that the necessary contacts and connections can be made.

Under no circumstances can a project be financed by both national programmes and the Community Actions. In case of co-financing of an activity by both the national programme(s) under the fund and the Community Actions, a clear division has to be established in order to avoid double-funding.

1.3 Priorities and eligible actions

The objectives laid down in Article 6(2) (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Decision will be pursued in 2013 by taking into account the policy context.

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| Category 1 Monitoring of forced return operations |
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Policy context

The following category addresses the specific measures related to the implementation of the Return Directive, one of them being effective monitoring of forced return, provided by Article 8(6) of the Return Directive (2008/115/EC).

The provision on forced return monitoring was based on the Council of Europe Guidelines on Forced Return of May 2005. Under the 2009 Community Actions, the Commission financed a comparative study to analyse practices and highlight best practices relating to forced-return monitoring systems in the Member States⁶. **The recommendations contained therein could therefore be practically implemented by enabling participation of all interested Member States.** This can be done by carrying out forced-return monitoring during implementation of joint removals by several Member States and the Frontex agency.

Eligible actions

Providing for and deploying a pool of forced return monitors for joint return operations.

- The action should cover at least the following stages of monitoring: the pre-departure phase, the operation procedure (return itself), a possible transit phase and the arrival and reception of the returnee in the country of return.
- Where possible monitoring should also cover the pre-return phase⁷ (logistical constraints may exist notably where e.g. a flight departs from one particular country but transports returnees from several Member States). In line with the general approach taken with regard to Art. 8(6) of the Return directive, the action is not required to cover post-return monitoring (the period following reception of the returnee in a third country).

⁶ Comparative Study on Best Practices in the Field of Forced Return Monitoring, available on DG HOME website: http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/immigration/docs/studies/Forced%20Return%20Monitoring%20Study%20Final%20Report.pdf

⁷ The pre-return phase refers to when a removal decision has been made; the pre-departure phase refers to the time when preparations for the actual departure are made and may possibly involve detention.

- The action should create and test model(s) of forced return monitoring based on the best practices identified in the Comparative Study on Best Practices in the Field of Forced Return Monitoring. This model could then be replicated by other Member States.

The vital element for the monitoring to be successful is the independence of monitors. To that end, it should include third parties different from the authorities enforcing return. Monitors could consequently represent relevant international and non-governmental organisations, public bodies (such as a national Ombudsman), etc. Monitors should also have an appropriate background to be able to carry out this task⁸. Consequently, the action may include a training element to prepare the monitors for their mission.

The applicant should obtain assurances from the organisations enforcing return that the monitors will be allowed to undertake their tasks and specifying monitors' mandate. Applicants and the Member States are encouraged to make arrangements so that their returnees are supervised by monitors from other Member States, at least during the operation (return itself) stage, to provide for further independence guarantees and exchange of best practices.

Member States shall make the list of monitors available to other interested parties so that they could be called upon for future return operations. This way, the sustainability of the action will be ensured by creating a pool of monitors that is available for the use of all interested parties.

In addition, the action may foresee that the Member States (including those who are not involved in return operation) may send observers from the institutions enforcing return. It has to be noted that observers will not be entitled to undertake any monitoring tasks; their role is to gain experience on how monitoring has to be implemented in practice so that they could replicate the model in their own Member State.

The report issued by the monitors should be made available to the Commission as one of the project deliverables.

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| Category 2: Reintegration measures accompanying the return |
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Policy context

Targeted reintegration measures are key conditions for a sustainable return. Migrants who fall outside of immigration laws often suffer exploitation, destitution and abuse while abroad and many of them struggle to re-establish their lives in their country of origin upon return. Different researches have shown that unless return is followed by reintegration, large number of returnees consider the possibility of leaving again. To have successful results in medium and long term in this policy area, the emphasis shall be put on the reintegration measures.

Therefore this category aims at reintegration measures accompanying the return, i.e.:

⁸ See the above-mentioned study for further guidance, notably p. 19-20; 24-28.

