



Newsletter  
Issue No. 7, December 2009

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Five-year anniversary of the MARRI Regional Centre  
(2004-2009)



"Dear MARRI Friends and Colleagues,

The MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje was officially opened on 18 November 2004 to serve as a secretariat to the MARRI Regional Forum and to accomplish MARRI political commitments. The MARRI Regional Centre provides a link between the Presidency of the Regional Forum and the MARRI Member States, functioning as the administrative and supporting structure/secretariat of the MARRI Regional Forum. Ever since then, the MARRI Regional Centre has been fully functional and it plays an advisory, information-sharing and coordination role, with the eventual goal that the associated states develop European-level standards of legislation, training and processes. The representatives of the Western Balkans countries take part in the work of the Centre, whereas the Centre serves as a liaison office for all activities related to the issues of migration, asylum, border management, visa policies and consular cooperation, refugee return and settlement.

In the period of five years, the activities of the MARRI Regional Centre were focused on strengthening of the regional ownership, promoting the European dimension of the region and enhancing the operational capabilities of regional co-operation and intensifying co-operation among MARRI Member States in MARRI fields. The goal of MARRI and the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje is to invest special efforts in the process of further development and implementation of its Strategy & Programme of Action by the MARRI Member States and synchronised with relevant international actors. In the course of the past five years the main objective of promoting and implementing MARRI issues has been achieved as far as MARRI could support it.

The MARRI Regional Centre became the principle forum established by the region itself, bringing together the countries of the region on migration issues. The fact that the countries of the region regularly come together through MARRI events and their valuable contribution to activities show the importance the countries themselves place in this forum. After five years, we can state that the concept of regional co-operation is now firmly embedded in the region."

Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director, MARRI Regional Centre

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#### **MARRI RC participation at Budapest Process meeting on readmission (Zagreb, 27-28 August 2009)**

ZAGREB, Croatia - MARRI Regional Centre was represented by the Director, Mr. Trpe Stojanovski at the Budapest Process Working Group on the South East European Region, titled "Practical Implementation of Readmission Agreements in the South East European Region", which was organized in Zagreb on 27 and 28 August 2009, by the Croatian Ministry of Interior and ICMPD. Dr. Stojanovski made a presentation on the topic "Practical Cooperation on Readmission Within the Framework of MARRI", presenting the importance of the Readmission Agreements for the MARRI Member States in its visa liberalisation and European integration process, regional cooperation and exchange of information in the MARRI region, challenges and difficulties in the implementation of the readmission agreements from the regional perspective, as well as presenting the statistical information for all six MARRI countries. The meeting ended with working sessions on best practices in practical readmission covering common challenges and priorities for readmission in the region and conclusions.

#### **SEPCA representative visited MARRI RC (Skopje, 9 September 2009)**

SKOPJE, Macedonia - Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director, MARRI RC, held a meeting with Mr. Reto Brunhart, Senior Adviser, Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA), in Skopje on 9 September 2009. Mr. Brunhart presented SEPCA, its fields of activities, structure, role, responsibilities as well as developed projects. Dr. Stojanovski appropriately presented MARRI RC and consequent MARRI project proposals. Mr. Brunhart and Dr. Stojanovski examined the modalities of future cooperation between MARRI and SEPCA. They discussed SEPCA's and MARRI's activities that pertain to the region especially in the subjects of mutual interest such as fighting illegal migration and THB. A special attention was paid to RCC's support to both organisations and importance of IPA funds to the region. Moreover, they discussed practical implementation of the MoU, in the way to help each other and to make synergy in the implementation of the foreseen respective activities of mutual interest.

#### **RCC, MARRI to promote rule of law principles in South East Europe (Sarajevo, 16 September 2009)**

SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Director of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), Trpe Stojanovski, and Hido Biscevic, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), signed a Memorandum of Understanding on development of an effective regional cooperation on issues of migration, asylum, refugee return, visa policies and border management at the RCC Secretariat in Sarajevo on 16 September 2009. The agreement is to enable cooperation in areas of common concern, in order to promote rule of law principles and strengthen regional cooperation in South East Europe (SEE). More specifically, it will support the efforts of the countries in SEE to respond to and identify the threats emanating from illegal migration and trafficking in human beings; sustain regional cooperation among migration, asylum, refugee, border and consular authorities; and foster collaboration in South East Europe based on shared policy approaches and strategies, transfer of knowledge, experience and best practices, mutual assistance, and implementation of international standards and principles.

