



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

Tbilissi, Georgia

After living in Switzerland for a few years, following the death of his wife, Mr. K. decided to give up his residence permit and return to Georgia to rebuild his life. Mr. K. therefore voluntarily returned to Georgia in August 2019. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) granted him financial assistance to set up a business project and to find accommodation. In addition, IOM was responsible for coordinating the project locally.

Before his departure, Mr. K. had no clear idea on how he would use the financial assistance allocated to the reintegration project. A few months after his return, he provided IOM Tbilisi with the necessary documents to rent a house. After another three months, he decided to use the financial assistance to start an animal farm (with chickens, pigs and calves), despite having no prior experience in this field. He also used his personal savings to set up this project.



When our colleagues met Mr. K. six months later, he said that he was able to make a living from his business. Moreover, he has been able to arrange his work on the farm so that he could take on a secondary job that would allow him to earn a little more for his personal expenses. In general, Mr. K. was satisfied with the help he received for his reintegration.

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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