



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance – in practice

Kosovo¹, District Gjakovë

In summer 2012, after having spent several years abroad, Mr. K decided to return voluntarily to his country of origin. He participated in the Return and Reintegration Assistance Program financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Through this program, Mr. K received reintegration assistance and counselling in order to implement a business project upon return.



Shortly after his arrival in Kosovo, Mr. K contacted IOM Pristina to present his project idea. He planned to open a small coffee shop in his home town. The first step for the realization of this project was to find an adequate location for the shop. Once Mr. K identified a suitable building, he contacted several suppliers to find out the prices of the goods and the furniture. He submitted the corresponding quotations as well as a copy of his newly received business license to IOM who could then make the payments directly to the suppliers.

Mr. K opened his coffee shop just a few weeks later. The news of the opening spread quickly, and many villagers became his new clients. Mr. K likes his new job. His business is so successful

that he could hire two additional employees to help him out with his daily tasks. Mr. K plans to reinvest part of the income generated by his shop in the further expansion of his business.

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.

¹ The denomination Kosovo refers to Kosovo, UN Security Council Resolution 1244/1999.