#### **MARRI Regional Committee Meeting (Skopje, 21-22 September 2009)**

SKOPJE, Macedonia - The first MARRI Regional Committee Meeting, organised by the MARRI Regional Centre under Montenegrin MARRI Presidency, was held in Skopje on 21 and 22 September 2009. The meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Abdulkadar Memedi, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Macedonia. The MARRI Regional Committee, consisting of high level official of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of MARRI Member States, coordinates the activities and provides guidelines for the MARRI initiative and considers ways of implementing ideas on cooperation within the MARRI Member States. The Committee discusses and reviews the activities of the working bodies of MARRI and provides appropriate guidance to them. During the meeting, the MARRI Regional Committee has reviewed the activities up to date and proposed ways of implementing ideas on cooperation within the MARRI Member States in MARRI areas. The MARRI Regional Committee members have expressed their strong dedication to present and strengthen the visibility of the initiative within the region, before the European Union and international community. The same Committee has also advised on mechanisms for enhancement and further coordination of internal cooperation in every MARRI Member State in relation to issues of migration, refugees and asylum.

#### **Visit of high-level MoS asylum officials from BH (Skopje, 7 October 2009)**

SKOPJE, Macedonia - Mr. Marijan Baotic, Assistant Minister in the Asylum Sector in the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mr. Mustafa Pasalic, Chief of Section for Reception and Programme in the Asylum Sector in the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, had a meeting with Mr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director of the MARRI Regional Centre, in Skopje on 7 October 2009. Mr. Marijan Baotic and Mr. Mustafa Pasalic presented Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina's past, current and planned activities in the area of asylum. In that respect, they announced upcoming Asylum Conference, to be organised by the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo on 21 and 22 October 2009. Furthermore, both parties discussed about possible modalities of future regional cooperation in the field of asylum with an emphasis on the project oriented approach as a possible modality for regional cooperation. In that regard, it was mentioned that Project Proposal in the field of asylum prepared by the MARRI Regional Centre would be of mutual interest for MARRI Member States. Both sides expressed firm belief for maintaining already established excellent cooperation between MARRI and the BH Ministry of Security.

#### **State Secretary of the German State of Brandenburg visited MARRI RC (Skopje, 9 October 2009)**

SKOPJE, Macedonia – State Secretary of Interior of the German State of Brandenburg, Mr. Hans Jürgen Hohnen, visited the MARRI RC on 9 October 2009, as part of his official visit to the Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Hohnen and Dr. Stojanovski expressed satisfaction with latest cooperation efforts, as seen in the study visit/workshop, “Best practices in managing reception/detention centers for asylum seekers,” organised by the MARRI Regional Centre in partnership with Ministry of Interior of Land of Brandenburg, which was held in Potsdam and Eisenhüttenstadt Detention Centre for Asylum Seekers in Land of Brandenburg, Germany on 18-19 June 2009. In that respect, he praised the cooperation with MARRI up to date.

#### **Workshop “Management of Labour Migration in MARRI Member States” (Skopje, 16 October 2009)**

SKOPJE, Macedonia – The MARRI Regional Centre, under Montenegrin Presidency of the Initiative and thanks to kind financial support from the Czech Government, organised a Workshop “Management of Labour Migration in MARRI Member States” in Skopje on 16 October 2009. The opening speech was delivered by Mr. Marjanco Todorovski, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Republic of Macedonia. The main objective of the Workshop was to present current state of affairs in management of labour migration within and between countries of the region, discuss identified obstacles and propose sustainable solutions. The focus was on developed national policies, bilateral and multilateral legal instruments for regulation of labour movements as well as improvement in their implementation. The objective was also to strengthen the communication between relevant stakeholders in the region (governmental institutions regulating labour movements) improve methods and quality of exchanged information and thus, create basis for developing sound policies and timely and effective measures.

#### **Workshop “Best practices in reception asylum seekers by family and gender categories” (Skopje/Ohrid, 17-19 November 2009)**

SKOPJE, Macedonia – The Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers of the Republic of Macedonia, in partnership with MARRI Regional Centre, organised the Launching Meeting/Workshop of the MARRI Member States’ Heads of Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers and MOI Asylum Units on topic “Best practices in reception asylum seekers by family and gender categories,” held in Skopje and Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia on 17- 19 November 2009. The objectives of the Launching Meeting/Workshop was to commence establishment of network for cooperation among heads of reception centers for asylum seekers and MOI Asylum Units in the format of Directorium as well as to exchange the best practices, identify gaps and possible solutions for reception asylum seekers by family and gender categories (male, female, unaccompanied minors, etc.). Launching Meeting/Workshop was realised through two groups of activities; (i) study visit of reception centre for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo near Skopje, Macedonia, and (ii) launching meeting/workshop in Ohrid, Macedonia.

