



Welcome Note

The Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) was established within the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Since 2004 this initiative is under regional ownership as part of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). MARRI is governed by its six MARRI Member States, Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Republic of Serbia, who meet twice a year at MARRI Regional Forum.

Since 2004 the MARRI Regional Centre is in Skopje. On 18th of November, 2007, the MARRI Regional Centre celebrated three years of its existence. MARRI is functioning through two mechanisms: The MARRI Regional Forum provides political and framework support initiative; the MARRI Regional Centre is carrying out practical cooperation and activities and supporting the implementation of decisions reached by the MARRI Regional Forum.

The MARRI Strategy and Programme of Action since its beginning is in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda and SAP. On that platform the MARRI Regional Centre is recognized by the international community as well as by Member States as a regional body for improving the cooperation through dialog, exchange of views and promotion of cooperation through tangible activities.

In 2007 MARRI Member States selected the Director of the Regional Centre in Skopje from the region and took over full responsibility for covering the running costs for the MARRI Regional Centre, starting from 2008. This process represents maturity of the MARRI Member States to take over the ownership on the initiative, as a vital part of EU integration agenda of the Member States. Of course, the partnership with the donor countries is crucial for further implementation of the regional as well as international projects from the MARRI issues, on its EU integration for the entire region.

The MARRI Regional Centre will continue to intensify its activities with intention to facilitate dialogue with national, regional and international representatives with expert, academic and donor communities. The priorities should be facilitation of experience sharing, support in establishing the operational links within the MARRI Member States, harmonization and implementation of legislation of the region countries with the international and European standards.

The MARRI Regional Centre is very grateful to the governments of Switzerland, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, USA and Czech Republic, as well as all MARRI Member States for its ongoing as well as future challenges and support.

Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director
MARRI Regional Centre

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Extraordinary Meeting of MARRI Regional Forum, Skopje, 26 June 2007

MARRI National Coordinators have met in the MARRI Regional Centre on 26 June 2007, for an extraordinary meeting of the MARRI Regional Forum.

Croatian Presidency in Office briefed the participants on the past and future MARRI activities, with an emphasis on donor approach, since the MARRI Regional Forum in Sarajevo held on 26 April 2007.

MARRI Regional Centre Budget for 2008 and Proposal for annual contribution of the MARRI Member States to the running costs of the MARRI Regional Centre starting 1 January 2008 were adopted by the participants.

The Terms of Reference for the Director and the Deputy Director were also adopted. Also, MARRI basic documents were modified in accordance with the Sarajevo Declaration. Dr. Trpe Stojanovski (Macedonia) was elected as a new Director of the MARRI Regional Centre.



Mr. Trpe Stojanovski, Ph.D. was appointed as the new Director of MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje

MARRI Regional Forum, Sarajevo, 26 April 2007

MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum gathered high state representatives responsible for issues of migration, asylum and refugees from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while the participants also included representatives of EU Member States' representatives, relevant international organisations (European Commission, ICMPD, IOM, OSCE and UNHCR) and the Stability Pact for South East Europe.

Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded its year-long Presidency within the framework of MARRI, while the Republic of Croatia took over the one-year Presidency of the Initiative that will last from April 2007 to April 2008.

Presidency of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
Republic of Croatia officially took over the one year long Presidency from the Bosnia and Herzegovina over Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative. The new Presidency committed to 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 activities towards achieving a better communication between MARRI and the European Commission, other regional initiatives and international organisations/agencies will be one of the Presidency's priorities.

Preparatory Meeting for MARRI Regional Forum, Banja Luka, 16 April 2007

The preparatory meeting for MARRI Regional Forum was held in Banja Luka on 16 April 2007. The meeting was envisaged as the preparation for the MARRI Regional Forum on ministerial level to be held in Sarajevo on 26 April 2007. The Presidency of the MARRI Regional Forum (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje organised the meeting, with the participation of political directors from MFAs and MOI's from six MARRI Member States and representative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The purpose of the preparatory meeting was to finalise the arrangements needed for the organisation of the forthcoming MARRI Regional Forum Meeting in Sarajevo, including the main document – Sarajevo Declaration - expected to be adopted during the meeting by ministers and high level political representatives of MARRI Member States.