- Action 1: persons to be returned to those countries from which a high number of illegally staying third country nationals come from but the ratio of effectively implemented returns is low. Targeted reintegration actions in these geographical areas could contribute to increasing the ratio of effectively implemented returns. The reintegration measures that are included in the AVRR (Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration) would help the beneficiaries by reducing the push factors and, in general, improving the socio-economic conditions in the country of origin.
- Action 2: vulnerable or disadvantaged persons such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors etc., requiring tailored assistance and support prior to and after return, in order to make their return sustainable. The vulnerable groups need often more advice, guidance and resources to cope with the challenges of reintegration. "Vulnerable or disadvantaged" is a rather broad category and may include different kinds of vulnerable persons mentioned in Art. 5(2) of the Decision (such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, victims of violence, victims of trafficking, persons requiring medical assistance), but also other categories that may correspond to the definition, such as members of certain communities facing persecution, prejudice, etc. In all cases, there should be an individual assessment of the situation, carried out according to pre-defined criteria.

Eligible Actions

Setting up and further development of cooperation of entities from at least two Member States in the field of reintegration of returnees in order to coordinate and implement reintegration measures envisaged in the country of return at an early stage and to develop a common approach towards specific countries of return.

The eligible actions can cover preparatory pre-departure activities in the Member States and re-integration after return but also can include socio-economic measures in the country of return itself.

- The scope of the actions should emphasize coordinating and implementing reintegration measures envisaged in the country of return at an early stage and developing a common approach towards specific countries of return or a specific type of vulnerability. Actions can include for example operational cooperation, exchange of good practices, development of approaches or models related to safe and sustainable return.
- The focus of the action is on providing tailor made reintegration measures to the returnees.
- The action should cover reintegration measures, but not the return itself; the latter would need to be funded by other sources than Community Actions. The main goal is to make sure that the return decision is accompanied by certain "blanket measures" to ease the burden on returning of persons and help them reintegrate society in their home country.
- Reintegration measures can cover both pre-return and post-return assistance and do not need to be limited to a specific assistance in relation to the persons' vulnerable (disadvantaged) status but can entail broader measures (such as e.g.

starting up business, training programmes etc.) to make the return sustainable and easier for the persons concerned.

- Apart from offering reintegration assistance to the returnees, the project should provide the description of lessons learned/conclusions drawn from the project, so that the stakeholders can benefit from experience accumulated during its implementation.

Member States are encouraged to define common reintegration strategies targeted to specific countries of return or geographical areas or a specific type of vulnerability. This may include common missions to these countries of return, common assessment of the socioeconomic needs of the countries of return (in relation to returnees), development of coherent post arrival reintegration tools and the common implementation and establishment of these tools as far as the countries of return (or specific types of vulnerability) are concerned.

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| <u>Category 3:</u> Deployment of Return coordinators to improve the cooperation with third countries |
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Policy context

Improve cooperation with third countries is essential to provide for an effective return policy. However, Member States have for example reported difficulties to establish contacts with third countries authorities or to receive their support in establishing the identity of the returnees and in obtaining travel documents.

These challenges could be met more efficiently by deploying **Return coordinators** which would operate on behalf of several Member States in the Member States' relevant administration or in their diplomatic representations abroad.

Eligible actions

The eligible actions shall contribute to initiate the deployment of Return coordinators and develop their activities and thereby contribute to facilitate return of irregular migrants in accordance with the principles established by the Return Directive and the management of legal/irregular migration to the European Union.

The primary task of **Return coordinators** shall be to facilitate the return of irregular migrants and to assist the Member States in their different tasks, such as establishing the identity of third country nationals, facilitating the acquisition of travel documents and providing assistance in third countries upon arrival of the returnees and facilitating their repatriation.

- The Return coordinators works on behalf at least two Member States (including his/her own).
- The coordinators can be deployed in the partner Member States' relevant administration or in their diplomatic representations abroad.
- Actions should aim at joint initiative in increasing the number of illegally staying third-country nationals returned to these countries and at reporting and

identifying best practices and an assessment of the effect of various return practices applied. The report issued should be made available to the Commission as one of the project deliverables.

This initiative shall improve the exchange of information and experience between all players involved in the return procedure. The action could include exchange of information, advice, training and strengthened cooperation between Member State's authorities active in the field of return, and/or ensuring co-operation and transfer of expertise (in line with the EU and international standards) to third country authorities and bodies participating in the return process.

