

Webinar on Humanitarian Admission

SRC Counseling Service Humanitarian Visa Switzerland



Croix-Rouge suisse
Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz
Croce Rossa Svizzera



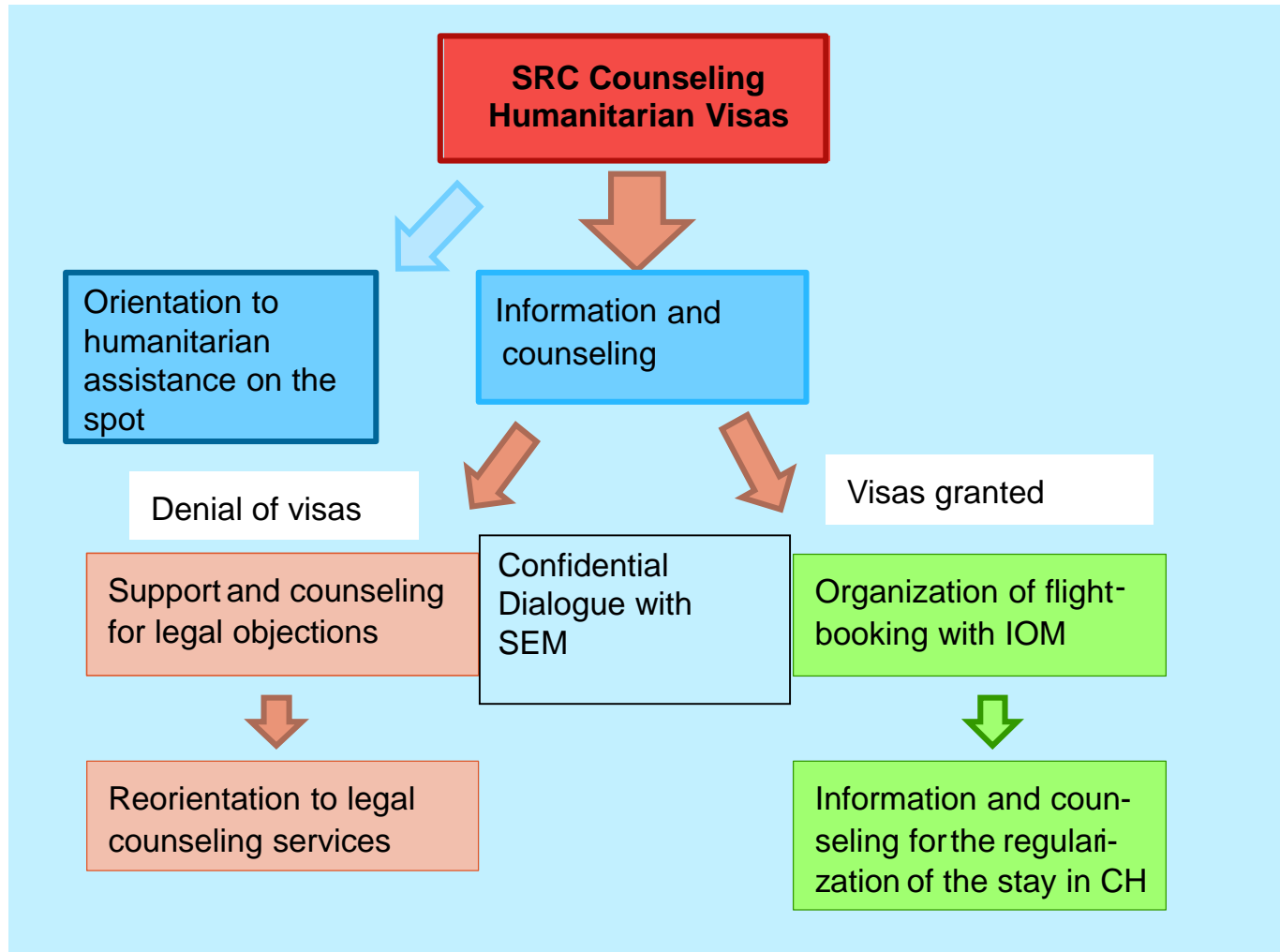
Initial situation, start of the Project «Syria» until today's general counseling service on Humanitarian Visa

- September-November 2013: SEM (State Secretary for Migration) publishes a special directive that facilitates the obtainment of visas for family members of Syrians living in Switzerland.
- 29 November 2013: The directive is repealed. Humanitarian visas become the only legal way to enter Switzerland for the majority of Syrians. Opening of our service to all countries of origin.

The legal framework

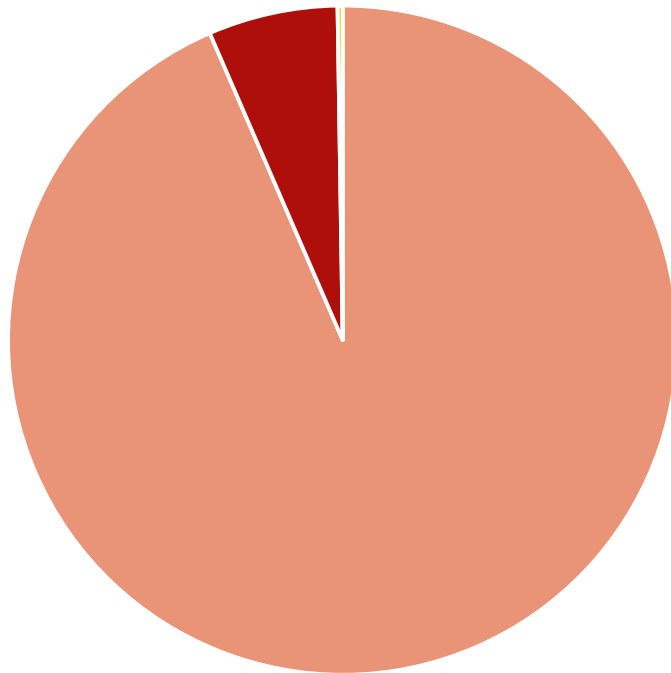
According to SEM's directive on humanitarian visas from February 2014: "Foreign nationals wishing to leave their native country for compelling reasons may apply at any time to a Swiss representation abroad to obtain information on whether they would be granted a visa for Switzerland on the basis of their personal circumstances. **A visa can be issued in individual cases for humanitarian reasons if it is evident that the applicant's life or physical integrity are directly, seriously and tangibly endangered. As a rule the Swiss authorities presume that individuals who are already in a third-party State are no longer in any danger.**" (Humanitarian Visas are based on the Swiss Asylum Act, revised in 2013)

Activities of the Swiss Red Cross to support people applying for humanitarian visas to enter Switzerland



Numbers and challenges

Numbers 2016



- Total persons reached 3033
- HV for Syrians 203
- HV for others 8

- **Swiss authorities are very strict in granting visas. Only in cases of Syria there is a tendency of “goodwill”-> political lobbying/advocacy, confidential dialogue. Lack of practice or political will for other countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan or Eritrea.**
- **Restricted access and unspecified criteria for humanitarian visas and lack of alternative legal ways to access protection.**



Key recommendations for the future and possible implementation elsewhere in Europe



Lobbying on national and European level for better legal access to enter Europe.

Strategic litigation on what possibilities are left for European countries after the decision by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on issuing humanitarian visas.

Thank you very much for listening!



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