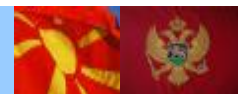


Introduction/Activities under Macedonian MARRI Presidency (May 2008-May 2009)



This Newsletter has been prepared by the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje for the purpose of informing the national authorities in MARRI Member States and EU countries, as well as general public, on the activities of the Centre under the Macedonian MARRI Presidency in the first half of 2009. The Montenegrin side took over the one-year MARRI Presidency (May 2009-May 2010) at the MARRI Regional Forum held in Ohrid, Macedonia on 28-29 May 2009. The MARRI Regional Centre and the Macedonian MARRI Presidency focused on the consolidation of its operations and activities in order to implement its activities, consisting of priority areas fully in line with the Czech EU Presidency Agenda in the area of Justice, Liberty and Security (JLS), as part of regional activities under the EU integration processes. During this period, the MARRI Regional Centre also has developed and sent to RCC for consideration and further action four projects ideas: "Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States"; „Building a Regionally Integrated Approach of MARRI Member States for Successful Preventing and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)“; "MARRI Interactive Migration Map", and "Migration and sustainable socio-economic development in the Western Balkans".

More concretely, the MARRI Regional Centre would like to emphasise the importance of the Seminar on "Citizenship Legislation and Practices-Overview of the state of Affairs in MARRI Member States" organised in Tirana on 20 February 2009, which stressed the common interest of the region to harmonise national legislation on citizenship with EU standards, and stated that MARRI activities contribute to the consolidation of regional cooperation in the area of migration. Also, the MARRI initiative, together with the Moldovan SEECPCiO and the RCC (Regional Cooperation Council) Secretariat, organised the 1st Meeting of the Heads of Consular Services of the SEECPC participating countries on "Possibilities of facilitating the visa regime for experts from SEECPC countries," held in Chisinau on 24 April 2009. The meeting identified and discussed the technical possibilities to provide certain facilities at bilateral levels, in order to eliminate the existent barriers for the participation of national representatives/experts in political and specialized meetings within the regional cooperation framework. Turkey, as the next Chairmanship-in-Office, promised to continue the process and to convene a meeting as soon as possible in autumn of 2009, in cooperation with the MARRI Regional Centre and RCC Secretariat.

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Seminar on citizenship legislation and practices in MARRI Member States (Tirana, 20 February 2009)

TIRANA, Albania – The MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje and the Albanian Ministry of Interior jointly organised the seminar “Citizenship legislation and practices - overview of the state of the affairs in MARRI Member States, ” held in Tirana, Albania on 20 February 2009. This seminar was organised thanks to kind financial contribution of the Czech Republic, EU Presidency. The population movements in MARRI MS’ region caused by the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, resulted in necessity to consider important citizenship issues for both individuals and states, in particular in identifying additional measures to deal with problems regarding citizenship. The European Commission considered that this is an area where there might be a need for additional activities which will result in collecting information on the legislation and practices of MARRI Member States as concerning citizenship. In that respect, the seminar was organised and collected information serves as a basis for regional assessment of the actual scope of challenges the MARRI MS are facing in their efforts to adopt standards and practices necessary for successful implementation of the Law for the Citizenship and development of more effective interventions and policies in the region.

MARRI presentation at COWEB (Brussels, 12 February 2009)

BRUSSELS, Belgium - On the invitation of the Czech European Union Presidency, the MARRI RC Director, Mr. Trpe Stojanovski, made a presentation during the COWEB (Committee for the Western Balkans Working Group) meeting in Brussels on 12 February 2009. The presentation, followed by great interest by the representatives of the European Union (EU) Member States, was focused on the MARRI organisational structure and the project activities of the MARRI RC for the years of 2009 and 2010.

Czech Foreign Ministry official met with the Director of MARRI RC (Skopje, 25 March 2009)

SKOPIJE, Macedonia - The Director of MARRI Regional Centre, Mr. Trpe Stojanovski, met with Dr. Pavel Svítíl, Head of Working Group for Enlargement, Department of South and South East Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (Presidency of the EU) , on the premises of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje on 25 March 2009. Mr. Stojanovski highlighted the importance of MARRI and its Regional Centre in the context of efforts to strengthen cooperation between MARRI countries. In that respect, Mr. Stojanovski thanked the Czech side on the financial contribution of the Czech Government for MARRI activities. The Czech counterpart expressed support for further activities of MARRI and its Regional Centre in Skopje, stressing the importance of regional cooperation, as shown in MARRI experience. He emphasised the importance of MARRI projects, e.g. visa liberalisation and the need to strengthen and support the activities directed towards visa liberalisation in the region.