The costs must be incurred by eligible entities of the Member States. They should be directly related to the preparation, logistical organisation of placement of Return coordinators, training, staff costs and follow-up activities related to the project. During the application process and in co-ordination with the partner Member States, the applicants shall provide a clear and detailed description of those activities that the coordinator would undertake in agreement and on behalf of the partners.

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| Category 4 | Exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices among judicial practitioners and judges on the Return Directive and its related case law |
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Policy context

At the end of 2013, the first report on the application of the Return Directive is expected to be released. The legislation, (and so the Return Directive) proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Parliament and Council, is affected, sometimes in a fundamental way, by the rulings of the Court of Justice. In the last three years, national Courts submitted several preliminary questions related to the interpretation of the Return Directive to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The ECJ already delivered four judgements (in cases C-357/09, C-61/11, C-329/11 and C-430/11) in which it clarified the impact of certain provisions (mainly related to detention) of the Return Directive on national law. At least four more cases are pending. At the national level, the Return Directive is already subject of intensive judicial discussion and review up to the highest Courts.

The return practitioners and judges are not always aware of the judgements in other Member States which could help similar cases examined in their own country. The need to improve (and first of all) enable the exchange of information among national judicial bodies on the Return Directive related case law is obvious. In this regard, practical steps can be undertaken by setting up a European network to inform, analyse and compare on how the Return Directive and its related case law are implemented by the national court.

Eligible Actions

- Actions aiming to collect landmark judgments implementing the Return Directive and its related case law or to produce studies on the judicial practice in the field of return in several Member States including the translation into English of important pieces of national jurisprudence.

- Actions such as the organisation of trainings/conferences aiming to foster information exchange among judicial practitioners/judges active in the field of return.
- Cooperation between entities from at least three Member States.

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| <u>Category 5</u> | Other forms of cooperation and exchange of best practices related to return |
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Eligible Actions

The scope of this category would involve project proposals with an innovative aspect or which could be considered as pilot actions or replicable models, proposing innovative type of cooperation compared to already existing projects in the return area and fostering the exchange of best practices and involving entities from at least two Member States.

The action can also include an impact assessment of various reintegration programs on sustainable return.

2. AVAILABLE BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

2.1 Budget requirements

The budget available for current call is **EUR 4.485.000**.

The actions are funded in the form of co-financing. The EU's financial contribution for each of the categories of actions may not exceed **90%** of the total eligible costs.

| Category of Community actions as defined in section 1.3 | Indicative Minimum EU funding per project | Duration |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Category 1 Monitoring of forced return operations | Minimum: €100.000 | Maximum 24 months ⁹ |
| Category 2 Reintegration measures accompanying the return | Minimum: €100.000 | Maximum 24 months ⁹ |
| Category 3 Deployment of Return Coordinators | Minimum: €100.000 | Maximum 24 months ⁹ |
| Category 4 Information exchange among national judicial bodies on Return Directive related case law | Minimum: €100.000 | Maximum 24 months ⁹ |
| Category 5 | Minimum: | Maximum 24 months ⁹ |

⁹ The project duration may be extended during its implementation for duly justified reasons subject to the Commission's approval via an amendment to the grant agreement

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| Other forms of cooperation and exchange of best practices related to return | €100.000 | |
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The above figures on the minimum funding relate to the amount of grant requested from the European Union (EU funding) and not to the total cost of the project. The Commission will determine the amounts of financial assistance to be awarded, based on the available budget.

2.2 Contractual framework

The implementation will be on the basis of either a standard grant agreement for an action with a single beneficiary or a standard grant agreement for an action with multiple beneficiaries in those situations where the beneficiary will act as coordinator in collaboration with other Member States or organisations (the other co-beneficiaries).

2.3 Payment conditions

The grant shall normally be paid under the following conditions:

- Pre-financing, representing 75% of the amount of the grant awarded within 30 days from the date of signature of the grant agreement by the last of the parties or within 30 days from the starting date of the action and upon receipt of a request for pre-financing from a beneficiary.
- The balance upon receipt and approval by the Commission of the final technical and financial implementation reports, together with a request for payment, accompanied by an certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts for each beneficiary/co-beneficiary incurring direct eligible costs above EUR 100.000. The cost of a certificate shall be included in the project budget. The model of the certificate is annexed to the model grant agreement.

