



BUDAPEST PROCESS

Workshop on Return Migration

Understanding how to translate the 2024 Ministerial Documents into a revised Roadmap on Return and Reintegration and how to better understand the needs of Silk Routes Countries

Date

25 November 2025

Location

Istanbul, Türkiye

Summary (draft)

The Budapest Process convened a Return Migration Workshop in Istanbul, Türkiye on 25 November. The meeting was **chaired by Türkiye as host and Sweden as principal donor and supported by ICMPD**, as the Budapest Process Secretariat. It gathered **16 participants from Bangladesh, Hungary, Iraq, Pakistan, Sweden and Türkiye as well as the European Union (EU), and ICMPD**.

- 1. Meeting background and objectives:** Building on the 2024 Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action and the Action Plan 2025–2030, which identified return, readmission and sustainable reintegration as a key priority under Priority Goal 3, this first-of-its-kind Budapest Process workshop in Istanbul provided a dedicated space for open dialogue and practical reflection on return and reintegration in the Silk Routes region and beyond. Building on the conclusions of the Thematic Working Group on Return and Reintegration held on 15 May 2025, the workshop sought to consult participating states and partner organisations on how to translate the 2024 Ministerial Documents into a revised Roadmap on Return and Reintegration. Discussions aimed to deepen understanding of the needs, capacities and challenges in BP Silk Routes countries regarding the systems in place for return and reintegration and to support the development of more operational and action-oriented directions for future cooperation. Finally, the workshop aimed to ensure coherence between the Roadmap revision process and the draft knowledge product on reintegration, so that both reflect recent developments and

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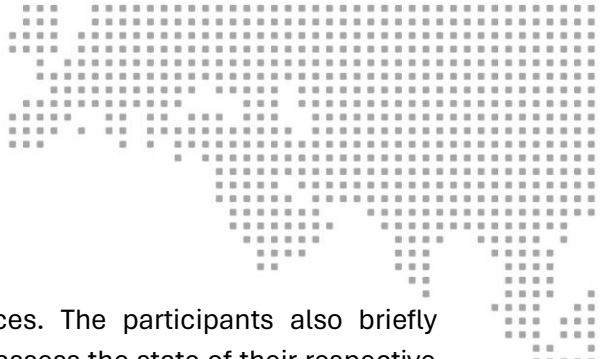
partner countries' priorities and can help shape the focus of the 2026 Thematic Working Group discussions and activities.

2. The **opening and introductory presentation on the Roadmap** framed the workshop as a new, interactive format within the Budapest Process, designed to enable open dialogue and practical exchange on return and reintegration. Opening remarks were delivered by Türkiye as Chair of the Dialogue and Co-Chair of the Thematic Working Group on Return and Reintegration, Sweden as donor, and ICMPD as the Budapest Process Secretariat. Bangladesh and Iraq as Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Return and Reintegration were also highlighted as crucial partners for the planned discussion. A presentation on the state of play of the Roadmap and some critical background information of its development and initial work of the BP on Return and Reintegration was shared ahead of the discussion sessions to establish a shared understanding of what the Roadmap aims at and currently covers.
3. **Session 1** aimed to take stock of the Budapest Process Roadmap on Return and Reintegration and to set the basis for its revision. Country representatives provided feedback on the Roadmap's relevance and on recent developments in return, readmission, and reintegration management, examining how the Roadmap has been used to date and its alignment with newer political commitments under the 2024 Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action and the Action Plan 2025–2030 (Priority Goal 3). Discussions focused on which priorities remain relevant, which are considered outdated, and what new priority areas have emerged in recent years. Finally, participants considered whether the current structure of the Roadmap remains fit for purpose.
4. **Bangladesh** shared that it adopted and published a government reintegration policy in 2025, built on a whole-of-society approach with strong NGO, civil society and local government engagement, alongside initiatives on entrepreneurship and recognition of prior learning (RPL). Bangladesh also flagged the need to reignite Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) that are no longer operating, while strengthening bilateral cooperation and readmission arrangements. **Iraq** indicated that a returnee reception office was recently opened at the Baghdad International Airport and highlighted practical measures taken including document issuance support, assistance packages such as loans, vouchers and aid, and the development of recognition of prior learning. Iraq emphasised the need for cooperation with governmental and non-governmental partners to provide documentation and psychosocial support and strengthen referral mechanisms. **Pakistan** outlined their extensive institutional set-up and programming through all partners working on reintegration, including airport reception desks, training and toolkits for returnees' livelihoods, an online returnee data repository, and ongoing work to finalise a revised reintegration policy under a whole-of-government approach. They emphasised the need to further develop the returnee data repository, analyse the data collected, and complement it with strong monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms.
5. Across interventions in **Session 1**, participants agreed the Roadmap remains largely useful, but should be tweaked to be more operational, time-bound and linked to clear activities, with



