

ANNEX I

Contribution of the European Funds Unit for the drafting of the Human Rights Situation for Cyprus following year 2014.

Background Information on AMIF/ ISF and the relevant Solid Funds (IF, RF, ERF).

The National Programme 2014-2020 for the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is a complementary instrument for the implementation of the state strategy on Integration, Asylum and Migration, (including Returns). National Objectives in the latest version of the AMIF National Programme are as follows:

Asylum:

- Full transposition and implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)
- Improvement of the quality of the accommodation reception capacities
- Support of health care of asylum seekers/ recognised refugees
- Support of legal representation, access to judicial review, interpretation services
- Systematic evaluation of the asylum system in order to improve quality and speed of Procedures
- Strengthen administrative capacity

Integration:

- Support integration actions for TCNs
- Improve acceptance of TCNs by the local society
- Support local communities/NGOs/public authorities in order to better promote integration
- Improve administrative capacity

Return:

- Support of voluntary return programmes
- Support of forced return procedures

- Support of forced return monitoring mechanism
- Support of the accommodation/detention centres
- Organization of joint return operations
- Training of staff and cooperation with other Member States

On the other hand Internal Security Fund - Police (ISF) is a complementary instrument of state policy for human trafficking which is a main focus area of ISF National Programme 2014-2020.

Projects under AMIF and ISF started being implemented in year 2015. Implementation of projects as according to the latest version of the National Programmes for these two Funds is expected to continue until year 2022.

In addition during years 2014-2015 several other projects that addressed Asylum, Integration and Returns were implemented under the European Refugee Fund (ERF), the Integration Fund (IF) and the Returns Fund (RF). These Solid Funds ceased to exist following the end of their eligibility period of 2007-2013.

AMIF and ISF National Programmes 2014-2020 have been drafted following policy dialogues with the EU. The two Programmes are periodically revised to adapt to situational changes, different prioritizing of activities and recommendations of relevant stakeholders. The Monitoring Committees for the AMIF and ISF National Programmes, led by representatives of government departments and NGOs that are stakeholders to the pre-mentioned areas of interest, meet at least once a year to monitor the progress of the National Programmes and present their views.

The target group for AMIF projects is generally Third Country Nationals (TCNs) while specific projects may have individual categories of TCNs as target groups such as applicants of international protection. Projects implemented under AMIF and ISF funds are currently financed with 90% EU budget and 10% state budget. The Final Beneficiaries implementing these projects can be either relevant public authorities such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Civil Registry, Migration Department and the Police, or private sector organizations, (including non-governmental organizations and organizations dealing with TCNs and issues that affect them, such as universities, research centres etc).

The AMIF, ISF, RF and ERF projects related to areas of human rights interest, (as addressed in the Recommendations contained in Section II of the Report of the Working Group A/HRC/26/14), and that were implemented since year 2014, (or have been including in the AMIF and ISF Multiannual Programmes for potential future implementation based on prioritizing of current needs), can be categorized in 7 sections as follows:

1. Torture:

In year 2014 under the ERF a project with title “*Training of public officers (medical workers, psychologists etc.) for detection of special needs in victims of tortures in need of international protection*”, 103 public officers (e.g nurses, policemen, prison guards, psychologists, doctors etc.), carried out expert training in identifying victims of torture and recording their findings appropriately as per the standards of the Istanbul Protocol.

2. Vulnerable Groups:

Implemented AMIF, IF and ERF projects frequently addressed the needs of vulnerable groups of TCNs, especially of migrant children. Several projects specifically targeted migrant children and even unaccompanied children such as the following:

- Setting up and Operating an Open centre for unaccompanied minors. This continuing project has established in 2015 and has since operated an Open Reception Center for up to 45 male minors, aged 13 to 18 years that have been recognized by the Cyprus authorities as unaccompanied third country nationals. The center aims to improve reception conditions for unaccompanied minors who are either beneficiaries or applicants for international protection. The Centre besides accommodation offers meals, security, ongoing psychosocial support, legal counseling, and several activities.
- Pilot Programme for Fostering Unaccompanied minors. This project co-financed in year 2017 the planning and implementation of a Foster Care Pilot Program which included the systematic evaluation of candidate foster parents by social workers and psychologists and training of the parents concerned on issues related to parenting skills. The project aimed to provide hospitality

for Unaccompanied Minors Applicants / Beneficiaries of International Protection by approved foster parents and improve reception conditions and services.

