ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN FROM THE NETHERLANDS

An analysis of fluctuations in AVR participation (1992-2008)

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IOM International Organization for Migration

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1 – INTRODUCTION: EXPLAINING FLUCTUATIONS IN AVR PARTICIPATION

1.1 ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN IN THE NETHERLANDS

Following Dutch migration law, any person without a legal status that permits him or her to stay in the Netherlands is required to leave of his own accord. This is applicable to rejected asylum seekers, for tourists who overstay their visa, for labour or other regular migrants whose residence permits are rejected or revoked, and for irregular migrants who have never tried to regularize their status. As such, voluntary return is a key concept in Dutch migration law. This has resulted in the development of a comprehensive return policy, in which various measures are employed to facilitate voluntary return for persons without a legal status.[1] The provision of Assisted Voluntary Return (hereinafter: AVR) services occupies a central place within these measures. In 1992, the Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands (hereinafter: REAN) programme was launched. This programme, funded by the Dutch government and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (hereinafter: IOM), provides information, counseling and return services that enable aliens who do not have the means to finance their own departure from the Netherlands.[2] Generally, this departure takes place by returning to one's country of origin, but resettlement to a third country can also be facilitated in certain cases.[3] Throughout the last two decades, several (temporary or more permanent) additions have been made to the REAN scheme, which have comprised outreach projects aimed at specific groups and reintegration assistance activities in various countries of return.

Figure 1: REAN-assisted departures, 1992-2008

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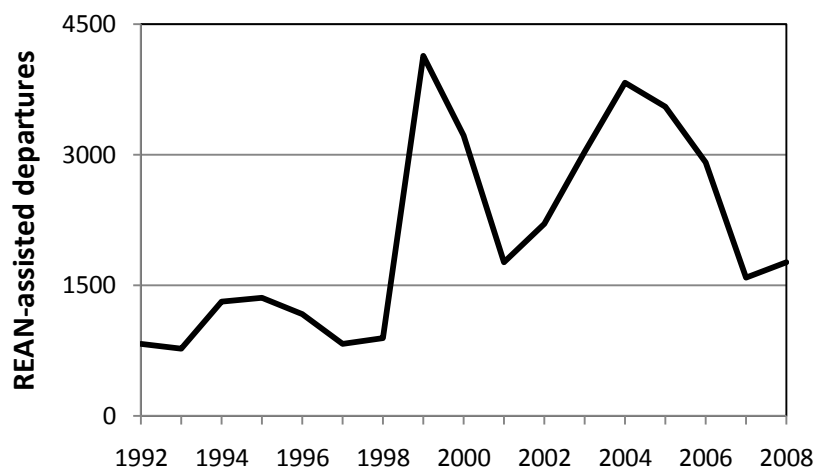
[1] For a historical overview of the development of Dutch return policy, and the evolution of the various instruments used by the Dutch government to facilitate voluntary departure, see the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010).

[2] The main target group of REAN is formed by persons with a legal obligation to leave the Netherlands, even though some categories of migrants possessing a legal status may be covered by the programme as well, as long as they are willing to relinquish this legal status upon returning. See www.iom-nederland.nl for more information about the REAN eligibility criteria.

[3] Provided that the individual involved can obtain admission and long-term residence in that third country which is decided upon by the country of destination.

Between 1992 and 2008, the voluntary departure of over 35.000 individuals has been facilitated by the REAN programme, an average of more than 2.000 persons per year. However, as figure 1 shows, these AVR numbers have not been divided equally over the years. There are strong fluctuations in the number of persons voluntarily leaving the Netherlands with REAN assistance. Analyzing and explaining these fluctuations will be the aim of this report.

1.2 AN ANALYSIS OF FLUCTUATIONS IN AVR STATISTICS

AVR statistics have occupied an important place in the assessment of the effectiveness of the Dutch policy of encouraging voluntary return in general, as this provides the primary 'hard' data on the willingness of migrants to leave the Netherlands of their own accord. Despite this fact, few in-depth analyses of these statistics have taken place. Too often, discussions about these statistics have been limited to short term perspectives, where increases or decreases of REAN-assisted departures have been assessed in comparison to the previous year. A long-term perspective on the way these numbers have changed, and which factors may have contributed to this, is lacking. This report aims to gain more insight into the long-term effects of voluntary return policy. While there are still significant limitations to both the available data and the way they can be used (see 1.3), in our opinion there is enough material to address some core questions related to the way the participation in the Dutch AVR programme has fluctuated over the years. The issues covered in this report are briefly outlined below.

In chapter 2, we will provide a more detailed description of the changing composition of AVR flows from the Netherlands, while focusing on a number of specific factors. These factors are the nationality of the participants and the legal situation of the participants, whereby the latter is divided into those who have applied for asylum and those who have not. Both these factors are of interest because the eligibility for specific AVR incentives (beyond the basic facilities provided by the REAN programme) has often been defined either by the nationality of potential returnees (in the case of country-specific programmes) or by their legal status.[4] We will also investigate the extent to which these two factors overlap for those benefitting from AVR services. Another factor is the composition of AVR participants in terms of their destination, that is, whether they return to their countries of origin, or resettle in a third country.

Next, in chapter 3, we will review the quantitative relationship between influx into the Netherlands and voluntary return. Primarily, we will test the thesis that a larger 'stock' of migrants will naturally lead to more return. We will examine this thesis for asylum seekers only, and discuss whether a statistical relationship exists between the number of persons applying for asylum in the Netherlands, and the number of persons returning voluntarily.[5]

Another important issue is reflected in chapter 4, namely that of perceived security in the country of origin. At least for asylum seekers, the main stated reason for travelling to the Netherlands, and for wanting to stay, is the fact that return to the country of origin would be too dangerous, either for personal reasons or because of a general situation of conflict. While it is impossible to incorporate considerations of individual insecurity in this study, it may be

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[4] While basic AVR services are available to both asylum seekers and irregular migrants, special programmes to incentivize return have historically provided preferential treatment to asylum seekers. See the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010).
[5] Hard data for other categories of migrants are more unreliable.

possible to deal with general situations of insecurity in an indirect manner, due to lack of objective indicators. The number of asylum applications from a certain country may tell us something about the (perceived) security situation in that country. Furthermore, throughout the last two decades, the Dutch government has regularly provided temporary protection to, or has tolerated the stay of, particular groups of asylum seekers, as it deemed the general situation in their countries of origin too insecure to warrant return. As such, in chapter 4, we will also take a closer look at whether these policies have impacted on the overall willingness to return voluntarily.

Chapter 5 considers the effects that economic developments may have on voluntary return, as security considerations are not the only aspect determining the decision to return or to stay. In many cases, economic prospects (either by themselves or in combination with security considerations) can also be strong determinants of staying or leaving. We focus on the employment situation in the Netherlands, and − where sufficient data exists − on the employment situation in countries of origin.

Chapter 6 explores the effects of specific programmes aimed at facilitating voluntary return for specific nationalities. Throughout the years, special efforts, usually complementary to REAN, have been made to facilitate the voluntary return. While this report is not an evaluation of the effectiveness of these different programmes, we will examine whether evidence can be found that they contributed to increased willingness and possibilities to return.

The final issue discussed in this report concerns a recent measure, the regularization of a large group of (rejected) asylum seekers who had resided in the Netherlands for a certain period. This regularization came into existence in 2007. Not only was this intended to clear backlogs of old cases in the admissions side of migration policy, but it was also intended to be a call to arms for a more effective return policy. However, particularly in relation to return, it has led to questions. In 2007 and 2008 there was a marked decrease in the number of people participating in the Dutch AVR programme. By some, this decrease was linked to the regularization, because of which a significant part of the population of potential returnees no longer was in a position that required them to return. Additionally, it was argued that the regularization exercise gave hope to others − not covered in the current regularization exercise − that staying would be preferable because sooner or later a regularization would take place. This issue will be examined in more detail in chapter 7.

Even though the issues above only provide a limited picture of the possible factors impacting on AVR and the decisions of individuals to return, we aim to do justice to the complex interplay between legal, social, cultural, economic, political and psychological issues that in the end lead to a return decision. This report intends to cover some of the basic debates on return, and shed light on factors influencing the success of AVR programming.

1.3 SCOPE OF AVAILABLE DATA

1.3.1. Data from the Netherlands
The basis for the examinations in this report is the data that has been generated by IOM over the course of the implementation of the REAN programme, as well as governmental data on asylum applications, unemployment and other relevant indicators. As far as AVR participation is concerned, general statistics cover the period of 1992 to 2008. However, for different reasons, such as changes in the registration system of IOM and only partial

availability of older data, not all sources have been found to be consistent. For the early years of the 1990s, statistics had to be reconstructed using different sources, which sometimes contradicted each other. Due to this, these years comprise approximations rather than exact figures of AVR participation. Only figures that could at least be split according to the nationality of the AVR participants were used. It follows from the foregoing that in some years the officially reported totals (in the media or annual reports of IOM) will not be the same as those in our report. For 1992, only the total number of participants was available, without specification of nationality. As most of our questions require a split according to nationality, this year is generally excluded from our analysis.

We have also attempted to split figures, where possible, according to return, resettlement and total departures. As noted above, the REAN programme facilitates departure from the Netherlands in the broadest sense. This covers both return to the migrant's country of origin, but also – under specific circumstances – travel to a third country where admission is guaranteed. As such, three broad categories are distinguished in this report: 1) return to the country of origin, 2) resettlement to a third country, and 3) departure, covering both return and resettlement. The available data only allows us to make this distinction from 1996 onwards, as between 1993 and 1995 only the aggregate indicator of 'departure' is available. Therefore, in those cases where we are specifically concerned with return to migrants' countries of origin, only data from 1996 and onwards will be used.

Data on other indicators also cover different levels of details and different periods. For example, asylum statistics were obtained for the period 1985-2008, but these cover – up to July 2007 – all applications in the Netherlands, including second or third applications by persons previously rejected (and therefore already in the Netherlands). As such, apart for 2008 and part of 2007, they are not completely accurate indicators of the de facto influx of asylum seekers into the Netherlands. Where necessary, gaps or limitations in such data are discussed in the relevant chapters.

1.3.2. Data from other European countries
While the focus of this report is the situation in the Netherlands, in many cases it will be useful to put these Dutch data in a broader perspective. For this reason, information about AVR participation in other European countries is used, where possible, to help understand and explain trends and issues in the Netherlands.[6] With the help of various IOM missions across Europe, information was received regarding AVR participation in particular countries.

Unfortunately, the method of registration of AVR cases differs from country to country. For example, in some countries, only return to the country of origin can be facilitated by the national AVR programme. In other cases, resettlement may also be facilitated, but not registered as a separate category. Furthermore, while in the Netherlands AVR participation is recorded based on the nationality of the assisted individual, in some other cases, the basis for statistics may be the destination country of the individual. Additionally, in many cases AVR programmes are relatively 'young', and have thus so far not yielded much data.[7] An additional difference is that the profile of persons assisted differs greatly across countries.

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[6] The collected data is used to enable comparisons between trends in the Netherlands and in other countries, and to enable a comprehensive analysis of the Dutch situation.
[7] Before the start of the REAN programme, only Germany (since 1979) and Belgium (since 1984) had established AVR programmes. In many European countries, such programmes did not start until the end of the 1990s or later. However, even when AVR programmes are large and well-established, data may not always be available for the entire period.

With these limitations in mind, comparisons were made with the Netherlands' surrounding countries Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. Where comparison with other countries was possible and useful, this is noted in the relevant chapters.

1.4 AVR STATISTICS IN RELATION TO VOLUNTARY RETURN POLICY

AVR participation and overall voluntary return are not the same. The REAN programme is not the only means to meet an obligation to voluntarily leave the Netherlands. There is nothing preventing rejected asylum seekers or irregular migrants to leave the Netherlands without any involvement of IOM or other agencies. Only part of such 'spontaneous' or 'non-assisted' departures is registered.[8] Therefore, the level of AVR participation is an imperfect indicator of voluntary departure. In this context it should also be noted that while Dutch return policy is mainly aimed at those with a legal obligation to leave the Netherlands, or those who are expected to be faced with such an obligation in the near future, the REAN programme's eligibility criteria are somewhat broader. Thus, statistics presented here may also include persons who are legally entitled to remain in the Netherlands, but opt to return or resettle.

In this report, we focus exclusively on the number of persons who have been assisted to leave the Netherlands. It is tempting to use these numbers as the only indicator for the success of voluntary return policy, in the sense that many voluntary departures are 'good' and decreases in departures are 'bad'. Such an approach to voluntary return ignores the qualitative indicators of the success of voluntary return policy, and AVR as a specific instrument within this policy. These could be defined, for example, in terms of the reduction of vulnerability of returnees, the possibility of psychosocial and economic reintegration after return, and the socio-political impact of return policies. As such, assessing voluntary return purely in terms of the number of persons departing the Netherlands can not be the sole measure of the success of voluntary return policy and the instrument of AVR.

This report aims to be a reference document with relevant data on AVR results, as well as a starting point for more detailed assessments of the effects of voluntary return policy and the instrument of AVR. As many lessons may be learned from past trends, this analysis may help policy makers and practitioners assess their assumptions on fluctuations in AVR participation. Moreover, this report aims to contribute to a broad and factual basis for discussions on AVR.

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[8] For example, a large category in the departure statistics published by the Dutch government are formed by those who have left 'with unknown destination'. These are often rejected asylum seekers who have been evicted from government-sponsored reception facilities and have subsequently disappeared 'off the radar screen'. Administratively, they are considered to have left the Netherlands, but there is significant debate about this, as their actual whereabouts are unclear. An unknown part of this group is likely to remain in the Netherlands illegally, while others may indeed have left the Netherlands, although not necessarily to their countries of origin; they may also have travelled onwards to other EU countries.

2 – THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AVR PARTICIPANTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A first step in our discussion of the fluctuations in AVR participation in the Netherlands is to take a closer look at the profiles of the individuals that make up the overall statistics. This will enable us to have a clearer picture of the composition of the AVR flows, and will help to discuss these flows in more detail.

When breaking down the AVR statistics, the most obvious distinguishing feature is the nationality of the participant. Therefore, we will first look at which nationalities have most made use of the REAN programme, and which changes have occurred over the course of the last two decades. In addition to this, we will look at the number of different nationalities that participated in the programme in each year (diversity of coverage). Thirdly, we will focus on the destinations of AVR participants, whether they returned to their countries of origin or resettled in third countries. Finally, we will examine the 'legal status' of the participants, at least to the extent that we can distinguish between those who had sought asylum in the Netherlands and those who had not.

2.2 NATIONALITIES

2.2.1. Patterns of nationalities and their relative importance to the Dutch AVR programme

When statistics on REAN participation are published, either by IOM or by the Dutch government, these are usually split according to the nationality of those whose departure has been assisted. In this section, we will look at the changes in the nationalities of AVR participants, and the extent to which these different nationalities have contributed to the quantitative outcomes of the REAN programme. Table 1 shows the ten largest contributors to the overall REAN-assisted departures in the period 1993-2008.[9]

Table 1: Largest REAN caseloads per nationality (1993-2008)

Rank	Nationality	REAN-assisted	% of total
1	Yugoslavia/Serbia (and Mont.)	5104	14.9
2	Bosnia-Herzegovina	3218	9.4
3	Iran	2410	7.0
4	Angola	1766	5.1
5	Ukraine	1427	4.2
6	Slovakia	1420	4.1
7	Iraq	1321	3.8
8	Afghanistan	1050	3.1
9	Brazil	1048	3.1
10	Suriname	1012	2.9
	Other	14560	42.4
	Total	**34336**	**100.0**

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[9] As discussed in the previous chapter, the REAN programme became operational in 1992, but data split according to nationality is only available from 1993 onwards.

Table 1 shows that, for this entire period, nationals of Yugoslavia (to which the citizens of the successor states Serbia and Montenegro and Serbia were added[10]), are the largest group of REAN participants, followed by Bosnians and Iranians. This does not mean that the departures for each nationality are spread evenly across the sixteen years incorporated in this table. For example, for the group from Yugoslavia/Serbia and Montenegro/Serbia, the number of REAN-assisted departures would average at 319 cases per year. However, when we make a list of the largest AVR caseloads per nationality per year (see table 2 below), it becomes apparent that more than half of all REAN-assisted departures for this group took place in 1999 alone, with another significant group in 2000. The same can be said for the second-largest overall group, the Bosnians, whose departures also mainly took place in 1999 and 2000.

Table 2: Largest REAN caseloads in single year

Rank	Nationality	Year	REAN-assisted	Rank	Nationality	Year	REAN-assisted
1	Yugoslavia	1999	2744	11	Serbia & Mont.	2002	323
2	Bosnia-Herz.	2000	1097	12	Slovakia	2001	322
3	Yugoslavia	2000	738	13	Iran	2001	306
4	Bosnia-Herz.	1999	575	14	Ukraine	2004	305
5	Angola	2006	434	15	Afghanistan	2005	287
6	Slovakia	2000	426	16	Serbia & Mont.	2005	274
7	Angola	2005	407	17	Iraq	2006	273
8	Angola	2004	401	18	Ukraine	2005	270
9	Serbia & Mont.	2003	357	19	Bosnia-Herz.	2001	264
10	Serbia & Mont.	2004	330	20	Afghanistan	2004	254

On the whole, a simple ranking of the nationalities which have contributed most to the total number of voluntary departures during the entire period in which the REAN programme was implemented, does not inform us about the changes that occur in the annual AVR flows. For this, we need to look at the rankings per year. In annex 1, the ten largest national groups that have made use of REAN assistance are presented for each year from 1993 to 2008. The tables provide both assisted voluntary departures in absolute terms and each national group's relative contribution to the total AVR participation. From this, it becomes apparent that REAN participation, in terms of nationality, is far from static. Countries that feature prominently in the first years of the programme, such as Egypt and Suriname, fail to show up in the top ten rankings of 2000 onwards. In 2007-2008, the two countries that contributed most to the overall number of REAN-assisted departures, Serbia and Bosnia, have also dropped out of the list of the ten largest AVR countries.[11] Conversely, Brazil does not feature among the largest countries of origin of REAN-assisted persons until 2004, but it then steadily rises to become the main AVR country in 2007 and 2008.

Even with these annual figures as presented in annex 1, only a partial picture emerges. Particularly when discussing why fluctuations occur in annual AVR numbers, it is tempting to look at the contribution of a few 'large' AVR countries. However, such a focus would not do justice to the complexity of the composition in AVR numbers. For example, for the numerically most productive year, 1999, in which 4.136 individuals made use of the REAN

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[10] The literature suggests that these are primarily persons from Kosovo, of which several thousands were temporarily evacuated to the Netherlands and subsequently returned. As Kosovo was not used as a separate nationality in IOM Netherlands' client registration system, the departure of this group is included in the statistics for Yugoslavian and/or Serbian nationals.

[11] In 2007, there were only 27 REAN participants from Serbia/Serbia & Montenegro and 22 from Bosnia. Although Serbia & Montenegro had ceased to exist as a country, this nationality still shows up in 2007 statistics. In 2008, there were 37 returnees from Serbia and 9 from Bosnia.

programme, over two thirds of all participants came from Yugoslavia (including Kosovo), contributing very significantly to the overall tally. Compare this to 2004, the year that shows the second-largest number of REAN-assisted departures. In this year, the largest group (Angolans) 'merely' constituted 10% of the entire caseload. In this second case, participation was spread much more evenly across the nationalities; all the top ten nationalities contributed at least 100 individual cases to the overall figure, with another 1.553 cases (40% of the total) divided over 78 other nationalities. In 2007 and 2008 – years in which a comparative decrease in REAN participation occurred – we neither find individual nationalities with very large caseloads, nor is this compensated by a consistency in AVR figures across the 'smaller' nationalities.

In all, the combination of nationalities and numbers of AVR participants provides us with an image constantly changing and shifting, making it very difficult to establish patterns in the way that the annual overall tally of REAN participants is affected. Nevertheless, we can conclude that in cases of large annual AVR caseloads, one of two situations occurred: a 'peak' in a specific nationality or a good 'spread' among a large number of countries. In absence of either of these situations, end-of-year AVR figures are likely to be low. In theory, if a situation of 'peak' should coincide with a situation of 'spread', even higher annual figures than thusfar seen may be possible. However, there may be practical reasons that prevent this from happening. For example, the capacity of IOM to facilitate voluntary departure is bound to limitations in terms of staff, time and financial resources. In situations where a large number of returns, a 'peak', of a specific nationality occurs, this might result in a diminished capacity to cater to other nationalities. At the same time, if IOM is confronted with a moderately high number of applications from a broad range of nationalities, this may make it impossible to simultaneously facilitate the departure of a very large caseload of a single nationality. In addition to this, other issues may also set limits to the number of individuals whose voluntary departures are assisted. These include, but are not limited to, the absorptive capacity of countries of return, the possibility of the representations of these countries of return to issue travel documents, and the availability of flights (and seats on those flights) to countries of return.[12]

2.2.2. Patterns of nationalities of voluntary returnees in surrounding countries

The complexity in patterns of voluntary departures by nationality is not exclusive to the case of the Netherlands, but is common to the AVR patterns of most European countries. This makes comparing the Netherlands to other countries difficult. This difficulty is aggravated by the fact that these patterns are not only constantly shifting, but that the nationalities that make up these patterns are very different in each European country. This is the case even if we limit our focus to those European countries that are geographically closest to the Netherlands. In annex 2a-c, the top ten nationalities of AVR participants are presented for Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, covering the period 2005-2008. When we compare these to each other and to the Dutch figures presented in annex 1, it becomes readily apparent that, despite their proximity, the compositions of the AVR caseloads of these countries differ greatly. While, for example, Brazil is the top AVR destination for Belgium during this period, and its relevance for the Netherlands and the UK is increasing, for Germany Brazilians do not play any significant role in its AVR programme.[13] By contrast, Serbia/Kosovo remained the major

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[12] Although in the case of the Balkan countries, voluntary returns have taken place over land in some occasions, in general, IOM-assisted departures take place by air. As such, the capacity of airlines to carry large numbers of returnees to a specific country may be a practical bottleneck in situations of 'peak'.

[13] A possible explanation for this is that access to the German AVR programme is very limited for irregular migrants, while the Dutch, Belgian and British programmes do cater for this legal category. As shall become

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AVR country for Germany up to 2007, while the importance of this group had already reduced significantly for the other three host countries. However, it is not just that the profile of German AVR differs from the other three, also between the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, there are distinct differences, with each showing idiosyncratic patterns. Perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that each of them has had to deal with large groups of AVR participants unique to that specific country. Examples of these are the Angolans in the Netherlands, Albanians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans in the UK, and the Slovaks in Belgium.[14]

For the overall picture of AVR per country, an overall comparison of the composition of AVR caseloads per European country is difficult. However, it is possible to compare particular nationalities when they occur in the caseloads of different European countries, which will become apparent in the following chapters.

2.3 DIVERSITY

In addition to the contribution of specific nationalities to overall REAN figures, it is worthwhile to consider the *number* of nationalities that are covered. The diversity of nationalities is a little-used, but useful, indicator for the effectiveness of AVR programmes. As annex 1 shows, even when the ten largest national groups of AVR participants are added up, this only accounts for about half to two-thirds of the entire Dutch AVR caseload for each year (with the exception of 1999-2000). The rest is made up of nationals of 'smaller countries'.[15] There may be a benefit to having a large number of nationalities making use of AVR facilities from a political and public acceptance point of view, as well as from that of the individuals looking for assistance in their voluntary departure.[16]

In figure 2 below, the diversity – defined as the number of nationalities catered to by an AVR programme in a given year – is shown for the Netherlands and its three neighboring countries.

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clear in chapter 2.5, in the Netherlands Brazilian returnees are very often in an irregular situation. The same can be said for Belgium, see P. Góis et al, *Assessment of Brazilian Migration Patterns and Assisted Voluntary Return Programme from Selected European Member States to Brazil*, Brussels, IOM 2009, p. 56. Assuming that the same is applicable to Brazilians in Germany, they would not be eligible for REAG assistance.

[14] This does not mean that these nationalities are not covered by the AVR programmes of the other host countries, but rather that they do not appear in their AVR caseloads in such numbers. In some cases, such as with Slovak AVR participants, there may also be a significant time gap in when they become major caseloads in the different EU countries. The Netherlands also coped with a substantial caseload of Slovak returnees, but this occured mainly in the late nineties and early part of the new millennium. By contrast, Belgium's Slovak AVR caseload has only developed in the last few years.

[15] Here, we will use this term for all those that are not included in the top 10 for each year.

[16] While some have criticized AVR programmes as tools that benefit host governments rather than individual asylum seekers and migrants, they are significant in overcoming practical obstacles for individuals with a genuine desire to return or resettle. Therefore, the inability to facilitate the return to a specific country may not necessarily be of great consequences for the overall AVR programme (if it is a country for which AVR applications are relatively rare), but it may have severe consequences for the individual involved.

Figure 2: Diversity (number of nationalities covered by AVR programme) for the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom
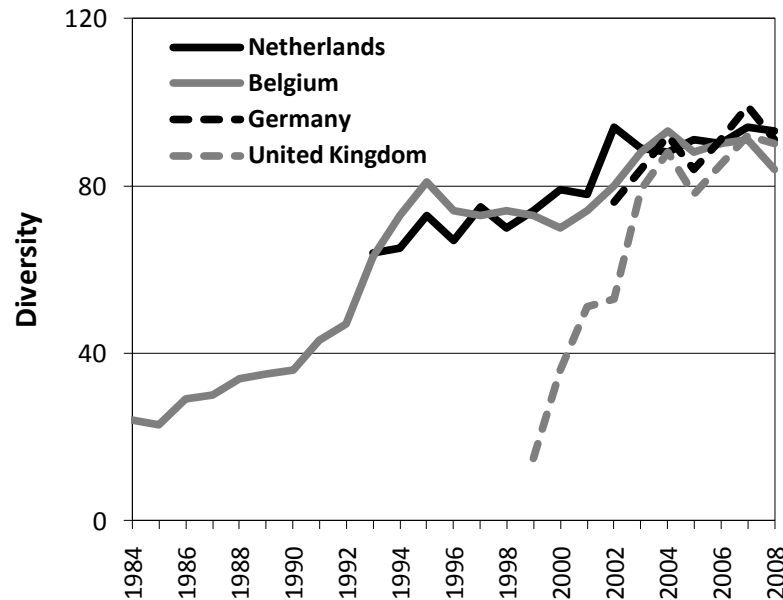
It is remarkable that all four countries experience very similar levels of diversity (between 80 and 95 nationalities or countries of destination per year). For REAN, this level has been fairly stable over the last few years, regardless of the absolute number of participants. Given the fact that the Dutch REAN programme was inspired to a considerable extent on the Belgian Return and Emigration of Asylum seekers ex Belgium programme (hereinafter: REAB), it is noteworthy that REAN comes into being at a very similar level of diversity as REAB, which had a considerable development to get there. We also note that the UK programme, despite having started several years after REAN and a decade and a half after REAB, has caught up in terms of diversity very rapidly.[17] A possible explanation for the rising diversity in AVR programmes may be sought in the increasing diversity in arrivals (both as asylum seekers and as regular or irregular migrants).

