

Newsletter
Issue 1, June 2006

This newsletter aims generally at informing on the activities of the Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI). This first issue is more specifically presenting an overview and short information on MARRI activities from January to June 2006.

Various population movements via the Western Balkans represent one of the major security issues in Europe. MARRI offers its countries a platform to work on viable solutions for management of population movements in the region.

For more information please consult the MARRI official website available at: www.marri-rc.org

The MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje is an international and inter-governmental organisation that serves as a secretariat to the MARRI Regional Forum and accomplishes MARRI's political commitments. MARRI has five Member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia), whose State Officials in the Centre act as a hub for consultations, dialogue, training, capacity building, information exchange and other regional activities in MARRI fields.



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

The first MARRI Regional Forum took place in Herceg Novi, Montenegro in April 2004, where it was decided to establish a MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje. Since 2004, MARRI came to function through two mechanisms: the MARRI Regional Forum—providing political and framework support to the Initiative and the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje — carrying out practical cooperation and activities of MARRI and supporting the implementation of decisions reached by the MARRI Regional Forum.

From April 2004 until April 2005 Albania held the Presidency of the MARRI Regional Forum, while the then Serbia and Montenegro took over the year-long Presidency at the MARRI Ministerial meeting held in Tirana on 5 April 2005. Bosnia and Herzegovina currently holds the Presidency, starting from the MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum held in Belgrade on 7 April 2006.

MARRI covers the following areas, including a cross-cutting programme Access to Rights (AtR): asylum and refugees, migration, border management as well as visa policy and consular cooperation.

MARRI's top priority is the enhancement of regional cooperation in its fields of activities among countries in the region, as a vital part of EU integration process and fully in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans.

The MARRI Member States have expressed their readiness for the ongoing processes in MARRI fields, as shown by the transfer of MARRI initiative under regional ownership. The overall idea was that these countries take ownership of the initiatives within the regional cooperation in order to prove their capability to cooperate on their own and contribute to the development, stabilisation and improvement of the situation in MARRI fields in the region. The notion of regional ownership proved to be a way of achieving greater efficiency in the implementation of MARRI programmes. The concepts of regional ownership and enhanced regional cooperation have become an important asset by the works of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje.

The working language of MARRI is English.

The MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje is now fully functional international and intergovernmental body with its own administration and full diplomatic status in the Republic of Macedonia. It plays an advisory, information-sharing and coordination role in MARRI fields, with the eventual goal that the associated states develop European-level standards of legislation, training and processes.

The Centre functions as the administrative and supporting structure for the MARRI Regional Forum.

**Alenka Prvinšek, Director
MARRI Regional Centre**



I would like to emphasise precious assistance of the seconded State Officials from the MARRI MS, as well as the office premises secured by the Host Government. Our wish is to further promote the concept of regional ownership that has been developed by and within MARRI.

The work of the Centre, which is both promising and difficult, paves the way for progress on MARRI issues, taking account of the root causes of migration and its consequences. The experience up to date has confirmed the need for stronger policy framework and adequate institutional capacity to support project development and improve effectiveness in MARRI areas. The MARRI Regional Centre has consolidated its role as a platform towards the European integration of the MARRI MS, as well as its purpose of becoming the voice of the region. It is clear that we shall build on the progress achieved so far and see its future activities in the framework of regional ownership and regional cooperation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken over the Presidency of MARRI Regional Forum at a turning point for this initiative. With basic documents for functioning of the Forum and its Centre adopted, we can finally concentrate our efforts on further development of basic MARRI principles: enhancing regional cooperation, supporting European Union integration and strengthening regional ownership.

Valuable experience of presiding over the South East Cooperation Process (SEEC) will be utilised for continuation and sustainability

**Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić
MARRI National Coordinator
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Presidency of MARRI RF
(April 2006—April 2007)**



of positive results achieved through activities of other regional activities.

In accordance with recommendations from the EU, BH will strive to put emphasis of the MARRI RF Presidency on establishment of platform for political dialogue within main areas of work covered by MARRI in order to harmonise existing policies, synergise acquired knowledge, experiences and best practices on common road toward European integration.

Bosnia and Herzegovina intends to make the most of its capacities in the role of the Presiding during building of a coordinated overall migration management approach at a national and regional level. MARRI shall serve as a platform where we can prove to our European partners that we are mature and ready to cooperate regionally and produce results that are beneficial to MARRI MS and wider.

When taking the Presidency of the MARRI Regional Forum at the Ministerial MARRI Meeting in Tirana in April 2005, the then Serbia and Montenegro put forward as its priority the elaboration and adoption of the basic documents for proper functioning of the initiative and the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje.

In close cooperation with the MARRI Regional Centre, the then Serbia and Montenegro drafted the Guidelines and Rules of Procedure, Statute of the MARRI Regional Centre and the MARRI

**Ambassador Pero Janković
MARRI National Coordinator
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia
Presidency of MARRI Regional
Forum (April 2005—April 2006)**



Strategy and Programme of Action 2006/2007, which have been adopted at the Ministerial Regional Forum held in Belgrade in April 2006, thus providing the sound basis for the MARRI initiative.

On the other hand, in cooperation with the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, various and numerous working groups, round tables and expert meetings have been held covering the areas of MARRI expertise, enabling the then Serbia and Montenegro MARRI Regional Forum Presidency to concretely coordinate different institutions in the MARRI Member States.

With all done in the last year, necessary conditions for MARRI to become one of the most important regional initiatives have been laid. Further cooperation of MARRI Member States shall be characterised by a notion that MARRI is an initiative of interest and common good for all of us individually and the region as a whole.

MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje

Strategy & Programme of Action (2006 & 2007)



The MARRI Regional Centre shall implement its Strategy and Programme of Action 2006/2007, with the following priorities:

- implement readmission agreements in the MARRI region;
- increase cooperation in the fields of fight against illegal migration, anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling;
- develop sustainable and effective asylum systems, including protection of refugees and their integration;
- exchange the best practices on migration management;
- develop orderly migration systems, in particular labour migration;
- enhance durable solutions for reintegration of labour emigrants and explore possibilities of the impact of remittances on development in the region;
- continue activities on visa and consular cooperation;
- maintain and support durable solutions related to the access to rights of returnees;
- pursue complementarity with other stakeholders in the region involved in border management process, namely Regional CARDS and Ohrid Border Process.

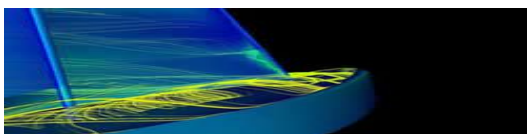
Priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Presidency of MARRI Regional Forum (April 2006—April 2007)



Bosnia and Herzegovina assumed the role of active leader in committing MARRI Member States to increase their capacities and resume regional ownership and responsibility of decision-making within main MARRI areas of work. In the capacity of MARRI RF Presidency, Bosnia and Herzegovina shall:

- advance regional ownership and cooperation which is imperative for successful implementation of MARRI objectives;
- establish and develop cooperation with other international organisations and regional initiatives based on the principle of complementarity;
- increase cooperation between governmental agencies responsible for migration, asylum and refugees on regional and national level with objective to develop good migration governance in MARRI region;
- endorse development of capacity building in the field of migration, asylum and refugees;
- support activities related to follow up of CARDS Regional Project on Asylum, Migration and Visa in the Western Balkans;
- encourage MARRI Member States in the process of strengthening harmonisation of existing policies, synergising acquired knowledge, experiences and best practices on the road towards EU integration;
- assist MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje to implement the MARRI Strategy and Programme of Action for 2006/2007, in particular with promotion of its activities.



NEWS — Recommendations
Workshop on Technical Aspects of Implementation of
Readmission Agreements (Skopje, 15-16 June 2006)

MARRI Member States need to develop comprehensive, integrated migration management systems tailored to their specific needs. The establishment of governmental agencies dealing with all forms of migration is an important element of such a system and is a precondition for efficient and effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Integrated systems in asylum, migration and visa fields need to incorporate coordination and cooperation on national level of all stakeholders responsible for the development and execution of a relevant regulatory framework. Regional cooperation is imperative and of particular importance. It represents an efficient tool to exchange best practices and information, supports regional ownership, combat illegal migration and better cope with mixed migration flows and harmonise existing legislation.

Recognising the relevance of the above mentioned basic preconditions for better cooperation and coordination in the MARRI region, the participants of the Workshop on Technical Aspects of Implementation of Readmission Agreements held in the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje on 15 and 16 June 2006 agreed on *Recommendations* for further activities that need to be developed in order to achieve better results in the implementation of readmission agreements (for further information please refer to <http://marri-rc.org/eventsm.php?id=44>).

<p>National Round Table on Migration (NRTM)</p> <p>Podgorica, 20 February 2006</p>	<p>The MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, together with the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro, organised the first National Round Table on Migration (NRTM). NRTM aims to assist in the creation of the national working groups on migration in the five countries of the region, while the next step is the creation of a Regional Group on Migration.</p>
<p>Meeting of Regional WG on Consular Cooperation</p> <p>Skopje, 22-23 February 2006</p>	<p>The representatives of consular departments of the MARRI Member States adopted the plan of activities in the field of consular cooperation in the region for 2006.</p>
<p>Workshop on Labour Migration for Integration/ Development in Western Balkans</p> <p>Zagreb, 22-24 February 2006</p>	<p>This event was organised by the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, in close cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Workshop served as a platform for discussions for the further development of policies and programmes on migration within/from the Western Balkans, in a spirit of positively implicating their economic and employment dimensions while contributing to combating possible irregular movements.</p>
<p>Preparatory Meeting for MARRI Ministerial RF</p> <p>Belgrade, 2 March 2006</p>	<p>Preparatory meeting of senior officials dealing with the migration, asylum and refugees issues in the five MARRI Member States. Preparation of main documents on the initiative.</p>
<p>MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum</p> <p>Belgrade, 7 April 2006</p>	<p>Meeting of regional interior ministers and high state representatives responsible for MARRI issues. Adoption of MARRI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure, Statute of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje and the MARRI Strategy and Programme of Action for 2006/2007. New one-year MARRI Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and appointment of a new Director of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, Mrs. Alenka Prvinšek.</p>
<p>Workshop on Technical Aspects of Implementation of Readmission Agreements</p> <p>Skopje, 15-16 June 2006</p>	<p>The objective of the workshop was to identify the gaps and needs of the MARRI Member States institutions involved in managing technical aspects of implementation of readmission agreements and to enhance regional co-operation mechanisms in accordance with international standards. It gathered officials and experts from MARRI MS and representatives of international organisations.</p>
<p>Workshop on Management of Irregular Transit Migration in the MARRI Region</p> <p>Sarajevo, 29-30 June 2006</p>	<p>This Workshop identified the areas of further cooperation in the field of combating irregular transit migration. In this respect, MARRI framework serves as the ground for the awareness of the region on illegal flows. This gathering provided a good opportunity to increase the co-operation between policy makers and law enforcement agencies, with the involvement of other international organisations.</p>

**UPCOMING MARRI EVENTS
(FALL/WINTER 2006):**

Workshop on establishment of identity;
Workshop on establishment of cooperation
between academia and governmental institutions;
Workshop for members of parliaments on migration policy;
Workshop on migration management systems in MARRI region;
Workshop on labour migration & Workshop on anti-trafficking.

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