- Programme for teaching Greek to TCN minors. This continuing project in years 2017-2018 co-finances the provision of Greek language lessons to minor Third Country Nationals, in addition to their regular school attendance. The structure and teaching material of the program addresses the specific needs of mostly primary school students whose first language is not Greek, thus aiming to expand more quickly their reading, writing, comprehension and speaking skills. This project is expected to continue being implemented in years 2019-2021 with possibly renewed activities and form as it has been included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.
- Activities Programme for residents at the Kofinou Open Reception Centre for applicants of International Protection. This project included activities for children residing at the Centre. For more information regarding this project please see section 7.7 below.
- Under ERF, the following two projects were implemented in year 2014 for the unaccompanied minor applicants and beneficiaries of international protection:
 - Creativity and equal opportunities through design and technology education.
 - Programme for the education of unaccompanied minors.
- Dental examination of unaccompanied minors to determine age. This project is being implemented in years 2016, 2017 and 2018 and co-finances the dental examinations for TCNs that are claiming to be minors and requesting asylum status. This project contributes to protecting the rights of minors.

In addition several co-funded projects, like the following, offered customized project services to vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and elderly persons.

- Migrant Info-Centres. For more information please see section 7.11 below.
- Provision of psychological and social support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. For more information please see section 7.14 below.

- Integration programmes by local authorities is a continuing project co-funded both under IF and AMIF in years 2014 -2018. For more information please see section 4 below.
- Moreover the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for implementing the following 3 projects:
 - Establishing a new centre in an urban area for vulnerable groups of applicants of international protection. A call of proposals for new projects under AMIF that will be implemented in year 2019-2022 is being drafted in July 2018 which includes a project with title “Open Reception Centre for Vulnerable applicants of international Protection”. This project is also relevant for section 7.7 below.
 - Establishing an open centre for returnees and mainly vulnerable groups of returnees. For more information please see section 5 below.
 - Provision of legal assistance and representation to applicants of international protection (including unaccompanied minors).

3. Education on Human Rights:

Some AMIF, IF and ERF measures, such as the following, have promoted education on a few specific Human Rights, (rights to equality, freedom from discrimination, Freedom of Belief and Religion):

- An awareness campaign for the receiving society is being implemented for the years 2016-2018. The awareness campaigns informs the general public on issues related to beneficiaries of international protection and migration issues. Short fiction films and mini documentaries and a lot of other publicity material were produced and circulated on media, including TV. Also interactive seminars were organized as part of the awareness campaign. Such seminars were repeatedly organized in schools hopefully shaping mindsets. This project is expected to continue being implemented in years 2019-2021 with possibly renewed activities and form as it has been included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.
- Under an IF project implemented in year 2014, several Cyprus journalists attended training which focused on how to avoid promoting discrimination through their work.

In addition some projects, such as the following, educated TCNs to better protect their human rights in the host country:

- A Guide was published in year 2017 which included general information about Cyprus (incl. history, culture, various public services, obligations, rights, housing, employment). The guide was published in 6 languages of the major groups of TCNs in Cyprus. It was distributed to corresponding embassies as well as municipal authorities, universities, UNHCR, Immigration and Migration departments, the Migrant Info- Centres in all districts, as a way to provide more information to migrants. A similar guide was also published under IF in years 2014 and 2015.
- An AMIF project co-financed in 2017 the implementation of training sessions (seminars/ workshops) which informed specific groups of TCNs about host country social skills, Cyprus legislation and regulations.