Rising diversity does not necessarily translate into higher levels of AVR participation. For Belgium and the UK there is a strong statistical link between diversity and AVR numbers.[18] For these two countries, the fact that more and more different national groups use AVR services is consistent with a rising number of total AVR participants, although we cannot ascertain that the rising diversity is actually the cause of this. By contrast, while in the German Reintegration and Emigration Program for Asylum-Seekers in Germany programme (hereinafter: REAG) the diversity of participants has continued to rise in the last few years, the absolute number of AVR participants has steadily declined. For the Netherlands, a statistical link between diversity and AVR numbers can be established.[19] For the Dutch situation, it can be said that more *diversity* in participation also leads to *higher levels* of participation.

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[17] The German REAG programme is also a predecessor to REAN, and is the oldest in Europe. Unfortunately, due to administrative limitations, detailed data (except for Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina) is only available for a relatively short period (2002-2008).

[18] For Belgium (covering 1984-2008) there is a very strong correlation between diversity and the total number of AVR participants. See the box in chapter 3 for an explanation of correlations. The correlation coefficient (r) is .892 with an explained variance (R^2) of .796, with a significance level of < .01. This is also true for the UK (covering 1999-2008): $r = .845$, $R^2 = .714$, $p < .01$.

[19] For 1993-2008: $r = .496$, $R^2 = .246$, $p < .01$. See chapter 3 for a description of these measures.

2.4 RETURN VERSUS RESETTLEMENT

The vast majority of departures from the Netherlands have been returns. Of the entire period for which the two types of departure can be distinguished for the Netherlands (1996-2008), only 3.294 cases (10,7% of the total) have consisted of resettlement to third countries. This number is significantly boosted by relatively few instances. For example, in 2000 alone, 1.220 individuals were assisted in their resettlement (37,9% of total caseload for that year), with 990 of those being Bosnians. From table 3 and figure 3 it becomes clear that resettlement as a means of voluntary departure has declined in importance during the current decade. In 2008, only 20 REAN-assisted cases (1,1% of the total) left the Netherlands for a country that was not their country of origin, the lowest number for the entire period for which data is available.

Table 3: Resettlement as percentage of annual AVR caseload (1996-2008)

Year	Total AVR	Of whom resettled	% resettled
1996	1168	251	21.5
1997	826	194	23.5
1998	889	175	19.7
1999	4136	516	12.5
2000	3220	1220	37.9
2001	1769	363	20.5
2002	2210	142	11.6
2003	3028	116	3.8
2004	3828	114	3.0
2005	3552	89	2.5
2006	2915	66	2.3
2007	1587	28	1.6
2008	1767	20	1.1
Total	*30895*	*3294*	*10.7*

Figure 3: Resettlement as percentage of annual AVR caseload (1996-2008)
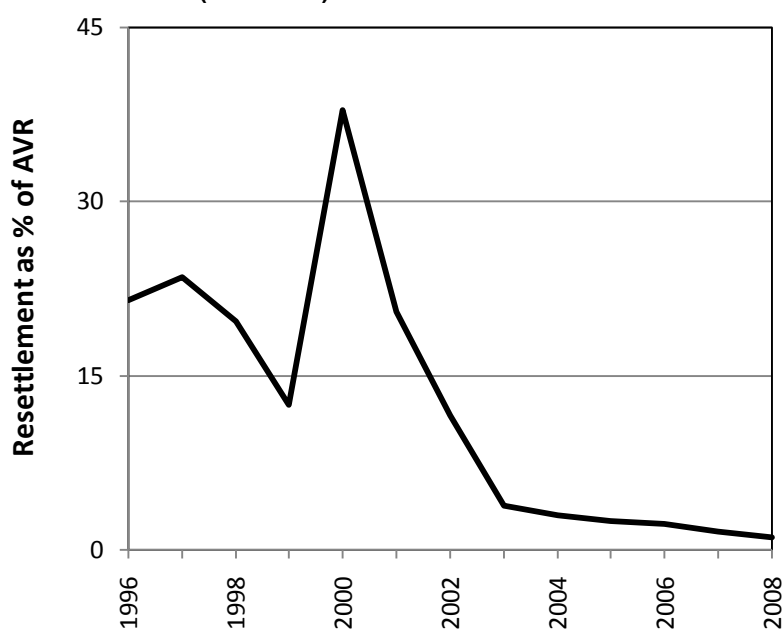
For some specific nationalities, resettlement has been a very important means of voluntarily leaving the Netherlands. As table 4 shows, of the 29 Rwandans that used REAN assistance since 1996, two thirds had a third country as their destination. The same was the case for half of all the Bosnian and Somali REAN participants, with the former group resettling in unprecedented high absolute numbers.

Table 4: Nationalities with highest proportion of resettlement[20]

Rank	Nationality	AVR 1996-2008	Of whom resettled	% resettled
1	Rwanda	29	19	65.5
2	Bosnia-Herzegovina	3108	1589	51.1
3	Somalia	203	103	50.7
4	Eritrea	70	34	48.6
5	Palestinian	34	16	47.1
6	Liberia	38	13	34.2
7	Iran	2081	627	30.1
8	Ethiopia	194	53	27.3
9	Kazakhstan	120	25	20.8
10	Iraq	1257	240	19.1

The reason why resettlement has been such an important means of voluntarily departing for these particular nationalities cannot be surmised from the available data. In general, it can be noted that the possibilities for resettlement may have been dependent on a variety of factors, including the existence of family ties in the resettlement country, or the availability of special resettlement programmes.[21] The individual decision to opt for resettlement may be related to the (perception of) the security situation in the country of origin, technical possibilities to obtain travel documents and access to the country of origin, the possibilities to survive in the Netherlands without legal residence, as well as a whole range of other considerations. What is clear is that for some nationalities and at specific times, the possibility to resettle rather than return using the REAN programme, was both attractive and effective (for the individual involved and the Dutch government). That this aspect of the REAN programme seems to have been declining in the last few years may give cause for further research into the underlying reasons for this, as well as into the option to enhance practical possibilities for resettlement as a way to leave the Netherlands voluntarily. Such research is, however, outside of the scope of this report.

2.5 'ASYLUM' AND 'NON-ASYLUM' COUNTRIES

Looking beyond the nationality of participants as a feature of the composition of the Dutch AVR programme, we may also focus on the legal status of participants in their host country.

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[20] Only nationalities for which at least 25 REAN-assisted departures have taken place are included. For some other nationalities, percentages of resettled persons as total of the AVR caseload may be higher, but these are heavily influenced by the low number of individual cases. For some countries, all voluntary departures have been resettlements: Myanmar (3 individuals), New Zealand (1 individual) and Saudi Arabia (4 individuals). In addition, 7 out of 9 voluntary departures of nationals of Sao Tome and Principe were resettlements (77,8%). It is unclear whether such percentages can be attributed to the fact that resettlement is the most likely or only option for these nationals or that they are the result of chance.

[21] It is likely that the high numbers of Bosnian resettlements can be attributed to an expansion of the US Refugee Programme in 1998, which allowed for the resettlement of particular groups, including Bosnians, in the United States when they did not have legally resident family members there. See also section 3.2.5 of the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010).

In this respect, the distinction between those who have claimed asylum at some point during their stay in the Netherlands and those who have not, is particularly relevant. While REAN assistance is open to both (rejected) asylum seekers and irregular migrants, traditionally, voluntary return policy has focused primarily on asylum seekers.[22] Moreover, special projects to facilitate voluntary return for particular groups, by providing extra incentives and reintegration assistance, have primarily focused on (rejected) asylum seekers of specific nationalities. While irregular migrants have always been a considerable group in the REAN caseload, a proactive focus on this group seems to have developed only recently. In this section, we will take a closer look at the legal status of AVR participants in the Netherlands.

Until 2007, IOM in the Netherlands registered the legal status of REAN-assisted persons according to three categories:

1. *Legal* (LE) comprising persons with a (temporary) residence permit, either based on asylum or regular (labour, family reunification or other) grounds, as well as those still awaiting a final decision on their application for such a permit.
2. *Irregular* (IL) constisting of persons who have never had a legal status as mentioned above, and who have never attempted to gain such as status.
3. *Having become irregular* (IG) covering persons who were legally in the country (as defined under 'legal' above) for a period of time, but who had lost this status at the time of their application for REAN-assistance. This category covers, for example, rejected asylum seekers who have not left the Netherlands in the period that Dutch legislation provides for this.

This categorization does not make the explicit distinction between returnees with an asylum background and those without. At most, it is possible to identify the *minimum number* of persons that definitely have not applied for asylum in the Netherlands, that is those in the 'irregular' group. In table 5 below, this number – as a percentage of all REAN-assisted persons – is provided for several nationalities of REAN participants, covering the years 2002-2006.[23] To ensure meaningful data, only instances in which at least thirty persons of a certain nationality have used REAN assistance in a particular year are included.[24]

The table shows, for example, that at least 12% of all Armenians who made use of the REAN programme did not have a legal status at any point during their stay in the Netherlands. It is likely that the remainder were (rejected) asylum applicants, although this remains somewhat speculative as the 'legal' and 'having become irregular' groups may have also covered persons with a non-asylum legal status.

In the course of 2007, the categorization of legal status was expanded to clearly distinguish between asylum (A) and non-asylum returnees (NA). Under these two main headings, the categories LE, IL and IG were maintained, resulting in five registered situations (A-LE, A-IG,

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[22] The issue of the target groups of voluntary return policy and the REAN programme is discussed at length in the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010). Particularly in the early days of the REAN programme, access to IOM's services for irregular migrants was limited.

[23] Data collated from IOM Netherlands' Client Registration System (CRS).

[24] Where insufficient cases (<30) are available, this is marked with a dash (-). Nationalities that only meet this threshold once or twice during the years covered are excluded.

NA-LE, NA-IL and NA-IG).[25] In the last three columns of table 5, the percentage of non-asylum returnees is presented for 2008, split according to the 'irregular', 'having become irregular' and 'legal' categories[26]. These columns show, for example, that 97,9% of Brazilians receiving REAN assistance in 2008 had never had a legal status. The remaining 2% had become irregular after having some sort of (non-asylum) status, or still had such a status at the time of departure. Consequently, there were no REAN-assisted Brazilians with an asylum background. By contrast, in the same year, only about 5% of assisted Angolans fell into the 'non-asylum' category.

Table 5: Percentage of known irregular migrants in AVR caseload (2002-2006 and 2008)

Nationality	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2008		
						% NA-IL	% NA-IG	% NA-LE
	% IL	% IL	% IL	% IL	% IL			
Afghanistan	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.4	1.2	-	-	-
Angola	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.7	2.1	4.7	1.1*	0.0*
Armenia	12.0	17.0	19.1	12.3	-	-	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	14.3	39.7	21.6	40.5	-	-	-
Bosnia-Herzegovina	9.4	7.0	6.3	9.6	6.8	-	-	-
Brazil	-	88.6	96.5	97.3	95.5	97.9	1.2	0.8
Bulgaria	-	65.6	79.7	-	66.6	-	-	-
China	-	-	29.3	30.6	42.9	72.5	0.0	0.0
Georgia	-	40.0	17.8	23.1	23.3	-	-	-
Ghana	-	-	92.5	92.3	82.3	83.9	4.7	0.0*
India	95.1	91.9	90.1	82.4	95.3	-	-	-
Indonesia	-	-	75.6	83.3	90.0	88.5	7.0	2.7
Iran	4.7	2.6	5.2	5.5	7.2	-	-	-
Iraq	1.8	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.1	0.5*	0.0*
Mongolia	2.8	14.4	14.2	9.6	6.3	20.0	3.3	0.0
Nigeria	-	-	45.3	60.5	59.4	71.4	4.8	7.9
Ukraine	77.9	73.9	87.5	87.1	86.2	94.5	0.0	0.0
Russian Fed.	39.7	41.4	38.7	31.4	28.2	51.6	9.7	3.2
Serbia & M./Serbia	2.5	4.2	4.2	7.6	4.1	59.5	8.1	0.0
Sri Lanka	2.8	1.6	2.7	4.8	-	-	-	-
Sudan	3.1	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	-	-	-
Suriname	-	35.6	29.5	65.5	46.7	59.0*	28.2	2.6
Turkey	29.1	16.4	6.9	10.8	20.5	50.8	25.4	0.0*
All nationalities	*20.9*	*23.9*	*29.1*	*29.3*	*31.2*	*57.1**	*5.7**	*3.0**

From this data, a typology of AVR countries according to legal status emerges. Firstly, there are 'asylum' nationalities, for which the overwhelming majority of individuals had applied for an asylum status prior to voluntarily leaving the Netherlands using the REAN programme. This group includes Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Sudan. On the other end of the spectrum are 'non-asylum' nationalities, for which most or all REAN-assisted persons were in an irregular situation in the Netherlands and had never applied for asylum or a residence permit. Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Ukraine are included in this category. The rest of the nationalities are somewhere between these extremes.

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[25] As mentioned, going through the asylum process is considered here to be a situation of 'legal' stay, regardless of whether asylum is granted or not. In this definition, it is not possible for anyone having made an asylum application to fall into the IL category. As such, the category A-IL does not exist.
[26] Figures for 2007 are not included because the categorization was changed in the course of 2007 and the resulting data thus represent both data which can be clearly split according to the asylum versus non-asylum dichotomy and data for which this is not yet possible. During the whole of 2008 the new categorization was used, although in some cases the old way of registering legal status was erroneously used. Instances where this happened are marked with an asterisk (*) in the table. Marked figures for 2008 therefore do not present exact percentages, but minimum percentages of non-asylum cases.

The table shows that such a characterization ('asylum', 'non-asylum' or 'mixed') is not necessarily static. For example, for China the balance is slowly but surely shifting towards irregularity. Comparing 2002-2006 to 2008, this shift seems to have occurred very dramatically for Serbia as well. Overall, the percentage of irregular persons as part of the REAN caseload shows an upward trend in the period presented here (from 21% in 2002 to 31% in 2006). Whether the sudden increase in this percentage between 2006 and 2008 (from 31% to 57%) is an anomaly or part of a continuing trend remains to be seen. However, it should be noted that in 2008 there was no discernable increase in the absolute number of persons from typical 'non-asylum' countries leaving the Netherlands using REAN facilities. Rather, the sudden change in asylum to non-asylum ratio in that year is more likely to be attributable to an absolute decrease in the number of AVR participants from some important 'asylum' countries, such as Angola, Afghanistan and Iraq.[27]

Regardless of these recent shifts, the proportion of irregular migrants as part of the total AVR caseload has clearly been rising since the start of the REAN programme. Although data on legal status of AVR participants are not available for the early years of REAN, IOM was quoted as saying that in 1993 approximately 15% of all REAN-assisted persons where irregular migrants.[28] Presuming this estimate was accurate, in a little more than a decade, this percentage has more than doubled.

In addition to the fact that policies and actions vis-à-vis the voluntary departure of asylum seekers and irregular migrants has differed, the distinction may also be useful in gauging the extent to which changes in the composition of AVR participation has impacted on the quantitative fluctuations that are of interest to us. For different reasons it can be claimed that fluctuations in the return to asylum countries might be more dramatic than to non-asylum countries. This may be due to the volatile security situation in asylum countries, but also due to changes in collective protection policies, which may very suddenly change the prospects of further (legal) stay in the Netherlands. The non-asylum countries are generally more stable politically and – given that a large number of the returnees from these countries do not have or seek a legal status to begin with – policy changes may be less likely to have an impact on a return decision.

In table 6, the annual changes in AVR numbers have been set out for five major 'asylum' countries (Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran and Iraq) for the period 2000-2008. The same has been done for five 'non-asylum' countries (Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Ukraine) in table 7. In each case the relative increase from one year to the next year (in percentages) is provided. As such, the percentage for 2000 is the increase compared to 1999, the percentage for 2001 is the increase in comparison to 2000, and so on. An increase of 100% means a doubling of departures in one year; a 200% increase means that departures have tripled. Negative percentages signify decreases, with a value of minus 50% meaning that the number of departures has halved compared to the previous year.[29]

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[27] At least for Iraq, the number of persons making use of REAN assistance has increased dramatically in 2009, which may contribute to the percentage of irregular migrants in the total caseload decreasing again.

[28] *Algemeen Dagblad* (1994), "Illegalen bereid om met premie terug te keren naar geboorteland", 13 January 1994.

[29] An increase from 5 to 15 is a 200% increase as 15 is the initial 5 departures *plus* another 200% of that (10). In the same way, the increase in departures of Afghans from 2001 to 2002 is 3600%, as 111 is 3 *plus* 36*3. Please note that while there is no limit to the potential increases, decreases can never be more than 100%; this would signify that there are no returnees in that year. As such, a 75% decrease in AVR numbers represents a more significant change than a 100% increase.

Table 6: 'Asylum' countries and annual fluctuations in AVR caseload (2000-2008)

Year	Afghanistan		Angola		Bosnia-Herz.		Iran		Iraq	
	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)
1999	16	-	1	-	575	-	135	-	46	-
2000	11	-31.3	3	200.0	1097	**90.8**	205	**52.9**	91	97.8
2001	3	-72.7	4	33.3	264	*-75.9*	306	49.3	35	-61.5
2002	111	**3600.0**	37	**825.0**	139	-47.3	170	-44.4	58	65.7
2003	101	-9.0	228	516.2	200	43.9	224	31.8	109	87.9
2004	254	151.5	401	75.9	191	-4.5	231	3.1	182	67.0
2005	287	13.0	407	1.5	135	-29.3	176	-23.8	141	-22.5
2006	170	-40.8	434	6.6	74	-45.2	69	*-60.8*	273	93.6
2007	44	*74.1*	145	*-66.6*	22	-70.3	29	-58.0	45	*-83.5*
2008	15	-65.9	85	-41.4	9	-59.1	26	-10.3	194	**331.1**

Table 7: 'Non-asylum' countries and annual fluctuations in AVR caseload (2000-2008)

Year	Brazil		Ghana		India		Indonesia		Ukraine	
	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)	AVR	↑↓ (%)
1999	9	-	13	-	17	-	7	-	11	-
2000	8	*-11.1*	10	-23.1	46	**170.6**	9	28.6	12	9.1
2001	13	62.5	7	-30.0	26	*-43.5*	5	*-44.4*	31	158.3
2002	24	84.6	12	71.4	62	138.5	16	**220.0**	87	**180.6**
2003	70	**191.7**	29	141.7	37	-40.3	28	75.0	176	102.3
2004	143	104.3	108	**272.4**	43	16.2	45	60.7	305	73.3
2005	146	2.1	117	8.3	34	-20.9	60	33.3	270	-11.5
2006	180	23.3	79	*-32.5*	43	26.5	50	-16.7	188	*-30.4*
2007	184	2.2	54	-31.6	39	-9.3	71	42.0	140	-25.5
2008	247	34.2	56	3.7	26	-33.3	113	59.2	128	-8.6

For some asylum countries, some remarkable relative increases in AVR can be identified. Most notable here are a 37-fold (+3600%) rise in voluntary departures of Afghans from 2001 to 2002, as well as very significant increases in departures of Angolese in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.[30] However, other asylum countries, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iran show far less sharp rises. In fact, the maximum increase for all the non-asylum countries covered here is higher than that of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iran. Moreover, very sudden increases (e.g. 100% or more) do not seem to occur more frequently for asylum countries than for non-asylum countries.

This may be different for decreases in voluntary departures. The drops in annual AVR numbers for asylum countries range from 60,8% to 83,5%, while those for non-asylum countries range from 11,1% to 44,4%. These figures suggest that very sudden decreases in AVR participation are more characteristic of asylum countries than of non-asylum countries. For the latter, when decreases occur, these seem to be more gradual. This would be in line with the idea that security situations in asylum countries may deteriorate rapidly, and that the possibility of gaining legal residence may change very suddenly, on account of policy changes.

In this chapter we have looked at the profiles of participants in the REAN programme and what these tell us about changes in the annual total number of assisted persons. The results are

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[30] In some cases, however, low absolute numbers of returnees may distort the general picture. For example, it is questionable whether the 825% rise in departures of Angolese in 2001-2002, which in absolute terms 'only' was a rise from 4 to 37 cases, should be considered equally 'dramatic' as the 516% rise the following year, which saw departures increase from 37 to 228.

summarized below. In the following chapters we will look at some 'external' factors and how they may have impacted on fluctuations in AVR movements over the years.

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

The nationality of REAN participants
- It is difficult to assess the influence of different national groups on the fluctuations in the overall number of REAN participants, as these are constantly in flux.
- Comparability with surrounding countries is difficult, as the AVR profiles of these countries are often quite different from those in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some cross-border comparisons for specific nationalities which are part of the caseloads of the Netherlands and one or more European countries.
- While specific patterns cannot be identified, the data indicate that situations of high AVR figures are characterized by either a 'peak' situation, with one or a few nationalities accounting for much of the AVR participation, or a 'spread' situation, in which the number of individual participants per nationality is lower, but the division is more consistent. In the Dutch context, a situation of 'peak' and 'spread' occurring at the same time has not taken place. There are reasons to believe that 'peak' and 'spread' might rule each other out in practice.
- 'Smaller' nationalities should not be forgotten in AVR policy and practice, as they contribute significantly to the overall numerical success of the REAN programme.

Diversity
- Diversity, in terms of the number of nationalities receiving AVR assistance, cannot explain fluctuations in REAN participation levels. This is in contrast with Belgium and the UK, where increased diversity and increased numbers of returnees have coincided. This diversity may be a sign of a 'mature' AVR programme and may constitute an additional measure of success, beyond numbers.

Resettlement
- Resettlement as a means to leave the Netherlands voluntarily has been declining in recent years, after a significant peak in 2000. Whether the possibility for resettlement exists depends mostly on factors outside the influence of the Netherlands. However, for some nationalities, resettlement has been a very large proportion of AVR from the Netherlands and as such may have a clear added value for the quantitative outcomes of the REAN programme.

'Asylum' versus 'non-asylum' returnees
- From the point of view of legal status, a distinction can be made between 'asylum' and 'non-asylum' returnees, with some nationalities falling clearly in one of these two categories, while some others fall somewhere in between. The proportion of 'non-asylum' returnees in the overall AVR caseload has grown during the last decade.
- Fluctuations in AVR participation levels seem to be more erratic for nationalities falling in the 'asylum' category. This is particularly the case for sudden *decreases* in participation from one year to the next (this may also be the result of protection policies for asylum seekers – see chapter 4). Changes in AVR participation levels for irregular migrants seem to be more gradual, which is in line with the idea that irregular migrants do not have or seek a legal status, so their return decision may be less influenced by policy changes.

3 – ASYLUM INFLUX

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When we look at the fluctuations in REAN-assisted departures beyond the characteristics of the individual REAN participants, our first area of interest is the number of persons entering the Netherlands. After all, every person making use of the Dutch AVR programme must have entered the country at some earlier stage. From this perspective, it may be useful to look at the effects that influx has had on the number of people voluntarily returning. We will approach this issue from the assumption that higher levels of influx will result in higher levels of voluntary departures. After all, the more migrants enter the country, the larger the 'stock' of potential returnees. Although admittedly this only accounts for a part of new arrivals, we will focus on the number of persons claiming asylum in the Netherlands as our measure for influx. The reason for this, and the limitations to this approach, will be discussed below.

3.2 ASYLUM INFLUX AS AN (IMPERFECT) INDICATOR FOR ENTRY INTO THE NETHERLANDS

There are some limitations to using asylum influx as a measure for entry into the Netherlands. The most obvious one being that this covers only part of the total number of aliens who arrive in the Netherlands and who, theoretically, could make use of the REAN programme at some point in the future. Persons entering the Netherlands by other means, such as tourists visas, residence permits, or those not in need of such visas and permits, are not covered by asylum statistics. However, because of the variety of categories of migrants involved, and the fact that some would, and others would not, be eligible for REAN assistance, it would be virtually impossible to reconstruct overall entry figures that could be adequately related to AVR participation. Additionally, as discussed in the previous chapter, an increasing number of AVR participants per definition fall outside these officially registered categories, as they have entered the Netherlands in an irregular manner.[31]

Asylum influx gives us a relatively clear-cut group, even though these numbers also present us with some inherent difficulties. Up to mid-2007, no separate registration of first applications took place. Asylum statistics prior to that time comprised both first and repeated applications, with the latter being, by definition, made up by persons already in the Netherlands, rather than new arrivals. For this reason, asylum influx, at least before the separate registration of first applications, may comprise multiple applications of the same individuals, who, conversely, can only make use of REAN assistance once. This is a factor that we take into account.[32] Keeping in mind the mentioned limitations, we will proceed with our exploration of the links between asylum influx and AVR participation.

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[31] It should be noted that under the category 'irregular migrants' as used here, also persons who entered regularly, such as on a tourist visa, but who later became irregular (for instance by overstaying the allowed term of their visa), are included. However, this does not mean that entry figures for these groups can be indicative for the voluntary departure of irregular migrants.

[32] That the asylum statistics from mid-2007 onwards comprise different data is only a minor problem in our search for statistical links. After all, when we start taking into account a time-lag effect of two years or more (see chapter 3.3.1), the asylum statistics of 2007 and 2008 disappear from our analysis (with a time-lag of two years, we compare asylum applications from 1990-2006 to AVR from 1992-2008).

