Minister announced new incentives for voluntary returns

The Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Jim O'Callaghan, announced higher levels of reintegration assistance for people who withdraw their international protection application and leave Ireland voluntarily.

For a limited time, people who were in the international protection process before 28 September 2025 will be offered increased reintegration assistance for a voluntary return at an earlier stage in the process. This offer is not open to applicants who applied after that date.

The current level of reintegration assistance offered is up to EUR 1,200 per person and EUR 2,000 per family unit. This assistance can only be availed of once and is offered to support people and families to re-establish themselves, access education or set up a small business when they return home. The changes announced mean that if a person decides to opt for voluntary return either before receiving a first instance decision or before appealing a negative first instance decision their assistance will be increased to EUR 2,500 per person to a maximum of EUR 10,000 per family unit. If they are in the appeals process and decide to voluntary return before the appeal decision issues their assistance will increase, but to the lower amount of EUR 1,500 per person and to a maximum of EUR 6,000 per family unit. If they receive a final decision on their application assistance will only increase for families to a maximum of EUR 3,000 per family unit.

There are safeguards in place for vulnerable people and requests for return can be refused if it would be unsafe for the person to return home.

In 2025, nearly 1,200 people have left Ireland by voluntary return; a significant increase compared to the 550 who left in the same period in 2024.

Currently it is estimated to cost EUR 122,000 per person to process an average international protection application. This includes costs for accommodation and food, social protection payments, healthcare and education. Increasing reintegration assistance for those at an earlier stage in the process is aimed to reduce the pressure on the system from the high numbers of applications received in 2023 and 2024.

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- Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration | An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce (7 October, 2025), [Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration Jim O'Callaghan announces new incentive to encourage Voluntary Returns], https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-justice-home-affairs-and-migration/press-releases/minister-for-justice-home-affairs-and-migration-jim-ocallaghan-announces-new-incentive-to-encourage-voluntary-returns/

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