4. Discrimination:

The implementation of co-funded projects under AMIF is one of the multidimensional measures to address discrimination. AMIF projects specifically impact discrimination of TCNs but may indirectly address discrimination against other groups.

AMIF, as well as the now ceased to exist IF, are systematically co-funding measures/projects that aim to enhance integration and reduce discrimination against third country nationals in various area of local life.

Anti-discrimination AMIF projects and promotion material are being designed to be inclusive for TCNs of various backgrounds.

Examples of AMIF, ERF and IF projects that were implemented following 2014 and which included anti-discrimination measures, are:

- A television cooking show called ‘Acquaintance of Third Countries’ Culture through Gastronomy’ is being co-funded for years 2016- 2018. The project is based on the idea that gastronomy forms a significant part of a culture. The aim of the project is to familiarize and acquaint receiving society

with third countries' culture through the presentation of their local cuisine and with the help of dynamics of television. The show presents recipes of third countries with the participation of TCNs highlighting at the same time the cultural heritage, traditions and customs of these countries, as well as their culinary relations with Cyprus.

- An awareness campaign for the receiving society is being implemented for the years 2016-2018. For more information about this project please see above section 3 above.
- Also a similar publicity campaign through the use of the mass media (TV, radio, press including electronic press and other web-sites) was carried out under ERF in years 2014 and 2015 and focused on eliminating discrimination against beneficiaries of international protection.
- Integration programmes by local authorities is a continuing project co-funded both under IF and AMIF in years 2014 -2018. These programmes included multidimensional activities for integration which are implemented in all five districts of the island by local authority partnerships. Municipalities offer TCNs a variety of programmes and events ranging from educational courses like computer lessons, English language lessons and First Aid classes, social and family support including counselling sessions and after school child care programmes. Under this continuing project, TCNs and the local population have the chance to familiarize with each other's culture through music/food/dance festivals and sports tournaments. As an example, the specific project implemented in year 2017 by Nicosia municipality and its partners has been named 'New Channels for the integration of TCNs' and it provides psychosocial support and after school child care, organizes festivals and cricket tournaments, and offers cultural appreciation classes for children of Chinese and Arab migrants, amongst other things. This project is expected to continue being implemented in years 2019-2021 with possibly renewed activities and form as it has been included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.
- A project is expected to be implemented in year 2019-2022 with title "National Action Plan for the Integration of Migrants" following a call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018. The main project activity is drafting a National action plan for the integration of Migrants, which can contribute to installing the mechanisms that will promote the rights of migrants. Under this project proposed measures will be assessed following focus groups and meetings arranged with governmental and non- governmental stakeholders, and a 3 Year National Plan will then be drafted as well as periodically monitored based on set indicators.

- Furthermore the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of a project that trains civil servants, social partners, employers and other relevant partners to deal with integration related issues and have awareness of multicultural background.

5. Detention:

The European Fund Unit in relation to the detention of irregular migrants co-funds projects that either alleviated detention costs for the state or improved the quality of life for detainees. The following projects were implemented in relation to the Menoyia Detention Centre.

- A continuing project was implemented under RF in years 2013-2015, which co-funded the salaries of the police officers dedicated to the Menoyia Detention Centre and the contract for Centre cleaning services.
- A project under AMIF co-finances in year 2018, the overtime salaries, travelling costs and equipment costs for the Ministry of Health's mental health services staff (clinical psychologists), in order for them to provide psychological support and counselling to the residents of the Kofinou Reception Centre and the Menoyia Detention Centre.
- Another project under AMIF co-financed in year 2017 the enrichment of the daily leisure programme for detainees residing at the Menoyia Detention Center, thus improving their detention conditions. Within the project, actions that further improved infrastructure took place such as restoration work (e.g. wings' paintwork in pleasant colours), purchase of equipment and other leisure activities' means (e.g. outdoor fitness equipment, basketballs, board games, personal computers - including security locks).
- Furthermore the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of projects that develop alternatives to the detentions of applicants of international protection, such as the following:
 - Usage of services of supervisors appointed by the Minister of Interior that will be responsible to accompany and supervise as well as inform applicants of international protection about the legal procedures.
 - Establishing an open centre for returnees. This centre will target mainly vulnerable groups, such as mothers with minors, elderly etc, but other returnees could be

accommodated as well. The support will include appropriate accommodation infrastructure, kitchen, dining room, space for leisure activities, provision of meals, other operational costs. This centre can also be used as alternative to detention of returnees.