3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASYLUM INFLUX AND AVR PARTICIPATION

3.3.1 On the 'time lag' between entry and departure

As suggested in the introduction to this chapter, we start our exploration from the assumption that a larger 'stock' of asylum seekers will result in higher numbers of persons eventually participation in the REAN programme. In other words, we are interested in finding whether there is a *positive* correlation between asylum influx and AVR participation. In this scenario, a rise in asylum applications will result in a (more or less proportional) rise in AVR participation, a decrease in asylum applications would lead to a smaller number of AVR participants.

However, even if this effect exists, it is unlikely that this effect is immediate. Although each individual case will be different, we suggest that there are several factors that create a time gap between the moment of arrival and the moment of departure. The most obvious of these is that asylum seekers arrive in the Netherlands with the intention of obtaining a legal status, and not with the intention to immediately return to their countries of origin.[33] Furthermore, we assume that most asylum seekers would await the outcome of their asylum procedure before opting for departure.[34] Given the fact that asylum procedures (including the appeals process) usually take up a significant amount of time, this argues against an immediate link between asylum influx and AVR participation.

An additional factor of concern for the would-be returnee may be the security situation in his or her country of origin. Conflict situations usually do not resolve overnight, and this would likely prevent the asylum seeker from opting for voluntary return soon after arriving in the Netherlands. From this perspective, it might be more reasonable to expect a *negative* relationship (that is, high numbers of asylum applications equal low numbers of REAN-assisted departures) when comparing asylum influx and AVR participation in the same year.[35]

To uncover whether there is a positive relationship between asylum influx and voluntary departure, we will take into account the possibility of a time-lag effect. As such, we will not only compare asylum influx to AVR participation in the same year (i.e., asylum applications in 1999 to AVR in 1999), but we will also look at the effects of asylum influx on AVR participation one, two or more years later.

We will first look at the overall numbers of asylum applications and AVR participation, beginning with the Netherlands and later on also covering some other European countries. As these overall figures also include 'non-asylum' AVR participants, we will subsequently look at some specific nationalities, to see whether there is indeed a strong link between influx and departure for 'asylum' nationalities and weak or no links for 'non-asylum' nationalities. We

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[33] There is always the possibility that the Netherlands merely acts as a transit country for asylum seekers. In this case, departure might occur soon after arrival. However, given the relatively small number of persons using REAN to resettle for a third country, these persons 'in transit' in the Netherlands are less likely to show up in AVR statistics.

[34] This does not mean that this will always be the case. At the end of 2008 and start of 2009, for example, IOM staff in the Netherlands noted that there were increasing numbers of Iraqi asylum seekers applying for return assistance, with a notable number of them only having arrived very recently and still awaiting the decision on their application. In fact, some of the Iraqi REAN participants were still waiting to formally submit their asylum application and get a first hearing.

[35] As solid quantitative indicators for security are lacking, we use the number of asylum applications as a (flawed) measure of security.

will do so primarily by looking for correlations between these two variables. These correlations show us the relative interconnection between one variable (asylum influx) and another (AVR participation). In the box below, a brief technical discussion of the use of correlations in statistical analysis is provided.

About correlations

Correlations show the statistical relationship between two variables, in our case between the variable 'number of asylum applications' and 'number of AVR participants'. This is done by comparing the relationship between a number of data pairs. Each of these data pairs consist of values of the two variables at a particular instance. For example, if we are interested in the effects of asylum influx on AVR participation *without* any time-lag effect, a data pair would consist of influx in 1992 and AVR in 1992, the following data pair would consist of influx in 1993 and AVR in 1993, and so on. These data pairs can be visualized by presenting them in a so-called *scatterplot*. An example of such a scatterplot is presented below.[36] Each dot on the graph represents a data pair. For example, the furthermost dot in the lower left-hand corner shows that, for this pair, there were approximately 6.000 asylum applications and approximately 800 assisted voluntary departures.[37]

When we have a number of points on our scatterplot, a line can be drawn so that all points are as close as possible to this line. In fact, this is done by a calculation resulting in a measure for correlation, Pearson's *r*. This provides us with two things: (1) the strength of the relationship between the two variables, and (2) the direction. The strength is indicated by a number between -1 and 1, with 0 being no statistical relationship at all (the line would be horizontal), and 1 being a perfect statistical match. The 'direction' of the line can be positive (*r* between 0 and +1) or negative (*r* between -1 and 0). A *positive* relationship indicates that an increase in one variable corresponds to a increase in the other, and that a decrease in one variable corresponds to a decrease in the other. The line in the scatterplot runs *upwards* from left to right in this instance. In case of a negative relationship, an increase in one variable corresponds to a decrease in the other, and vice versa, the line in the scatterplot would run *downwards* from left to right.

Line indicating the 'direction' of the correlation

Data pair

Value of R^2 indicating the strength of the relationship

$R^2 = 0{,}672$
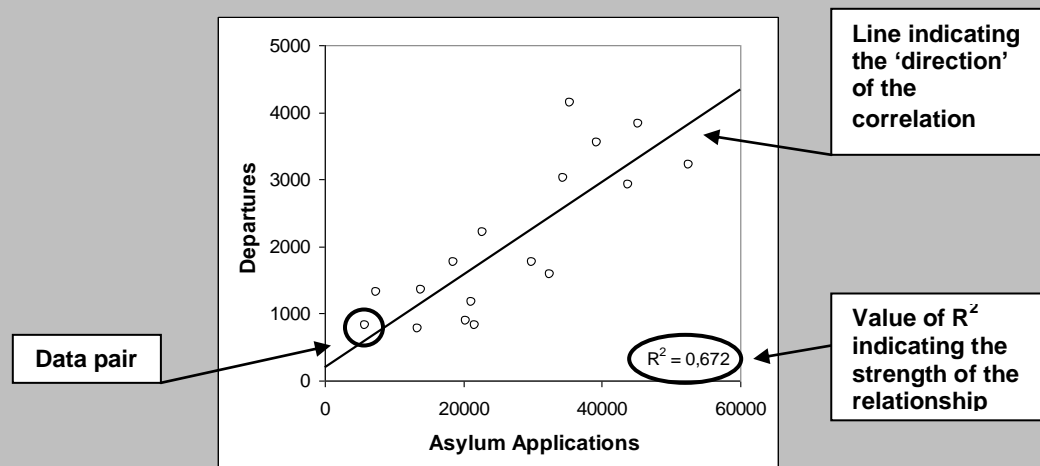
Pearson's *r* only tells us about the existence of a statistical link, but not about the impact that one variable has on the other. For this, we use a measure called R^2, which indicates how much of the change in a particular variable (in our case AVR participation) can be explained by changes in another variable (asylum influx). Again, the value of R² can range between 0 and 1. The larger the

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[36] This scatterplot is used to visualize the workings of correlations. We will not display them in the remainder of our report, although we did produce scatterplots for every possible correlation in order to verify the visual linear relationship.

[37] In this particular instance, the scatterplot is that of asylum influx into, and AVR from, the Netherlands, with a time lag of six years. As such, the pairs represent asylum influx in a certain year and AVR *six years later*..

value of this index, the stronger the association between asylum influx and departure.[38]

In our example above, the relationship is positive. There is an explained variance (R^2) of 0,672, meaning that changes in the AVR participations are 67,2% accounted for by changes in asylum applications.[39] This is quite a strong relationship. In addition to the strength of the relationship, the relationship also has to be statistically significant, meaning that the probability that the correlation coefficient would have occurred by chance is very low.[40] In most social sciences, a correlation is statistically significant below .05. Hence, if the correlation is significant at the .05 (or lower) level, we can have confidence that the relationship between asylum influx and departure is genuine.[41]

3.3.2 Asylum influx into and AVR from the Netherlands

With regards to the Netherlands, in addition to AVR numbers for 1992-2008, statistics on the number of asylum applications are available for 1985-2008.[42] We will use different scenarios to explore the existence of statistical links between asylum influx and AVR. First of all, we look at the situation in which there is no time lag (i.e. asylum influx in 1992 is paired with AVR in 1992, etc.)[43]. From this, only an extremely weak relationship is found and this relationship is not statistically significant ($r = -.289$, $R^2 = .084$, $p > \alpha$). As expected, we do not find a positive relationship at this point, in the sense that a higher asylum influx leads to more voluntary departure *in that same year*. The data also do not support the idea that there might be an inverse relationship between the two, such as high asylum levels leading to low voluntary departure levels.

When we change the data pairs, we first pair the asylum figures for a particular year with the AVR figures of the following year (our +1 scenario).[44] Here again, we find only a very weak negative correlation that is not statistically significant ($r = -.108$, $R^2 = .012$, $p > \alpha$). We have repeated this process for our +2 up to +8 scenarios, the results of which can all be found in table 8.

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[38] It is important to mention that R² only relates to *linear* relationships. Therefore, scatterplots were produced in order to investigate the linearity of every relationship. Note that if R² is low (e.g. 4% variance in Y is explained for by X) this does *not* mean that the other 96% is *not* explained, but that it is not explained by a linear relationship. Other types of relationships (parabolic) may have more explanatory strength, but our study focuses on linear relationships (changes in the variable 'asylum influx' result in a change in the variable 'AVR participation').

[39] Technically, correlations only tell us about the mutual link between the two variables, and not between the causality (i.e. whether variable A has an impact on variable B or vice versa). As asylum influx has to occur *before* AVR can take place, we must infer – if we find correlations – that influx affects AVR and not the other way around. This also enables us to calculate R^2, assuming that 'AVR participation' is dependent on 'asylum influx'. However, this does not unequivocally mean that one causes the other. There still is the possibility of another event (C) that is causing A (i.e. asylum applications) and B (i.e. AVR) to happen.

[40] Establishing significance requires normally distributed data. Although from the plotted histograms it can be argued that one of the distributions (the variable 'departure') is only fairly normally distributed, we put the above data to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The latter indicated that our data are not significantly different from a normal distribution. A. Field, *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS. Second edition*, Sage: London 2005, p. 93. Furthermore, all tests in this report are one-tailed tests, as they are directional (the hypothetical "if asylum influx increases, AVR increases as well" is positively directed).

[41] A. Field, *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS. Second edition*, Sage: London 2005, p. 126, 140.

[42] Data received through the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service's Information and Analysis Centre (INDIAC), also the national focal point for the European Migration Network (EMN).

[43] This means that not all data on asylum applications are used. For the period before 1992, it is not possible to make data pairs as there are no figures for AVR. As a result, these data are excluded from this analysis.

[44] Because of this shift, we now compare data on asylum applications for 1991-2007 to data on AVR participation for 1992-2008.

Table 8: Correlation between annual asylum influx and annual departure for the Netherlands (1992-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	−.289	.084	No, .130 > .05
1	−.108	.012	No, .341 > .05
2	−.028	.001	No, .457 > .05
3	.005	.000	No, .493 > .05
4	.291	.085	No, .128 > .05
5	.818	.669	Yes, $p < .001$
6	.820	.672	Yes, $p < .001$
7	.486	.236	Yes, $p < .05$
8	−.289	.084	No, .130 > .05

The table shows that in our +5 and +6 scenarios, a statistically significant correlation is found, which is also very strong.[45] In the +5 scenario, we see that a change in the asylum influx in a particular year, say, 1995, explains as much as 67% of the change in AVR numbers five years later, in 2000. The same is true for the +6 scenario. Particularly considering the fact that AVR figures also include non-asylum cases, this can be considered a remarkably high proportion.

In both the +5 and +6 scenarios, the relationships are positive, implying that rises in the number of asylum applications are mirrored by increased AVR participation five and six years later, whereas decreases in asylum influx have resulted in lower AVR participation five and six years later. These outcomes seem to fit with the general picture that emerges when the number of asylum applications and voluntary departures are plotted in a graph (see figure 4).[46]

Figure 4: Asylum applications (1985-2008) and assisted voluntary departures (1992-2008), the Netherlands (no delay)

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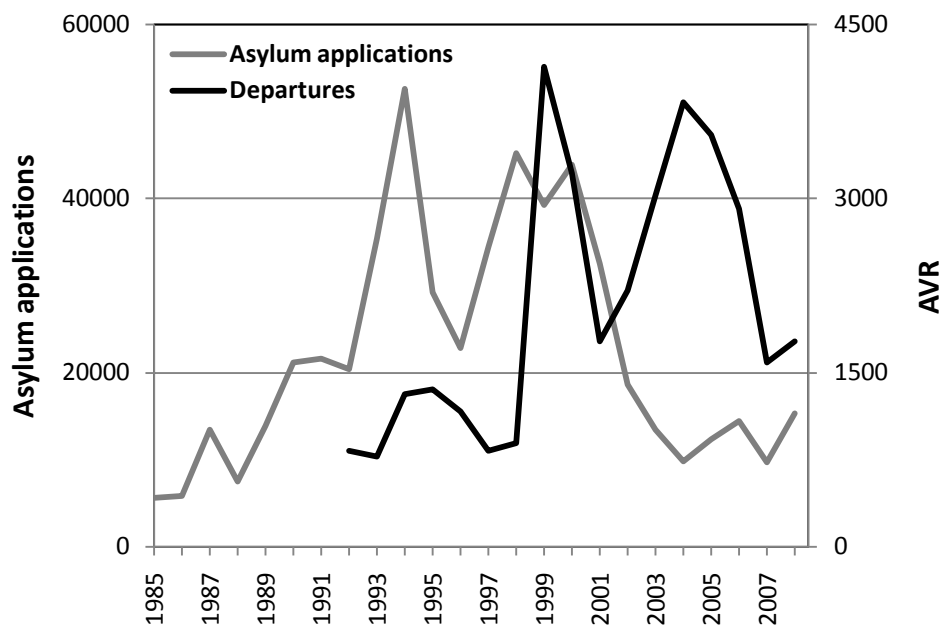
[45] The +7 scenario also presents a significant correlation, but only with a level of 5%, so that we can be more confident about the +5 and +6 scenarios' associations. Therefore, we will focus on the +5 and +6 scenarios.

[46] Please note that, due to the differences in absolute numbers, different scales are used to represent asylum influx and AVR respectively. Asylum influx is presented on the left-hand Y-axis, whilst AVR is plotted on the right-hand Y axis. In this section, we only deal with the relative connections between the two variables. In section 3.5 we will discuss the proportionality of these variables in absolute terms.

The line representing assisted voluntary departures does not mimic the line representing asylum applications exactly, but generally similar patterns can be found. We see, for example, that some of the same gaps and troughs on the asylum line can be found to occur a few years later on the line representing AVR. For example, the peak in asylum requests in 1994 is mirrored by a peak in voluntary departures in 1999.[47] Similarly, the sharp relative decrease in asylum applications in 1995-1996 translates into a similar decrease in AVR in 2000-2001. In 1997 and 1998 the number of asylum applications rises again, with a similar rise in AVR numbers in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The similarities in fluctuations in asylum applications and assisted voluntary departures becomes readily apparent when we shift the line representing REAN-assisted departures back by five years, resulting in figure 6 below.[48]

Figure 5: Asylum applications and AVR for the Netherlands, with AVR shifted backwards by five years
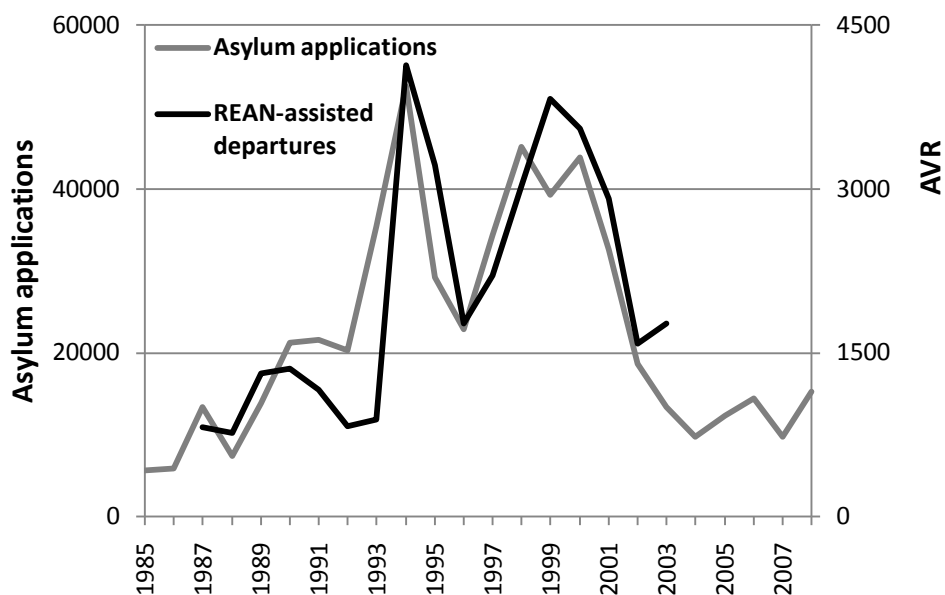
When dealing with the overall figures for asylum applications and assisted voluntary departures (not split according to nationality), then, we see that asylum influx has a clear relationship with AVR participation levels, but that this effect is delayed, generally, by five or six years. Without further research amongst (former) asylum seekers voluntary leaving the Netherlands, it is impossible to say exactly whether this delay is due to any of the causes discussed in chapter 3.3.1, or to others not discussed here.[49] We also note that, given the increased contribution of 'non-asylum' departures to the overall REAN caseload (see chapter 2), it is feasible that the explanatory power of asylum influx as a determinant for AVR participation levels has been diminishing in recent years.

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[47] Not coincidentally, a large proportion of asylum applications in 1994 were made by persons arriving from Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iran, which are also the largest groups of REAN-assisted persons in 1999. However, in 1994 other nationalities, such as Romanians and Somalis also contributed very significantly to asylum numbers, whilst these do not contribute to any considerable extent to voluntary departures in 1999 (Somalia is included in the top ten of AVR countries in this year, but only with 29 cases).

[48] While a delay of six years between asylum influx and AVR presents us with a slightly stronger correlation than the five year delay scenario, visually, the overlap is more pronounced with a five year delay.

[49] In addition to a lack of insight in the causes of this delay between application and departure, it is useful to reiterate that further caution has to be taken on account of the inclusion of non-asylum REAN participants in AVR statistics.

3.3.3. Other European countries

Next, we explore whether the link between asylum influx and assisted voluntary departures can also be identified for other European countries, and, if so, whether the same time-lag effect is applicable there. In annex 3, the outcomes of the comparison between asylum influx and AVR are presented for Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as for a selection of other countries (Austria, Norway and Portugal).[50] The three latter countries were included as they all dealt with significant groups of AVR participants relevant to the Dutch situation.[51] The conclusions for each country are briefly presented below.

Belgium

Belgium is an exception here as all scenarios (from +0 to +8) provide us with a significant correlation between the two variables (see annex 3a). The correlation is strongest, and the explained variance greatest, for a delay of two years, the difference with other scenarios is minimal. In all scenarios, the relationship is positive, implying that changes in asylum influx result in changes in AVR participation in similar directions.[52] As in the case of the Netherlands, no negative (or inverse) relationship is found when no time-lag is used.

Despite these results, a visualization of the asylum influx and AVR levels for Belgium indicates it is indeed the most plausible that assisted voluntary departure generally follows the trend of asylum influx with a delay of approximately two years (see figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Number of asylum applications (1980-2008) and AVR (1984-2008) for Belgium (no delay)

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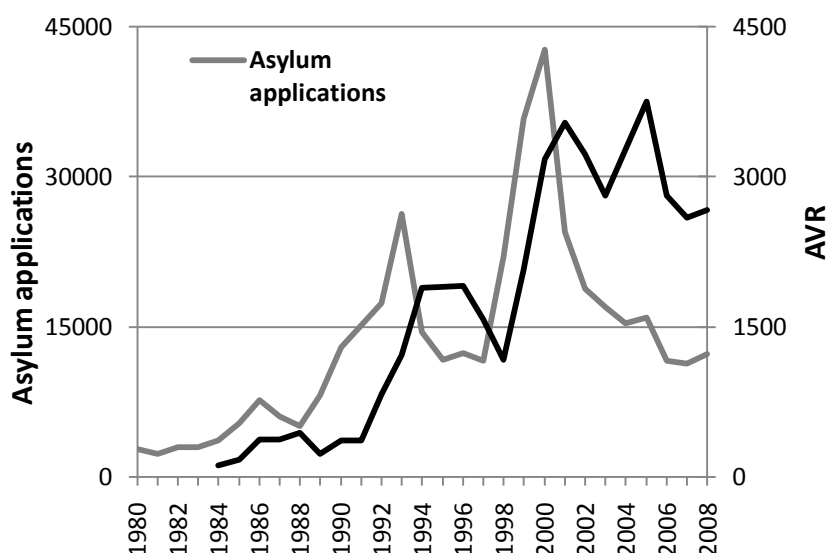
[50] All AVR data were obtained from IOM missions in the countries concerned and is on file with the authors. Data on asylum applications was obtained from: UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database on 18 October 2009, 23 November 2009 and 25 November 2009 through http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a013eb06.html . For data on Belgium, we also used C. Grütters, *Asieldynamiek. Een systeemdynamische analyse van de Nederlandse asielprocedure in de periode 1980-2002*, Wolf Legal Publishers: Nijmegen 2003, annex 4.

[51] Former Yugoslavs for Austria, Afghans and Iraqis for Norway and Angolans for Portugal.

[52] The fact that data from Belgium covers a long period, and that both asylum and AVR figures have been steadily rising for most of that period, could explain these results. Asylum figures have only shown a downwards trend in recent years, which are precisely the years that are excluded when time-lags are incorporated in the analysis.

Germany

In the case of Germany, we see the strongest correlations when a short delay is applied (see annex 3b). The effect of asylum influx seems to be strongest after one, but particularly after two years ($r = .985$, $R^2 = .970$, $p < .001$).[53] Again, in the case of Germany there is no inverse relationship between overall asylum and AVR figures when no delay is applied.

Figure 7: Number of asylum applications (1993-2008) and AVR (2002-2008) for Germany (no delay)
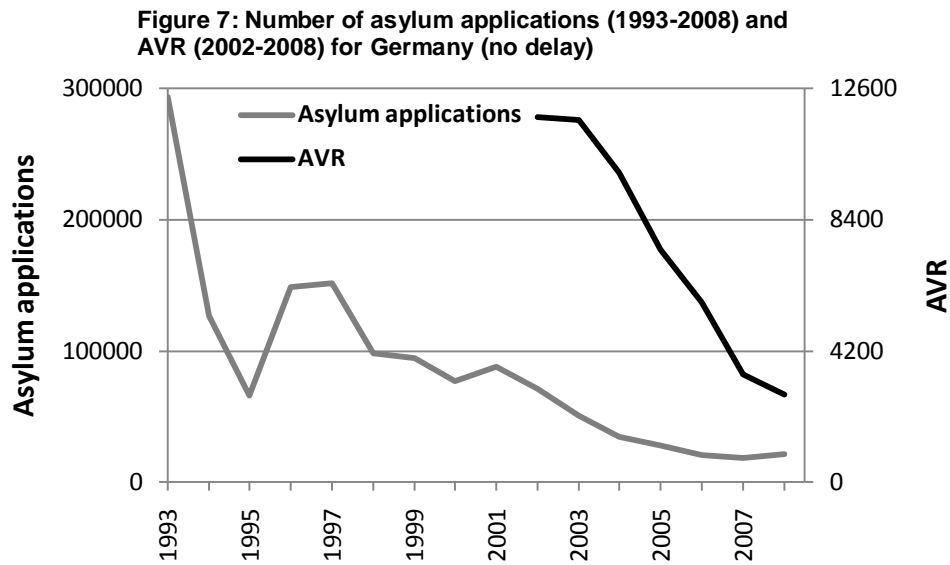
United Kingdom

In contrast to the other countries discussed, the data from the United Kingdom does show a negative correlation between asylum and AVR when no delay is applied, and a very strong one ($r = -.893$, $R^2 = .797$, $p < .001$). There are significant positive correlations for the +4, +5, +6 and +7 scenarios, with the +6 scenario presenting the strongest and most significant relationship (see annex 3c) This delay in the effect of asylum influx on AVR is comparable to the Dutch situation.

Figure 8: Number of asylum applications (1991-2008) and AVR (1999-2008) for United Kingdom (no delay)

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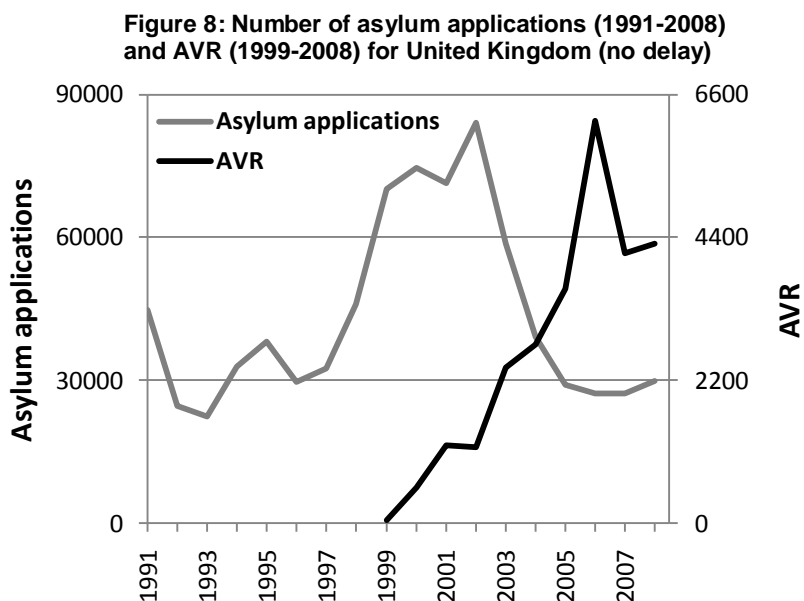
[53] However, in the case of Germany we have a very limited data set (AVR only for the period 2002-2008). Any additional data could affect the outcomes of the analysis.