2.4 VAT

Value added tax (VAT) is an eligible cost except for:

- taxed/exempt activities with right of deduction;
- activities which are undertaken by public bodies acting as public authorities in the exercise of sovereign powers or prerogatives.

2.5 Checks and audits

Checks and audits will be carried out in accordance with the relevant articles of the grant agreement.

Beneficiaries (applicants, and co-beneficiaries) are required to keep all original documents, including accounting and tax documents, or, in duly substantiated exceptional cases, certified copies of original documents relating to the agreements for a period of five years from the date of payment of the balance of amounts payable. Upon request, these documents should be made available to the Commission. In case of an audit, the applicant must have available all documents of partners.

The European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) will have the same audit powers, and in particular the same rights of access, as the Commission.

3. DURATION AND START DATE

As a general rule the maximum project duration indicated should not exceed the periods set in section 2.1. The co-financed actions shall start as soon as possible after conclusion of a grant agreement but at the latest nine months after signature of the Grant Agreement.

4. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The submitted proposals will be evaluated against exclusion, eligibility, selection and award criteria.

4.1 Exclusion criteria

Applicants, co-beneficiaries and associated partners shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations listed in Article 106(1) and 107 of Council Regulation No.966/2012 of 25 October 2012¹⁰ on the Financial Regulation applicable to the budget of the European Union.

Effective, proportionate and dissuasive administrative and financial penalties may be applied in the event of incorrect statements.

The Commission will exclude a proposal from the eligibility, selection and award procedure if any of the partners involved in the project:

- (a) is bankrupt or is being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the court, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters or is in an analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulation;
- (b) has, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have, been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify including by decisions of the EIB and international organisations;
- (d) is not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

¹⁰ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

- (e) has, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have, been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) is currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) of the Financial Regulation;
- (g) is subject to a conflict of interest;
- (h) is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the authorising department as a condition of participation in the contract or grant award procedure or fail to supply this information.

4.2 Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible, project proposals must meet **all** the following requirements:

1. The submission of the proposal must respect the deadline set for the call. The applications must be submitted through the PRIAMOS system at the latest by **04 October 2013 at 12:00 CET**.
2. Project proposals must be presented by eligible entities from the eligible Member States as defined in section 1.2, having a proven experience in the areas prioritised under this call. Applications must involve one main beneficiary and minimum one co-beneficiary and associated partners (optional) in different Member States. Organisations in Denmark, EU Agencies or third countries may participate as associated partners on a non-cost basis.
3. Project proposals must fall within one of the categories as defined in section 1.3. Project proposals must respect the ceiling on percentage, minimum grant amount and the maximum project duration set out in section 2.1.
4. The indicative budget, the objectives of the project and its intended impact must be clearly indicated. A detailed description must be given of the activities envisaged, the results and impacts anticipated, and the approach, working methods and timetable to be followed.
5. Project proposals must contain **all** documents defined under section 6.4 of this call. If a document appearing on the checklist is either unavailable or not relevant, please indicate and give the reason why.

Applicants are invited to carefully examine and comply with additional requirements imposed on some actions/strands as specified in the section 1.3 of the call.

Only applications which meet the above eligibility criteria will be further processed.

4.3 Selection criteria

All applicants, co-beneficiaries and associated partners should have sufficient financial and operational capacity in the field of proposed action (e.g. list of similar projects carried out, CVs of key staff, etc.) to complete the planned action, as defined in Article 132 of the Financial Regulation and Article 202 of Rules of Application.

The analysis of the financial capacity will be done for the co-ordinating organisation on the basis of the signed financial statements (profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year) or any other equivalent documents provided by the applicant organisation for the last available financial year. The financial statements should be accompanied by an external audit report if the amount of grant sought exceeds €750.000.

