

The Hague, 13 February 2014

National Ombudsman launches investigation into deportation flights

The National Ombudsman has launched an investigation into deportation flights for migrants who have exhausted all legal remedies and must therefore leave the country. He will establish how the flights are monitored in the Netherlands, and how human rights are safeguarded in the process. The European Ombudsman asked for information about this topic in the Netherlands. This was the reason for the National Ombudsman of the Netherlands to launch an investigation on his own initiative. Similar investigations are being conducted by the National Ombudsmen in over twenty EU countries.

Migrants who must leave the Netherlands and who fail to do so of their own accord are forcibly deported to their country of origin. The Dutch authorities arrange special deportation flights, while others are facilitated by the European Union's Frontex agency. Member states are free to make use of these flights, the actual organisation of which remains the responsibility of one of the member states.

Independent monitoring needed

There is a risk that people will suffer harm during forced return operations. Coercive measures are sometimes used. The question is whether deportation flights are arranged in such a way as to rule out or minimise human rights violations. One essential safeguard is to have independent monitoring of such flights.

Security and Justice Inspectorate monitors in the Netherlands

The National Ombudsman is to investigate how deportation proceeds in practice, and how monitoring is arranged. The Security and Justice Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring the flights that are arranged by the Netherlands. The Repatriation and Departure Service prepares migrants for their deportation, and the Royal Military Police escort them on the flight. All three monitoring bodies will be questioned during the investigation.



The results of the investigations in the various EU countries will be compared later this year to identify any problem areas and examples of best practice, and to foster cooperation in this area.

Note for editors

For more information on the National Ombudsman's investigation, contact Sandra Loois on +31 (0)70 356 3641.

For more news, reports and background information, visit www.nationaleombudsman.nl, or follow the National Ombudsman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/nat_ombudsman.

The National Ombudsman is an independent institute that receives over 38,000 complaints every year from people experiencing problems with the authorities. Frank van Dooren is currently acting National Ombudsman; he was appointed by the House of Representatives.