stronger attention to coordination, capacity-building needs, and expansion of services such as MRCs and reception desks. The engagement of the diaspora in reintegration was discussed. Participants noted examples such as investment, philanthropy, support to micro-businesses, and counselling. However, the discussion emphasised the need to better understand the different forms diaspora engagement may take and the conditions, frameworks, and infrastructure required to support it. Further research may be needed to define these requirements more clearly. Overall, the session generated concrete inputs on priorities and implementation gaps that can feed directly into a more practical, country-referenced and action-oriented Roadmap revision. It was agreed that the revision could include a broad Roadmap applying to all countries, and then country-specific sections with more specific actions.

- 6. Session 2** focused on an open discussion of country priorities for operationalising the Roadmap on Return and Reintegration and on the external support required in this regard. Delegations were invited to comment on how the Budapest Process and their members and partners (i.e., donors, ICMPD, Member States) could help achieving its priorities. The session also aimed to capture practical suggestions on how the revised Roadmap could better support implementation, including by making it more operational and useful for cooperation. **Türkiye** highlighted efforts to work creatively with NGOs and development actors, including showcasing AVRR systems with embassy officials, strengthening links between MFA and PMM, and expanding partnerships with national Red Crescent societies and CSOs in partner countries. **Iraq** underlined the need to strengthen MRC capacity, expand staffing and psychosocial services (including for returnees facing addiction), and improve service quality, while emphasising that employment opportunities and reintegration planning are essential to reduce vulnerabilities and re-migration. Iraq also stressed the importance of awareness-raising on irregular migration, including outreach through schools and universities and better use of trained counsellors and interviewers. **Pakistan** emphasised livelihoods and employment support, as well as financial inclusion, as key for sustainable reintegration. They advocated for a comprehensive case-management and profiling system to identify vulnerabilities and tailor assistance, alongside stronger data collection and monitoring and evaluation, community-level initiatives, incubation support for small businesses, and stronger links with TVET centres and private sector employers. Pakistan also highlighted their wish to institutionalise the airport reception desks, ensuring their presence in all main international airports. **Bangladesh** prioritised dignified return, comprehensive returnee databases (including profiles, skills and needs), increased technical and financial support to resume the work of MRCs, capacity development of officials, infrastructure development, strengthening diaspora engagement for return and reintegration and financial and technical assistance to develop an action plan and a strategy to help the government operationalise the new reintegration. Bangladesh also referenced ongoing regional cooperation, including a joint working group discussion linked to regularisation pathways for Bangladeshi workers in Iraq. All countries expressed an interest in increasing peer learning, which could take the form of study visits, workshops on specific



thematics and online meetings to present good practices. The participants also briefly discussed about the possibility to pilot a diagnosis tool to assess the state of their respective national reintegration systems, that could lead to the identification of gaps and programmatic interventions and to the exchange of good practices.

7. The presentation of **“Reintegration is complicated”** shared initial insights from research which will lead to a knowledge product to be shared in 2026. The initial findings were well received by participants who highlighted their relevance. The research argues that, despite growing attention, reintegration policies and programmes in countries of return often remain fragmented and frequently focus on specific types of return rather than the full spectrum of return experiences. It highlighted that sustainable reintegration requires multi-level coordination and cannot be achieved through short-term or stand-alone assistance. The presentation identified four areas where post-return challenges are grouped: service provision and state capacity, labour market reintegration, social & psychosocial dimensions as well as institutional interactions. Finally, it concludes that effective models combine pre-return preparation, coordinated referrals, skills recognition and community-based support, and recommends strengthening referral systems linked to social protection and employment structures, investing in community initiatives to address stigma, and aligning reintegration programmes with national development strategies.