Other countries[54]
The other three countries, Austria, Norway and Portugal, also show very different results (see annex 3d-f). For Austria, the strongest positive correlation is found when a delay of five years is applied, although relatively strong correlations are found for any delay between four and seven years. For Norway, on the other hand, the delay that explains most of the impact of asylum on AVR is just one year. Portugal does not present us with any significant positive correlations in any scenario. Only in Austria, a significant negative relationship exists when no time-lag is applied.[55]

It follows from the foregoing that a positive relationship between asylum applications and AVR participation can be found to exist for most countries discussed, with the exception of Portugal. However, the delay of the effect varies considerably. The Netherlands shows one of the highest delays, with five to six years, while for some other countries (particularly Belgium, Germany and Norway) this time-lag effect is much shorter. From a policy perspective, these differences can be very relevant.[56]

3.3.4 Correlations between asylum influx and AVR for specific nationalities
Given the overall links between asylum influx and AVR, it would be logical to assume that particularly for those nationalities that account for many voluntary departures of persons with an asylum background, the correlation would also be strong, possibly even stronger than overall. However, if we look at some of the major 'asylum' nationalities in the Dutch AVR caseload, this does not always appear to be the case. A very large portion of the fluctuations in the voluntary departure of Bosnians can be explained through changes in the number of asylum applications six years earlier, in line with the overall conclusions drawn. For Afghans, the best indication is provided with a delay of six to seven years, and for Iraqis this delay is even eight years.[57] Conversely, for Angolans, the delay between asylum influx and AVR is a bit shorter, four to five years. While these findings seem to support the idea that asylum influx and AVR are strongly linked for 'asylum' nationalities, there are also cases were no statistically significant correlations are found. These include Iran[58], Somalia[59] and Yugoslavia/Serbia[60]. Therefore, it must be concluded that, while the overall data show that there is a link between fluctuations in asylum applications and fluctuations in AVR, this conclusion cannot be applied without reservation for specific nationalities of AVR participants, even if these are mainly persons with an asylum background.

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[54] For reasons of brevity, visualizations are not provided for these countries.
[55] Austria (no delay): $r = -.652$, $R^2 = .425$, $p < .05$.
[56] These differences may depend on approaches to AVR, lengths of asylum procedures and alike. A thorough analysis of this falls outside the scope of this report.
[57] And the explanatory power is weaker than for Bosnians.
[58] For Iran, some pronounced peaks occur in asylum influx (particularly in 1994), but changes in AVR participation have been much more gradual.
[59] Compared to the large numbers of Somalis applying for asylum in the Netherlands, voluntary departures have been negligible, accounting for the lack of a statistical relationship.
[60] Here, a possible explanation may lie in the fact that these figures encompass both asylum seekers from the Serbian part of former Yugoslavia and from Kosovo. The peak in AVR to Yugoslavia in 1999/2000 seems to be attributable primarily in returns of Kosovar evacuees (see the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010)), which – owing to their special status – are likely not to have been incorporated in Dutch asylum statistics (as they did not have to file a formal application).

3.4 A NOTE ON THE PROPORTIONALITY OF ASYLUM AND AVR FIGURES

Even though some statistical links between asylum influx and AVR participation have been found to exist, it is necessary to provide some qualifications about the nature of this relationship. The first of these is that, in absolute terms, there is an imbalance between the numbers of asylum applications and the numbers of AVR participants. In the graphs provided in this chapter, this is somewhat obscured due to the use of different scales to ensure comparability. Note that in figures 4-8, asylum applications are plotted on the left-hand side Y-axis whilst AVR numbers are plotted on the right, and their asymmetry in scale.[61] When we speak of statistical relationships between the two variables, it is very important to remember that the impact of fluctuations in asylum on AVR is not 1:1. Only a percentage (R^2) of the changes in AVR is explained by changes in asylum applications. In addition, the number of voluntary departures that this results in is a mere fraction of the number of asylum seekers who entered the Netherlands.[62]

This matter becomes clear when we start comparing the absolute numbers for asylum and AVR. The ten nationalities accounting for most asylum applications in the Netherlands are presented below for the periods 1993-2008 (table 9a) and 1987-2002 (table 9b).[63]

Table 9a: Total number of asylum applications in the Netherlands (1993-2008)

Rank	Asylum applications 1993-2008		
	Nationality	**#**	*%*
1	Iraq	56322	13.1
2	Afghanistan	40381	9.4
3	Somalia	35677	8.3
4	Bosnia-Herz.	28987	6.8
5	Yugosl./Serbia	27898	6.5
6	Iran	25347	5.9
7	Angola	14971	3.5
8	Sri Lanka	12658	2.9
9	Turkey	12453	2.9
10	China	10762	2.5
	Other	*163739*	*38.2*
	Total	**429195**	**100.0**

Table 9b: Total number of asylum applications in the Netherlands (1987-2002)

Rank	Asylum applications 1987-2002		
	Nationality	**#**	*%*
1	Iraq	42144	9.3
2	Afghanistan	37738	8.3
3	Somalia	36329	8.0
4	Yugosl./Serbia	34829	7.7
5	Bosnia-Herz.	29398	6.5
6	Iran	28740	6.4
7	Sri Lanka	19408	4.3
8	Turkey	15466	3.4
9	Angola	14945	3.3
10	China	10992	2.4
	Other	*182195*	*40.3*
	Total	**452184**	**100.0**

These data can also be presented as a ratio of AVR participation, resulting in table 10 below. Here it is shown, for each nationality, how many more asylum seekers entered the Netherlands than left voluntarily.

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[61] The asylum applications in figures 4 and 5, for example, are set out on a scale that reaches 60.000, whilst AVR statistics are presented on a scale with a maximum of 4.500. If the AVR numbers in these figures had been presented on the same scale as asylum influx, the AVR participation would have only been a fraction of that of asylum influx, and fluctuations in AVR would hardly be visible.

[62] Logic also dictates that this is the case. Those asylum seekers who obtained a status have no obligation to leave the Netherlands (although it would be possible to do so under the REAN programme). Those who are faced with such an obligation might choose to stay in the Netherlands illegally or depart. This departure can be forced or voluntary. Even if departure is voluntary, there is no requirement that this takes place through the REAN programme. As such, there are many different possible trajectories for newly arrived asylum seekers and only a specific one leads to assisted voluntary departure.

[63] These two periods are presented to allow comparison with AVR for an equal period (1993-2008), and for the six years delay which provides the strongest correlation between asylum influx and AVR (1987-2002).

Table 10: Ratios of asylum applications (1987-2002 and 1993-2008) versus AVR (1993-2008)

Rank	Nationality	Ratio asylum influx (1987-2002) : AVR (1993-2008)	Ratio asylum influx (1993-2008) : AVR (1993-2008)
1	Iraq	31.9 : 1	42.6 : 1
2	Afghanistan	35.9 : 1	38.5 : 1
3	Somalia	128.8 : 1	126.5 : 1
4	Yugoslavia/Serbia	6.8 : 1	5.7 : 1
5	Bosnia-Herzegovina	9.1 : 1	8.7 : 1
6	Iran	11.9 : 1	10.5 : 1
7	Sri Lanka	68.8 : 1	53.1 : 1
8	Turkey	18.4 : 1	15.1 : 1
9	Angola	8.5 : 1	7.1 : 1
10	China	24.5 : 1	24.0 : 1
	Total	**13.2 : 1**	**12.5 : 1**

On the whole, for approximately every thirteen asylum seekers who have entered the Netherlands, one person has voluntarily departed using the REAN programme.[64] For some nationalities (Yugoslavs/Serbians, Bosnians and Angolans) the proportion of persons having voluntarily departed is slightly higher than the average, whilst for others, only very few departures have taken place, compared to the number of asylum seekers that have entered the country. The most dramatic example of this is Somalia. Here, for every 126 to 129 arrivals, only one person has left the Netherlands using REAN.

A second qualification of the results is that the data does not provide insight into individual trajectories. When we see, for example, that there is a peak in REAN-assisted departures for Bosnians in 1999-2000, we might assume (given the strong relationship and six year delay) that these are primarily persons who applied for asylum in 1993-1994. However, since we only have aggregate data (totals of applications and departures) there is no way to determine whether this is the case. We see similar patterns, but theoretically it is equally possible that the majority of persons voluntarily departing in 1999-2000 entered the country between 1995 and 1999-2000.[65] At the moment, longitudinal data on individual trajectories are not sufficiently available to establish clear links between the moment asylum seekers arrive in the Netherlands and the moment they voluntarily depart. However, a cohort analysis of asylum seekers arriving in the Netherlands between 2001 and 2006, does support the idea that only a small fraction of arrivals eventually return voluntarily, regardless of whether they use the REAN programme for this.[66] In this analysis, the state of the procedure of asylum seekers having arrived in each year (2001-2006) was assessed, with 1 July 2007 as a reference point. This includes data on whether they had left the Netherlands voluntarily.[67] The report shows that of those having applied for asylum in 2001, 70% had received a negative decision by 1 July 2007, and 4% of these persons had left the Netherlands voluntarily, approximately 2,8% of all applicants. For arrivals in 2002-2006, the percentage of those having departed

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[64] These departures also include persons who did not enter the Netherlands as asylum seekers.

[65] A reason for this could be, for example, that after a strong peak in influx protection policies become more strict, thus making it more difficult for new arrivals to obtain a legal status.

[66] See INDIAC (2007), *Cohortanalyse asielprocedure 2001-2006: peildatum 1 juli 2007*, Information and Analysis Centre, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Ministry of Justice: http://static.ikregeer.nl/pdf/BLG15101.pdf, accessed on 31 July 2009.

[67] As discussed earlier, government data on voluntary departure is broader than only REAN-assisted departures, but it provides an approximation.

voluntarily varied from 2,0% to 2,8%.[68] In table 11 we see that for particular nationalities[69], this percentage differs. Approximately six years after arrival, more than 10% of Angolans has left the Netherlands voluntarily, whilst this is only the case for little over 0,5% of Sierra Leoneans and Somalis. For arrivals in 2006, these percentages are naturally even lower, as the time since arrival is much shorter.[70]

Table 11: Voluntary departures as percentage of asylum applicants in 2001 and 2006, reference point 1 July 2007 (source: INDIAC cohort analysis 2001-2006)[71]

Nationality	2001			2006		
	% of total rejected	*% of rejected voluntarily departed*	*% of total voluntarily departed*	*% of total rejected*	*% of rejected voluntarily departed*	*% of total voluntarily departed*
Afghanistan	62	7	4.3	30	13	3.9
Angola	82	13	10.7	43	6	2.6
Iran	66	6	4.0	27	4	1.1
Iraq	54	3	3.0	43	3	1.3
Sierra Leone	58	1	0.6	39	0	0.0
Somalia	65	1	0.7	20	2	0.4
All nationalities	*70*	*4*	*2.8*	*34*	*6*	*2.0*

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

Asylum influx as a determinant for levels of AVR participation
- For the Netherlands and the period covered, a positive relationship has been found to exist between asylum influx and REAN-assisted departures, meaning that ups and downs in the number of asylum applications are mirrored in the levels of AVR participation.
- This positive effect is not immediate. The strongest relationship was found to exist between asylum influx in a particular year and assisted voluntary departures five to six years later. In these cases, fluctuations in asylum applications explain up to two thirds of fluctuations in AVR.
- For some other European countries, similar links between asylum influx and AVR have been found to exist. However, the delays of these effects vary from country to country. For Belgium, Germany and Norway, the effects of variations in asylum influx seem to have a much quicker impact on AVR participation levels.

Applicability to specific nationalities
- The link between asylum influx and AVR in the Netherlands, with a delay of five to six years, is not automatically valid for specific nationalities of REAN-assisted persons. Such links do exist for certain 'asylum' nationalities, but the delays may be shorter or longer. For some nationalities, no particular relationship was identified.

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[68] Not all asylum seekers covered by the cohort analysis had already received a final decision. 8% of asylum seekers having arrived in 2001 were still awaiting a decision on 1 July 2007. For those having arrived in 2006 this was 25%. It should also be noted that we are dealing with a very specific reference point. There is no way of knowing whether any persons still awaiting a decision (or for that matter those with a status or those already rejected) as of 1 July 2007 voluntarily departed afterwards.

[69] These nationalities are covered by the INDIAC report.

[70] It should be noted that the cohort analysis shows that most 'departures' that are registered are of asylum seekers who have left 'with unknown destination'. This is in line with the idea that AVR data only provides a limited view of actual departures.

[71] The cohort analysis only provides rough percentages (no decimals). As a result, the calculations of the voluntary departures as a percentage of total applications is only an approximation.

The link between asylum applications and AVR
- We cannot tell whether peaks in AVR which follow earlier peaks in asylum applications, consist of the same people. The links discussed here refer to general patterns and do not tell us about individual trajectories.
- There is a considerable asymmetry in absolute numbers between asylum influx and assisted voluntary departures. Of those arriving in the Netherlands as asylum seekers, only a very small part (roughly between one in ten and less than one in a hundred) leave the Netherlands using REAN assistance.

4 – PROTECTION POLICIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Although we have established that certain links exist between the number of persons applying for asylum in the Netherlands and the number of persons making use of the REAN programme, this may not be the only aspect of asylum policy having an impact on AVR participation. In this chapter, we will go a step further and also take into consideration the chances of persons applying for asylum seekers to obtain a (temporary) status in the Netherlands. We do so by taking a closer look at temporary protection policies which have been instituted, and subsequently cancelled, for asylum seekers from particular countries or groups.[72] These policies all have in common that protection is accorded to all persons of a specific nationality, or persons with similar characteristics, due to a general risk faced in the country of origin.[73] This has often been the case in situations of intense armed conflict or other sources of insecurity. When these sources of insecurity are deemed to have disappeared, the temporary protection policy is cancelled and protection is no longer accorded to these individuals on a group basis. If no specific, individual reason for protection exists, individuals that were members of the group having previously received temporary protection are required to leave the Netherlands. Often, the cancellation of group-based, temporary protection policies is combined with an emphasis on voluntary departure.

As having a legal status provides a strong incentive to remain in the Netherlands, and loss of such a status may trigger a decision to leave, we might expect assisted voluntary departures to be low for those groups receiving temporary protection, while the cancellation of a temporary protection policy may be the start of an increase in AVR participation. In this chapter, we will look at a few instances in which temporary protection policies have been instituted, and subsequently cancelled, and whether these developments have indeed impacted on the willingness to leave the Netherlands voluntarily in this way. In contrast to the previous chapter, we cannot rely on indicators as r and R^2 to do so. While we again use our annual AVR figures, these need to be compared to specific moments in time when protection policies are instituted or cancelled, rather than to another set of annual data. We will therefore describe the trends in AVR and seek to identify whether the moments of instituting or cancelling protection policies represent turning points in these trends.

4.2 TEMPORARY PROTECTION POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC NATIONALITIES

In 2006, the Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (*Adviescommissie Vreemdelingenzaken*, hereinafter: ACVZ) published a report on the effects of temporary group-based (or 'categorical') protection policies on asylum influx.[74] This study includes

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[72] Under the different legal regimes of the last two decades, these policies have had different bases and different terms have been used. For the sake of clarity, we will refer to these policies as 'temporary protection policies'.

[73] This may apply to persons from a specific region within a country, but also, for example, to specific ethnic groups.

[74] ACVZ (2006), *Effecten van groepsgebonden asielbeleidsmaatregelen: voorstudie*, The Hague, Advisory Committee for Migration Affairs: http://www.acvz.org/publicaties/VS-ACVZ-NR13-2006.pdf, accessed on 6 October 2009.

details of gr oup-based protection policies since t he ea rly 1990s, c overing eleven nationalities.[75] This, in c ombination w ith t he results o f ou r own r econstruction o f t he development of Dutch voluntary r eturn policy[76], have le d u s to the identification of fifteen nationalities for which some form o f temporary, group-based protection was instituted during the l ast two de cades.[77] This group i s n ot n ecessarily e xhaustive, a s t hese po licies do no t always co ver al l nationals o f a certain country. I n most i nstances of group-based pr otection policies, it i s d ifficult t o establish a c lear link w ith a vailable AVR statistics, which do not provide more d etailed c haracteristics than nationality. G iven th ese l imitations, a nd considering t he relative importance f or the A VR p rogramme of p articular countries, o nly Afghanistan, Angola and Iran are covered here in detail. A few 'smaller' AVR countries are discussed briefly.

Afghanistan
Until the cancellation of the 'categorical protection' for Afghanistan on 1 5 September 2002, some form of protection had been in place since the start of 1994.[78] Figure 9 below shows the developments in the number of assisted voluntary departures of Afghans from the Netherlands. In this figure, the start and end dates of the group-based protection policy are indicated.[79]

Figure 9: REAN-assisted voluntary departures and asylum applications of Afghans, 1993-2008

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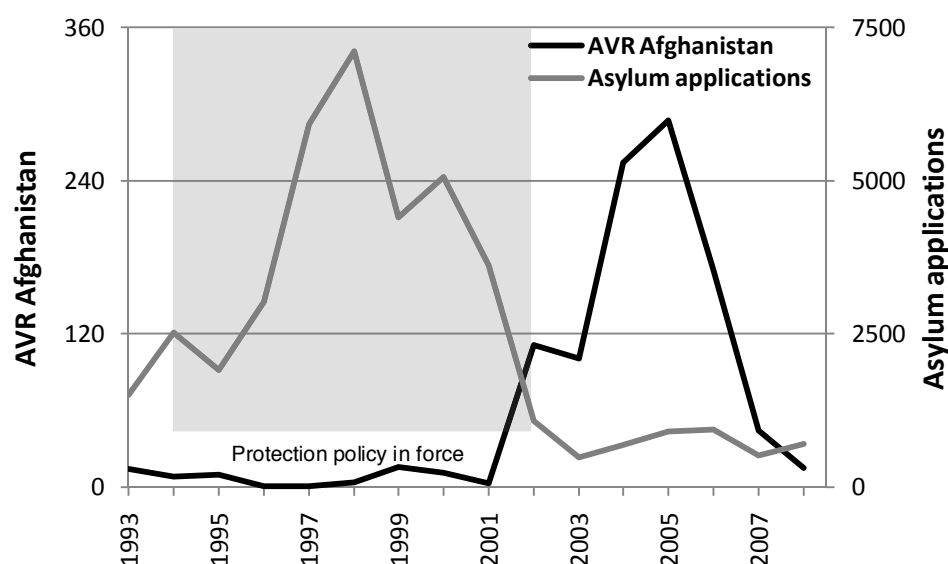
[75] This does not mean that all persons in possession of those nationalities were al ways co vered by the protection policies. For example, c ategorical protection has been granted to persons coming from Central Iraq, rather than from ot her r egions, or f or s pecific e thnic (such a s T utsis f rom the DRC) or ot her g roups (for e xample, homosexuals from Iran). See annex 1 of the ACVZ report for an overview of these protection policies.

[76] See t he report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of v oluntary r eturn policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010).

[77] These n ationalities include individuals f rom A fghanistan, A ngola, B osnia-Herzegovina, B urundi, t he Democratic R epublic of C ongo, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Ivory C oast, K osovo, Liberia, R wanda, S ierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

[78] From J anuary 1994, various l egal variations on t he pr otection pol icy were i n f orce f or A fghans. A t l east between N ovember 1998 a nd A pril 2001, pe rsons having pr eviously s tayed i n P akistan were e xcluded. F or a complete o verview, see ACVZ (2006), *Effecten van gr oepsgebonden as ielbeleidsmaatregelen: v oorstudie*, The Hague, Advisory Committee for Migration Affairs: p. 45.

[79] Please note that we only h ave end-of-year data (also see below) for both asylum applications and AVR. For this reason, if a protection policy is instituted or cancelled during the course of a year, such as the cancellation of categorical protection for Afghans in September 2002, the end of the protection period in the graph is *the end of 1992*.

It is clear that while the protection policy was in force, the number of persons departing voluntarily with REAN assistance remained at a stable and low level, never exceeding sixteen cases.[80] The end-of-year figures for 2002 (the year in which the policy was cancelled) show a sharp increase of AVR movements by Afghans.[81] However, while this increase seems to coincide with the cancellation of the protection policy, some caution has to be taken in the interpretation of this trend. While in 2002 the number of REAN-assisted departures of Afghans increases dramatically from three at the end of 2001 to 111 at the end of 2002, our data do not provide any indication of the spread of these 111 cases during the year. In theory, all 111 departures in 2002 could have taken place in a single month, or even on a single day. As such, we cannot say with certainty whether the increase in voluntary departures already started before the official cancellation of the protection policy, or whether this took place after 15 September 2002. However, what is clear is that, compared to 2001 – the last entire year during which the protection policy was in force – the number of assisted voluntary departures in 2003 remained high with 101 cases. In the following two years, the number of persons almost triples, and then starts to decrease again. In 2006, 170 Afghans are still assisted under the REAN programme; in 2007 this has reduced to 44, with AVR participation levels in 2008 being back to that of the protection policy era.

At face value, it seems that the cancellation of the protection policy for Afghans has indeed had an effect, if temporary, on the number of Afghans returning voluntarily. However, this development should also be seen in light of the link between asylum influx and AVR discussed in the previous chapter. Figure 9 also shows that the number of asylum applications of Afghans in the Netherlands starts rising in 1995 and reaches a peak in 1997 and 1998, only to drop from 2001 onwards. Keeping in mind the fact that a large proportion in variance in AVR numbers of Afghans can be explained from fluctuations in asylum applications, with a delay of six to seven years, it cannot be stated with certainty that the cancellation of the protection policy is responsible for the changes in AVR trends discussed above. Moreover, the delay itself might have been prolonged due to the protection policy.

Angola

Angola provides a somewhat different picture from Afghanistan. In contrast to Afghanistan, asylum applications for Angolans were still high when the protection policy, in place since August 1998, was cancelled in June 2001, as shown in figure 10.[82] Only in the first full year after the cancellation of the policy did asylum numbers start to decrease. In that same year, the upturn in AVR participation really started to show: from four cases in 2001, to 37 in 2002, to 228 in 2003, and onwards to more than 400 cases in the three following years. While again we need to take into consideration that there is a considerable correlation between asylum influx and AVR participation[83], in this case with a delay of four to five years, in the case of

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[80] It should be noted, however, that also in 1993, the year before the protection policy was implemented, only fourteen persons used the AVR programme to leave the Netherlands. Also, it should be recalled that much of the period during which the protection policy was in place coincides with the early years of the REAN programme, during which voluntary departure numbers were generally lower than those of the late 1990s and onwards.

[81] In this case, virtually all AVR movements from the Netherlands were returns to Afghanistan. Of the 1.018 Afghans making use of AVR facilities between 1996 and 2008 (the period for which returns and resettlements can be split), only 76 (7,5%) resettled in third countries, with the remainder traveling back to Afghanistan. For the period since 2002, the resettlement percentage is even lower (5,6%).

[82] In fact, the policy was not to specifically provide protection to Angolans, but gave them a 'delay of the legal obligation to depart'. This meant that Angolans, although not necessarily in possession of an asylum status, did not face a legal obligation to leave the Netherlands under this policy.

[83] This mostly covers returns to Angola. Our data shows only 5 cases of resettlement to a third country between 1996-2008, all occurring after 2002. Between 1996 and 2008 1.764 Angolans made use of the REAN programme, making the rate of resettlement only 0,3%.

Angola the cancellation of the protection policy seems to represent a very important turning point in the number of persons making use of the REAN-programme.

Figure 10: REAN-assisted voluntary departures and asylum applications of Angolans, 1993-2008
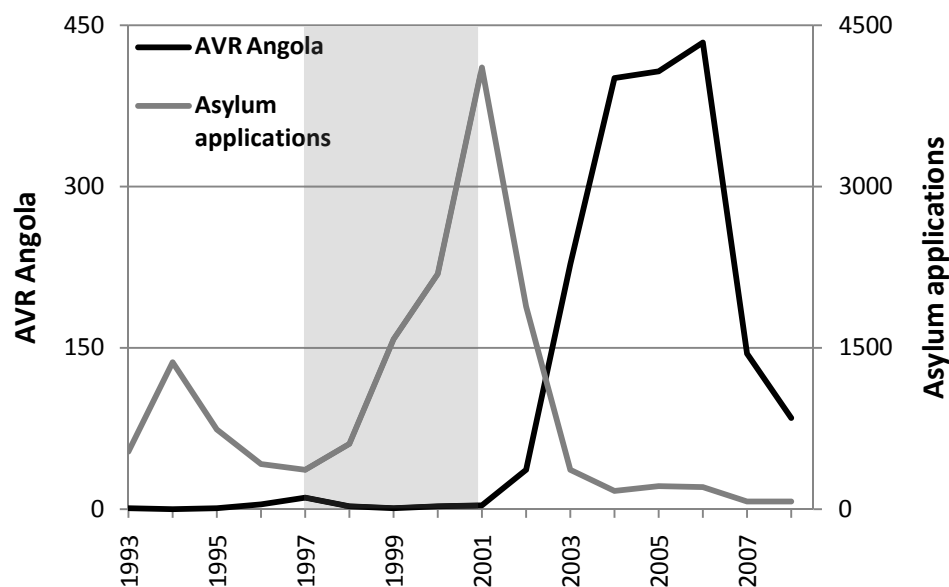
Iran

Specific protection of Iranians, at least a 'stay of departure', was granted at the beginning of 1990.[84] This policy was upheld until January 1995. Afterwards, Iranians who did not receive protection on individual grounds were legally obliged to leave the Netherlands. This situation did not last long. In October 1997, Iranian asylum seekers were temporarily allowed to remain in the Netherlands again, this time until January of 1999. As such, there were two periods in which Iranian nationals were either protected or otherwise allowed to remain, on a group, rather than individual, basis (see figure 11).[85] The effects of these policies on the willingness to depart voluntarily are somewhat difficult to interpret in the case of Iranian asylum seekers. We see that in 1993 (the first year for which nationality-specific data is available), 68 Iranians made use of the REAN programme to leave the Netherlands[86], quite a considerable number for that year[87]. Despite the lack of a legal obligation to leave in that period, this number continued to rise in 1994. This trend continued in 1995 and 1996, when no specific policy was in place for Iranians. As such, it is unclear what the impact of the cancellation of the protection policy on AVR participation was in this instance. Conversely, the influx of asylum seekers from Iran clearly takes a tumble after the protection policy is no longer in place.

