



PRIORITIES OF THE MARRI PRESIDENCY Republic of Macedonia (May 2008 – May 2009)

On 19 May 2008, the Republic of Macedonia took over the presidency of the Regional Forum of the Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI). The Republic of Macedonia will put special endeavor in further strengthening of the concept of regional ownership as well as developing and promoting MARRI.

The objective of the Presidency is to enhance state and human security and initiate, facilitate and coordinate developments in the fields of asylum, migration, visa, border management and sustainability of return, meeting international and European standards.

In capacity of MARRI Presidency, the priorities of the Republic of Macedonia are in line with the EU integration process for the region and focus on:

- ✓ Ensuring implementation of the envisaged activities in line with duties and responsibilities stipulated in MARRI basic documents.
- ✓ Promoting the Initiative as a key stakeholder in the management of population movements in the region and widely.
- ✓ Seeking partnership with European and other international partners by ensuring MARRI's visibility and disseminating adequate information to potential partners and donors.
- ✓ Enhancing regional co-operation identified in the Thessaloniki Agenda as a principle of the highest importance in efforts by MMS to move closer to the European Union.

- ✓ Promoting the idea of expanding the regional co-operation into an international one, including neighboring EU member countries as strategic partners, which have an interest in the region and are willing to cooperate and contribute towards effective migration management.
- ✓ Continuing to perform close partnership with regional and international organizations and other actors in particular, SEECP, RCC, UNHCR, UNICRI, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, DCAF, ICMPD, IOM, SECI, SEPCA, RACVIAC and continuously seeks synergies and proper coordination with existing regional initiatives and processes.
- ✓ Devoting special attention to activities that will lead to visa facilitation and, at a later stage, to reach visa liberalisation which will enable free movement of the MMS citizens.
- ✓ Due to improved stability in the region, and thanks to previous migration-related initiatives and activities aimed at reduction of irregular migration, The Presidency will place special emphasis on orderly migration and efforts to facilitate labour migration according to EU policy on immigration and seasonal labour market needs.
- ✓ Giving proper attention to the “brain drain” as migration-related issue of main concern.
- ✓ Supporting development and harmonization of legislation, status determination procedures, reception of asylum seekers as well as capacity building, training and information exchange to meet European and international standards.
- ✓ Encouraging and promoting activities for improving implementation of readmission agreements and dedicating attention in finding durable solutions for reintegration of returnees through promotion of conditions, access to basic services and realization of social and human rights and enabling for sustainable returns to take place.

Republic of Macedonia is committed to actively cooperate with Member States of the Initiative and Regional Centre in Skopje in order to realize presented priorities in the capacity of the Presiding Country of the Initiative.