



28 October 2014 - Since 2000, over [40,000 people have lost their lives](#) whilst trying to leave their country. Many hope to find a better life in Europe, which has in fact become one of the most dangerous destinations for 'irregular migration'. Since the beginning of the year, more than 3,000 migrants have died trying to reach Europe.

People are willing to take such high risks because their living conditions at home have become unbearable. The vast majority flee conflict zones or unstable countries as a result of Human Rights violations. An estimated 63% of people who enter Europe illegally originate from three countries: Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan.

IOM provides information and institutional support

Once arriving at their destination, their ordeal is not over. Either they are sent back immediately

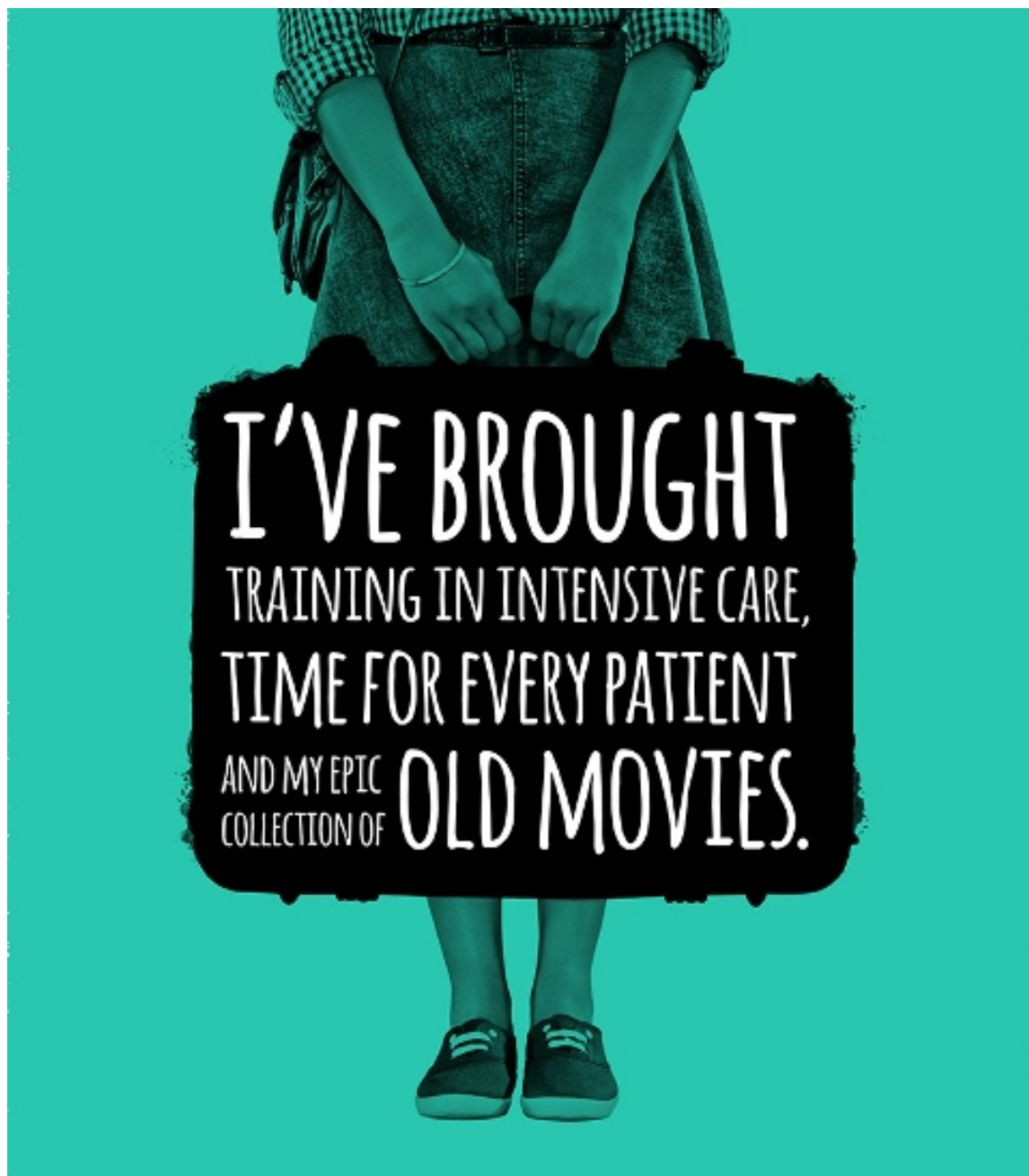
to their country of origin, or they risk being stigmatized or ostracized as an “economic refugee”.

“The term migration should not be limited to negative connotations such as danger, insecurity or death. Every migrant carries a rich personal history which could potentially be positive for the host country”, explains Pascal Reyntjens, Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration [Country Office for Belgium and Luxembourg](#) .



Last year, IOM launched a [global campaign](#) raising awareness of the positive contribution of migrants to society, in order to dispel misconceptions about immigrated people. The main

objective of [IOM](#) is to strive for respect for human dignity and the well-being of migrants. The Country Office for Belgium and Luxembourg works in cooperation with governmental, European and international institutions, as well as with civil society; in order to provide these people protection and assistance if necessary.



In other words, it serves as a “point of information” for all migrated people who wish to inform themselves on their personal situation, the host country or their country of origin. Mr. Reyntjens

hopes that migrants know that they can count on IOM in order to support them in their endeavors.

For those whose asylum application has been rejected, who are still in the asylum process, or who are in an irregular situation in Belgium and who wish to return to their home country without any financial means, [IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration \(AVRR\)](#) programmes can provide them with tailor-made assistance. In 2013, 4,388 people have used IOM's support for voluntary return and 1,229 have benefited from a reintegration project.

More information

[International organization for migration](#)

[Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration \(AVRR\) programme](#)

[IOM's campaign "What migrants bring"](#)