

*Project Presentation*

## GAPs: De-centring the Study of Migrant Returns and Readmission Policies in Europe and Beyond Project<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

GAPs: De-centring the Study of Migrant Returns and Readmission Policies in Europe and Beyond Project is a comprehensive, transnational and interdisciplinary research project focusing on the drivers of return policies, international cooperation on returns and the experiences of migrants in the process. The Project examines the disconnects between expectations of return policies and their actual outcomes by de-centring the dominant, one-sided understanding of “return policymaking”. The Project is financed by the European Union through the Horizon Programme and brings together 17 organisations from 14 countries.

**Keywords:** Return, Readmission, Return Governance, Return Migration Infrastructures, Return Migration Diplomacy, Migrants’ Trajectories.

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*Proje Tanıtımı***Boşluklar: Avrupa ve Ötesinde Göçmen Geri Dönüşleri ve Geri Kabul Politikaları Araştırmalarının Merkezleştirilmesi Projesi****Öz**

Avrupa ve Ötesinde Göçmen Geri Dönüşleri ve Geri Kabul Politikaları Projesi kısa adıyla “GAPs” geri dönüş politikalarının itici güçlerine, geri dönüşlere ilişkin uluslararası işbirliğine ve süreçte göçmenlerin deneyimlerine odaklanan kapsamlı, ulusötesi ve disiplinlerarası bir araştırma projesidir. Proje, baskın, tek taraflı “geri dönüş politikası oluşturma” anlayışını merkezden uzaklaştırarak, geri dönüş politikalarının beklentileri ile bunların gerçek sonuçları arasındaki kopuklukları incelemektedir. Proje Avrupa Birliği tarafından Horizon Programı tarafından finanse edilmekte ve toplam 14 ülkeden 17 kuruluşu bir araya getirmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Geri Dönüş, Geri Kabul, Geri Dönüş Yönetişimi, Geri Dönüş Göç Altyapıları, Geri Göç Diplomasisi, Göçmen Deneyimleri.



# GAPS

A Study of Migrant Returns  
and Readmission Policies

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the process. The Project examines the disconnects between expectations of return policies and their actual outcomes by de-centring the dominant, one-sided understanding of “return policymaking”.

GAPs is funded by the European Union (EU) as a part of HORIZON-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09 Programme- Return and readmission of irregular migrants in the EU Call (Grant Agreement No: 101094341) with a total budget of 3,489,526.00 EUR.

GAPs will a) scrutinise the shortcomings of the EU’s governance of returns internally and externally; b) examine the complex interactions of policymakers and local actors involved in return processes to shed light on cooperation failures; c) analyse the perspectives of migrants themselves to understand their knowledge of return policies, aspirations and experiences. By taking a close look at governance, cooperation and actor’s agency, the Project is able to suggest new avenues for international cooperation, develop recommendations for stakeholders and explore alternative pathways to returning migrants. In this framework, the main objectives of the Project are summarised below:

GAPs specific objectives	
<b>Objective 1</b>	To examine drivers of return governance by focusing on (i) existing policy, legal, and operational infrastructures as well as (ii) the gaps between policies and practices to advance return governance indicators
<b>Objective 2</b>	To analyse enablers and barriers of international cooperation by (i) assessing various cooperation attempts of the EU and its MSs targeting origin and third countries (ii) studying specific dynamics and drivers of South-South returns in connection with EU policies.
<b>Objective 3</b>	To examine the agency of migrants and the autonomy of migration processes that influence and are influenced by governance and cooperation.
<b>Objective 4</b>	To co-create and suggest alternative pathways and models for existing return policies, practices, and cooperation with stakeholder expert panels in 12 countries that would contribute interplay between policy and science.

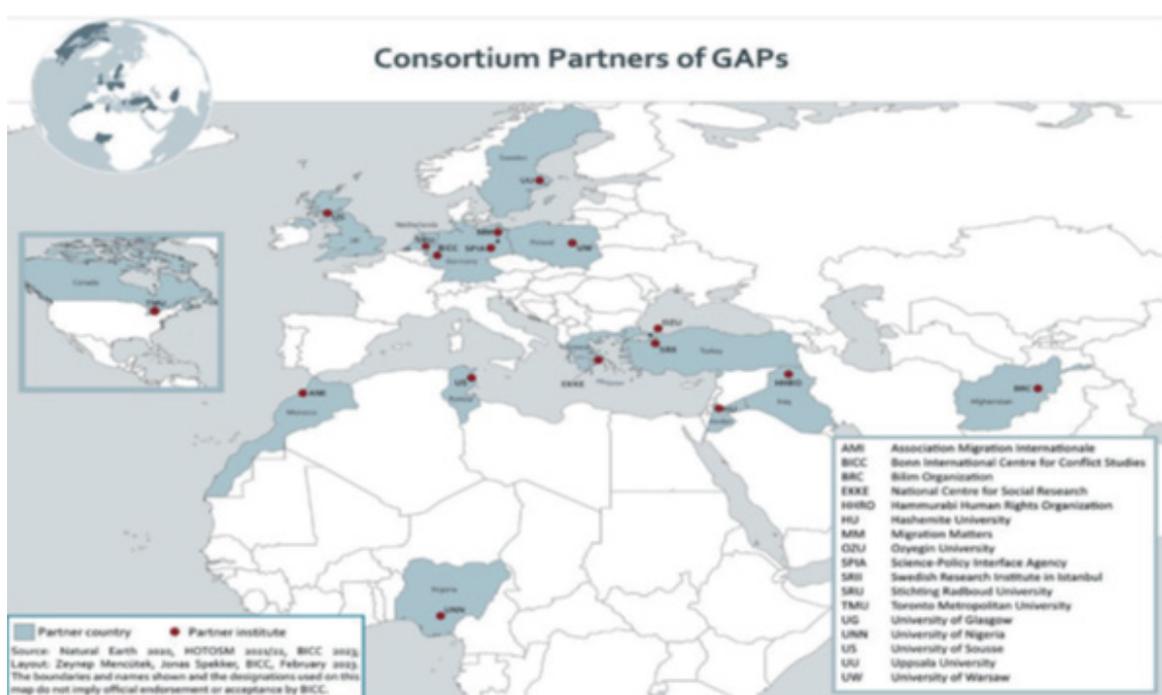
GAPs grounds itself in an interdisciplinary perspective and a mixed-method approach to provide scientific evidence into debates on return governance and cooperation. The Project 11 different work packages that address 4 dimensions as follows:

<b>Dimensions of return gap, analytical approach, and related WPs</b>		
<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Analytical Approaches</b>	<b>Related Work Packages</b>
Revisiting concepts and data on return (intersecting with all dimensions) ( <b>Work Package 1:</b> Concepts & Data on Returns )		
<b>Dimension I Return Migration Governance (Obj1)</b>	Return Migration Infrastructures	<b>Work Package 2</b> (Legal and Policy Infrastructures of Returns in the EU) <b>Work Package 3</b> (Operational Infrastructures of Returns) <b>Work Package 6</b> (Public Attitudes on Returns)
<b>Dimension II International cooperation on returns (Obj2)</b>	Return Migration Diplomacy	<b>Work Package 4</b> (South-South Dynamics) <b>Work Package 5</b> (International Cooperation)
<b>Dimension III Migrant agency (Obj3)</b>	Migrants' Trajectories	<b>Work Package 7</b> (Return Aspirations and Trajectories of Migrants) <b>Work Package 8</b> (Post-Return Experiences)
<b>Alternatives and Recommendations (Obj4)</b>	Interplay between policy and science	<b>Work Package 9</b> (Alternative Pathways) <b>Work Package 10</b> (Dissemination & Exploitation & Communication)
<b>Work Package 11:</b> Project Management & Ethical Governance		

The Project combines its de-centring approach with three innovative concepts: 1) a focus on return migration infrastructures that enable GAPs to analyse governance fissures, 2) an analysis of return migration diplomacy to understand how relations among EU Member States and third countries hinder cooperation on returns, and 3) a trajectory approach that uses a socio-spatial and temporal lens to understand migrant agency. The Project involves wide-ranging and innovative impacts, including the creation of an interactive data repository on returns, a return cooperation index, return governance indicators, policy briefs and workshops, the formation of stakeholder expert panels, a digital storytelling and video series, the launching of Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), as well as open access policy and scholarly publications.

The project achieves its aims via multi-disciplinary, qualitative and quantitative comparative research in 14 countries in Europe, Africa and the broader Middle East (including Afghanistan) with 17 partner institutions.

EU Member Partners	Non-EU Members
Uppsala University (UU, Applicant, co-coordinator), Sweden	Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII), Turkey
Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC, co-coordinator), Germany	Istanbul Özyegin University (OzU), Turkey
Radboud University (RU), Netherlands	Hammurabi Human Rights Organisation (HHRO), Iraq
University of Warsaw (UW), Poland	The Hashemite University (HU), Jordon
National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), Greece	Association Migration Internationale (AMI), Morocco
Migration Matters (MM), Germany	Ryerson University (Ryerson), Canada
Science-Policy Interface Agency (SPIA), Germany	University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Nigeria
	Bilim Research and Social Studies, (BRC) Afghanistan
	University of Sousse, Tunisia
	The University of Glasgow (UG), United Kingdom



To capture geographical, socio-spatial, and political variations, the GAPS Project identifies three return systems in line with the EU's external migration policies:

- 1. Central and Western Mediterranean Return Route:** from EU countries to Africa (Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, and Niger)
- 2. Eastern Mediterranean Return Route:** from EU countries to the broader Middle East (Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Afghanistan)
- 3. Eastern European Return Route:** from EU to Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Georgia)

Within the Project, Turkey is represented by two institutions Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, the co-leader of Work Package 2 and Özyeğin University, the co-leader of Work Package 7. The research team of two institutions are given below:



- Dr N. Ela Gökalp-Aras (Principal Investigator/ PI, SRII)
- Dr Neva Övünç Öztürk (Senior Researcher, SRII)
- Hakan Ünay (Researcher, SRII)
- Umutcan Yüksel (Researcher, SRII)



- Dr Susan Rottmann (Principal Investigator/PI, OzU)
- Dr Massiam Nimer (Senior Researcher, OzU)

GAPS officially started as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023, and the kick-off meeting in Uppsala, Sweden was held on 8-9-10 March 2023 with the participation of consortium members from 14 countries.



GAPs project is just started, and further information, outcomes and publications will be shared through IJHM's further issues and the Project's website:

<http://www.returnmigration.eu>

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101094341>

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