For more information please visit: www.marri-rc.org



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Management of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje

Members of the Forum thanked the current Director of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, Ms. Alenka Prvinsek, for her valuable efforts at the expiry of her mandate on 26 April 2007. Vacancy for the position of the new Director was opened for the candidates from the MARRI Member States in accordance with the proposal submitted by the Republic of Croatia. Practice was introduced that the position of the Deputy Director of the MARRI Regional Centre gets occupied by the Centre's State Official of the MARRI Member State that presides over the MARRI Regional Forum *Regional Ownership*

MARRI Member States have committed to improve their level of regional ownership through taking full responsibility in decision-making and financial obligations, through jointly financing from 2008 onwards the running costs of the MARRI RC in Skopje. It was agreed to adopt the financing model used for contributions of the MARRI Member States to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

For more information please visit: www.marri-rc.org

MARRI Regional Forum, Zagreb, 10 December 2007

The Forum provided an opportunity for MARRI MS to discuss current and future activities of MARRI in the framework of regional ownership and cooperation. The main issues of the Initiative were discussed and adopted during the Forum.

Namely, MARRI RC Budget for 2008 and annual contributions of the MARRI Member States to the running costs as an important issue concerning the functioning and future development of the Initiative and the Centre.

New Internal Working Rules of MARRI RC were also adopted during the Forum session.



Zagreb, Republic of Croatia

MARRI RC Director, Dr. Stojanovski met with Minister of Interior of Albania, Mr. Nishani

Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director of the MARRI Regional Centre met with Mr. Bujar Nishani, Minister of Interior of Albania on 4 December 2007. Dr. Stojanovski presented the current activities MARRI RC is implementing and informed Albanian Minister about the forthcoming projects and asked for support and full participation from Albanian institution, appreciating the support that the countries of the region, including Albania are giving in the process of MARRI transition to regional ownership by sharing the costs of the MARRI RC from January 2008 onwards.

Mr. Nishani emphasized the full support that the Albanian side is giving to MARRI. Recognizing the Initiative and its activities as important challenges, the Minister assured the MARRI RC Director that Albania will be even more active in the future and a dynamic partner and supporter of this cooperation.



MARRI RC Director, Dr. Stojanovski with Minister of Interior of Republic of Albania, Mr. Nishani in Tirana

MARRI and ICMPD Sign the Memorandum of Understanding, Vienna, 18 December 2007

On 18 December 2007 directors of International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative Regional Centre (MARRI RC), Mr. Gottfried Zürcher, and Dr. Trpe Stojanovski signed the Memorandum of Understanding whose purpose is to ensure the basis of and to define the framework of cooperation between ICMPD and MARRI RC in the field of migration.



Dr. Trpe Stojanovski and Mr. Gottfried Zürcher

MARRI is also a partner in two projects implemented by ICMPD:

The Programme for the Enhancement of Anti-trafficking Responses in South Eastern Europe – Data Collection and Information Management. The objective of the programme is to contribute to harmonisation, improved quality and reliability of data related to trafficking in persons in SEE in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution. In order to achieve this goal, a database will be developed for each participating country/territory to be installed within the relevant national institutions.

The Programme to Support the Development of Trans-national Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe.

The objective of the programme is to empower trafficked persons to restart a self-determined life, being aware of their rights and of the role they might play in criminal proceedings. For this purpose, mechanisms necessary for comprehensive trans-national victim support and institutionalized co-operation on trans-national cases between countries/actors in South Eastern Europe will be developed and implemented in the course of the programme.

Document Security in MARRI Region

The objective of the Project on Document Security for MARRI Region is to improve capacity-building and regional cooperation as supportive instrument for freedom of population movements in the MARRI region. The Project, whose duration is from January to December 2007, is funded by the UK Government. Its aim is to enhance regional cooperation and information exchange mechanisms and promote harmonisation of standards in the area of irregular transit migration in the field of document security.

In November 2006 a Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity was established, consisting of relevant experts from national institutions managing irregular migration in the region.

Thematic areas covered by Working Group are:

a) technical aspects of documents security-including operational expertise on genuine documents unlawfully obtained;



Macedonian Minister of Interior, Ms. Jankuloska at November 2006 meeting on Document Security

genuine documents obtained by false identity; genuine lost or stolen issued documents used by third parties; and genuine documents obtained by means of corruption; and
b) legal aspects on establishment of identity (risk analyses on possible frauds and abuse of legal documents to obtain false identity).