The end of 1997, the year a specific policy for Iranians is instituted for the second time, does show a small decrease in AVR participation of Iranians, although this is still higher than in the first few years of the REAN programme. While the policy is cancelled at the beginning of 1999, the end-of-year AVR figures show that the number of voluntary departures are still

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[84] See ACVZ (2006), *Effecten van groepsgebonden asielbeleidsmaatregelen: voorstudie*, The Hague, Advisory Committee for Migration Affairs: p. 47.

[85] Subsequent protection policies have been instituted for Iranians, but these have only covered very specific groups, in particular homosexuals.

[86] As discussed in 2.3, Iranians are among those nationalities for which a considerable part of voluntary departures have consisted of resettlements to third countries. In the period 1996-2008 this was approximately 30% of all Iranian REAN participants. No data for the period before 1996 is available.

[87] Iranians rank as the fourth-largest group of REAN participants in 1993, see annex 1.

more or less similar to those of the previous, 'protected' years. Only in 2000 and 2001 do AVR movements of Iranians start to increase significantly. As with the Afghans and Angolans, this rise is temporary, followed by an unsteady, but eventually very definite, decrease in AVR participation figures. At least in the case of the second cancellation of the 'stay of departure', it seems that an effect on AVR participation can be identified, although there is a slight delay in this effect.

Figure 11: REAN-assisted voluntary departures and asylum applications of Iranians, 1993-2008
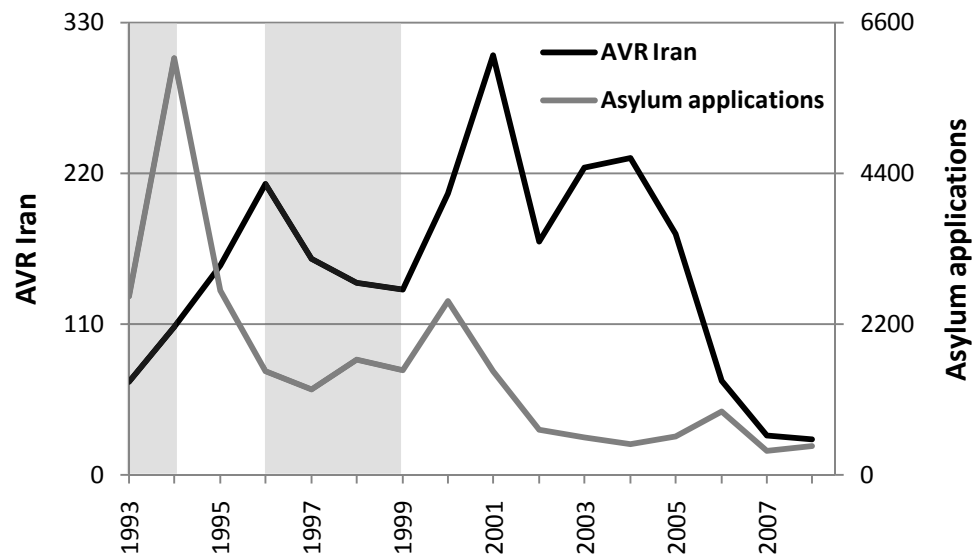
Smaller AVR countries: Burundi and Sierra Leone

Although accounting for considerably fewer voluntary departures, the smaller AVR countries which have been subject to temporary protection policies, such as Burundi and Sierra Leone (see figures 12 and 13 below) show similar results as the cases of Afghanistan and Angola: low numbers of voluntary departures while the protection policy is in place, but also beforehand, a temporary increase in AVR after these policies are cancelled, albeit with a slight delay.

Figure 12: REAN-assisted voluntary departures and asylum applications of Burundians, 1993-2008

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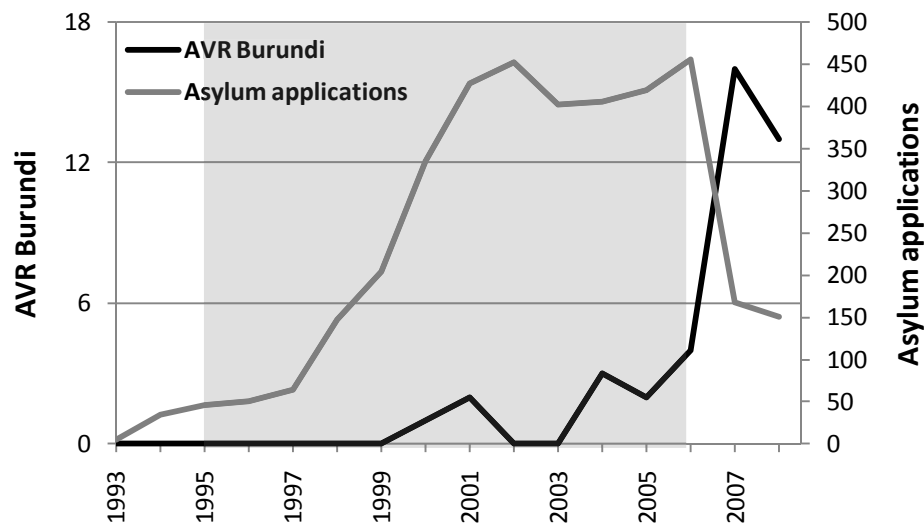
Figure 13: REAN-assisted voluntary departures and asylum applications of Sierra Leoneans, 1993-2008
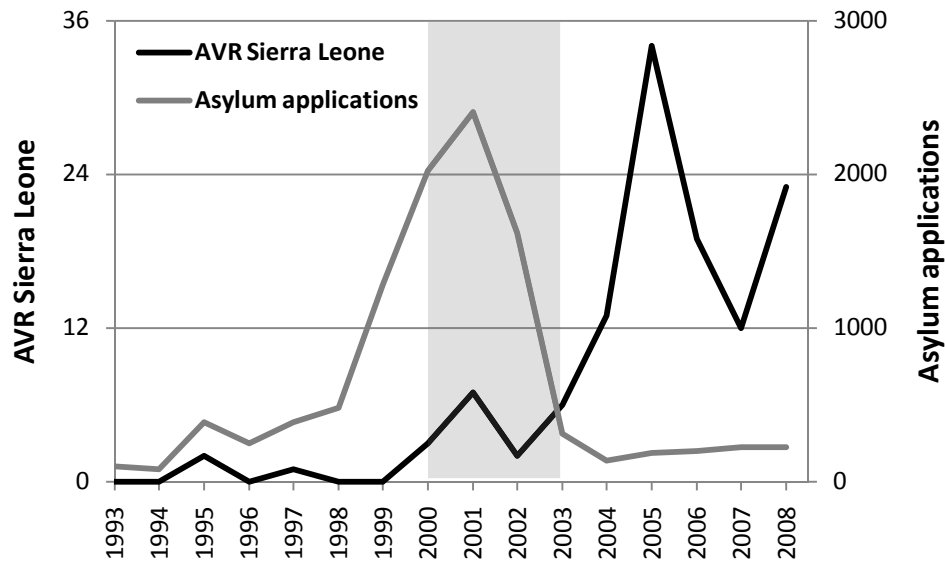
As with the relationship between asylum influx and AVR, we should note here that we have no way of knowing with which individuals we are dealing in the AVR caseload. It is equally likely that a rise in voluntary departures is caused by persons previously protected, whose temporary status has been revoked, as by persons who arrive after the cancellation of the policy, who may be confronted with an obligation to leave very shortly after their arrival.

Additionally, while we observe some changes in AVR trends that coincide with the institution, and particularly with the cancellation, of protection policies, other factors may be at play here. One in particular deserves attention here: the (perception of) the actual security situation in the countries of origin of asylum seekers. The cancellation of protection policies signifies that, in the opinion of the Dutch government, the security situation in a particular country has sufficiently improved to allow for return. That AVR increases after such cancellation, rather than indicating that the lack of a legal status in the Netherlands triggers departure (in most cases return), might also point to asylum seekers themselves having perceived a positive change in the situation in their countries of origin. The fact that there is some delay in the increase in AVR participation after the cancellation of a protection policy could also indicate that this change of perception is incremental, while the change in the policy situation is very sudden (either the policy applies, or it does not). This, however, remains speculation without further qualitative insights.[88] From this perspective, the situation of Iraqi asylum seekers in the Netherlands, for whom temporary protection on a group basis was cancelled at the end of 2008 (and is not included in this report) could provide an interesting basis for further investigation.

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[88] If, for example, the lack of a legal status is the primary trigger for voluntary departure, the observed delay may be due to the fact that procedures to obtain asylum are likely to continue beyond the moment that a protection policy is cancelled. Furthermore, these 'triggers' are likely to be different in individual cases, and, as the literature suggests, cannot simply be reduced to a single factor.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

Connection between protection policies and AVR
- For 'asylum' countries, cancellation of group-based, temporary protection policies are likely to coincide with an increase in the number of persons making use of the AVR programme.
- In general, there is a slight delay after the cancellation before this increase in AVR becomes noticeable.
- The increase in AVR participation, however, is temporary and often only very short-term.

Changes in protection policies as determinants for fluctuations in AVR of asylum seekers
- In each of the cases in which increases in AVR participation follow the cancellation of a protection policy, further investigation may take place to determine whether this is due to the policy change and subsequent loss of legal status, or to other factors.
- These other factors may include, but are not limited to, previous fluctuations in the number of asylum applications and perceived changes in the situation of the countries of origin of asylum seekers.

5 – EMPLOYMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the introduction, there are many factors that may lead to a decision to leave voluntarily, outside issues related to security in the country of origin and the possibility of obtaining a legal (asylum) status in the Netherlands. Another factor that is commonly regarded of importance, particularly for the migration motivations of non-asylum migrants, are economic conditions in the host country and in the country of origin. Worsening economic conditions in the host country are considered to be an important push factor for voluntary departure, while economic improvements in the country of origin may act as a pull factor. In this chapter, we will specifically look at the role that employment opportunities and unemployment play in the decisions of non-asylum migrants.[89] Our primary measure to test the relationship between employment and AVR are unemployment rates, both in the Netherlands and in countries of origin. We will look at how these affect the AVR participation of some of the two main 'non-asylum' nationalities, as identified in chapter 2: Ukrainians and Brazilians.

We should note that the unemployment rates used here provide an indication of the state of the *official* labour market. However, as discussed in chapter 2, a considerable portion of the non-asylum AVR participants has an irregular status in the Netherlands, and can therefore not be found in the formal economy. Informal employment is not covered by this indicator. However, it does provide the closest approximation of useful data for our purposes, and it is therefore included.

5.2 UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS AND AVR

In this section, we look at the correlation between unemployment in the Netherlands and voluntary departure.[90] If a relationship between unemployment in the Netherlands and voluntary departure exists, we expect to find a *positive* relationship[91], which is that increases in unemployment can be linked to increases in voluntary departure. First, we will have a look at the overall number of voluntary departures facilitated by the REAN programme. These overall figures incorporate both asylum and non-asylum AVR participants. As in chapter 3, we also incorporate a time-lag effect into the analysis. Table 12 below shows the correlations between unemployment in the Netherlands and AVR, with time-lag scenarios of 0 (no delay) up to +4 (unemployment in a certain year is compared to AVR four years later).

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[89] It should be noted that issues related to employment may also be extremely relevant for asylum seekers in making their return decision, just as non-asylum migrants' motivations may also be related to security concerns. From this perspective, a focus on unemployment, as provided in this chapter, is a simplification of the complex, multicausal decision to leave and return voluntarily. However, to be able to test the link between employment opportunities and AVR, this simplification is necessary. As economic motivations are primarily ascribed to non-asylum migrants, we will focus on this group here.

[90] All data on unemployment rates in the Netherlands were obtained from the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS), see http://statline.cbs.nl/statweb.

[91] Therefore all tests in this section are one-tailed.

Table 12: Correlation between unemployment rates and voluntary departure from the Netherlands, 1992-2008

Time lag in years	Correlation (*r*)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	-.368	.135	No, .073 > .05
1	-.471	.222	Yes, $p < .05$
2	-.568	.323	Yes, $p < .05$
3	-.578	.334	Yes, $p < .05$
4	-.430	.185	No, .072 > .05

Table 12 shows that the +1, +2 and +3 scenarios provide us with statistically significant correlations. However, these relationships are all negative. Even when unemployment rates and departures are plotted in a graph (figure 14), this outcome cannot be adequately explained. One possible reason for this unexpected result may be the fact that the 'start up' years of the REAN programme (in the early 1990s, when departures are much lower than later in the programme) distort the effect. A distorting effect might also be found in the inclusion of AVR participants, for whom other factors (such as the availability of protection, see chapter 4) may have been more relevant than employment conditions. It should be noted that the patterns of the lines representing unemployment and AVR show considerable overlap from 2001 onwards, even without a time delay. This may be the result of the increasing proportion of non-asylum migrants who have become part of the AVR caseload since that time.

Figure 14 – Unemployment rates in the Netherlands and REAN-assisted departures, all nationalities (1992-2008) (no delay)
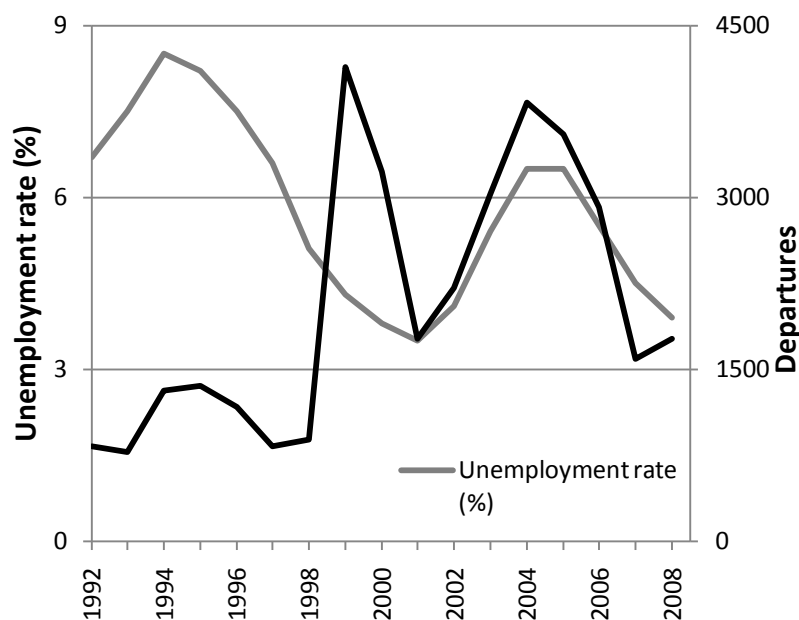
With the overall picture not providing evidence of the existence of a positive relationship between unemployment in the Netherlands and departure, we will take a more detailed look at this relationship with regards to some of the main 'non-asylum' nationalities of AVR participants.

When we look at figure 15, which plots the voluntary departures of Ukrainians in relation to Dutch unemployment rates, we notice again that the patterns are very similar since, approximately, 2001. In these years, fluctuations in unemployment are more or less mirrored by fluctuations in voluntary departures. However, this is not the case for the period before

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2001. As table 13 shows, the long-term analysis does not provide us with any significant positive correlations, even if a time-lag effect is incorporated.[92]

Figure 15 – Unemployment rates in the Netherlands and REAN-assisted departures, Ukrainians only (1993-2008) (no delay)
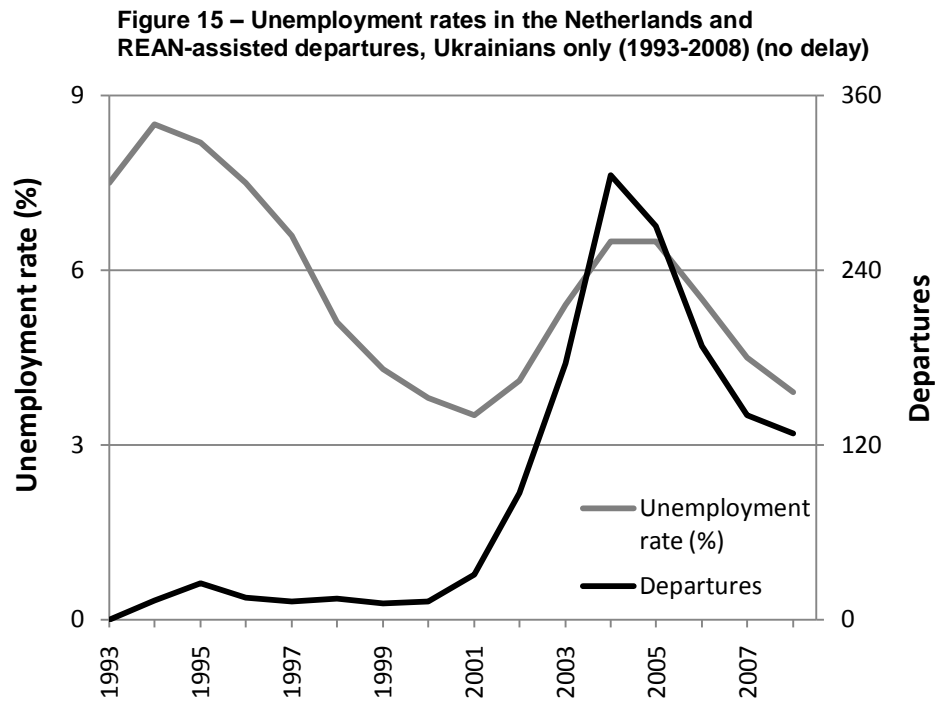
Table 13: Correlation between unemployment rates and Voluntary, Ukrainians only (1993-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (*r*)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	-.066	.004	No, .404 > .05
1	-.211	.045	No, .225 > .05
2	-.505	.255	Yes, $p < .05$
3	-.777	.604	Yes, $p < .01$
4	-.915	.837	Yes, $p < .001$

When we compare this to the correlations between unemployment and voluntary departures of Brazilians (table 14), a similar picture emerges: no significant correlations are found. The analysis rather provides us with negative correlations.

Table 14: Correlation between unemployment rates and Voluntary departures, Brazilians only (1993-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (*r*)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	-.269	.072	No, .156 > .05
1	-.217	.047	No, .219 > .05
2	-.243	.059	No, .202 > .05
3	-.362	.131	No, .112 > .05
4	-.581	.338	Yes, $p < .05$

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[92] The virtual absence of voluntary departures of Ukrainians until 2001 are likely to have caused that the outcomes of an analysis over the entire period 1993-2008 has led to negative correlations, particularly when a time-lag effect is taken into consideration.

This is reflected in figure 16. While unemployment rates in the Netherlands have fluctuated, the number of voluntary departures of Brazilians have continued to rise, seemingly unaffected by the Dutch employment situation.

Figure 16 – Unemployment rates in the Netherlands and REAN-assisted departures, Brazilians only (1993-2008) (no delay)
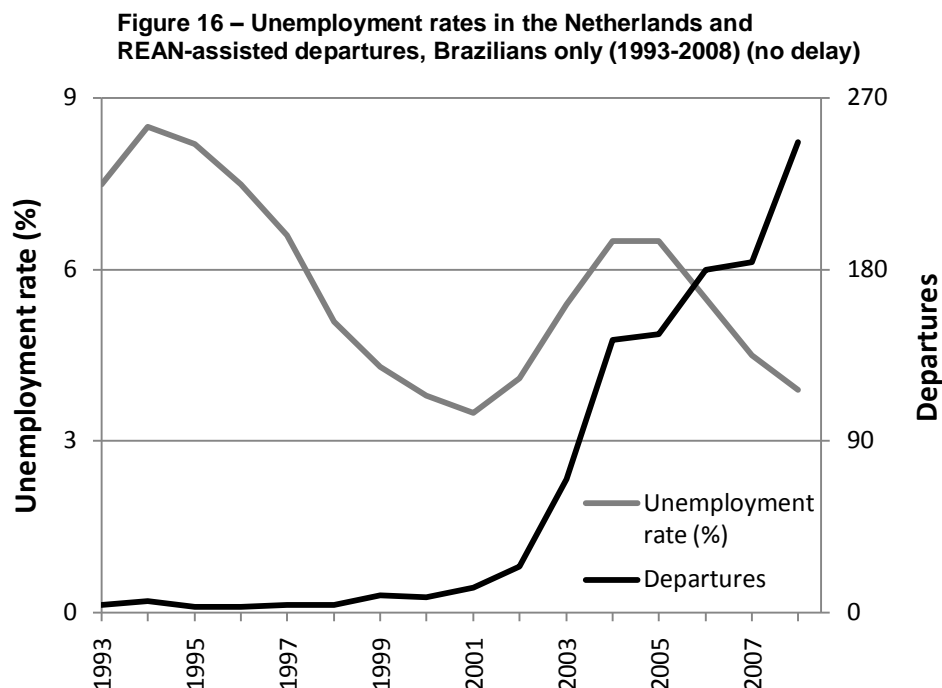
Our exploration of the connection between unemployment and AVR is necessarily limited. Regardless of this, neither the overall perspective, nor a closer look at the two largest 'non-asylum' countries where we might expect the connection to manifest itself most clearly, provides us with evidence that unemployment levels in the Netherlands have a direct impact on the willingness of migrants to return. As noted, a gap in the analysis may be that we only have data about the formal employment situation in the Netherlands, which is less relevant for irregular migrants who make use of AVR services. Also, the difference between economic opportunities in the Netherlands may be favourable, compared to the situation in the migrant's country of origin, regardless of changes in Dutch unemployment rates. From this perspective, it is useful to also consider the economic possibilities in migrants' countries of origin.

5.3 UNEMPLOYMENT IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND AVR

In this section, we look at the correlation between unemployment in the Netherlands and voluntary *return* rather than departure. After all, if we want to look at the effects of factors in the country of origin, we can only take into consideration those AVR participants who return to those countries. In this case, we would expect to find a negative relationship; if unemployment rates in the country of origin is high, this would deter migrants to return, while decreasing employment rise could act as a pull factor. The correlation between unemployment rates in the Ukraine and the number of Ukrainians voluntarily returning from the Netherlands (including time-lag effect) results in table 15 below.

Table 15: Correlation between unemployment rates in Ukraine (1995-2008) and voluntary returns of Ukrainians from the Netherlands (1996-2008)[93]

Time lag in years	Correlation (*r*)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	-.581	.338	Yes, $p < .05$
1	-.209	.044	No, $.246 > .05$
2	.045	.002	No, $.445 > .05$
3	.380	.144	No, $.124 > .05$
4	.736	.542	Yes, $p < .01$

We see a negative relationship between unemployment and return when no time-lag is applied. When a larger time lag is applied, the relationship becomes positive, with a time-lag of four years being statistically significant. The results, therefore, do not provide us with evidence that, in the case of the Ukraine, a negative relationship between unemployment rates and voluntary return exists. The fluctuations in unemployment and return are visualized below in figure 17.

Figure 17: Unemployment rates in Ukraine (1995-2008) and voluntary returns (1996-2008) (no delay)
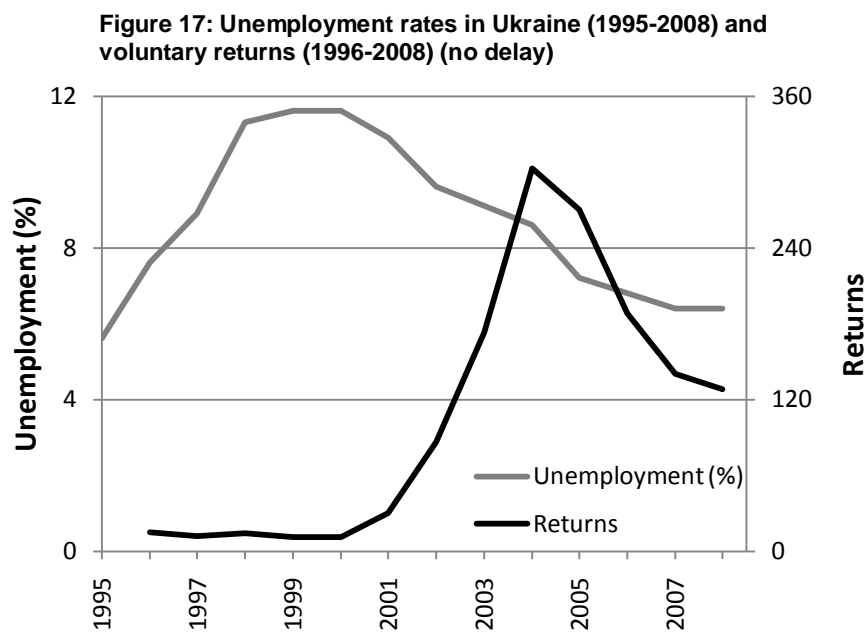
As figure 17 shows, while unemployment rates rose during the 1990s, returns were hardly affected; these were low throughout this period. Several potential explanations could account for this. For example, the number of Ukrainian migrants in the Netherlands may have been low during the 1990s, which would account, to some extent, for a low demand for AVR. However, the consistent low numbers of returnees may also be attributed to poor prospects in the Ukraine. Indeed, after 2000, when unemployment rates start dropping, we see a significant increase in voluntary returns.[94] This trend is broken by the decrease in voluntary returns from 2004 onwards. During this same period, the unemployment rate in Ukraine also keeps

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[93] Unemployment statistics were acquired from the International Labour Organization's LABORSTA database, http://laborsta.ilo.org, accessed on 12 December 2009.

[94] This does not mean that this necessarily was the cause of this increase in returns. Other factors, such as increased possibilities to travel between the Netherlands and Ukraine (including changing visa provisions) may also have contributed to this.

decreasing. This accounts for the lack of a significant negative correlation, and even for the existence of a significant positive correlation when the time-lag is increased.[95]

The case of Brazil also does not provide us with statistical evidence that unemployment in the country of origin negatively correlates with voluntary returns (see table 16).

Table 16: Correlation between unemployment rates in Brazil (1993-2007)[96] and voluntary returns of Brazilians from the Netherlands (1996-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	-.055	.003	No, .432 > .05
1	.204	.042	No, .252 > .05
2	.426	.181	No, .073 > .05
3	.652	.425	Yes, $p < .01$
4	.730	.533	Yes, $p < .01$

From figure 18 it becomes immediately clear why this is the case.