- The annual turnover of the co-ordinating organisation (in the last financial year for which statements are available) must be superior to the amount of requested EU contribution;
- The co-ordinating organisation must be established at least two years prior to the date of submission of the application.

The selection criteria is not applicable for public bodies and international organisations.

Only applications which meet the above selection criteria will be further processed.

4.4 Award criteria

Among the projects which fulfil the eligibility and selection criteria, the Commission will select the proposals achieving the highest score following an evaluation according to the award criteria set out below, taking into account the funds available:

- **Relevance:** the extent to which the proposed action falls within the priorities and objectives of the programme defined in section 1.3 above and the clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives. Does the proposal add value at European level in relation to previous projects of a similar nature? (max 35 points);
- **Quality of the proposed action:** the thoroughness, appropriateness and feasibility of the approach, methodology, timeframe and organisation (max 25 points);
- **Value for money:** the adequacy of the forecast budget, appropriateness of the amount requested as to the expected results, inter alia in view of the number of persons concerned by the project (max 20 points);
- **Outcomes and Impact of the project:** quality, relevance and effectiveness of expected results in terms of outcomes. The sustainability of the project and/or its results after the termination of the grant (where relevant), the dissemination of results, lessons learned and acquired know-how beyond the national level (max 20 points).

In order to be selected for co-financing, the project must obtain a minimum of 60 points out of 100. Proposal scoring below 60 points will be rejected.

The proposals receiving less than 15 points for the criteria on "relevance" will not be evaluated further.

5. VISIBILITY OF EUROPEAN UNION FINANCING

The beneficiaries whose projects are selected for funding should undertake to ensure adequate visibility of the operation financed by the European Union. Specific reference should always be made to the fact that a project is co-financed by the European Union under the European Return Fund - Community Actions 2013. Any communication or publication by the beneficiary, in any form and medium, shall indicate that sole responsibility lies with the author and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

During each operation the beneficiary shall do whatever necessary to bring the support and financing given by the European Union to the attention of the general public and the media and refer to this contribution in its internal and annual reports.

Evidence of implementation of activities undertaken in compliance with this requirement will be provided in the final reports. The beneficiary shall ensure that:

- a) all documents, including any attendance or other certificate, concerning the project include a statement indicating that the project is co-financed by the Fund;
- b) the equipment and any other material co-financed by the European Union display the EU logo, which should be of the same size and have the same prominence as the logo of the beneficiary;
- c) a permanent prominent sign or plaque of significant size is put up on all infrastructure co-financed by the European Union, stating the type and the name of the project and displaying the European flag.

The EU emblem can be found at:

<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-5000100.htm>

http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics1_en.htm

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

6.1 Language of the application

In order to minimise translation delays, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications completed in English. However, applications may be submitted in any of the official languages of the European Union.

6.2 Submission of applications via Priamos

This call is managed via Priamos, a system for the submission of the applications, which requires applicants to fill in an on-line Grant Application form and to attach to it all required annexes.

In order to access the system applicants first need to register (this involves applicants providing some basic data about themselves and their organisations). It should be done as soon as a decision is taken to participate in this call. Subsequently, the applicant shall receive a password to be used to access the system.

Applications must be submitted, in their entirety, through Priamos. **No applications (partial or entire) submitted on paper, fax or e-mail will be considered. Please note**

that although the Priamos system is able to deal with a lot of applications at the same time, it is advisable NOT to wait until the last moment to register on the system and submit your application.

If the applicant submits more than one version of the grant application form or any annex, only the latest version of such document(s) will be taken into consideration for the evaluation.

Applicants should make sure that all electronic files are readable and are not corrupted and that their applications are complete. In the case of multiple submissions (repeated submission of the same project proposal by the same applicant), only the latest submission will be considered (and therefore must be complete, i.e. contain all the elements mentioned in the check list of the application form).

Following the conclusion of the selection process, applicants placed sufficiently high on the merit list to be considered for a grant may be requested to provide a paper copy of the application (printed out at the moment of submitting it via the Priamos system) and the originals (signed and stamped wherever applicable) of all annexes required under the call for proposals. Failure to produce any of the aforesaid documents may lead to disqualification of the project proposal concerned.