For more info contact Mr. Toni Jakimovski at toni.jakimovski@marri-rc.org.mk

1st Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity, 5-6 February 2007



MARRI Regional Centre organised the first Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity in Skopje on 5 and 6 February 2007. The meeting was attended by regional experts from national institutions managing areas related to document security and establishment of identity. The aim of the meeting was to identify gaps and develop solutions/recommendations for possible misuse of legal channels, identify best practices and elaborate follow-up strategies in the area of document security and establishment of identity for the region.

The emphasis was placed on:

- enhancing regional co-operation and information exchange mechanisms;
- improving regional migration management systems to address issues of combating irregular migration;
- supporting the process of harmonisation with the standards in JHA field and visa facilitation processes;

Irregular Migration and Its Effects on Security Meeting, Rakitje, 27-28 March 2007

The seminar organized by MARRI Regional Centre and RAC-VIAC was designed for law enforcement and military officials who are tasked to co-operate mostly on operational level (intelligence agencies, criminal investigative units) from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, France, Greece and Turkey. Also, representatives from international organisations such as UNICRI, ICMPD, IOM and EUROPOL attended the meeting. The aim of the seminar was to discuss the main challenges the states in the region face in their efforts to tackle increasingly complex phenomenon of irregular migration and its effects to security, trafficking and smuggling of human beings and document security.



2nd Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity, Skopje, 18-19 June 2007



MARRI Regional Centre organised the Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity titled *Registration of Birth, Nationality and Residence in Country and Abroad* in Skopje on 18 - 19 June 2007.

The objective of the second meeting was to identify the best practices on the prevention and avoidance of the failure or misuse of the procedures of registration of child, marriage/divorce, deaths as well as citizenship and residence and to elaborate follow-up strategies.

The event was attended by regional experts from the national institutions managing areas related to document security and establishment of identity in the MARRI MS. The Meeting presented an opportunity to exchange views, ideas and best practices. Also, it contributed to establishment of contacts among MARRI Member States' national experts which will increase and facilitate regional co-operation.

For more info please visit www.marri-rc.org

3rd Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity, Skopje, 20-21 September

MARRI Regional Centre organised the Third Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security – titled *Authenticity of Identification Documents* in Skopje on 20- 21 September 2007. The event was attended by regional experts from the national institutions managing areas related to document security and establishment of identity in MARRI Member States. It was an opportunity to exchange views, ideas and best practices, to identify gaps and solutions for the prevention of possible misuse of legal channels in the procedures of handling and issuance of identification documents, detection of forged identification documents, verification of authenticity of identification documents, as well as to develop indicators for recognising abuse of identification documents.

National presentations on *Authenticity of Identification Documents* focused on types of national identification documents, national legislation regulating identification documents, national institutions responsible for production/issuance of identification documents, procedures of handling and issuance of identification documents as well as developed projects on new identification documents.



Particular emphasis was placed on identified gaps and solutions for the prevention/combating fraud in respect of civil status and misuse of legal channels in the procedures of issuance of identification documents, forgery of identification documents, abuse of genuine identification documents and development of possible solutions.

For more info please visit www.marri-rc.org

Briefing for the Members of the Diplomatic Corps in Skopje, 25 October 2007



The Director of the MARRI Regional Centre, Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, held a briefing for members of Macedonian diplomatic corps on 25 October 2007. The priorities from the MARRI Strategy and Programme of Action in the field of migration, with an overview of MARRI Regional Centre present and future activities were presented. More specifically, three project proposals prepared by MARRI RC were presented. The meeting underlined the contribution of MARRI to the promotion of regional cooperation, as MARRI was established according to the basic guidelines of the regional ownership concept among its Member States. This regional cooperation in the area of migration reflects the extent to which the region is prepared for integration into EU structures.

Briefing for Diplomatic Corps in Skopje

MARRI Migration Paper, November 2007

The main recommendation from this paper is that each of the MARRI Member States should formulate and adopt a document on comprehensive migration policy strategy in order to secure political commitment on principles and aims of the comprehensive and integrated migration policy and its implementation.

