



## **PRIORITIES OF MARRI PRESIDENCY**

### **Republic of Croatia (April 2007-April 2008)**

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On 26 April 2007, the Republic of Croatia took over the Presidency of the Regional Forum of the Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI). During its one-year Presidency, the Republic of Croatia will invest necessary efforts in strengthening and promoting MARRI and, in particular, in developing the concept of regional ownership.

The Presidency will work towards initiating, monitoring, providing guidelines to, and finalising projects, programmes and meetings of working groups and experts, as well as towards organising two MARRI Regional Forums, one, on the level of political directors, in November 2007 and the other, a ministerial-level one, prior to handing over the Presidency in April 2008.

The Presidency will guide the MARRI Regional Centre (hereinafter: the Centre) to implement its activities and will work towards promoting the idea of regional ownership in MARRI issues, underlining the importance of continuous cooperation among MARRI Member States to promote security and stability in the region. Special attention will be attached to facilitation of activities in line with the MARRI Strategy and Programme of Action.

The Presidency will ensure that the approach taken during its mandate is in line with the requirements needed in progressively closer association among countries in the region and, at a later stage, accession to the European Union.

The Presidency will channel the needs, interests and concerns of MARRI Member States in dealing with population movements, strengthening regional cooperation and harmonisation of existing experiences and best practices on the road towards EU integration, as well as building the capacities and raising awareness of their state administration of the migration issues.

The Presidency will render its full contribution in the field of migration through organising seminars and other activities aimed at co-ordinating and monitoring action on MARRI issues in the region, based on the principle of complementarity with other international organizations and initiatives in order to avoid overlapping of activities.

The Presidency will devote special attention to maintaining contacts with Ministries of Foreign Affairs of other countries of the region and the MARRI Regional Centre, so as to provide adequate political and technical support for MARRI activities.

The activities towards achieving a better communication between MARRI and other regional initiatives and international organisations/agencies will be one of the Presidency's priorities. Special attention will be attached to communication with the future Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). To that end, the Presidency will take necessary steps towards ensuring MARRI's close and all-round cooperation with, and greater involvement with the RCC.

The Presidency will continue cooperation and develop partnerships with major stakeholders in the area of migration, such as partnership with ICMPD within Project on Transnational Referral Mechanisms and Project on Data Collection and Information Management, as well as Swedish Migration Board projects funded by AENEAS Programme in MARRI Member States.

The Presidency will place special emphasis on working towards achieving better cooperation with the European Union and its programmes of support for the region. To that end, MARRI is envisaged as the region's medium of approaching the European Union and highlighting problems of relevance for the region in MARRI issues.

The Presidency will work on facilitating exchange of migration related information and practices among MARRI Member States, as well as with European organisations such as EUROPOL and FRONTEX.

The Presidency will seek out modalities for obtaining observer status in the activities of other international intergovernmental organizations and regional structures (e.g. Council of Europe, OSCE, RACVIAC, SEECF etc.) and vice versa in the format of a signed Memorandum of Understanding or Protocol for Cooperation.

The Presidency will enhance and coordinate activities regarding the establishment of effective response mechanisms to combat irregular migration, smuggling in migrants and trafficking in human beings in MARRI Member States. In pursuit of this objective, the Presidency will take into account and build on action already underway, as well as seek to fill important gaps in action.

The Presidency will work towards establishing a regional exchange of information and experiences among the countries of origin, transit and destination, aimed at reducing illegal migration.

The Presidency will continue the activities in document security and establishment of identity in order to improve capacity-building and regional cooperation as supportive instruments for freedom of population movements in the region.

The Presidency will encourage and promote activities to enhance cooperation by further coordinating and improving the programmes and projects in the readmission area in the region and outside of it, in accordance with the EU practice.

The Presidency will take necessary steps to have the questions of labour migration and brain drain incorporated in the work of the Centre and the MARRI Regional Forum in the most effective way.

As to the integrated border management, the Presidency will work on establishing closer cross border cooperation to increase efficiency, facilitate trade and prevent/reduce crime and irregular migration.

The Presidency will work on strengthening the dialogue between parliaments and governments on the relevance of migration policy for the development of the countries in the region.

The Presidency will devote special attention to the efforts to establish mechanisms for achieving necessary standards to strengthen the rule of law, struggle against organised crime and corruption.

In view of the fact of the need for donors for the MARRI Regional Centre, the Presidency will work, alongside the Centre, towards intensifying contacts with competent institutions of the donor countries and international organisations aimed at promoting this Initiative and providing the funds for the continued work of the Centre in 2007 and beyond.

Zagreb, 26 April 2007