Information and guidance on how to register and submit your application on Priamos can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund/transnational-actions/index_en.htm

6.3 Deadline for submitting applications

Applications have to be submitted electronically via the Priamos system by

04 October 2013 at 12.00 C.E.T

The Priamos system will not accept any application after the deadline. Applications submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected.

It is the responsibility of an applicant to complete the on-line application before the deadline. We strongly advise you not to wait until the last few days before applying since heavy Internet traffic or a problem with the Internet connection could lead to your on-line session being interrupted before you complete your application thereby obliging you to repeat the whole process and you may miss the deadline.

6.4 Content of Applications

Each proposal must include following documents:

- Application (electronic document, available only in PRIAMOS)
- Annex I – Project Description and Implementation
- Annex II – The Budget Form
- Annex III – Financial Identification Form (to be down-loaded: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm)
- Annex IV – Legal Entity Form (for all partners involved in the project, accompanied by evidence of legal status) (to be down-loaded: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)
- Annex V – Partner/Associated Partner Declaration Form/Co-financing third party declaration (if relevant)
- Annex VI – VAT declaration
- Annex VII – Curriculum vitae of key staff performing the work in connection with the project (not required from public bodies and International Organisations)
- Annex VIII – Financial statements of applicant organisation (profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year). The financial statements should be accompanied by an external audit report if the amount of grant sought exceeds €750.000. (Financial statements are not relevant for public bodies and International Organisations.)

The details and the explanations concerning the annexes to be provided by the applicant are available in the **Guide for Applicants 2013**. Therefore, please read carefully the guide for details and explanations concerning compulsory documents and annexes to be uploaded in PRIAMOS as a complete application package. The forms necessary for the grant application, its annexes, the guide for applicants and the relevant links can be accessed from the European Return Fund website at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund/transnational-actions/index_en.htm

The Commission may contact applicants to request additional information at any time prior to taking its decision. Failures to respond to such requests by the deadline set may lead to disqualification of the application. Applicants must take the necessary steps to ensure that they can be contacted rapidly up to the end of the selection process. Where the Commission contacts an applicant, this should not be regarded as a pre-selection of the proposal on the part of the Commission.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

7.1. Where to find the necessary information

The page on Funding possibilities of the website of Directorate-General Home Affairs is updated whenever relevant information becomes available, therefore, applicants are advised to check it regularly:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund/transnational-actions/index_en.htm

7.2. Contact at the European Commission

The Commission service responsible for implementing the European Return Fund is Unit C4 of Directorate General Home Affairs - HOME.

Contact :

e-mail: HOME-RETURN-FUND@ec.europa.eu

Mailing address:

European Commission
DG HOME
Unit C4 - RF
LX 46 8/101,
BE-1049 Brussels.

All applicants will be informed of the Commission's decision concerning their grant application in due time. It is envisaged that the Commission will complete its selection procedures by the **first quarter of 2014**.

It should be noted that in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or a specific activity.

8. EX-POST PUBLICITY

Information on all grants signed in the course of a financial year will be published on the Internet site of the Union institutions. The information may also be published by any other appropriate medium, including the Official Journal of the European Union. The following will be published with the agreement of the beneficiary:

1. the name and address of the beneficiaries;
2. the subject of the grant;
3. the amount awarded and rate of funding of the total eligible costs of the operational work programme.

The European Commission may waive the above obligations if publication of the information could threaten the safety of the beneficiaries or harm their business interests. Beneficiaries of grants must clearly display acknowledgement of the support received from the EU.

9. DATA PROTECTION

The grant applications will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data¹¹. Your replies to the questions in this form are necessary in order to assess your grant application and they will be processed

¹¹ Official Journal L 8, 12.1.2001.

solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the Community grant programme concerned. On request, you may be sent personal data and correct or complete them. For any question relating to these data, please contact the Commission department to which the form must be returned. Beneficiaries may lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time.

If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 195(1) of the EC Treaty and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties published in Official Journal of the European Communities L 113 of 4 May 1994.

Grant applicants and persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125,)

or

- the Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12),

their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above- mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or a decision.

10. MEANS OF REDRESS

If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 228(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties published in Official Journal L 113 of 4 May 1994.