Bearing in mind the necessity of development of a comprehensive migration policy approach, the aim of this paper is to highlight relevant MARRI recommendations and proposals for migration policy and in some areas for utilization of concrete instruments, programmes and measures in the following areas: legal migration; asylum systems; integration; combating irregular migration, information management national institutional set-up and regional co-operation.

The paper builds upon already agreed and adopted recommendations from workshops and activities organized by MARRI RC. In particular, MARRI Workshop on Migration Management Systems held in Ulcinj, 5-6 October 2006 and recommendations from Workshop on Management of Irregular Transit Migration in MARRI Region held in Sarajevo, 29-30 June 2006.

For further information about this publication please contact info@marri-rc.org.mk

MARRI Publishes New Asylum Report, April 2007

MARRI Regional Centre conducted an assessment of the progress that has been achieved in the field of asylum in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and short trips were organised to these countries in December 2006. Interviews were held with the asylum authorities and UNHCR in each of the countries, as well as with NGOs dealing with legal representation. The aim of the assessment was to describe the progress that was made during 2006 regarding legislation and its implementation taking into account capacity, staffing and management of the different stages in the asylum procedure. In this respect, the UNHCR Asylum Module Country Progress Report of 2005 was taken as a basis for the interviews.

The Report was developed based on the information received during these interviews, with the emphasis on achieved progress. As the situation in each of the visited countries is different and the developments therefore are in different stages, the topics that are elaborated in the reports also differ.

For further information about this publication please contact info@marri-rc.org.mk

New MARRI Comparative Overview of Visa Regimes

MARRI Regional Centre has compiled the Comparative Overview of Visa Regimes in MARRI Member States. This overview provides all interested parties with the factual overview of the visa regimes in the respective MARRI Member States, taking into consideration the importance of the unified data on visa matters and the need to enhance the exchange of information in the region. The MARRI Regional Centre prepared this overview on the basis of the information which has been successively received from the competent institutions of each MARRI Member State as of beginning of April 2007.

MARRI RC prepared this overview on the basis of the information received from relevant institutions from each Member State.

The overview is posted on: www.marri-rc.org

MARRI Regional Centre Project Proposals

Building capacity of MARRI Member States for successful implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission

This project is built upon recent initiatives to extend activities related to migration on intersectoral level in MARRI MS. It seeks to scale-up existing successful activities and strengthen overall coordination and cooperation on national and international level. The goal of this project is to build a coordinated national response of MARRI Member States for successful implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission.

MARRI Interactive Migration Map

Web-based, on-line Interactive Migration Map will serve as a tool for prompt exchange of information between MARRI Member States on national legislation in the area of migration, institutions and contact points responsible for managing migration, operational and statistical data relevant to migration management, international legal instruments and best national and international practices of all stakeholders involved in migration management. The objective is to develop a comprehensive overview of the state of affairs in the specific areas of national migration management, which will lead to a harmonized regional approach in dealing with the challenges of population movements in the Western Balkans.

Assessment of Types of IDs in MARRI Member States

The objective is to enhance capacities of MARRI MMS national institutions responsible for document security to successfully prevent and combat misuse of Identification Documents. Compilation of all types of existing IDs will be created in hard copy and electronic form which will serve national institutions dealing with IDs as a platform for exchange of information, reliable identification of individuals, verification of authenticity of documents, expertise sharing, etc.

For more information on project proposals please write to info@marri-rc.org.mk

MARRI Regional Centre Short Term Strategy

Having in mind adopted conclusions from the MARRI Ministerial Sarajevo Forum from 26 April 2007 and priorities of the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office, MARRI RC developed a Short-Term Strategy in order to utilize current capabilities and assist in bridging over the period until the Initiative will fall under the regional ownership. Short-Term Strategy was developed following the top priority areas in need of improvement identified in MARRI Member States and most importantly, avoiding duplication with activities of international partners in the area of migration.

Taking in consideration that MARRI RC needs to focus only on the several priority areas until regional ownership principle is fully functional, MARRI RC has identified the following areas for implementation of activities in the immediate future:

- Management of irregular migration and combating THB;
- Labour Migration;
- Visa and Consular Cooperation;

In order to achieve goals from the Short Term Strategy, MARRI RC planned activities aimed at stated administration capacity building, enhancement of regional cooperation and exchange of information within identified priority areas.