Figure 18: Unemployment rates in Brazil (1993-2007[97]) and voluntary returns (1996-2008) (no delay)
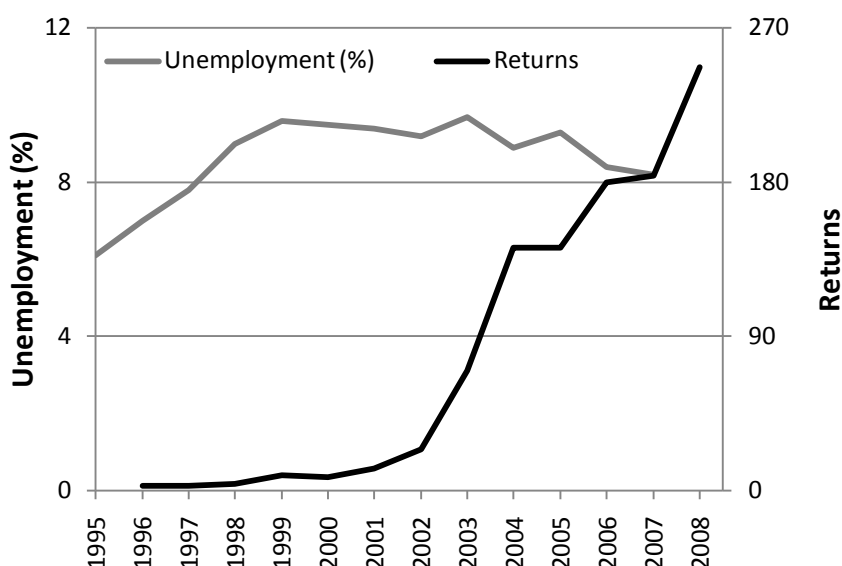
As some ups and downs occur in the unemployment rates in Brazil, the number of returns to Brazil rises almost uninterruptedly. As such, no clear link between the two data sets can be established.

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[95] In this case, the earlier part of the 'unemployment' line in figure 17 is compared with the later part of the 'return' line, which would cause a significant overlap.

[96] Unemployment statistics were acquired from the International Labour Organization's LABORSTA database, http://laborsta.ilo.org, accessed on 12 December 2009. In the case of Brazil, statistics for 1994, 2000 and 2008 were not available.

[97] In the absence of statistics for 1994 and 2000, the average of the previous and successive years have been used to provide an estimate of the unemployment rate in this graph.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between unemployment rates in the Netherlands and AVR participation
- In recent years, a considerable overlap between fluctuations in unemployment rates in the Netherlands and AVR participation levels can be identified. This is mirrored by the case of Ukrainian AVR participants, but not by the case of Brazilian AVR participants.
- However, when the entire period for which AVR data are available (for all nationalities) is considered, no statistical evidence for the existence of a positive relationship (more unemployment – more departure; less unemployment – less departure) can be found.

The relationship between unemployment rates in countries of origin and AVR participation
- In the case of the Ukraine, a short period where the expected negative relationship between unemployment and return (more unemployment – less return; less unemployment – more return) seems to be verified. However, the long-term data do not provide statistical evidence of this negative relationship.
- In the case of Brazil, no negative relationship between unemployment and return can be established.

Factors impacting on the analysis
- Unemployment is only one indicator of the economic situation in the Netherlands or in countries of origin. Moreover, official labour market data refer only to the formal economy.
- The analysis focused on 'non-asylum' AVR participants, as their migration motivations are generally considered to be based on economic factors. However, non-asylum AVR seems to be substantial only in recent years, providing too little data for a long-term analysis.
- The analysis provides a simplified perspective on migration decisions. Psychological, social, legal and political factors in both the Netherlands and countries of origin have an indirect impact on economic prospects at a personal level. The unemployment rates, as they are used here, represent a macro-economic factor, which is likely to have a less direct and less observable impact on migration decisions than micro-economic factors.

6 –COUNTRY-SPECIFIC AVR PROGRAMMES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the implementation of the Dutch assisted voluntary return programme, several projects and schemes have been launched to specifically facilitate the voluntary departure of particular national groups. Usually, these have been aimed at nationalities which accounted for large numbers of asylum seekers present in the Netherlands, often starting around the time that temporary protection policies for such groups ceased.

These country-specific schemes may take the form of additional financial incentives, or material assistance and referrals provided in the country of origin (so-called post-arrival assistance), or a combination of both. As a rule of thumb, these schemes have been complementary to REAN, which provides for the transportation and (in specific cases) a small cash grant.[98] These country-specific schemes can be seen as forms of sustainable return and reintegration, but the main policy rationale may also be understood as to attempt to make voluntary departure more attractive. In this chapter, we will look at the quantitative outcomes of some of these country-specific programmes, and investigate whether they have contributed to more returns or departures.[99]

6.2 ETHIOPIA

From the early beginnings of the REAN programme, there has been discussion about providing additional assistance to returnees in their own countries of origin, both as a means of easing their reintegration and aiding local development, and as way to provide better prospects in those countries, and thus making return more attractive. After lengthy discussions about the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Development Cooperation in this respect, a first programme was launched under the name Facilitated Return of Rejected Asylum Seekers (*Gefaciliteerde Terugkeer voor Afgewezen Asielzoekers*, hereinafter: GTAA).[100] This programme was supposed to be applied to several countries, starting with Ethiopia and Angola. The launch of the Ethiopia GTAA scheme in August 1997 marked the start of the first, structured country-specific AVR programme to become

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[98] In principle, therefore, all persons having benefitted from country-specific schemes instituted by the Dutch government are also registered as having departed under REAN. However, the reverse is not always the case; even if schemes are aimed at specific nationalities, there are usually additional eligibility criteria, which are more limited than those of REAN. As such, it cannot be assumed that all persons of a specific nationality who are included in the REAN statistics in the period that a country-specific scheme was operational have actually benefitted from said scheme. Where possible, we have attempted to verify the extent of overlap between the schemes and REAN, but – due to lack of official evaluations and reports of some schemes – this is not always possible.

[99] In most cases, the schemes – particularly those providing post-arrival assistance – have been aimed at *return* to the country of origin of the beneficiaries, rather than general departure from the Netherlands. For this reason, we will specifically look at return figures. These may not vary much from overall departure figures for most countries, but in some cases (e.g. that of the Bosnian caseload) there may be a substantial difference.

[100] The debate about post-arrival reintegration assistance and the link with development is described at length in the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010).

operational in th e N etherlands.[101] The incentives i ncluded cash grants, a s well a s a dditional assistance to returnees to set u p their own small-scale r eintegration projects, such a s a small business, by a project o ffice w hich w as l aunched in the spring of 1998. The project i nitially aimed to assist with the return of 700 to 900 rejected asylum seekers from Ethiopia.

In figure 19 below, the returns to Ethiopia from the Netherlands in the period leading u p to, during a nd a fter the operational phase o f the G TAA scheme a re pr esented.[102] The t ime i n which GTAA facilities were available to returnees to Ethiopia is marked by the grey block on the graph.[103]

Figure 19: Returns to Ethiopia before, during and after the GTAA scheme
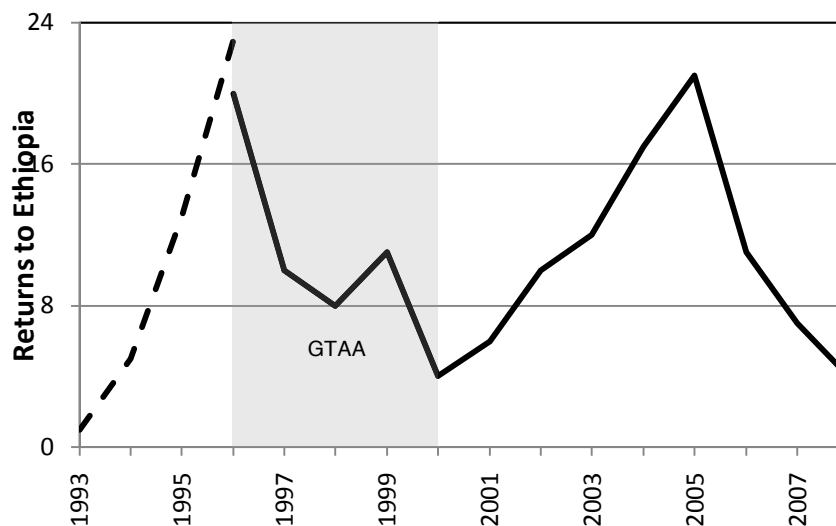
The first years of the REAN programme, before the GTAA scheme came into force, show a steady increase in departures of Ethiopians, from five persons in 1993 to 23 in 1996 (of whom 20 returned). Undoubtedly, GTAA was introduced at this time to reinforce this – from a return policy p erspective – positive trend. H owever, in sharp contrast, a t the end of 1997, the first year in which GTAA was available to Ethiopian returnees, this number had dropped to 10.[104] This i s followed by e ight returns in 1998, eleven in 1999 a nd only four at the end of 2000, when the GTAA scheme was ended. As such, the GTAA period shows an o verall downward pattern of returns of E thiopians. I ronically, a slow b ut steady u pturn i n r eturn figures (continuing until 2005) seems to s tart s hortly after t he G TAA s cheme for E thiopia w as abandoned, although they did not a pproximate the levels t hat w ere aimed f or w hen GTAA was set up.

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[101] In 1994-1995, a d hoc measures ha d be en t aken i n relation to t he return of a group of Vietnamese a sylum seekers, including cooperation agreements with the Vietnamese government, financial support of the returnees, and the promise of development aid to the country. However, as a comprehensive return scheme, these measures never really took flight (see the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010)).

[102] As data can only be split according to returns and resettlement from 1996 onwards, for the period 1993-1995 general AVR figures are provided as a rough indication of the number of returns (dotted line). In 1996, a total of 23 cases left the Netherlands voluntarily, of whom 20 returned to Ethiopia.

[103] As we only ha ve annual figures, we have marked all years in which the GTAA scheme was active, even if this was only for part of the year. Please note again that years on the Y-axis indicate the end-of-year figures. As such, the marking of the GTAA period begins immediately after 1996.

[104] The data does not indicate whether (part of) these ten returns took place in the last months of 1997, when the GTAA scheme was active, or before that time.

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At t he e nd of t he G TAA pr ogramme, only fourteen Ethiopians w ere r eported t o ha ve benefitted f rom the s cheme, f alling f ar s hort of the t argets s et.[105] Nevertheless, t his d oes account f or t he m ajority, approximately 60%, o f all E thiopians w ho returned f rom the Netherlands.[106] It should be noted that resettlement, rather than return (whether with GTAA assistance or not) was at least as popular an option during this same period.[107]

It could be argued that without the scheme, the rate of return would have been even lower, but this i s i mpossible t o verify based on these figures. Whether t he G TAA E thiopia scheme contributed to 'new' returnees or was just accessed by those who would have returned anyway, is unclear.

Comparison to other countries
When l ooking at the e ffects of c ountry-specific schemes, a comparison to d evelopments in other European countries, particularly if no similar schemes have been launched there at the same t ime, ca n p rove very valuable. Unfortunately, t he o nly o ther country for w hich da ta of this pe riod is available is Belgium, w hich traditionally ha s on ly ha d v ery f ew c ases o f Ethiopian returnees, never totaling more than seven in a single year.

In f igure 20 w e look a t the G TAA period a nd compare returns of E thiopians from the Netherlands and Belgium.[108].

Figure 20: Returns to Ethiopia from the Netherlands and Belgium, 1993-2002
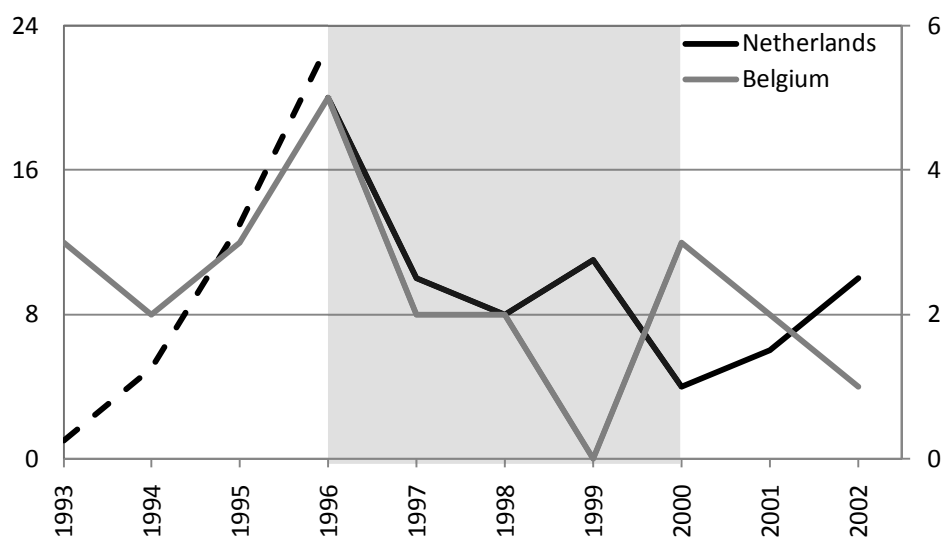
In this figure, the returns from Belgium are pl otted on the right-hand axis, so as to make the data mo re ea sily co mparable. A s w ith the ca se of the Netherlands, we mostly see a declining pattern for Belgium, with the few cases that exist in 1996 'drying up' in the following years.

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[105] K. K oser, *The r eturn and r eintegration of r ejected as ylum s eekers and i rregular migrants,* IOM r esearch series no. 4. Geneva, International Organization for Migration (2001).
[106] We should note that, due to the fact that it is unclear whether the 10 returnees of 1997 fell within the GTAA period, this proportion could be lower. Between 1998 and 2000, years in which the GTAA scheme was active the whole time, 23 returns to Ethiopia took place. Including 1997, this would be 33 cases.
[107] For 1998-2000, the 23 r eturns were complemented by 22 c ases of resettlement to a third country. For 1997-2000, there were 33 returns but 37 cases of resettlement.
[108] In fact, the data for the Netherlands shows returns while for Belgium overall AVR is used.

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It is risky to read too much into the Belgian figures, as small variations (such as two returnees more or less) heavily impact the overall pattern. However, the declining trend of returns from the Netherlands is a strong indicator that: (1) the GTAA programme did not have a positive influence on the willingness of Ethiopians to return, and/or (2) that other factors, external to the programme, made return less attractive.[109]

6.3 ANGOLA

The GTAA format was intended to be applied to other countries as well. Along with Ethiopia, Angola was the first test-case. The GTAA scheme for Angola also failed to produce the desired results for Angola. Due to increasing insecurity, the project office in Luanda was closed in October 1998. As figure 21 shows, 11 Angolans returned in 1997 and 3 in 1998. However, none were facilitated under the GTAA scheme. As such, it is clear that the GTAA programme had no positive impact on the return of Angolans.

Between 2002 and 2006, a second programme for Angola was run, REAN Plus, which provided financial incentives for return, as well as extensive information provisions about reintegration possibilities in Angola.[110]

Figure 21: Returns to Angola and GTAA and REAN+ schemes
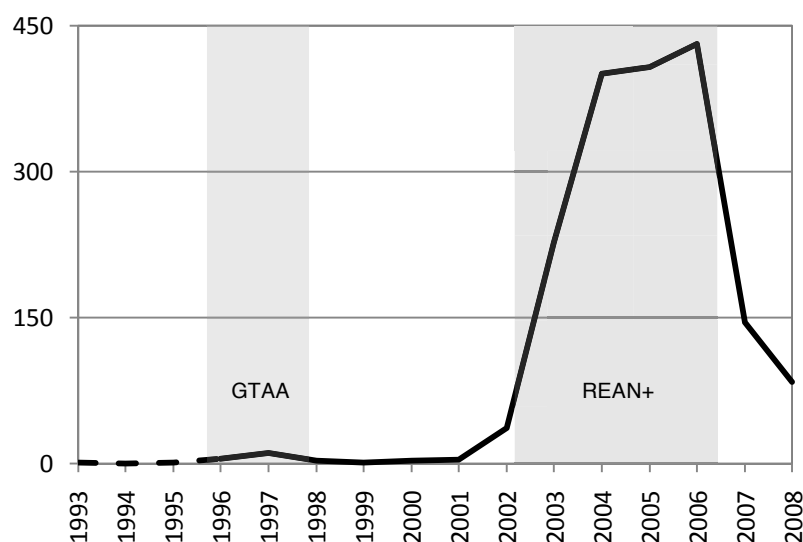
During this period, a significant increase in returns is noticeable. After the REAN Plus scheme ended, the number of Angolans who returned voluntarily drops dramatically. As such, it is clear that the implementation of the REAN Plus programme for Angola coincides with increased returns. To assess whether this should be attributed to the REAN Plus programme, we will compare the rise in returns of Angolans with the developments in other countries. In

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[109]The literature on the GTAA scheme suggests that a major factor was the declining security situation in Ethiopia. The potential positive effects of the GTAA are therefore likely to have been negated by this circumstance, although a host of other factors may also have been at play. See the report: *Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)*, IOM (2010).

[110] Part of the programme was focused on unaccompanied minors, many of whom present in the Netherlands possessed the Angolan nationality.

this case, we focus on Portugal, which – besides the Netherlands – was an important country of destination for Angolans.[111]

Figure 22: Returns to Angola from the Netherlands (1996-2008) and Portugal (1998-2008)
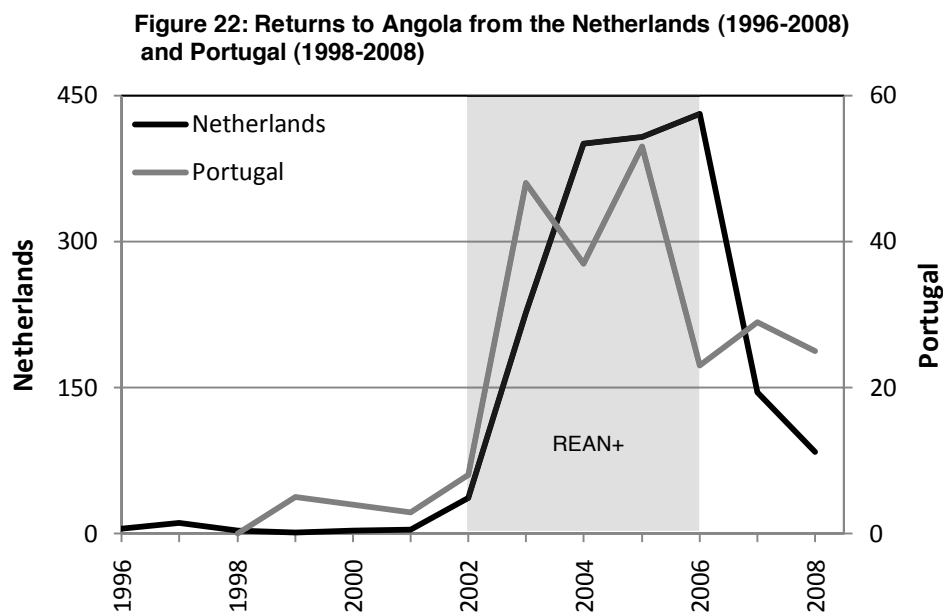
Figure 22 shows us that returns of Angolans from Portugal follows a relatively similar pattern to that of the Netherlands. A peak in returns is clearly observable for both countries in the same period, which coincides with the period in which the REAN Plus programme was implemented in the Netherlands. In the same period, no special programme for Angolans was run in Portugal. This may indicate that other factors, such as the conditions in Angola, may have contributed more to the decision of Angolans to return than the availability of a special return programme.

6.4 AFGHANISTAN

Another approach to assessing the impact of country-specific return programmes on AVR participation levels is by focusing on situations in which the same programmes have been implemented in different European countries. Only one such example is available, the Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan (hereinafter: RANA) programme. This programme provided reception, transport and reintegration facilities in Afghanistan, and was accessible for Afghan returnees from various participating European countries. The majority of voluntarily returning Afghans who made use of the RANA programme were from the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria.[112] Below, we will first examine the returns of Afghans from the Netherlands before moving on to a comparison with these other three countries.

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[111] Portugal was the only country for which data was available where a considerable number of Angolan returnees were registered. Even so, the absolute numbers of Portugal are much lower than those of the Netherlands.

[112] EU/IOM (2007), *Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan, External Evaluation - Final Report*, by L. Hunzinger, July 2007.

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Figure 23: Voluntary returns of Afghans from the Netherlands (1996-2008)
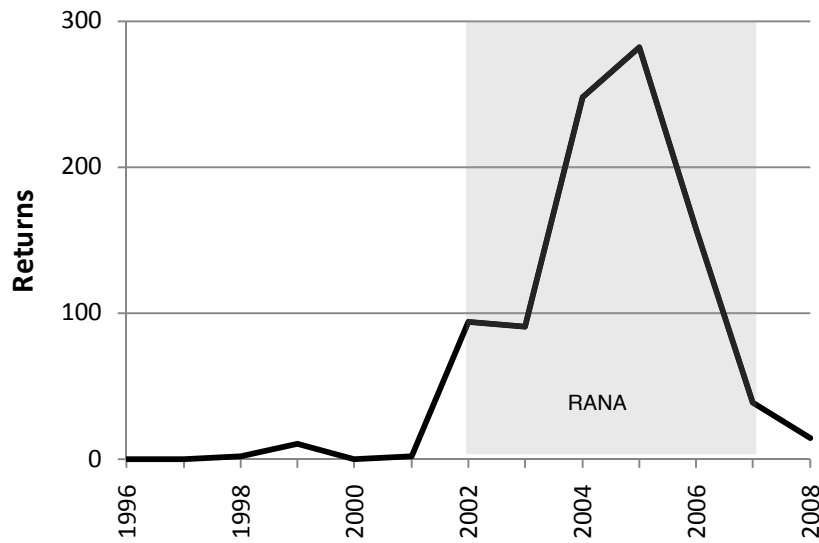
As figure 23 shows, there is only one period in Dutch AVR history during which Afghans returned in considerable numbers. This period coincides with the implementation of the RANA programme. While the RANA programme started operating in mid-2003, figure 23 also shows that 2003 did not produce more returnees than the year before. In fact, the rise in returns that occurred from 2001 to 2002 actually stopped in 2003. [113] In 2004 and 2005, however, the number of Afghan returnees from the Netherlands rose steadily, only to decline again in the following years. This indicates that the availability of assistance in itself was not sufficient to facilitate voluntary return. Particularly the decline in returns between 2005 and 2006, when RANA assistance was still fully available, points to this.

Regardless of whether it actually stimulated return, among those Afghans who had decided to return, the participation in the RANA programme was high. Approximately 740 Afghans who voluntarily returned from the Netherlands made use of RANA assistance. [114] This seems to be the overwhelming majority of the Dutch AVR caseload during the period that the RANA programme was operational. [115]

In figure 24, the return of Afghans from the Netherlands between 2000 and 2008 is compared to the return of Afghans from Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria in that same period.

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[113] It should be noted that, in parallel with the Europe-wide RANA programme, a REAN Plus programme for Afghans (only open to those residing in the Netherlands) was in operation. This programme started in 2002 and may account for the initial increase in returns of Afghans from the Netherlands. From 2003 until 2006, when the REAN Plus programme ended, Afghan returnees from the Netherlands were entitled both to RANA and REAN Plus assistance. Given this overlap, and our interest in the comparison with other European countries, we will only discuss the RANA programme in this section.

[114] The evaluation notes that 2.097 voluntary returnees were assisted under the RANA programme, and 35,2% thereof came from the Netherlands. See EU/IOM (2007), *Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan, External Evaluation - Final Report*, by L. Hunzinger, July 2007, p. 28.

[115] As we only have end-of-year data, it is not possible to say precisely how many Afghans voluntarily returned in the period that the RANA programme was operational as the programme started mid-2003 and ended in April of 2007. However, even if we look at all returns to Afghanistan in 2003-2007, 818 cases in total, it is clear that the vast majority of Afghan returnees benefitted from RANA-assistance.

Figure 24: Returns of Afghans from the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria (2000-2008)
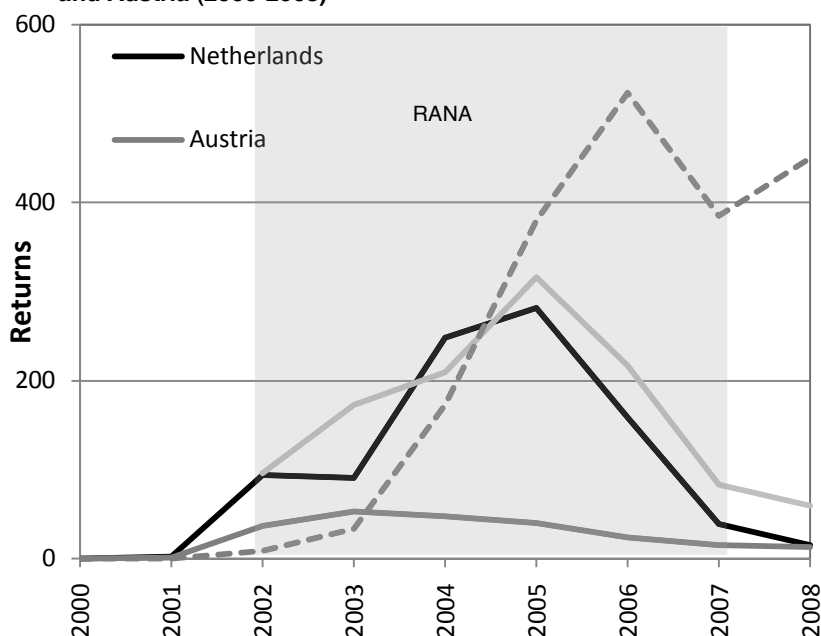
The pattern of returns from Germany is most similar to that of the Netherlands, with an initial rise, but a decline in return figures before the last full year of the RANA programme. The case of Austria a ctually shows a slow de cline d uring most of t he pe riod i n w hich the R ANA programme w as active. I n t he c ase of the U nited K ingdom, returns rise s teadily t hroughout the i mplementation of the programme, with t he e xception of 2007. S ince the pr ogramme ended in April 2007, the decline in returns from the United Kingdom in that year may actually support t he assumption that t he pr ogramme e ncouraged returns. W ithout detailed da ta on whether these returns occurred before or after the end of the RANA programme in 2007, it is not possible to ascertain whether this is the case.

