



SWISSREPAT-IOM-MOVEMENTS (SIM): VOLUNTARY RETURN MOVEMENTS FROM SWITZERLAND

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is a key instrument in ensuring humane and orderly movement of migrants. It is an indispensable component of a migration management approach that is mutually beneficial to migrants, governments and other relevant stakeholders.

As such, the project is in line with IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGoF), which includes the advancement of the wellbeing of migrants and societies among its three key objectives. Within the SIM-project, two types of movements can be organized: voluntary return or resettlement-related movements. As the resettlement-related movements from Switzerland are very rare (max. three cases per year), the main target group of the SIM-project are potential voluntary returnees.



Voluntary return movements include organizing the return journey (routing, ticketing) as well as transit and arrival assistance, particularly for migrants in vulnerable situations (unaccompanied migrant children, disabled persons, elderly persons, persons with physical or mental health problems, etc.).

For these migrants, IOM provides medical or social accompaniment before, during and/or after the journey and secondary transportation at arrival from the airport to the final destination. As an additional option, swissREPAT can mandate IOM Switzerland to organize travel to the airport where persons will be departing from in Switzerland.

Implementation Timeframe:

Ongoing since 2003

Beneficiaries:

- **Voluntary returnees in need of support before, during or after their journey.**

Furthermore, IOM clarifies the necessary Covid19-related steps that need to be taken and organizes further testing or quarantine in the country of destination. By the end of 2020 — since the creation of the SIM project in 2003 — IOM organized the return movement of more than 10,700 migrants.

SWISSREPAT-IOM-MOVEMENTS: PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This project contributes to ensuring that migrants living in Switzerland — under the Swiss Asylum or Foreigner law — in need of specific assistance during the return journey are able to travel in a safe and organized manner to their final destination in the country of origin.

Timely, individualized, and effective travel organization

Upon receiving the booking request, IOM makes sure to organize the movement in a timely and personalized manner. IOM looks up suitable flight connections, clarifies Covid-related entry requirements and organizes specific assistance that is required before, during and after the travel (this includes organizing overnight stay, transit and/or arrival assistance, support with immigration formalities, arrangement of secondary transport, etc.)

Arrangements of escorts

For returnees with medical concerns, the Medical Health Division (MHD) of IOM will make specific clarifications to ensure the conditions for the return travel and for the living conditions are adequately met. Post arrival medical assistance will also be provided to ensure continuation of treatment after the return. If deemed necessary, a medical escort is organized. For non-medical vulnerable individuals, such as unaccompanied minor cases, an operational escort can be organized.

Increased knowledge of stakeholders

Relevant partners and stakeholders have increased knowledge and can provide advice to eligible persons about the available assistance. For this, regular meetings and trainings with all return counsellors in Switzerland are organized.

Reasons for SIM booking

SIM bookings are exclusively for those who have medical or psychological requirements during travel, individuals with special vulnerabilities (unaccompanied minors, victims of human trafficking, etc.) or for country-specific reasons (fear of immigration process, fear of authorities, etc.). Cumulative reasons for a SIM booking include lack of travel experience, need for secondary travel arrangements, illiteracy, families with children under 12 years of age, etc.

Migrant agency

IOM only provides support to individuals who have taken a free and informed decision to return voluntarily to their country. This presupposes the availability of timely, clear and unbiased information provided as well as the absence of any physical or psychological pressure.



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