4th Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity, Skopje, 29-30 November

The 4th Meeting was focused on *Mechanisms of Regular Regional Information Exchange and Models of Early Warning Systems in the Field of Document Security*.

The objective of the fourth meeting was to exchange practices, identify gaps and possible solutions for establishment/improvement of recommended models of formal and regular exchange of information as well as recommended models of early warning systems in the field of document security. The event was attended by national and international experts in the field of document security. The participants agreed on and adopted a set of conclusions with objective to more effectively prevent and combat irregular migration and facilitator networks, better detect forged documents, improve regional cooperation and exchange of information and enhance capacities of national institutions responsible for document security.



Group photo of the participants



Ms. Maglock, ICE Investigator-US Embassy in Vienna, Dr. Stojanovski, MARRI RC Director, Mr. Hopkinson, Chief Investigator-UK Border and Immigration Agency

Friends of MARRI Meeting, Rakitje, 6 November 2007



Participants of the Friends of MARRI Meeting in Rakitje

Meeting of the Friends of MARRI, organized by the Croatian Presidency and the MARRI Regional Centre, was held at RACVIAC Centre in Rakitje, Croatia on 6 November 2007. The participants included state representatives from EU Member States (Austria, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, UK), European Commission, IOM, UNHCR, OSCE and the Stability Pact. Directors of RACVIAC, MARRI RC and the representative of the Croatian MARRI Presidency in their introductory speeches pointed out the successful process of transformation of MARRI into regionally owned Initiative. Cooperation with other international organisations was welcomed and the signing of MoUs was identified as a method for strengthening that cooperation.

Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, MARRI RC Director presented current activities, financial requirements and identified strategic priority areas for the upcoming period. He particularly emphasized complementarities and partnerships with other organizations/institutions such as Swedish Migration Board, EUROPOL ICMPD, IOM, SECI RACVIAC, etc. Dr. Stojanovski underlined that MARRI's highest priority is the enhancement of regional co-operation in its fields of activities among countries in the region, as a vital part of EU integration process and in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans.

International representatives mentioned the extensive support provided in the past for the functioning of MARRI, both political and financial. They gave an overview of ongoing projects their countries and institutions are involved with MARRI Member States. It was suggested that it is time for MARRI to change its role as an external actor for its Member States in the area of migration to internal actor with stronger influence on national institutions managing migration.

For more information about this event please visit www.marri-rc.org

MARRI Visibility and Additional Activities

MARRI Regional Centre continues the established co-operation with partner organisations on the regional level and participates in migration related activities. During 2007, cooperation and coordination with international organizations and other related initiatives has been enhanced. Namely, Memorandum of Understanding with International Centre for Migration Policy Development has been signed and preparations for signing the MoU with South East Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA) and Swedish Migration Board (AENEAS Project "Strong Institutions and a Unified Approach in the AMV in the Western Balkans") are underway.

In order to increase visibility of MARRI, the Director, Croatian Presidency in Office and MARRI RC representatives participated in a number of international conferences, bilateral meetings, workshops and seminars. Contacts and meetings were realized with institutions from MARRI Member States, EU Member States, European Commission, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, IOM, OSCE, UNHCR, RACVIAC, SEEGROUP, AENEAS Programmes, etc. Three projects were developed by MARRI Regional Centre and submitted to potential donors for implementation in 2008:

- *MARRI Migration Interactive Map*
- *Building Capacity of MARRI Member States for Successful Implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission*
- *Assessment of Identity Documents in MARRI Member States*

In the upcoming period, MARRI will continue to strengthen institutional ties with relevant international organisations and regional organisations, including the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in order to reach a higher level of visibility.

**Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year
from the MARRI Regional Centre**



MARRI Regional Centre

MTV Building, 8th fl., Blvd. Goce Delčev bb

P.O. Box 447, 1000 Skopje, Macedonia

Tel.: ++389 2 3235700; Fax: ++389 2 3235711

Website Address: www.marri-rc.org

For more information about MARRI activities or subscription to the Newsletter, please send an email to info@marri-rc.org.mk