The case of the U nited K ingdom is particularly interesting as A fghan returnees s eem to ha ve made r elatively l ittle u se o f RANA a ssistance.[116] As only a m inority of Afghan v oluntary returnees f rom the U nited K ingdom received RANA facilities, it s eems i mplausible that the rise in returns from the United Kingdom between 2002 a nd 2006 s hould be attributed to the availability of the RANA programme. By contrast, for Germany and Au stria, where no such clear, c ontinuous increase i n returnees to A fghanistan c an be identified, t he pr oportion o f returnees that made use of RANA facilities is comparable to that of the Netherlands.[117]

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[116] IOM facilitated the voluntary departure of 1.494 Afghans from the United Kingdom between 2003 and 2007, while only approximately 180 voluntary returnees from the UK (8,6% of total) were reported to have received RANA assistance. This may be attributed to other programmes open to Afghans residing in the United Kingdom, which may have provided more favorable conditions than the RANA programme. Alternatively, the vigor with which t he R ANA pr ogramme was pr omoted i n t he di fferent E uropean c ountries a lso s eems t o ha ve varied considerably, w hich may a ccount f or r eturnees f rom c ertain E uropean c ountries m aking more us e of t he programme than returnees from others.
[117] Between 2003 and 2007, 179 Afghans from Austria voluntarily returned, while there were "approximately 180" voluntary returnees from Austria who participated in the RANA programme (6% of all RANA-assisted voluntary r eturnees). In t he s ame pe riod, 998 A fghans voluntarily de parted Germany with I OM a ssistance. Approximately 734 c ases of voluntary returnees f rom Germany were f ound t o ha ve b enefitted f rom R ANA assistance (35% of total).

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

The outcomes of various country-specific voluntary return and reintegration programmes
- The outcomes of the GTAA programme, both for Ethiopia and Angola, do not provide any evidence that it contributed to AVR participation numbers.
- During the implementation of the Angola REAN Plus programme, a clear increase in voluntary returns can be identified. A comparison with the situation in Portugal, however, cast some doubt over whether it was actually the REAN Plus programme that resulted in these increases or that other factors were of importance here.
- The RANA programme for Afghans, which was accessible from various European countries, provides us with ambiguous results about the impact of reintegration assistance on the willingness to return. In the case of three of the main European countries participating in the programme, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom, a rise in return numbers can be identified. In the case of the Netherlands and Germany, however, this turns into a decline before the end of the programme. Conversely, in the case of the United Kingdom, a steady rise in returns is identifiable throughout the period in which the RANA programme was operational, however, only a very small proportion of returnees from the United Kingdom participated in the RANA programme.

Do country-specific programmes have a positive quantitative effect on voluntary return?
- Our brief analysis of the three cases discussed above do not provide strong evidence that fluctuations in AVR participation for specific nationalities are influenced by the availability of country-specific programmes.
- Given the results of earlier chapters, it seems more likely that security concerns (represented here by asylum influx) and the accessibility of legal residence (e.g. through temporary protection policies) have a bigger impact on voluntary return.
- Particularly with regard to the protection policies, it is useful to note that in both cases where a rise in returns from the Netherlands coincided with a a country-specific programme (REAN Plus Angola and RANA), protection policies for Angolans and Afghans had recently been cancelled (see chapter 4.2).

7 –THE REGULARIZATION OF REJECTED ASYLUM SEEKERS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

On 1 April 2001, a new Aliens Act (hereinafter: Aliens Act 2000) entered into force in the Netherlands. At that moment, a large number of asylum seekers were still awaiting decisions under the old legislation. In the following years, it became apparent that large numbers of 'old law' asylum seekers were still in the asylum procedure. In 2005 and 2006 there were increasing calls to provide asylum seekers with a residence permit, based on the fact that they had been in the Netherlands for a considerable period of time. This would 'clear up' the asylum system, so that the Aliens Act 2000 could be implemented effectively. Up until the Parliamentary elections of 22 November 2006 this call was not heeded by the government. However, after the elections, a majority of the parliament voted in favor of a regularization exercise. This regularization exercise entered into force on 15 June 2007. Persons who had filed an asylum application before 1 April 2001, and who had subsequently remained in the Netherlands uninterruptedly, were eligible.

Approximately parallel to the emergence of the debate on a regularization, and its eventual institution, the number of aliens voluntarily leaving the Netherlands using REAN assistance began to decline. While in 2005 and 2006 respectively, 3.552 and 2.915 persons were assisted with their departure, in 2007-2008 this number had declined (1.587 in 2007 and 1.767 in 2008).

During this time, several individuals were quick to establish the link between the decreasing voluntary return numbers and the regularization exercise, and saw the latter's institution as a clear reason for the drop in voluntary return numbers, and subsequently as a weakening of Dutch return policy. The effects of the regularization on the voluntary return figures were suggested to have taken place in two ways.

First of all, the 'stock' of potential returnees would have been depleted through the regularization. At the closing of the exercise, a considerable number of asylum seekers, who might otherwise have faced an obligation to leave the Netherlands, were accorded a residence permit. The second, and arguably much more serious factor causing harm to return policy, was suggested to be a reduced tendency of those not covered by the regularization to return voluntarily. This was related to those not eligible remaining in the Netherlands in the hope that the scope of the exercise would be extended, as well as to the idea that the regularization sent out the wrong signal: 'if you wait long enough, a new regularization exercise will take place'. Indeed, in the past there had been several (pseudo-)regularizations in the Netherlands.[118] An incident in 2008 occurred which strengthened this presumption, when several hundreds of irregularly staying Chinese presented themselves at the Ter Apel application centre as a result of an (unfounded) rumor that Queen Beatrix would resign from the throne and that a general amnesty would be granted in celebration.[119]

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[118] See, for example, J. Apap, P. De Bruycker and C. Schmitter, "Regularisation of aliens in the European Union: Summary report of a comparative study" in *European Journal of Migration and Law* 2000*, 2: 263-308.
[119] See, for example, *Trouw* (2008), "Vergeefse Chinese hoop op pardon", 9 April 2008.

These presumptions have an inherent logic and seem plausible. As early as 2005, the ACVZ noted in a report on return: "it is unknown whether the chance of regularization (amnesty) is of any influence on the expectations and decision-making process of irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers. There are no 'hard' figures, but the possibility that a chance of an amnesty plays a role in these personal deliberations should by no means be excluded".[120]

Below, we analyze some of the available statistical materials about voluntary return from the Netherlands and other European countries to answer the question whether the latest regularization has indeed slowed down voluntary return from the Netherlands.

7.2 THE UNPREDICTABLE NATURE OF VOLUNTARY RETURN TRENDS

The historical fluctuations in the number of voluntary returnees since the start of the REAN programme in 1992 are cause for caution in drawing conclusions on recent developments. In the first chapter we showed that throughout the two decades that REAN has been operational, there have been distinct ups and downs. Therefore, the recent downturn in AVR numbers from the Netherlands is not unique. Between 1999 and 2001, for example, a larger decrease in numbers occurred. The eventual lowest point in that downturn is comparable to the levels of returnees in 2008. Therefore, in a long-term perspective, a sudden drop in return figures is not without precedent and it is probable that this 'peaks and valleys' pattern is a natural part of the levels of participation in the REAN programme.

7.3 THE CHANGING COMPOSITION OF ASYLUM INFLUX AND AVR CASELOADS

In chapter 2, we looked extensively at changes in the composition of the Dutch AVR caseload. Here, we will briefly turn to this composition again, this time in light of the developments surrounding the regularization. Figure 25 below presents the relative contribution to total AVR from the Netherlands of six selected countries: Angola, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Iraq and Ukraine. These are the major AVR countries for 2007-2008 (each accounts for at least 5% of the AVR figures in those years).

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[120] ACVZ (2005), *Terugkeer: de internationale aspecten,* The Hague 2005, Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs.

Figure 25: AVR for Angola, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Indonesia, Iraq and Ukraine as percentage of total REAN caseload (2004-2008)
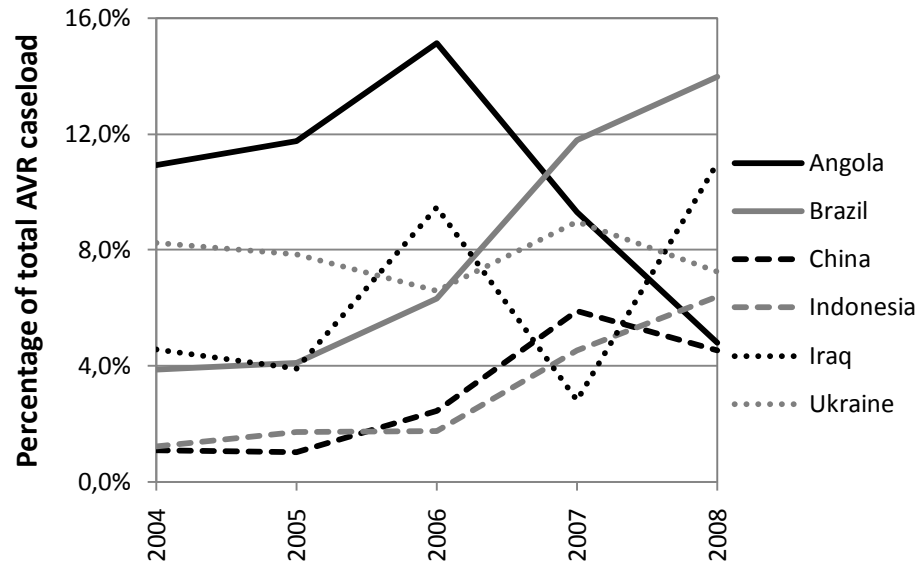
Of these countries, Angola is noticeable for its steady decrease in importance, which accounted for 10,5%, 11,5% and 14,9% of the total REAN departures in 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively. While in 2007 this number was still 9,8%, the next year it had dropped to 4,8%. While this still made Angola an important country of return, its role as *the* AVR country had finished by that time. With the exception of Ukraine, which shows fairly stable return figures, the other four countries have significantly increased in importance between 2004 and 2008 (although Iraq shows low numbers in 2007). We note that of these six countries, four can be called 'non-asylum' countries, in the sense of our discussion in chapter 2. Table 17 below illustrates this. Due to the importance of these non-asylum nationalities, 65,8% of all AVR in 2008 consisted of non-asylum seekers.

Table 17: Percentage of non-asylum AVR participants in 2008, Angola, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Iraq, Ukraine

Country	Angola	Brazil	China	Indonesia	Iraq	Ukraine
Number of REAN participants	85	247	80	113	194	128
Number of non-asylum participants	5	247	58	111	5	121
% of non-asylum seekers in 2008 REAN caseload	5.9%	100.0%	72.5%	98.2%	2.6%	94.5%

When we make a similar graph (see figure 26), only including the most important countries in 2004-2005 (at least 5% of the caseload), it becomes apparent that the profile of AVR participants has changed immensely in these few years.

Figure 26: AVR for Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iran, and Ukraine as percentage of total REAN caseload (2004-2008)
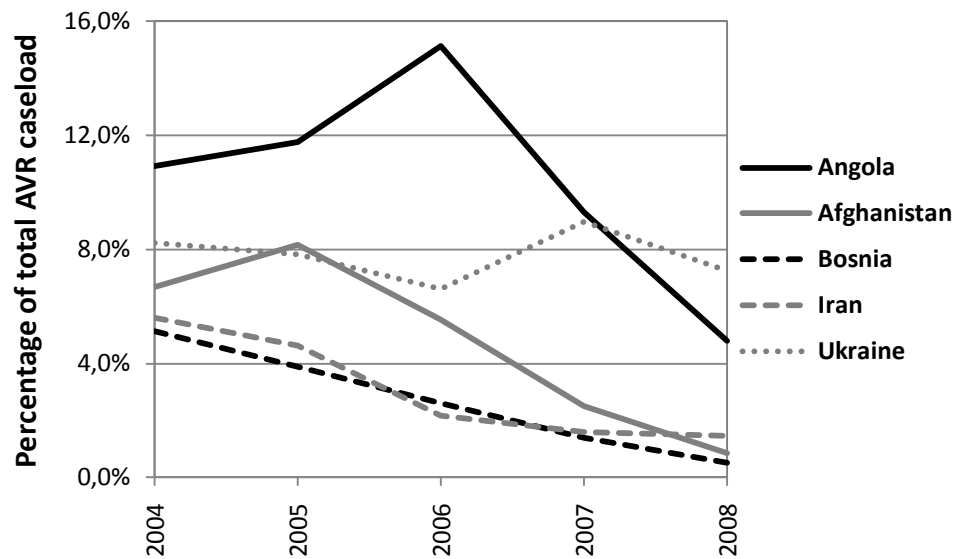
First of all, in this graph, only Angola and Ukraine make an appearance, with three new major countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iran) taking the place of Brazil, China, Indonesia and Iraq. While figures for the earlier years of the REAN programme are not available, the returnees are most likely (former) asylum seekers (see chapter 2). The fact that the proportion of these 'asylum countries' in AVR numbers is decreasing could be consistent with apprehension among asylum seekers to leave the Netherlands, in anticipation of the regularization. However, as already discussed, for these "asylum countries" there is a recurring pattern of correlation between the asylum influx and AVR participation. In each case, when a peak in asylum applications occurs, a peak in AVR will occur as well, albeit with a varying delay and covering only a part of the absolute numbers of the asylum peak.

This pattern is consistent with the relative and absolute decrease in participation in the REAN programme of Afghans, Angolans, Bosnians and Iranians. Figure 27 below clearly shows that the number of asylum applications for each of these countries has steadily declined during the last several years. When we take into account that this pattern in asylum applications reverberates in AVR numbers, with delays of anywhere between three and five years, it should come as no surprise that AVR of 'asylum' nationalities is very low in 2007-2008.

Figure 27: Asylum applications by Afghans, Angolans, Bosnians and Iranians in the Netherlands (1985-2008)
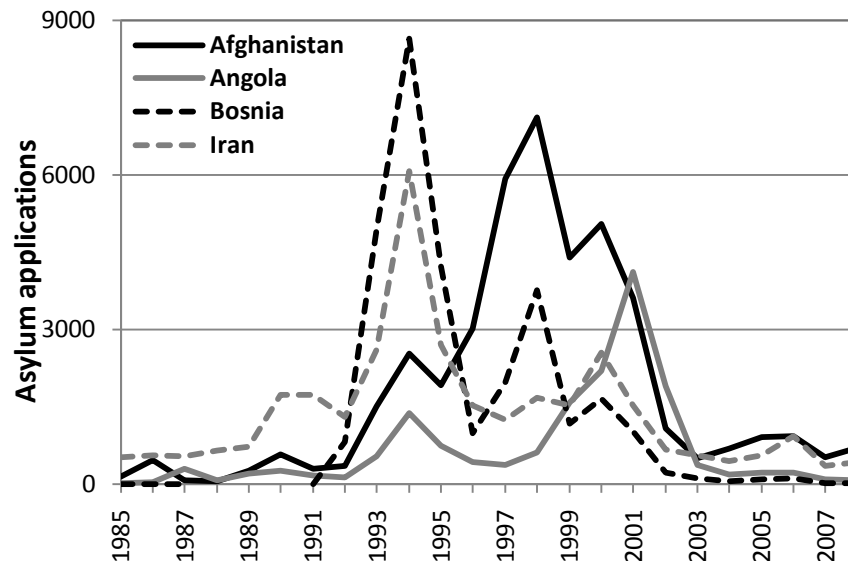
Given the fact that the height of the asylum influxes for these countries occurs in the mid- to late 1990s, the drop in AVR figures is likely to be attributable to a natural 'drying up' of potential returnees. Some question marks remain about Angola, since the peak in asylum applications occurs fairly late. Given the 'normal' delay, it is unclear whether the drop in AVR figures for Angola would also have occurred in 2008 without the regularization, particularly considering the fact that many Angolans arrived in the Netherlands around the time of the entry into force of the Aliens Act 2000. However, as already discussed, returns to Angolans took place relatively quickly and in relatively large numbers, particularly when compared to the number of asylum applications (see chapter 3.5). This makes it likely that the 'stock' of Angolans willing to return may have 'dried up' quicker than for other groups. The significant efforts directed at the voluntary return of Angolans, both by governmental agencies and NGOs, may have also played a part in this.

In contrast to large AVR countries such as Angola, in more recent years, asylum numbers have been dominated by arrivals from Somalia and Iraq. At least up to the period discussed here, the security situation in those countries was not conducive to return, and as such did not lead to many REAN-assisted departures.[121]

7.4 DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Perhaps the most useful way to investigate the potential link between the regularization and the decreasing AVR numbers is to use comparative data from other European countries. These can be used, at least, to gauge whether the recent decrease in AVR numbers is a uniquely Dutch phenomenon – and thus possibly attributable to the Dutch regularization – or that it is part of a larger European trend.[122]

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[121] At the time of writing, AVR for Somalis is still virtually non-existent. Since late 2008, however, there has been a significant increase in the number of Iraqis voluntarily leaving the Netherlands. The bulk of these departures, however, have taken place in 2009, a year not included in the scope of this report.
[122] As discussed, such a comparison encounters difficulties, as data are collected in different ways and are not available for all countries. Also, in many cases, statistics about AVR have only been generated very recently. Only a few European countries have AVR programmes that have been running long enough to produce sufficient

Figure 28 shows the fluctuations in AVR numbers for the Netherlands and its surrounding countries, covering the years 2000 to 2008.

Figure 28: AVR participation, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany[123], United Kingdom (2000-2008)
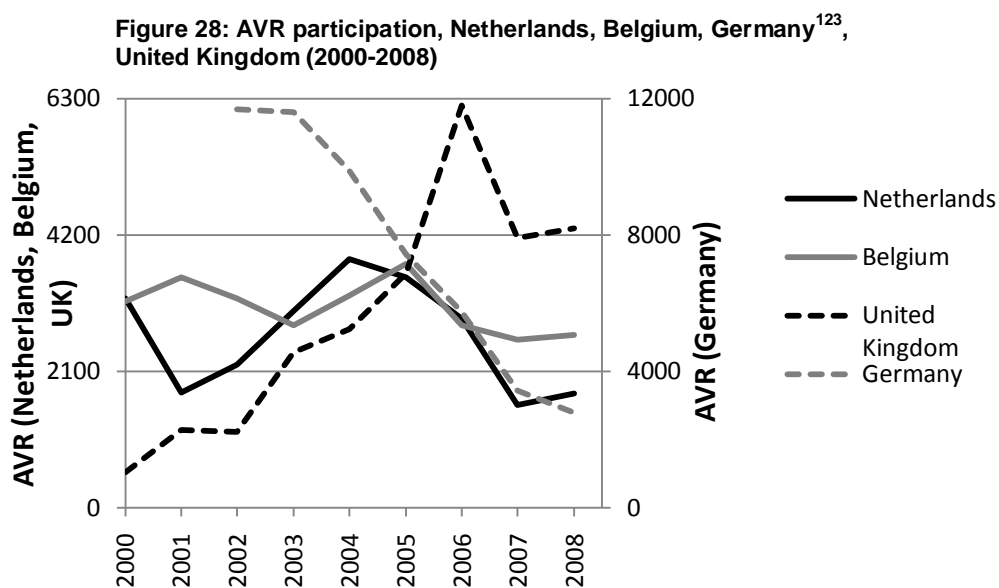
In all four countries the number of assisted departures is lower in 2007 and 2008 than in the years before. The pattern for Germany is very similar to that of the Netherlands. Belgium shows a less pronounced decrease in AVR numbers than the Netherlands and Germany. The UK has a different pattern with a consistent rise in numbers up to 2006. This may be related to the fact that the UK AVR programme is relatively new; it became operational in 1999. During this time, the size of IOM's outreach activities (staff and offices across the country) has increased exponentially, and different actors were getting increasingly familiar with the programme, all contributing to a steady upward trend. However, even in the UK, the downturn in 2007 and 2008 is apparent. As such, the overall AVR statistics of surrounding countries would argue against the idea that the decrease in AVR movements from the Netherlands is primarily related to domestic factors.

However, a closer look at the specific nationalities which have contributed most to the recent downturn in the Netherlands may be able to provide us with more details.

Afghanistan
In figure 29, a comparison is made between AVR movements of Afghans from the Netherlands, the UK and Germany. Belgium is left out of this comparison as Afghans constituted a very small group in its AVR caseload.

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long-term data. Finally, the profiles of the returnees encountered in those countries may differ from those in the Netherlands.
[123] As German AVR figures are much higher than those of the other three countries, these are plotted on the secondary Y-axis.

**Figure 29: AVR of Afghans from the Netherlands,
the United Kingdom (2001-2008), and Germany (2002-2008)**
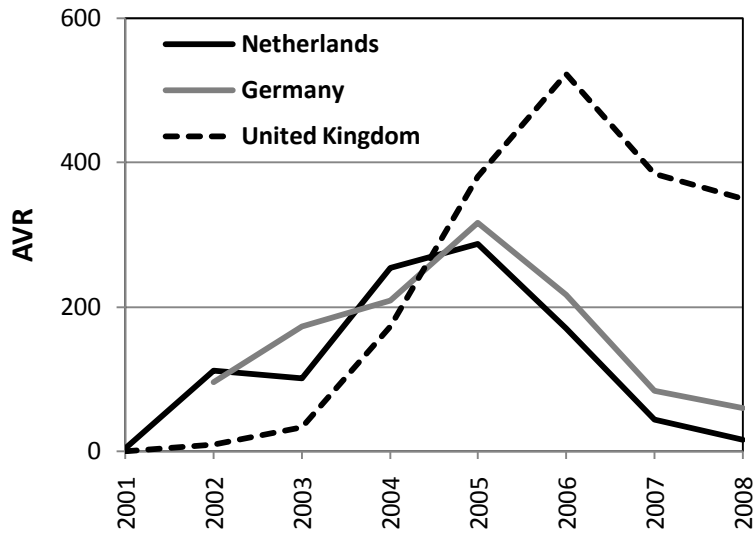
As noted, the UK's relatively young AVR programme has produced a consistent upward trend until 2006, and then experienced a slight drop. This is equally true for its Afghan caseload. The German pattern is remarkably similar to that of the Netherlands. The data from Germany and the UK suggest that the drop in Afghan returns is by no means a Dutch phenomenon.

Angola
As both Belgium and Germany never have more than 30 Angolan AVR participants, these are not included in figure 30 below. Instead, Portugal has been added, as a traditional host country for Angolans. Even despite its colonial links, in absolute terms there is no European equivalent to the caseload of Angolan AVR participants in the Netherlands. For reasons of comparability, therefore, AVR from the Netherlands has been presented on a separate axis (right-hand side).

**Figure 30: AVR of Angolans from the Netherlands[124],
The United Kingdom and Portugal (2001-2008)**

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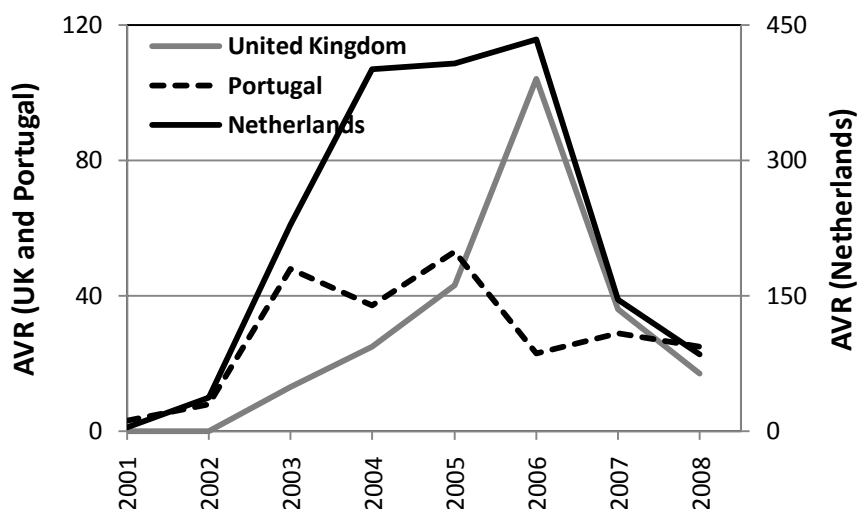
[124] Due to large differences in the absolute number of AVR participants, data for the Netherlands is presented on the secondary Y-axis.

Here we see that the downturn in AVR of Angolans from the Netherlands coincides with a decrease in the UK, as well as with decreases in the Portuguese caseload, although the latter decline is less pronounced.

Bosnia-Herzegovina
As Bosnians have not represented a significant group in the UK caseload, only AVR movements from Belgium and Germany are included in figure 31.

Figure 31: AVR of Bosnians from the Netherlands, Belgium (2001-2008) and Germany (2002-2008)
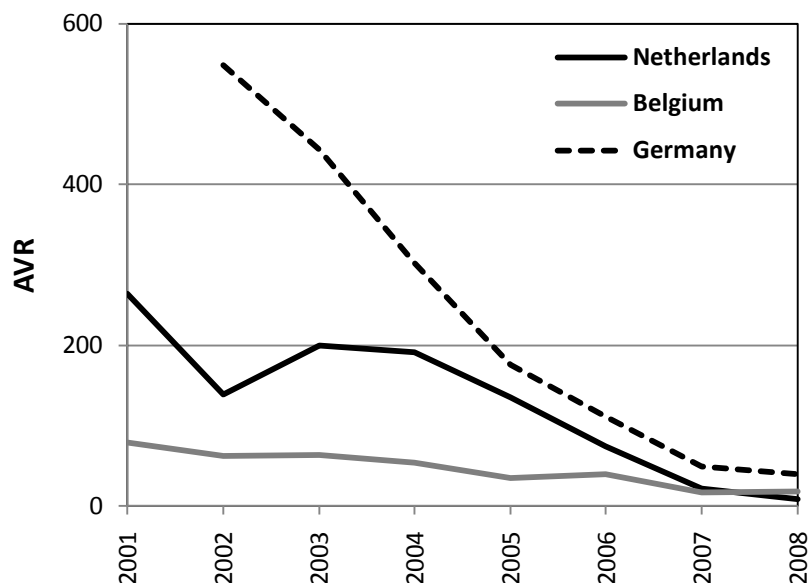
The similarities in patterns between the Netherlands and its two neighboring countries is again clear. All countries show a downwards trend, starting in 2001-2003. This trends is most clearly seen in Germany, whose enormous caseloads of Bosnians during the late 1990s have been decimated by 2008. As Belgium's Bosnian caseload has always been smaller in absolute terms, the decrease in AVR seems less dramatic. However, also for Belgium, the Bosnian caseload in 2008 is only about 25% of the caseload of 2001.