6. Combating Trafficking in Human Beings:

In relation to taking all the necessary steps to eliminate Human Trafficking, please note that ISF specifically targets this area and has funds directly allocated to implementing measures/projects that can reduce Human Trafficking. ISF projects that target human trafficking are planned to be implemented during the remaining upcoming period of the ISF National Programme (until year 2022). The choice of projects to be implemented follows the recommendations of a Committee set up and assigned to work for the prevention of Human Trafficking.

The ISF National Programme 2014-2020 includes several measures to address Human Trafficking, that are currently being expected to be implemented, such as the:

- Provision of legal advice to victims,
- Employing an external evaluator to monitor and evaluate the trafficking trends, assess implemented policy and provide suggestions,
- Engaging in research-assessment in order to evaluate possible legislative gaps, victim/traffickers profiling, impact assessment of specific actions,
- Carrying out of a public awareness campaign in relation to human trafficking.

7. Protecting the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers:

7.1 Recommendation: Improve services to vulnerable groups:

Please see section 2 –vulnerable groups.

7.2 Recommendation: Improve access to education and Improving school education

Some projects that were implemented after year 2014 have improved access to education and education itself including the following:

- Under ERF a project with title “In-service training programme for primary school teachers, school psychologists and school counsellors and advisors” was implemented in year 2014.
- Under AMIF, an initiative by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute aims at promoting the social and educational integration of TCNs in Cypriot schools through the empowerment of teachers and the relationship between schools and parents (2017-2018). This project carried out measures to improve socio-educational integration of children of third countries in Cyprus, including systematic research and evaluation of existing institutions, systematic training of teachers and education directors in management issues of sociocultural diversity, functioning of a group of facilitators-supporters for parents and children, and teacher training for reinforcement of learning the Greek language and multilingualism.
- Another AMIF project implemented in years 2017 and 2018 offered Greek language supporting lessons to minor TCNs, during after school hours. For more information please see section 2.
- Again under AMIF the continuing project “Integration Programmes by local authorities” repeatedly offers free Computer lessons, English courses and occasionally Arab or Chinese lessons for TCNs. For more information please see section 4 above.
- A call of proposal that is being drafted in July 2018 includes a project that if awarded will provide for years 2019-2021 the following services:
 - Greek language supporting lessons to minor TCNs, during after school hours.
 - Employment of adults who speak the mother tongue of minor TCNs as their facilitators/mediators/supporters in regular school classes.

7.3 Recommendation: Improve access to health

The following AMIF projects provided on the spot health services to applicants of international protection and irregular migrants residing at the Kofinou Reception Centre and Menoyia Detention Centre:

- Provision of nursing services in Kofinou Reception Centre/Menoyia Detention. This project is co-financing in years 2017 and 2018 the overtime salaries and travelling costs for the Ministry of

Health's nursing staff, in order for them to provide services to the residents of the Kofinou Reception Centre and the Menoyia Detention Centre.

- Provision of mental health services in Kofinou Reception Centre/Menogeia Detention Centre. This project co-financed in years 2017 and 2018 the overtime salaries, travelling costs and equipment costs for the Ministry of Health's mental health services staff (clinical psychologists), in order for them to provide psychological support and counselling to residents of the Kofinou Reception Centre and the Menoyia Detention Centre.
- Also an ERF project with title “Provision of medical support for persons who may be in need of international protection” was implemented in year 2014.
- Furthermore the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of a project that supports the state financial costs for medical examination treatment, (eg. screening tests, pharmaceutical support and medical treatment), during the asylum examination procedure. A memorandum of Understanding for this project is expected to be signed in July 2018, covering medical costs for a four year period.

