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Welcome Note — Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director, MARRI Regional Centre



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 second half of 2008. The MARRI Regional Centre focused on the consolidation of its operations and activities in order to implement the MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008 and ensuing MARRI Regional Centre Action Plan 2008/2009. In the meantime, the Centre has developed Action Plan for 2008/2009, consisting of priority areas fully in line with the French EU Presidency Agenda in the area of Justice, Liberty and Security (JLS) and supporting commitments for harmonisation and approximation of MARRI Member States standards in JLS area, as part of reforms under the EU integration processes.

Activities under MARRI Presidency-In-Office—Republic of Macedonia (May 2008-May 2009) 

MARRI has identified following priority areas for development of activities during the Macedonian MARRI Presidency-in-Office: Migration; Trafficking in human beings; Visa liberalisation and implementation of readmission agreements; Document security; Border management; Asylum and refugees. In order to achieve objectives from these strategic priority areas, the MARRI Regional Centre has developed activities, as presented in this Newsletter, which contribute in capacity building of the MARRI Member States' national institutions managing above-mentioned priority areas as well as enhancing regional co-operation, exchange of best practices and information.

In the second half of 2008, the MARRI Regional Centre and the Macedonian MARRI Presidency representatives embarked on organisation of relevant MARRI events and a process of dialogue and cooperation with all the main stakeholders in the region, starting from the national authorities in the MARRI Member States, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and relevant international organisations important for regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe.

Interesting articles in this issue:

<p>Welcome Note — Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director, MARRI Regional Centre Activities under MARRI Presidency-In-Office—Republic of Macedonia (May 2008-May 2009)</p>	1
<p>MARRI officials met with RCC Secretary-General TRM Project Team Meeting, Mavrovo, 8–10 September 2008 Continuation of the Programme for the Enhancement of Anti-trafficking Responses in SEE</p>	2
<p>Seminar “Comprehensive Migration Management Systems,” Ohrid, 12 September 2008 Interior Minister Jörg Schönbohm of the German State of Brandenburg visited MARRI RC Friends of MARRI Meeting/Diplomatic Briefing, Skopje, 21 October 2008 MARRI visit by Max-Peter Ratzel, Director of Europol</p>	3
<p>Workshop “Models for exchange of info in preventing/combating THB,” Mavrovo, 30 October 2008 MARRI Regional Forum, Ohrid, 5 December 2008</p>	4

MARRI officials met with RCC Secretary-General

SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina – The MARRI Presidency-in-Office, represented by Ambassador Nikola Todorovski and the MARRI Regional Centre Director, Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, held talks with the Secretary-General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Mr. Hido Biscevic in Sarajevo on 4 September 2008. The purpose of this visit was to present the MARRI activities up to date to the Secretary-General of RCC. The RCC Secretary General also gave an overview of the RCC structure as a new institution in the region pointing out the regional cooperation for better perspective of the region on its way to EU integration. A special interest was expressed regarding the cooperation and synergy between the existing initiatives in the region and the implementation of the projects on regional level.



TRM Project Team Meeting, Mavrovo, 8–10 September 2008



MAVROVO, Macedonia - The Programme to Support the Development of Transnational Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in SEE project team meeting took place on 8-10 September 2008 in Mavrovo, Macedonia. The Programme is implemented by ICMPD, while TRM partners are MARRI and UNICEF and the project is financed by USAID. The project team meeting clarified a number of outstanding issues and gave an effective start of the fourth phase of the TRM programme. The Local Liaison Officers shared the results of the questionnaires that were distributed to the National Implementation Teams in each participating country at the beginning of the summer. The goal of the questionnaires was to gather more information on the needs and priorities of each country with regards to the TRM implementation. The information collected with these questionnaires will serve to shape the activities of the fourth phase. The upcoming activities of the fourth phase – the study visits, transnational workshops and monitoring and evaluation tool were also presented.

Continuation of the Programme for the Enhancement of Anti-trafficking Responses in SEE

SKOPIJE, Macedonia - The Programme for the Enhancement of Anti-trafficking Responses in South-Eastern Europe: Data Collection and Information Management Phase II Data Processing, Maintenance and Analysis (DJM Phase II) was launched at the beginning of September 2008. The 18-month DCIM Phase II Programme is funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development is implementing the Programme, in partnership with the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the Office of the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, Europol, and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI Center). The participating countries in this Programme are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The overall objective of the DCIM Phase II is to build upon the achievements of the Programme for the Enhancement of Anti-trafficking Responses in South-Eastern Europe: Data Collection and Information Management (DCIM Phase I), and to strengthen the capacities of participating countries to monitor, evaluate and review their National Anti-Trafficking Responses. Specifically, the project builds up the capacities of the participating institutions to process, analyse, present and consequently transform into relevant programmatic information and activities the information contained in the DCIM databases, developed in the course of the DCIM Phase I. While ensuring that the criteria and methods for analysing and presenting Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) statistical data are regionally harmonised and correspond to the commonly accepted international standards and norms.



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Seminar "Comprehensive Migration Management Systems," Ohrid, 12 September 2008



OHRID, Macedonia - The Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within its capacity of MARRI Presidency-In-Office, organised the Seminar on "Comprehensive Migration Management Systems," held in Hotel Granit, Ohrid on 12 September 2008. Recently, the European Commission opened a structured dialogue on visa liberalisation for all MARRI Member States (Croatia already has visa free regime with EU countries) which resulted in "Roadmaps on visa liberalisation" with clearly defined standards each country has to meet in order to gradually progress towards the liberalisation of visa regimes. In this respect, the national migration management experts from MARRI Member States had an opportunity to present their national migration systems, while the EU experts from Sweden and The Netherlands have familiarised the participants with their experience and best practices in EU countries.

