

The European countries that pay migrants the most to go home



Money to go home. (Reuters/Kai Pfaffenbach)

Germany's offer to pay rejected asylum seekers up to €1,000 (\$1226) for individuals and €3,000 for families, to go home sparked condemnation and praise. But Europe's economic powerhouse, which took in one million refugees in 2015, is by no means the first or only European country to take this approach.

A combination of the European commission's 2015 report (pdf) on cash offered for migrants who voluntarily return home and updated government policies reveal that Sweden—offering individuals up to €3050 in cash and families €7620—had the most generous offer in the European Union (EU). Spain and UK come in joint-second place, offering migrants a cash payment of €2,000. Finland was in third place, offering individual migrants €1,500.

These cash payments are far from static. In 2016, France temporarily increased (link in French) the amount of cash it gives to migrants from €650 to €2,500.

Eastern European countries, such as Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, offered some of the smallest amount of cash payments. But it was Portugal, offering just “€50 pocket money to cover any other expenses related to the journey,” to migrants interested in returning home that came in last place. Still, it was better than other EU member states, such as the Czech Republic, that didn't offer cash payments at all.

However, even those who didn't offer cash payments often still provided some form of in-kind assistance once migrants returned to their country of origin (as well as paying for the flights home). The assistance ranged from medical care, accommodation, education, a business start-up grant or loan, equipment or furniture, or on the job training. In Germany, migrants who voluntarily returned to their home country were offered subsidized housing for a year—to help pay rent, home renovations, or get basic equipment for a kitchen or a bathroom.

Last year, the European Commission warned that the disparities in what migrants

are offered to return home will tempt migrants to hop around for the best deal. The Commission called for cash payments and in-kind assistance to be consistent across the bloc.

Source: <https://qz.com/1179970/european-refugee-crisis-countries-that-pay-migrants-the-most-to-go-home/>

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