Workshop “Establishment of network for cooperation among border police on international airport border crossing points in MARRI Member States” (Skopje, 27 March 2009)

SKOPIJE, Macedonia - The MARRI Regional Centre, together with the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior, within its capacity of MARRI Presidency-In-Office, organised a Workshop titled “Establishment of network for cooperation among border police on international airport border crossing points in MARRI MS, ” held in Skopje on 27 March 2009. The overall objective of the Workshop was to improve regional migration management system to address issues of combating irregular migration on sustainable and permanent basis, thus contributing to the regional efforts to channel irregular flows to regular ones. Specific objectives of the MARRI workshop were to establish more effective cross border co-operation among border police on international airport border crossing points in MARRI Member States, to increase efficiency in movement of persons and goods as well as to prevent/reduce crime and irregular migration.

First SEECP Meeting of the Heads of Consular Services (Chisinau, 24 April 2009)

CHISINAU, Moldova - The Chairmanship of the Republic of Moldova to the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat and MARRI, have developed a study concerning visa regimes among the SEECP members, which serves as a basis for launching the discussions on “Possibilities of facilitating the visa regime for experts from SEECP countries”. The main objective of the consequent First Meeting of the Heads of Consular Services of the SEECP participating countries was to identify and discuss the possibilities of providing certain facilities at a bilateral level, in order to eliminate the existing barriers in the participation process of representatives/experts to political and sectoral meetings within the regional cooperation in the SEE framework. Turkey, as the next CiO, promised to continue the process and to convene a meeting as soon as possible in the autumn of 2009, in cooperation with the MARRI RC and RCC Secretariat.

MARRI participation at the EU Ministerial Conference (Prague, 28-29 April 2009)

PRAGUE, Czech Republic - The MARRI RC Director took part at the Legal Migration, Integration and Migration and Development Ministerial Conference in Prague, which was organised on 28 and 29th of April 2009. The Conference was organised under the auspices of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU, where 48 states and 10 international organisations adopted the Migration Declaration. The MARRI RC Director delivered speech on the regional cooperation in the MARRI Member States.

Frontex Executive Director visited MARRI Regional Centre (Skopje, 13 May 2009)

SKOPJE, Macedonia - A delegation of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the EU Members - Frontex, led by Executive Director Mr. Ilkka Laitinen visited the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje on 13 May 2009, as part of their official visit to the Republic of Macedonia. At the meeting, MARRI RC Director, Mr. Trpe Stojanovski presented the MARRI activities and its achievements up to date. He underlined possible further cooperation with the FRONTEX agency, starting with MARRI's proposal of MoU between two organisations. Director Laitinen stated that perception of MARRI in FRONTEX is positive and that he envisages future bilateral cooperation between FRONTEX and MARRI.

MARRI Regional Forum (Ohrid, 28-29 May 2009)

OHRID, Macedonia - The Macedonian MARRI Presidency-In-Office (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Interior) and the MARRI Regional Centre Skopje organised the MARRI Regional Forum in Ohrid, 28-29 May 2009. The event was opened by Mr. Zoran Petrov, Macedonian Deputy MFA on behalf of Ms. Gordana Jankuloska, Mol, and Mr. Jusuf Kalamperovic, Montenegrin Mol. The participants were high officials dealing with migration issues from MARRI MS, representatives of the Czech EU Presidency, international organisations/initiatives and foreign embassies.. The MARRI RF provided an opportunity for MARRI MS to discuss activities of MARRI in the framework of cooperation and regional ownership. The MARRI Presidency was handed over from the Macedonian Presidency-in-Office to Montenegro. The participants have adopted the Joint Ohrid Declaration and the Montenegrin Priorities of MARRI Presidency 2009/2010 were also presented.