Interior Minister Jörg Schönbohm of the German State of Brandenburg visited MARRI RC

SKOPJE, Macedonia - Interior Minister Jörg Schönbohm of the German State of Brandenburg visited the MARRI Regional Centre on 12 October 2008, as part of his regional tour, including the official visit to the Republic of Macedonia. Within the scope of the EU-financed CARDS twinning programme (2005-2007), the Ministry of Interior of the Federal State of Brandenburg, Germany was involved in support to police reform in Macedonia. Director of the MARRI Regional Centre, Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, presented the MARRI and its activities up to date. He gave an overview of the MARRI structure as a regionally owned institution, emphasising the strong regional cooperation on MARRI issues for better perspective of the region on its way to EU integration.



Friends of MARRI Meeting/Diplomatic Briefing, Skopje, 21 October 2008

SKOPJE, Macedonia - The MARRI Regional Centre and the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the capacity of the MARRI Presidency-in-Office, organised Friends of MARRI/Diplomatic Briefing meeting on the Government premises in Skopje on 21 October 2008. The meeting gathered members of Macedonian diplomatic corps, relevant international organisations and representatives of foreign donors from EU countries. The opening speech was delivered by the Macedonian Minister of Interior, Ms. Gordana Jankuloska, M.A. The MARRI Regional Centre was recognised as an active factor competent for migrations. According to Minister Jankuloska, the Republic of Macedonia shall continue to give its active and constructive support to the Centre in order to raise the level of regional cooperation, mechanisms for exchange of information, promotion and support of the standards harmonisation process and the visa facilitation process, improving regional migration management system at a sustainable and permanent grounds. An overview of MARRI Regional Centre's present and future activities was presented at the above-mentioned meeting by the Director of the MARRI Regional Centre, Dr. Trpe Stojanovski. He briefed the participants on six MARRI project proposals for 2008/2009 as submitted to the potential donors, as follows:



Building capacity of MARRI Member States for successful implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission; MARRI Interactive Migration Map; Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States; Promoting a Regionally Integrated Approach for Successful Preventing and Combating of THB; MARRI Migration Paper 2008/2009 (analysis of progress made in areas identified in Roadmaps for Visa Liberalisation and Recommendations for Way Forward in the Region) and Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States.

MARRI visit by Max-Peter Ratzel, Director of Europol

SKOPJE, Macedonia - Max-Peter Ratzel, Director of Europol, visited the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje on 28 October 2008, as part of his official visit to Macedonia. He held talks with Dr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director, MARRI Regional Centre and had a presentation on EUROPOL for Macedonian civil servants, law students and members of foreign embassies in Skopje. Max-Peter Ratzel and Dr. Trpe Stojanovski examined the modalities of future cooperation between MARRI and Europol. They discussed MARRI's role in handling migration issues in the Western Balkans region, as the so-called Balkan road represents one of the most congested traffic arteries for smuggling people and goods into the EU. Moreover, they discussed the EUROPOL's activities that pertain to the region. Dr. Stojanovski presented the MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008-2009 and consequent MARRI project proposals.



Workshop “Models for exchange of information in preventing and combating THB,” Mavrovo, 30 October 2008

MAVROVO, Macedonia—The Macedonian MARRI-Presidency-in-Office and the MARRI Regional Centre organised a workshop “Models for exchange of information in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings”, held in Mavrovo, Macedonia on 30 October 2008. The objective of the Workshop was to exchange the best practices, identify gaps and possible solutions for establishment/improvement of models of formal and regular exchange of information as well as models of early warning systems between MARRI Member States' institutions responsible for combating THB and smuggling of migrants. Participants were senior officers from national delegation from MARRI MS, members of units responsible for combating THB and smuggling of migrants. Participants from MARRI Member States had an opportunity to get familiarised with expertise and experience in exchange of information as well as early warning systems between law enforcement agencies from EU countries, such as Austria, and overseas countries (USA) responsible for combating trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.



MARRI Regional Forum, Ohrid, 5 December 2008



OHRID, Macedonia - The MARRI National Coordinators from six MARRI Member States met for the MARRI Regional Forum in Ohrid, 5 December 2008, the first one held under the Macedonian MARRI Presidency. The MARRI National Coordinators and the Director of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje briefed the Forum on the past and future MARRI activities, in line with the MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008, MARRI Action Plan 2008/2009 and the Priorities of Macedonian MARRI Presidency 2008/2009. The participants have agreed that MARRI shall continue to provide its active and constructive support to the region in order to raise the level of regional cooperation, mechanisms for exchange of information, promotion and support of the standards harmonisation process and the visa facilitation process, improving regional migration management system at sustainable and permanent grounds.

General News Flash

Croatian, Serbian Interior Ministries sign memorandum of consent

ZAGREB, Croatia - Croatian and Serbian interior ministers signed a memorandum of consent aimed at strengthening cooperation between two ministries and police forces in Zagreb on 12 December 2008....

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UPCOMING MEETINGS	TOPICS http://www.icmpd.org/
Macedonia (place TBC), March 2009	Workshop on establishment of network for co-operation between border police on international airport BCP's in MARRI Member States
Macedonia (place TBC), April 2009	Workshop on best practices in managing Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers
Macedonia (place TBC), May 2009	Preparatory Meeting for the MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum
Macedonia (place TBC), May 2009	MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum

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