



# INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)



## Mandate

The Republic of Armenia became an IOM Member State in 1993. IOM activities in the country are grounded on a number of official documents signed with the Armenian Government, including "Co-operation Agreement on Privileges and Immunities" (1994) and "Memorandum of Understanding" (2001). As an intergovernmental organization, the IOM in Armenia works closely with the Government and implements projects prioritised by the Government and various ministries and state agencies. The IOM office in Yerevan was opened in 1993.

## Technical Cooperation on Migration and Capacity Building in Migration Management

- Policy Reforms:** Through its technical cooperation programmes, the IOM has been offering advisory services on migration-related issues to the Government. It assists in the development, implementation, and management of migration policy and legislation to prevent irregular migration. The IOM also helps to facilitate regular beneficial migration as well as provides assistance with various aspects of migrant processing. The IOM assists the reforms of migration management, including Introduction of the System of Electronic Passports and Identification Cards with Biometric Parameters.
- Capacity Building:** In order to respond to the country's needs to develop coherent responses to migration challenges in a changing international environment, IOM's technical co-operation also focuses on capacity building for officials dealing with migration management and working towards solutions for emerging migration issues. Since 1993 IOM is involved in capacity building for the State Migration Service, National Security Service and its Border Guards Troops, Interpol Armenia National Central Bureau, Police and its Department of Passports and Visas, Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and its Consular Services and the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues among others. In particular, the Training Centre of the Border Guards Troops was established and extensive training programmes are being organized for border guards and police on issues such as legislation, human rights, the examination of identity and travel documents and fraud detection, counter-smuggling and counter-trafficking, as well as the use of border control and management technologies. The IOM has also supported the Government's border management reform through expansion of the Border Management Information system to all border crossing points.

## Labour Migration

IOM's labour migration activities focus on the regulation of labour movements and programmes to assist Government and migrants in the selection, recruitment, cultural orientation, training, travel, reception, integration and return of labour migrants.

Since 2001 IOM has assisted and involved Armenia in the inter-regional migration management dialogue (the "Cluster" Process) between the sending and transitional countries of the South Caucasus, and the receiving EU Member States. A focus on the promotion of legal migration and the importance of bilateral readmission agreements was introduced into discussions. To raise the public's awareness on threats of irregular migration, as well as the benefits of legal labour migration, the IOM Mission in Armenia, together with the State Employment Service, has established a Migration Resource Centre which provides free consultations to potential migrants.

## Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

The IOM has been active in counter-trafficking activities in Armenia and has lobbied for the inclusion of an article criminalizing human trafficking into the Criminal Code, for ratification of the





UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, and has contributed to the development of the National Plans of Action to Combat Human Trafficking.

The IOM has implemented seven counter-trafficking projects in Armenia ranging from research and capacity building to victim assistance and public awareness. Working with its partners, the IOM offers direct assistance to victims of trafficking.

Further assistance includes specialized expertise and practical skills for law enforcement agencies and Border Guard troops to help them more effectively detect, investigate and prosecute traffickers, which are in line with other efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

Through IOM's support and in the framework of the regional South Caucasus project, a trafficking course is now included into high school curricula. Teachers from all schools country-wide were trained to teach counter-trafficking and all schools received books and educational materials prepared for the course. To ensure community support, Armenian NGOs regularly organize information dissemination campaigns which promote Counter-Trafficking education in Armenia.

**Migrant Integration**

The IOM facilitates successful integration of migrants and refugees in host societies. Migrant Integration focuses on; i) the dissemination of information on rights and obligations of migrants and refugees in home and host countries, ii) the provision of advisory services and information on services available to them, and iii) the reinforcement of their skills which enhance their prospects for quick and successful integration.

Within the framework of the "Self-reliance and Integration through Micro-enterprise Development" project implemented in Armenia since 1997, the IOM helps individuals (including returnees, refugees and displaced persons) to become self-sufficient through micro-credit schemes, including micro-enterprise training as well as credit and employment opportunities. The aim is to reduce their dependence on humanitarian aid and the levels of poverty as well as to achieve effective reintegration in society.

More than 2,200 persons have already completed training in micro-business management and business planning. So far over 9,000 loans, amounting to more than US\$ 6.0 million have been extended, impacting the lives of over 3,900 direct beneficiaries, including loan recipients as well as persons employed. Over 2,800 businesses were supported, with some 25 per cent of the loans used to create production and service businesses and the balance for trade. 42 Iraqi refugees and 17 mine victims benefited from the training and MED services.

**Facilitated Movements and Resettlement**

- **Pre-Consular Services (Canada):** Under the Canadian Government's programme for legal immigration for qualified skilled workers, the Canadian Government has signed an agreement with the IOM offering pre-consular services for Armenian citizens and residents applying to the Canadian Embassy in Moscow for non-immigrant visas. The applicants can receive assistance with temporary resident visas, work permits and help preparing the immigration pack (including consultation, translations, filling in of the applications, verifications, and complete check of the kit). During last two years, IOM has assisted more about 1500 people in Armenia.



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