Study visit/workshop "Best practices in managing reception/detention centers for asylum seekers" (Potsdam, Land of Brandenburg, Germany, 18-19 June 2009)

POTSDAM, Germany - The study visit/workshop, "Best practices in managing reception/detention centers for asylum seekers," organised by the MARRI RC in partnership with Ministry of Interior of Land of Brandenburg, was held in Potsdam and Eisenhüttenstadt Detention Centre for Asylum Seekers in Land of Brandenburg, Germany on 18-19 June 2009. Its objective was to assist the MARRI MS' national institutions responsible for managing reception/detention centers for asylum seekers in their efforts to achieve international and European standards and provide some guidance and examples of how a reception/detention centre for asylum seekers can be established and maintained. Its objective was to assist the MARRI MS' national institutions responsible for managing reception/detention centers for asylum seekers in their efforts to achieve international and European standards and provide some guidance and examples of how a reception/detention centre for asylum seekers can be established and maintained.

Study visit/workshop "Best practices in management of visa systems" (Skopje, 23 June 2009)

SKOPJE, Macedonia - In line with MARRI priorities in the area of visa and consular cooperation and with the kind financial support of the Czech Government, the MARRI Regional Centre and the Macedonian MFA (under the Montenegrin MARRI Presidency) organised a study visit/workshop "Best practices in management of visa systems," held in Skopje on 23 June 2009. Its objective was to assist MARRI MS' national institutions responsible for managing overall visa issuing process in their efforts to achieve Schengen standards and provide guidance and examples of establishing and maintaining a visa issuing system. Study visit/workshop was realised through two groups of activities: workshop in the MFA of Macedonia and study visit to the National Visa Centre in Macedonian MFA. Foreign ministry officials responsible for visa and consular affairs from MARRI MS took part at the event. The MARRI MS' delegations presented current national visa processes relating to institutional capacities, legal framework and visa issuing procedures as well as technical, IT and document security capacities. In addition to them, consuls from EU countries to Skopje also presented their experiences in the process of visa issuance in Macedonia. In general, the participants underlined the importance of all the components in visa system in order to develop a secure process of issuing visas and having an effective immigration control.

MARRI RC Director met with high level officials in Montenegro (Podgorica, 17 July 2009)

PODGORICA, Montenegro - Trpe Stojanovski, Director, MARRI Regional Centre, accompanied by Deputy Director Branislav Perovic, met with Foreign Minister Milan Rocen, Interior Minister Ivan Brajovic and Director of Human Resources Management Government Authority Svetlana Vukovic during his working visit to Podgorica, Montenegro on 17 July 2009.



Director Stojanovski informed Foreign Minister Rocen about important activities and future plans of MARRI. Mr. Rocen spoke affirmatively about the MARRI Regional Initiative. He put MARRI in the context of the other regional and international organisations, instruments and processes. He also offered more support for MARRI from Montenegrin institutions. At the end of this successful visit, Mr. Stojanovski thanked Mr. Rocen for his hospitality and clear will for future cooperation. Minister Rocen accepted open invitation of Director Stojanovski to visit the MARRI Regional Centre.

Mr. Ivan Brajovic, Interior Minister, together with Deputy Minister Osman Subasic, have expressed real prospects of future mutual coordination and partnership. Mr. Stojanovski presented a review of MARRI Initiative and Center activities. He particularly thanked the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration of Montenegro for permanent and concrete support for MARRI. In that positive context, ex-Interior Minister Jusuf Kalamperovic was also mentioned. Minister Brajovic talked affirmatively about importance and role of MARRI Initiative. He announced more engagement from himself and his assistants in the next months in the direction of MARRI. Mr. Subasic asked for more projects initiatives from the MARRI Regional Centre. At the end, Mr. Brajovic accepted invitation of Mr. Stojanovski to pay visit to the MARRI Regional Centre.



During the visit to the Human Resources Management Authority Mrs. Svetlana Vukovic, Director, informed about Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) located in Danilovgrad. She explained process of forming, financial issues and concept of work of that regional center for education of civil servants from the region. Mrs. Vukovic pointed out the role and support by the EU, the Government of Montenegro and founding states. Mr. Stojanovski presented the general picture about MARRI and Centre itself. He talked about implementations and prospective of some projects. Both sides concluded that, because of regional character of ReSPA and MARRI, there are very good possibilities for future partnership and cooperation.

UPCOMING MARRI MEETINGS (UNTIL DECEMBER 2009)

First Meeting of MARRI Committee, Montenegro (place TBC), September 2009

Workshop on labour migration in MARRI Member States, Skopje, Macedonia, 16 October 2009 (date TBC)

Round table on progress in introducing MB IPA Programme, Montenegro (place TBC), October 2009

MARRI Regional Forum, Montenegro (place TBC), November 2009



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