7.4 Recommendation: Improved access to employment

- In years 2014-2015, under IF the two following projects were relevant to labor market integration:
 - Vocational training programmes for TCNs. This action implemented vocational training programmes for illegally residing TCNs, (regardless of their arrival time). The seminars taught specific skills to TCNs that are needed for performing mostly manual labor jobs. In fact 6 vocational training programmes were offered to TCN’S as well as additional training in Health and Safety and First Aid.
 - Training seminars for employers. This action was addressed to employers and their authorized representatives and through the co-funded training, (including intercultural training), aimed to develop their capacity to handle diversity and particularly ethnic, racial and religious diversity in the workplace.

- Also under AMIF the continuing project “Integration Programmes by local authorities” repeatedly offers free Computer lessons and others skills courses to TCNs. For more information please see section 4 above.
- In addition a call of proposals for new projects under AMIF that will be implemented in year 2019-2021 is being drafted in July 2018 which includes a project with title “Labor market Integration Programmes”. This project is expected to offer the following services to migrants that aim to increase their scope and speed of accessibility in the labor market:
 - Assessment of migrants skills and qualifications
 - Provision of relevant work orientation and skills advancement programmes
 - Provision of consultancy services to migrants relevant to their job seeking.

7. 5 Recommendation: Set up monitoring mechanisms to promote the rights of migrants.

The following projects are relevant to setting up such mechanisms:

- The AMIF project called “Integration Network” which has set up a network of stakeholders and NGOS and provides access to relevant information enhancing integration of TCNs. For more information please see section 7.12 below.
- Another continuing AMIF project called “Centre for Information and Support of Voluntary Returns” has set up a mechanism to support voluntary returns. This project was implemented under RF in year 2015 and under AMIF in years 2016, 2017 and 2018. This project co-financed return measures that provide individual guidance and support to migrants willing to return to their country of origin are being co-financed. The Voluntary Returns programme includes, the operation of a Centre for awareness-raising for Assisted Voluntary Returns, individualized counselling on return, reintegration assistance, specialized assistance and referral services to vulnerable individuals. A mobile information unit provides the necessary information to the target group all over the country. The programme facilitates travel documentation, arranges escorts if required, undertakes travel arrangements, gives financial and in kind assistance, as well reintegration assistance to TCN’s. This project is expected to continue being implemented in

years 2019-2021 with possibly renewed activities and form as it has been included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.

- A project is expected to be implemented in year 2019-2022 with title “National Action Plan for the Integration of Migrants” as it has been included in a call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018. For more information please see section 4 above.
- Furthermore the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of projects that install mechanisms to promote the rights of migrants such as the following:
 - Upgrading and overhauling of the asylum electronic database in order to enhance the capability to collect and process statistical data as according to revised needs for statistical purposes requested by EUROSTAT, Early Warning and Preparedness System by EASO and national asylum procedure changes.
 - Upgrading the webpage of Civil Registry and Migration Department in order to facilitate the application procedure for applicants and the issuing of residence permits;
 - With regards to return issues the following projects were included in the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 for possible future implementation:
 - Setting up a monitoring mechanism for forced returns. The Ombudsman is responsible for the mechanism upon decision of the Council of Ministers. The support of the mechanism includes: additional staff in order to facilitate the proper functioning of the mechanism, travel costs, training activities, awareness campaigns.
 - Training on return issues. This action will include trainings on: legislation, forced returns, voluntary returns, social/psychological awareness, code of conduct and good practices in the field across the EU, alternative measures to detention, i.e. regular monitoring until departure, supervision in open centres. The training will be addressed to all public officials that are involved in the returns procedure, with priority to police and immigration officers.

