

1951

THE BEGINNING

The organization was founded on the 5 December 1951 as the Intergovernmental Committee for EU Migration (ICEM) to address the major chaos and displacement of persons in post-war Europe.



1961

1 MILLION SUPPORTED

By 1961, one million migrants were directly assisted by ICEM.



1973

CHILEAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

A special resettlement programme helped over 31,000 Chileans resettle in 50 countries, including Switzerland.



1974

FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS

ICEM became a forum for international discussion and exchange of experiences between governments and various organizations on migration issues.



1989

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

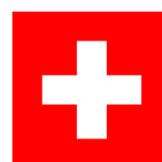
The ICEM was renamed the International Organization for Migration (IOM) upon the amendment and ratification of the 1953 Constitution.



1994

IOM IN SWITZERLAND

The IOM Coordination Office in Bern was established, based on a Memorandum of Understanding between IOM and the FDJP, to foster the voluntary return of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as to support projects in countries of origin.



1997- 1999

FIRST MAJOR RETURN ASSISTANCE PROJECT

More than 10,000 returnees were supported through the Bosnia and Herzegovina return assistance programme - the first major Swiss return assistance project. It was implemented in cooperation between the Federal Office for Refugees - FOR (today SEM), SDC and IOM.



1999- 2002

RETURN TO KOSOVO

After the end of the Kosovo conflict, around 35,000 migrants returned home. IOM and FOR jointly organized the voluntary return and reintegration in the country of origin, for which IOM Bern organized the charter flights.



2002- 2003

IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY PROGRAMMES

Within the framework of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme, IOM Bern implemented three main programmes that are successfully running to date: Swiss Return Information Fund (RIF), swissREPAT-IOM Movements (SIM) and Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland (RAS).



2007

RETURN FROM RECEPTION AND PROCESSING CENTRES (REZ)

IOM Bern implemented the REZ project (today RAZ - Return from Federal Asylum Center). Since then, IOM return counsellors have been covering federal asylum centers in five regions of Switzerland and have also been present at the Zurich and Geneva airports since 2009.



2012

RAISING AWARENESS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Since 2012, IOM Bern has been contributing to various awareness-raising and prevention activities as part of the European Anti-Trafficking Day. To date, over 470,000 people have been reached in Switzerland.



Die Schweiz gegen Menschenhandel
à Suisse contre le trafic des êtres humains
a Svizzera contro la tratta di esseri umani

2013

SWISS RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

The Swiss Resettlement Programme was implemented on behalf of the SEM and has been ongoing since 2013. IOM Bern has assisted more than 4,000 refugees with entering Switzerland and getting them prepared for their future life in the host country, thanks to "Predeparture Orientation" courses.



2016

IOM JOINS THE UNITED NATIONS

At IOM's Special Council in June 2016, IOM member states agreed to join the United Nations. IOM and the UN signed the agreement in September 2016.



2017

HUMAN TRAFFICKING INFO-BUS LAUNCH

Together with partners, IOM Bern launched a mobile bus exhibition to raise awareness of human trafficking. Over 11,000 people were directly informed at 44 bus stops, across 16 cantons in Switzerland. Around 100 media articles were published in connection with the project.



2018

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION

The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the first global UN agreement on a common approach to international migration. IOM took the role of coordinator and secretariat of the United Nations Network on Migration.



2020- 2021

COVID-19 SUPPORT

In line with WHO recommendations, IOM staff have been mobilized around the world to respond to the pandemic. They have been drawing on decades of experience, most recently with the Ebola epidemic, and working with dozens of governments to save lives.



2021

10 YEARS MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP WITH NIGERIA

In collaboration with the SEM and Nigerian partners, IOM Bern has been playing a key role in the coordination of the return and reintegration programmes. In addition, the idea of the info-bus on human trafficking was exported to Nigeria.



DIRECTOR GENERAL'S VISIT TO BERN

During his visit to Bern, IOM's General Director, António Vitorino, met with several high-ranking Swiss representatives to discuss migratory challenges and the cooperation between IOM and Switzerland.



1 YEAR MOVEMENT OPERATIONS BERN (MOB)

Since the implementation of MOB in 2020, all flights are directly booked in-house by IOM Bern. To date, over 480 flights and 680 tickets have been booked through MOB.