Iran
AVR movements of Iranians (figure 32 below) also show a generally declining pattern for Germany and Belgium. Only in the UK do voluntary departures of Iranians rise for most of the period covered here. However, precisely in 2007-2008, the years of the Dutch regularization, the Iranian AVR caseload in the UK also starts to drop.
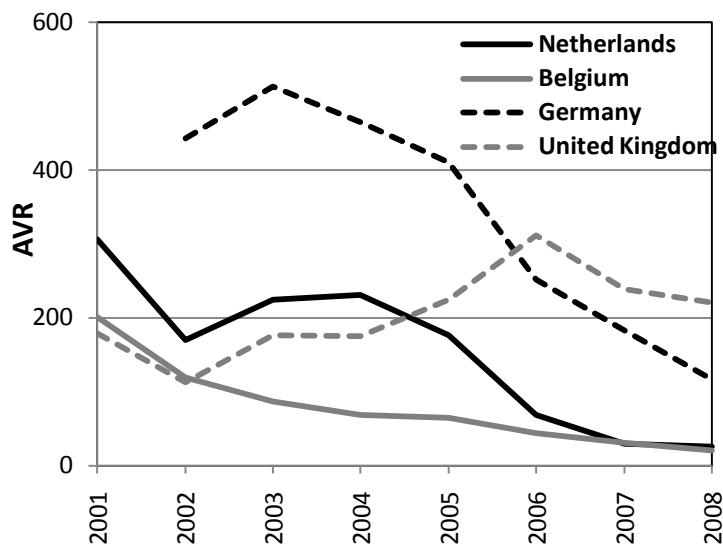
For all these countries, which constitute very important REAN caseloads consisting primarily of asylum seekers, the decline in 2007-2008 is mirrored by developments in other European countries. This is perhaps the clearest sign that the downward trend in voluntary departures of asylum seekers is not a strictly Dutch phenomenon, and cannot be related simply to the effects of the regularization exercise.

7.5 CONCLUSIONS

Unpredictability of AVR trends
- Historically, AVR numbers have been very erratic, with very significant ups and downs. These fluctuations, as discussed throughout this report, can be related to various developments, the consequences of which generally take a long time to become noticeable. Caution should therefore be taken when easily drawing conclusions about the effect of recent events on decreases in AVR participation levels.

The composition of influx and AVR caseloads
- In the last few years, a considerable shift has occurred in the composition of new arrivals (which later become potential AVR participants). Perhaps most importantly, the number of new arrivals from countries which have traditionally been important AVR destinations has steadily declined in the period leading up to the most recent lull in voluntary departures. This has also led to a relative increase in the number of non-asylum seekers which make use of the REAN programme.
- Those asylum seekers that have been arriving in large numbers primarily hail from countries such as Somalia and Iraq, where the respective security situations were not conducive to return in the period leading up to, and including, the regularization exercise.

Developments in surrounding countries
- The downturn in AVR of asylum seekers, which characterizes the Dutch situation in 2007-2008 is not a strictly Dutch phenomenon. Both total AVR numbers, as well as those for particularly important 'asylum' countries, have also declined in a number of other European countries.

Is the recent decrease in voluntary departures attributable to the Dutch regularization?
- Although it cannot be ruled out that the regularization had an impact on the low AVR numbers in 2007-2008, the factors described above strongly indicate that the regularization

has not been the main reason for this. It is more likely that the years 2007-2008 have merely been the years during which the effects of developments in the composition and number of arrivals in earlier years became apparent.

8 – SUMMARY

In this report, we have taken a look at some of the potential factors that influence the number of (rejected) asylum seekers and (irregular) migrants who make use of the Dutch assisted voluntary return programme. We have done so by comparing statistics on AVR participation in the last two decades to other indicators, such as the number of asylum applications, the existence of protection policies, unemployment rates, and the provision of country-specific return and reintegration programmes. Additionally, we have used data on AVR participation of several other European countries to put the results of this analysis of the Dutch situation in a broader context. However, in many cases, data from other countries were difficult to compare to that from the Netherlands. A considerable investment in collecting AVR data in a comprehensive, uniform way, would be necessary to enable more in-depth comparative analyses of the fluctuations in voluntary departures in different European countries.

In chapter 2, we started with exploring the characteristics of the persons whose voluntary departure had been assisted under the REAN programme since 1992. In terms of the nationality of AVR participants, and its influence on annual fluctuations in departure numbers, we were presented with a complex image. Different nationalities have comprised the largest groups of returnees at different moments, with very few groups being important to the overall AVR figures for the entire period covered in this report. In general, it can be said that high AVR figures are caused either by a particular national group voluntarily departing in large numbers, or – in absence of such a 'peak' – by a wide coverage of the REAN programme, with many different nationalities making use of its facilities. From this perspective, it would be counterproductive to focus voluntary return policy primarily on the largest national groups. Throughout the existence of the REAN programme, the number of different nationalities covered has increased, but this increase has been leveling off in recent years.

We have also noted that resettlement can provide a positive impulse to the quantitative outcomes of the Dutch AVR programme. It is hardly a coincidence that the years in which the most people voluntarily departed from the Netherlands also were the years in which a considerable portion of departures consisted of resettlement cases. Since the late 1990s, the importance of resettlement to the overall AVR numbers has gradually reduced.

A final characteristic that was studied in chapter 2 was the legal status of returnees. We distinguished between those with an asylum background and those called 'non-asylum' returnees. While AVR policy has generally focused primarily on (rejected) asylum seekers, quantitatively non-asylum AVR participants have become increasingly prominent. There are some indications that this will result in less dramatic fluctuations in AVR numbers – particularly in respect to sudden decreases – as we have concluded in this report that fluctuations are more associated with asylum seekers.

In chapter 3, we explored the links between the number of asylum applications and the levels of AVR participation. For the Netherlands, a positive relationship seems to exist between the two: an increase in asylum applications is likely to be mirrored by an increase in voluntary departures. However, this effect is not immediate. Fluctuations in asylum applications in the Netherlands are most likely to affect AVR participation five or six years later. This shows that a short-term perspective may be less useful than a long-term view. We also found that similar relationships between asylum influx and AVR could be found for some other countries, but

that the time-lag effect varies significantly per country. For Belgium, Germany and Norway, for example, the impact of fluctuations in asylum influx seem to become apparent in fluctuations in AVR participation much quicker than in the Netherlands. A possible explanation might be found in the length of asylum procedures in different countries. However, even when a general link between asylum influx and AVR, with a time-lag effect, has been identified, it is not possible to apply this to all national groups. The strength of the relationship, as well as the relevant time-lag, varies considerably for the different national groups that make use of the REAN programme.

It should be noted that, even where statistical relationships between asylum influx and AVR are found, this does not provide in-depth insight into individual trajectories. The available data did not allow us to explore whether large influxes of asylum seekers consisted of the same individuals as large voluntary departure movements several years later. Further research into individual trajectories, which would focus on the moment of entry and the moment of voluntary departure, would shed more light on this issue. From our data it is sufficiently clear that – regardless of individual trajectories – voluntary return only represents a fraction of arrivals in the asylum procedures. On the whole, only about 1 in 13 asylum seekers seem to voluntarily leave the Netherlands using the REAN programme.

In chapter 4, we investigated the impact that temporary protection policies for asylum seekers had on AVR participation. We found that while these policies were in effect, very few voluntary departures of nationals covered by these policies took place. After the policies were cancelled, voluntary departures rose, although this effect was not immediate. Moreover, this effect was usually temporary. Shortly after the cancellation, a peak in departures was noticeable, but this generally subsided within two years. Based on the available data, we could not ascertain whether the end of the protection policies, and the subsequent loss of a legal status in the Netherlands, was the main driving force behind the peak in departures, or that other factors were responsible for this.

In chapter 5, we focused on the relationship between unemployment and the voluntary departure of non-asylum migrants. First, we explored the fluctuations in unemployment rates in the Netherlands and departure levels, both overall and for two specific countries (Ukraine and Brazil). With regards to the overall departure figures, no relationship seemed to exist with unemployment rates in the Netherlands. For Ukrainians, there are some indications that, in recent years, departure trends mirror unemployment rates. However, when the entire period for which data is available is taken into consideration, no evidence exists for a statistical link between unemployment in the Netherlands and departure of either Ukrainians or Brazilians. The same is true when the relationship between unemployment in the countries of origin and voluntary return is explored. Recent years show some overlap between the return of Ukrainians and changes in unemployment rates, but the overall data does not provide us with statistical evidence. This can be attributed, in all likelihood, to the fact that departure of non-asylum migrants has only become prominent in the REAN programme in recent years. In a few years' time, it should be better possible to usefully explore the links between unemployment and voluntary departure.

In chapter 6, we have described three cases of country-specific programmes aimed at promoting voluntary return. In the case of the GTAA scheme for Ethiopia and Angola, there was clearly no positive effect on voluntary departure levels. The REAN Plus programme for Angola, however, coincides with a distinct increase in voluntary departures. Whether this can

be attributed to the programme or to other factors, such as the end of protection policies, or a combination of these, could not be verified with the data available to us.

The case of the RANA programme, which was available to Afghans in various European countries, further casts doubt on whether special programmes actually cause higher voluntary return numbers. While we see increases in voluntary return numbers of Afghans from the Netherlands and Germany during the implementation of the RANA programme, decreases occur some time before the programme came to an end. In the case of the UK, returns of Afghans increase continuously during the period that the RANA programme is available. However, as only a very small proportion of returning Afghans from the UK have made use of the RANA programme, this is not expected to have been the reason for this increase.

Finally, in chapter 7, we looked at a recent measure to regularize a group of asylum seekers who have been in the Netherlands for a prolonged period of time. It has been speculated that the dip in AVR figures in 2007 and 2008 was the direct result of this measure. However, there are various reasons to believe that this is not the case. Firstly, the nationalities of newly-arriving asylum seekers has shifted considerably in the last few years, particularly comprising Somalis and Iraqis, for which return in 2007-2008 was usually not possible (or even legally necessary). At the same time, considerable numbers of asylum seekers from other countries had voluntarily departed since the beginning of new millennium, causing a 'drying up' of persons for whom voluntary return was both plausible and possible. This is particularly clear when we look at developments in other European countries. Like in the Netherlands, there has been a steady decline, which already started several years before the institution of the regularization exercise, in the number of voluntary departures of nationals of, for example, Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Iran. These are exactly the nationalities that have contributed most to Dutch AVR figures in recent years. Consequently, the regularization is unlikely to have been the (primary) reason for the decline in Dutch AVR figures in 2007 and 2008.

By exploring the themes discussed above, we have attempted to provide a tentative quantitative basis for discussions on fluctuations in AVR participation in the Netherlands. This analysis is by no means exhaustive and was subject to limitations, often due to the absence of reliable data. Moreover, it should be noted that we have investigated the various themes in isolation, while further research into the cumulative effects of these (and other) themes may also be valuable. It is also important to reiterate that a focus on the number of voluntary departures cannot replace qualitative research into the individual motivations of asylum seekers and migrants to stay or leave the Netherlands. Both methods are useful and necessary to understand how voluntary return policy can be made effective and valuable for the people it concerns.

Annex 1: Top 10 nationalities of REAN participants per year, including percentages of total

1993

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Romania	103	13.3
2	Suriname	93	12.0
3	Egypt	69	8.9
4	Iran	68	8.8
5	Macedonia	32	4.1
6	Israel	29	3.8
7	Bosnia-Herz.	28	3.6
8	Turkey	25	3.2
9	Croatia	22	2.8
10	Iraq	21	2.7
	Other	*283*	*36.6*
	Total	**773**	**100.0**

1994

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Suriname	243	18.4
2	Egypt	137	10.4
3	Iran	108	8.2
4	Turkey	106	8.1
5	Macedonia	82	6.2
6	Romania	50	3.8
7	Russian Fed.	45	3.4
8	Georgia	42	3.2
9	Lebanon	39	3.0
10	Somalia	36	2.7
	Other	*426*	*32.4*
	Total	**1314**	**100.0**

1995

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Iran	153	11.3
2	Suriname	135	10.0
3	Egypt	118	8.7
4	Slovakia	118	8.7
5	Armenia	82	6.1
6	Georgia	80	5.9
7	Bosnia	58	4.3
8	Czech Republic	42	3.1
9	Macedonia	39	2.9
10	Turkey	36	2.7
	Other	*493*	*36.4*
	Total	**1354**	**100.0**

1996

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Iran	212	18.2
2	Bosnia-Herz.	165	14.1
3	Egypt	86	7.4
4	Suriname	64	5.5
5	Georgia	58	5.0
6	Slovakia	52	4.5
7	Armenia	40	3.4
8	Iraq	37	3.2
9	Ecuador	35	3.0
10	Colombia	33	2.8
	Other	*386*	*33.0*
	Total	**1168**	**100.0**

1997

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Iran	158	19.1
2	Suriname	58	7.0
3	Egypt	56	6.8
4	Bosnia-Herz.	49	5.9
5	Colombia	40	4.8
6	Yugoslavia	28	3.4
7	Georgia	26	3.1
8	Ethiopia	25	3.0
9	Iraq	25	3.0
10	Ecuador	20	2.4
	Other	*341*	*41.3*
	Total	**826**	**100.0**

1998

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Bosnia-Herz.		
2	Iran		
3	Slovakia		
4	Colombia		
5	Egypt		
6	Suriname		
7	Ethiopia		
8	Iraq		
9	DR Congo		
10	*		
	Other		
	Total		

1999

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Yugoslavia	188	21.1
2	Bosnia-Herz.	140	15.7
3	Iran	46	5.2
4	Slovakia	43	4.8
5	Suriname	40	4.5
6	Iraq	36	4.0
7	Russian Fed.	22	2.5
8	Egypt	21	2.4
9	Colombia	17	1.9
10	Somalia	16	1.8
	Other	*288*	*32.4*
	Total	**889**	**100.0**

2000

Rank	Nationality	#	%
1	Bosnia-Herz.	2744	66.3
2	Yugoslavia	575	13.9
3	Slovakia	135	3.2
4	Iran	78	1.9
5	Iraq	48	1.2
6	Czech Republic	46	1.1
7	Armenia	33	0.8
8	India	32	0.8
9	Russian Fed.	30	0.7
10	Colombia	29	0.7
	Other	*386*	*9.3*
	Total	**4136**	**100.0**

* Three nationalities: Croatia, Czech Republic, Russian Federation

Annex 1 (continued)

Rank	2001 Nationality	#	%	2002 Nationality	#	%	2003 Nationality	#	%	2004 Nationality	#	%
1	Slovakia	322	18.2	Serbia & Mont.	323	14.6	Serbia & Mont.	357	11.8	Angola	401	10.5
2	Iran	306	17.3	Slovakia	201	9.1	Angola	228	7.5	Serbia & Mont.	330	8.6
3	Bosnia-Herz.	264	14.9	Iran	170	7.7	Iran	224	7.4	Ukraine	305	8.0
4	Yugoslavia	129	7.3	Bosnia-Herz.	139	6.3	Afghanistan	200	6.6	Afghanistan	254	6.6
5	Russian Fed.	71	4.0	Afghanistan	111	5.0	Iran	176	5.8	Iran	231	6.0
6	Czech Republic	56	3.2	Ukraine	87	3.9	Bosnia-Herz.	141	4.7	Bosnia-Herz.	191	5.0
7	Iraq	35	2.0	Mongolia	71	3.2	Russian Fed.	137	4.5	Iraq	182	4.8
8	Armenia	34	1.9	Russian Fed.	70	3.2	Slovakia	109	3.6	Brazil	143	3.7
9	Ukraine	31	1.8	India	62	2.8	Iraq	104	3.4	Turkey	122	3.2
10	India/Turkey	26	1.5	Armenia/Iraq	58	2.6	Mongolia	101	3.3	Russian Fed.	116	3.0
	Other	*469*	*26.5*	*Other*	*860*	*38.9*	*Afghanistan*	*1251*	*41.3*	*Other*	*1553*	*40.6*
	Total	**1769**	**100.0**	**Total**	**2210**	**100.0**	**Total**	**3028**	**100.0**	**Total**	**3828**	**100.0**

Rank	2005 Nationality	#	%	2006 Nationality	#	%	2007 Nationality	#	%	2008 Nationality	#	%
1	Angola	407	11.5	Angola	434	14.9	Brazil	184	11.6	Brazil	247	14.0
2	Afghanistan	287	8.1	Iraq	273	9.4	Angola	145	9.1	Iraq	194	11.0
3	Serbia & Mont.	274	7.7	Ukraine	188	6.4	Ukraine	140	8.8	Ukraine	128	7.2
4	Ukraine	270	7.6	Brazil	180	6.2	China	93	5.9	Indonesia	113	6.4
5	Iran	176	5.0	Afghanistan	170	5.8	Indonesia	71	4.5	Angola	85	4.8
6	Brazil	146	4.1	Serbia & Mont.	114	3.9	Turkey	69	4.3	China	80	4.5
7	Iraq	141	4.0	Russian Fed.	110	3.8	Ghana	54	3.4	Nigeria	63	3.6
8	Bosnia-Herz.	135	3.8	Nigeria	93	3.2	Nigeria	52	3.3	Turkey	59	3.3
9	Armenia	124	3.5	Ghana	79	2.7	Iraq	45	2.8	Ghana	56	3.2
10	Nigeria	120	3.4	Bosnia-Herz.	74	2.5	Afghanistan	44	2.8	Morocco	56	3.2
	Other	*1472*	*41.4*	*Other*	*1200*	*41.2*	*Other*	*690*	*43.5*	*Other*	*686*	*38.8*
	Total	**3552**	**100.0**	**Total**	**2915**	**100.0**	**Total**	**1587**	**100.0**	**Total**	**1767**	**100.0**

Annex 2 – Top 10 of AVR participants (2005-2008) for Belgium, Germany and UK

2a – Belgium (by country of destination)

Rank	2005 Nationality	#	%	2006 Nationality	#	%	2007 Nationality	#	%	2008 Nationality	#	%
1	Brazil	714	19.0	Brazil	708	25.2	Brazil	805	31.0	Brazil	697	26.1
2	Slovakia	679	18.1	Ukraine	286	10.2	Ukraine	244	9.4	Slovakia	390	14.6
3	Ukraine	346	9.2	Armenia	184	6.5	Russian Fed.	158	6.1	Russian Fed.	260	9.7
4	Russian Fed.	210	5.6	Mongolia	177	6.3	Mongolia	142	5.5	Ukraine	217	8.1
5	Armenia	193	5.1	Russian Fed.	159	5.7	Slovakia	131	5.1	Armenia	135	5.1
6	Bulgaria	151	4.0	Slovakia	127	4.5	Armenia	127	4.9	Mongolia	119	4.5
7	Mongolia	134	3.6	Bulgaria	89	3.2	Kosovo	63	2.4	Kosovo	80	3.0
8	Kosovo	105	2.8	Kosovo	72	2.6	Bulgaria	62	2.4	Nepal	45	1.7
9	Ecuador	91	2.4	Georgia	66	2.3	Romania	47	1.8	Moldova	44	1.6
10	Moldova	77	2.1	Moldova	62	2.2	Georgia	44	1.7	Bulgaria/Georgia	41	1.5
	Other	1055	28.1	Other	881	31.3	Other	770	29.7	Other	641	24.0
	Total	3755	100.0	Total	2811	100.0	Total	2593	100.0	Total	2669	100.0

2b – Germany (by nationality)

Rank	2005 Nationality	#	%	2006 Nationality	#	%	2007 Nationality	#	%	2008 Nationality	#	%
1	Serbia & Mont.	1959	26.3	Serbia & Mont.	1048	18.2	Serbia(incl. Kosovo)	505	14.7	Iraq	302	10.8
2	Turkey	741	9.9	Turkey	664	11.5	Russian Fed.	365	10.6	Russian Fed.	286	10.2
3	Iraq	689	9.3	Iraq	554	9.6	Turkey	313	9.1	Turkey	220	7.9
4	Iran	410	5.5	Russian Fed.	407	7.1	Vietnam	202	5.9	Kosovo*	219	7.8
5	Russian Fed.	399	5.4	Vietnam	298	5.2	Iraq	191	5.6	Armenia	138	4.9
6	Afghanistan	316	4.2	Iran	251	4.4	Iran	183	5.3	Vietnam	135	4.8
7	Vietnam	313	4.2	Afghanistan	217	3.8	Azerbaijan	167	4.9	Azerbaijan	122	4.4
8	Bulgaria	268	3.6	Azerbaijan	216	3.8	Yemen	154	4.5	Iran	116	4.1
9	Azerbaijan	249	3.3	China	156	2.7	China	113	3.3	Serbia (incl. Kosovo)*	111	4.0
10	Bosnia-Herz.	176	2.4	Armenia	134	2.3	Armenia	100	2.9	China	93	3.3
	Other	1928	25.9	Other	1812	31.5	Other	1144	33.3	Other	1057	37.8
	Total	7448	100.0	Total	5757	100.0	Total	3437	100.0	Total	2799	100.0

* For administrative reasons, returnees to Kosovo have been partially registered under 'Kosovo' and partially under 'Serbia (incl. Kosovo)'

2c – United Kingdom (by nationality)

Rank	2005 Nationality	#	%	2006 Nationality	#	%	2007 Nationality	#	%	2008 Nationality	#	%
1	Iraq	769	21.3	Iraq	1725	27.8	Afghanistan	385	9.3	Brazil	487	11.3
2	Albania	535	14.8	Afghanistan	523	8.4	Iraq	385	9.3	Iraq	445	10.3
3	Afghanistan	380	10.5	Albania	348	5.6	Brazil	340	8.2	Afghanistan	350	8.1
4	Sri Lanka	272	7.5	Iran	311	5.0	Pakistan	251	6.0	Pakistan	306	7.1
5	Iran	224	6.2	Sri Lanka	303	4.9	Iran	239	5.7	China	264	6.1
6	Kosovo	178	4.9	Brazil	294	4.7	Zimbabwe	188	4.5	Iran	221	5.1
7	Brazil	135	3.7	Zimbabwe	258	4.2	Albania	183	4.4	India	188	4.4
8	Zimbabwe	114	3.2	Pakistan	209	3.4	Sri Lanka	181	4.4	Zimbabwe	177	4.1
9	Pakistan	94	2.6	Kosovo	136	2.2	China	161	3.9	South Africa	128	3.0
10	Colombia	63	1.7	China	122	2.0	India	129	3.1	Sri Lanka	124	2.9
	Other	*844*	*23.4*	*Other*	*1971*	*31.8*	*Other*	*1715*	*41.3*	*Other*	*1610*	*37.4*
	Total	**3608**	**100.0**	**Total**	**6200**	**100.0**	**Total**	**4157**	**100.0**	**Total**	**4300**	**100.0**

Annex 3 – Correlations between annual asylum influx and annual AVR participation for Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Norway and Portugal

3a – Belgium (1984-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	.493	.243	Yes, $p < .01$
1	.712	.507	Yes, $p < .001$
2	.776	.602	Yes, $p < .001$
3	.755	.570	Yes, $p < .001$
4	.734	.539	Yes, $p < .001$
5	.719	.517	Yes, $p < .001$
6	.678	.460	Yes, $p < .001$
7	.634	.402	Yes, $p < .01$
8	.611	.373	Yes, $p < .01$

3b – Germany (2002-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	.862	.743	Yes, $p < .05$
1	.939	.882	Yes, $p < .01$
2	.985	.970	Yes, $p < .001$
3	.957	.916	Yes, $p < .001$
4	.918	.843	Yes, $p < .01$
5	.815	.664	Yes, $p < .05$
6	.875	.766	Yes, $p < .01$
7	.454	.206	No, $.153 > .05$
8	.290	.084	No, $.264 > .05$

3c – United Kingdom (1999-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	.862	.743	Yes, $p < .05$
1	.939	.882	Yes, $p < .01$
2	.985	.970	Yes, $p < .001$
3	.957	.916	Yes, $p < .001$
4	.918	.843	Yes, $p < .01$
5	.815	.664	Yes, $p < .05$
6	.875	.766	Yes, $p < .01$
7	.454	.206	No, $.153 > .05$
8	.290	.084	No, $.264 > .05$

Annex 3 (continued)

3d – Austria (2000-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	−.652	.425	Yes, $p < .05$
1	−.340	.116	No, $.185 > .05$
2	.062	.004	No, $.438 > .05$
3	.651	.424	Yes, $p < .05$
4	.896	.803	Yes, $p < .01$
5	.918	.843	Yes, $p < .001$
6	.872	.760	Yes, $p < .01$
7	.892	.796	Yes, $p < .01$
8	.500	.250	No, $.085 > .05$

3e – Norway (2002-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	.623	.388	No, $.068 > .05$
1	.957	.916	Yes, $p < .001$
2	.550	.303	No, $.101 > .05$
3	−.065	.004	No, $.445 > .05$
4	−.647	.419	No, $.058 > .05$
5	−.639	.261	No, $.061 > .05$
6	−.757	.573	Yes, $p < .05$
7	.623	.388	No, $.068 > .05$
8	.957	.916	Yes, $p < .001$

3f – Portugal (1998-2008)

Time lag in years	Correlation (r)	R^2	Significance (one-tailed)
0	−.369	.136	No, $.132 > .05$
1	−.382	.146	No, $.123 > .05$
2	−.310	.096	No, $.177 > .05$
3	−.440	.194	No, $.088 > .05$
4	−.750	.562	Yes, $p < .01$
5	−.667	.445	Yes, $p < .05$
6	−.226	.051	No, $.252 > .05$
7	.103	.012	No, $.382 > .05$
8	.321	.103	No, $.168 > .05$