7. 6 Recommendation: Take Measures against labor exploitation

It is our view that the following projects that provide general information to TCNs may also be partly addressing this issue:

- Migrant Info-Centres via which TCNs can have access to information and general support. For more information please see below section 7.11 below.
- A Guide was published in year 2017 which included general information about Cyprus (incl. history, culture, various public services, obligations, rights, housing, employment). For more information please see section 3 above.
- Also in relation to this issue a new AMIF project is planned to be implemented in years 2019-2021 with title “Labor market Integration Programmes”, following a call of proposals for new projects that is being drafted in July 2018. For more information please see section 7.4 above.

7.7 Recommendation: Improving reception of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and access to acceptable housing.

- Under ERF Emergency Measures a project with title “Preparing a second open accommodation site for reception of possible mass influx of people that may be in need of international protection” has in year 2014 set up such a temporary reception/accommodation site in Pournaras. Please note that the Pournaras temporary accommodation site has already been used to temporarily shelter migrants that appear to be in need of international protection, following sudden mass arrival of migrants.
- AMIF and ERF funds, from year 2014 onwards, have funded several projects linked to the Kofinou Reception Centre for applicants of international protection, (with capacity of approximately 400 beds), thus improving the overall reception conditions for applicants of international protection. Project related to the Kofinou Reception Centre can be mainly categorized as follows.
 - Expenses co-financed via these projects included running costs such as operational support, on-site administrative and security staff, social care and psychological support for residents, meals, material support, travel expenses, health services and interpretation services.

- Also these projects co-financed infrastructure expenditure such covering the costs to expand the Centre and the purchase costs of additional equipment or replacement and maintenance of old equipment.

Please note that more projects to improve living conditions at the Kofinou Reception Centre are already being planned.

- Also another project with title “Activities Programme for residents at the Kofinou Open Reception Centre” has co-financed in year 2017 and 2018 structured activities for the residents of the Open Reception and Accommodation Centre in Kofinou to participate in and aimed to improve their quality of life. More specifically, the project organized activities for pre-school and school age children residing at the Centre, as well as afternoon study programmes for school age children. Activities programmes were also organized for the adults living in the Centre. This project is expected to continue being implemented in year 2019-2021 as it has been included in a call of proposals for new projects under AMIF that is being drafted in July 2018.
- In addition a project, (co-funded under AMIF in year 2017 and 2018 as well as under ERF in year 2014), provided support services to the Asylum Service to enhance its capacity to examine applications of international protection. Cases workers are employed with job tasks to carry out in full the process of examining applications and clear any backlog. With the implementation of this project, the process of reception for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection is speeded up.
- As already mention under section 2 above the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of a project that establishes a new centre in an urban area for vulnerable groups of applicants of international protection, which is expected to be implemented via the Call of proposals drafted in July 2018).
- In addition the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of a project that supports running costs for the Pournaras site, when the centre is used for accommodating potential applicants of international protection. For more information please see section 7.7 above.

7.8 Recommendation: Take measures to eliminate racial discrimination and xenophobia and increase awareness.

Please see section 4 –Discrimination.

7.9 Recommendation: Detention of migrants

Please see section 5 –Detention.

7.10 Recommendation: Respect for European and international conventions for the protection of human rights

AMIF, IF, RF and ERF projects carried out since 2014 have been designed and implemented to promote respect for European and international conventions for the protection of human rights.

7.11 Recommendation: Improving access social services

- Migrant Info-Centres. Four Migrant Information Centres (MICs) operated in years 2017-2018 in the four main cities of Cyprus. The MICs were run as a one stop-shop for services to TCNs including applicants or Beneficiaries of International Protection and provided guidance and advice on housing, access to health and education services, family support, completion of official forms, translation and interpretation services etc. The project also included the operation of an InfoBus equipped with qualified staff whose main role was to reach TCNs that do not have easy access to the four MICs and provide the above-named services. This project may continue being implemented in years 2019-2021 with possibly renewed activities and form since it is included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.
- Provision of psychological and social support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. For more information please see section 7.14 below.