8. Key messages to be reinforced in the revised Roadmap

- a. Strengthen partnerships within countries, including clearer coordination among government entities, IOs, and CSOs.
- b. Strengthen partnerships across BP countries, including by promoting study visits and peer learning.
- c. Reinforce the role of CSOs and diaspora in return and reintegration processes.
- d. Improve local reintegration services and referral pathways.
- e. Strengthen MRCs and airport information desks as key first-line support mechanisms.
- f. Increase digitalisation, including more robust databases and case management tools.
- g. Expand systematic monitoring of outcomes and strengthen evaluation and learning.
- h. Enhance public–private partnerships to support sustainable reintegration, especially employment and livelihoods.
- i. Pursue further research and gap analysis to inform programming and cooperation.
- j. Better integrate pre-departure orientation and counselling, including options for virtual support.



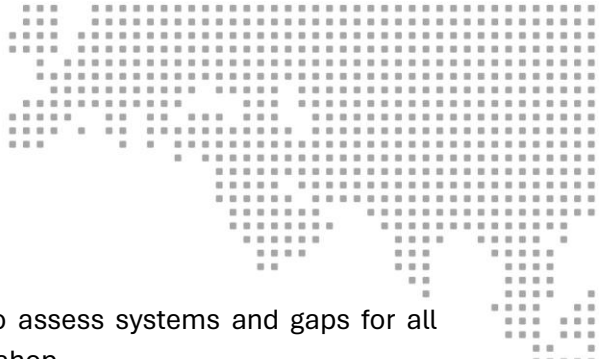
10. Recommendations and the way forward

Drawing on the discussions, the meeting highlighted practical directions to advance return and reintegration under the Budapest Process, in line with Priority Goal 3 of the 2024 Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action:

- **Make reintegration implementable and funded sustainably:** move beyond project-based support by integrating reintegration measures into **national budgets** and linking them with existing **social safety net programmes**, while ensuring financing tools are adequate in scale.
- **Improve national coordination and reduce duplication:** establish or strengthen a **functioning national coordination mechanism** (ideally with a designated lead institution) to align government, donors, NGOs/CSOs and service providers and avoid overlapping programmes.
- **Build stronger data and case management systems: develop comprehensive, digitalised databases** and profiling/case management to identify who needs what support (including psychosocial needs), track assistance, and improve monitoring and evaluation.
- **Address psychosocial and dignity dimensions:** recognise reintegration as part of the **full migration cycle** and expand support beyond economics, especially **psychosocial support**, stigma reduction with clearer guidance for returnees on available pathways and services.
- **Prioritise livelihoods, skills and employability:** strengthen employment plans, links to **TVET/private sector**, incubation for small businesses, and practical tools (including **certification/skills recognition**) to make reintegration sustainable and reduce re-migration.
- **Strengthen delivery structures (MRCs and reception desks):** reinforce **MRCs**, referral mechanisms, and **airport information/reception desks**, including awareness-raising and counselling before as well as after return all while considering **pre-departure/virtual orientation**.
- **Leverage diaspora and partnerships:** clarify how **diaspora** can contribute (investment, mentoring, philanthropy) through enabling frameworks and stronger partnerships with international actors and civil society.
- **Further support dialogue and capacity development:** support dialogue across and within countries to improve mutual understanding, cross-fertilisation and learning, and support capacity development beyond training, including through online and in-person meetings to learn from experience and good practices.

11. Next steps:

- a. Validate and finalise the **research product** and share in 2026 for validation before dissemination to all BP partners.

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- b. Explore governments' interest for a **diagnosis tool** to assess systems and gaps for all partners and to further the work discussed in this workshop.
 - c. Revise the **Roadmap** with a mix of **regional and country-specific actions**.
 - d. Continue focusing on return and reintegration in 2026 with potentially another workshop back to back with a TWG meeting and a dedicated study visit.
12. All partners agreed this meeting had been fruitful and that the Roadmap on Return and Reintegration would be revised and shared with all partners and used as a basis for cooperation under the umbrella of the Budapest Process and its Thematic Working Group on Return and Reintegration.