



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance – in practice

Shiraz, Iran

In spring 2012 Mr. M. opted for a voluntary return to his home country, Iran, because opportunities in Switzerland were limited. He contacted the cantonal return counsellor who helped him with the organization of the return. In order to facilitate his reintegration, Mr. M. was planning to set up his own hardware shop because he was experienced in this field. The Federal Office for Migration (FOM) granted him financial assistance to implement this business project.



Shortly after his arrival, Mr. M. contacted the office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Teheran. The local IOM staff counselled him and explained him the procedure to set up his project. Mr. M. submitted an estimate of costs for the goods that he needed for his shop. Once he had submitted all the necessary documents, IOM Teheran paid the goods directly to the providers.

A few months after his return, IOM staff visited him in his shop. Mr. M.

was satisfied with his personal situation and he was thankful for the support he received. He was managing the shop together with a partner. The business was going well and Mr. M. was earning a stable income from it. He declared that he hadn't experienced any particular difficulties with his reintegration process. At the time of the visit, Mr. M. was planning to expand his business and he was not thinking of leaving Iran again.

As a humanitarian and, at the same time, reasonably-priced solution, the concept of Return Assistance has proved itself and gained acceptance in many European countries. The object of Return Assistance is to harmonize the justified interests of migrants with those of Switzerland and the countries of origin. Return Assistance makes a valuable contribution to a sustainable and successful return. It is conceived so as to rule out undesired pull factors in the direction of Switzerland.

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