7.12 Recommendation: Promoting international co-operation as per International guidelines in relation to asylum and irregular migration.

AMIF, IF and ERF have co-funded several projects that encouraged international co-operation and the transfer of ideas, good standards and best practices in the areas of Asylum, Migration and Returns. The following relevant projects were implemented since 2014:

- In year 2014 a project was implemented under RF with title “Conference and training on the return procedures in respect to the human rights of the returnees (with reference to legal instruments), re-admission procedures and best practices”.
- In year 2015 a project was implemented under IF with title “Inter-European Municipalities Network”
- In year 2014 a project was implemented under IF with title “Establishment of multilateral networks with Mediterranean countries”
- In year 2014 a project was implemented under RF with title “Research on the factors that affect voluntary return –experiences across the EU”
- In year 2014 and 2015 a continuing project was implemented under RF, establishing a multilateral network between countries on return issues. Via this project 118 persons participated in the 5 seminars/1 educational visit implemented, while 10 countries participated in the project activities.
- A similar project called “Integration Network” was implemented under AMIF in years 2016 and 2018 creating a network that will deal with integration issues of third country nationals in the host country. The network had members joining from different countries and from different entities related to integration issues. The network activities involve training, exchange of experiences and best practices, and access to relevant information in order to enhance integration of TCNs.
- Also a project with title “Network for Return” is expected to be implemented in years 2019-2020 with possibly renewed activities and form as it has been included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.
- Furthermore the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of a project that will carry out joint return operations for irregular migrants. Joint return flights will be organised in cooperation with FRONTEX Agency and other Member States.

All of the above projects have in practice promoted local and international collaboration and exchange of good practices amongst public and private stakeholders, as well as NGO's that are active in the fields of migration and integration.

7.13 Recommendation: Free legal assistance/aid for applicants of international protection.

- Under ERF a project was implemented for the Provision of free legal advice throughout the asylum procedure. This project provided in year 2014, readily available and free of charge, legal advice to applicants of international protection.
- As already mentioned in section 2 above, the current version of the AMIF National Programme 2014-2020 includes a provision for future implementation of a project that provides legal assistance and representation to applicants of international protection.

7.14 Recommendation: Offering psychological support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

- Provision of psychological and social support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. ERF co-funded in years 2014 and 2015 the provision of psychological and social support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. The project services were provided via the operation of an InfoBus which was staffed with qualified personnel and travelled around the island, aiming to improve everyday lives of participants.

7.15 Recommendation: Interpretation services during the reception of applicants of international protection.

- An ERF project offered in year 2014 interpretation services to applicants of international protection residing at the Kofinou Reception Centre.
- Under an AMIF project already mentioned in section 7.7 above which provides support services to the Asylum Service to enhance its capacity to examine applications of international protection, teleconferencing equipment will be purchased in year 2018 in order to allow the Asylum Service

to carry out interviews using long distance translation services, in cases that a translator in a specific language is not available in Cyprus.

- The AMIF project called “Migrant Info-Centres” offers translation/interpretation services. For more information please see section 7.11 below.

7.16 Recommendation: Enhancing language skills of migrants

- Since 2014, both under ERF, IF and AMIF free Greek language courses were annually implemented in a way specifically designed either for applicants of international protection or TCNs. Under AMIF the project target group for the free Greek language courses were TCNs and courses were implemented between years 2015-2018. This project is expected to continue being implemented in years 2019-2021 with possibly renewed activities and form as it is included in a Call of proposals for new AMIF projects that is being drafted in July 2018.
- Another AMIF project implemented in years 2017 and 2018 offered Greek language supporting lessons to minor TCNs, during after school hours. For more information please see section 2.
- Also under AMIF the continuing project “Integration Programmes by local authorities” repeatedly offers free English courses and occasionally Arab or Chinese lessons for TCNs. For more information please see section 4 above.

Finally please be informed that the European Funds Unit has not co-financed any projects that included activities directly relevant to carrying out change of legislation.