#### **MARRI RC participate at the Conference on multi-annual regional strategy on JHA (Sarajevo, 16-17 Dec. 2009)irs**

SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina—The MARRI Regional Centre delegation, led by Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director of the MARRI Regional Centre, will participate at the Conference on multi-annual regional strategy on justice and home affairs, to be held in Sarajevo on 16-17 December 2009. The Conference is organised by the RCC Secretariat and it marks an important forward in fostering regional cooperation as an integrated, coherent, sustainable and transparent process. The event aims to identify and centralise regional priorities, needs and objectives to be addressed in the coming years in the justice and home affairs area, and to recommend, based on an action plan, implementable solutions.

#### **MARRI Regional Forum/MARRI Committee Meeting (Becici, 17-18 December 2009)**

BEICICI, Montenegro – MARRI will organise its Regional Committee Meeting and Regional Forum under the Montenegrin Chairmanship-in-Office in Becici on 17-18 December 2009. The meeting of the Regional Committee will be held on 17 December 2009 in order to coordinate and discuss the MARRI Regional Centre Action Plan 2009-2010 as well as to approve a number of strategic documents of the Initiative: bilateral agreements on mutual consular protection, draft texts on interagency cooperation and any other issues according to the Agenda. The second part of the Regional Forum will take place on 18 December 2009. The Forum provides an opportunity for its Member States to discuss current and future activities of MARRI in the framework of regional cooperation and regional ownership. The main issues of the Initiative and the Regional Centre will be discussed and adopted during the Forum. Reiterating the importance of regional cooperation in the field of migration, asylum, border management, visa regime and consular cooperation, refugees return, as a vital part of EU integration process and the commitment of the Governments of MARRI Member States for managing population movements in SEE, based on the recommendations of the Thessaloniki Agenda, remains highly relevant with full support towards its realisation.

## New MARRI Project "Establishment of Network for Co-operation among Border Police on International Airport Border Crossing Points in the MARRI Member States" (November 2009—September 2010)

SKOPJE, Macedonia - The Swiss Government finances the implementation of the MARRI Project "Establishment of Network for Co-operation between Border Police on International Airport Border Crossing Points in the MARRI Member States." MARRI partners in the implementation of the Project, are the Police Cooperation Convention Secretariat and the Southeast Police Chiefs Association. The project will last eleven months, starting from 1 November 2009. The Project is a follow up of the workshop titled "Establishment of network for co-operation between border police on international airport border crossing points in the MARRI Member States," held in March 2009 in Skopje. During the above-mentioned event, the participants have recognised the need to develop sustainable and permanent network for cooperation and information exchange among border police on international airport border crossing points in the MARRI MS (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia).



## New document on MARRI Member States' Visa Systems (October 2009)

SKOPJE, Macedonia - The MARRI Regional Centre has prepared the of MARRI member States' Visa Systems, along with Comparative Table for Visa Statistics 2008 and Table for Visa Statistics 2008. This document, with particular emphasis on priorities of visa regimes, is based on input of the participants of the Study Visit/Workshop "Best practices in management of visa systems (Skopje, 22-23 June 2009). According to approved international migration standards, visa issuance is considered the first protection line against the international movement of persons who might represent a security risk. Efficient control of migration is a key prerequisite imposed by the EU on MARRI Member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), as a strategic interest in terms of their visa policies. To this end, in accordance with MARRI priorities in the area of visa and consular cooperation, the MARRI RC organised the above-mentioned Study Visit/Workshop "Best practices in management of visa systems." Its objective was to assist MARRI Member States' national institutions responsible for managing overall visa issuing process in their efforts to achieve Schengen standards and provide some guidance and examples of establishing and maintaining a visa issuing system.

## Upcoming MARRI meetings in the first half of 2010

Consular meeting regarding MoU on Mutual Consular Protection and Services (Skopje, 26 January 2010)

MARRI Friends Meeting/Diplomatic Briefing (Skopje, 27 January 2010)

Study Visit within Project "Establishment of network among border police on international airport border crossing points in the MARRI Member States" (Zürich, March 2010)

MARRI Committee Meeting (Montenegro—Place TBC, March 2010)

Workshop No. 1 within Project "Establishment of network among border police on international airport border crossing points in the MARRI Member States" (Belgrade—TBC, April 2010)

MARRI Regional Forum (Montenegro—Place TBC, April 2010)

Workshop No. 2 within Project "Establishment of network among border police on international airport border crossing points in the MARRI Member States" (Zagreb—TBC, May 2010)



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