



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance – in practice

Azerbaijan

In 2012, Mr. N. opted for a voluntary return to his country of origin, Azerbaijan, with his wife and daughter. He wished to open a small clothing shop in his hometown as he had experience in retail. In order to facilitate his reintegration, the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) granted him financial assistance to set up his project upon return.

Shortly after his arrival in Azerbaijan, Mr. N. contacted the IOM local office. IOM staff counselled him and explained him the procedure to set



up his business. He decided to set up his business in premises owned by his mother. After submission of all required documentation, IOM could make the payment of the reintegration grant, which was used to purchase clothing (shoes, jeans and dresses) and display material for the shop.

A few months after his return, IOM staff visited his business. Mr. N. stated that the income generated by his business was satisfactory, and sufficient to provide for his own and his family's needs. According to him, the assistance was very useful in providing the conditions for his reintegration. His future projects include an expansion of the shop, and the search for new housing for his family.

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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