

Switzerland to support IOM voluntary humanitarian return for third-country nationals fleeing Ukraine

Switzerland – The Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) has announced financial support to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to provide voluntary humanitarian return and related assistance to third-country nationals (TCNs) fleeing Ukraine. The support of CHF 1 million will enable IOM to help them return from Poland, Romania and Slovakia to their countries of origin.

“The situation of stranded third-country nationals remains a high concern for IOM,” said Berta Fernandez, IOM’s Chief of Mission in Switzerland. “We will leverage our existing expertise in movement management and humanitarian returns to ensure the safe, orderly, and dignified return of these individuals.”

“IOM will also seek, wherever feasible, to refer returnees in need of support to available services in their country of origin,” she added.

More than 3.3 million people have fled the country since the invasion of Ukraine, and nearly 6.5 million people are now displaced inside the country. More than 180,000 third-country nationals from over 140 countries have arrived in Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania to date.

Third-country nationals fleeing the war in Ukraine are arriving to neighbouring countries with no or limited resources and may not be able to access repatriation assistance from their own governments or be eligible to stay under the EU’s Temporary Protection Directive. Many find themselves stranded in a vulnerable situation and potentially exposed to discrimination, violence or other human rights abuses and crimes.

IOM has received requests for return support from both TCN and Third Country Governments and will assist those in need of return assistance who avail themselves of this support on a voluntary basis and in a non-discriminatory manner.

In close coordination with national authorities, IOM will adapt its operating return procedures in each host country. Throughout the process, due consideration will be given to vulnerabilities and specific protection needs that the individuals might have due to their migratory situation. This will entail individual screening for possible protection needs and vulnerabilities and referral to appropriate services, pre-departure medical checks, as well as access to temporary accommodation as needed.

For more information, please contact:

In Bern: Setareh Bidar, Tel: +41 31 350 82 11, Email: sbidar@iom.int

In Brussels: Ryan Schroeder, Tel: +32 492 25 02 34, Email: rschroeder@iom.int



About IOM: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an international, intergovernmental organization founded in 1951 to help displaced persons, refugees and migrants in Europe. Currently, IOM has 151 Member States and 12 other Member States have observer status. As a leading international organization in the field of migration, IOM is working in partnership with governments and migrants to address migration issues. IOM's mission and activities are based on the principle that humane and organized migration benefits both migrants and society. It covers a wide range of migration issues in all areas of the world.