



International Organization for Migration



Assisting migrants in need

in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia



Dignified and humane assistance to migrants in need is the cornerstone of the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, IOM is increasingly called upon by States to assist migrants in need. To this end, IOM pursues the following objectives in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEEECA) by working together with States, international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders to:

- provide migrants in need with a reliable individualized response that is consistent with international best practice standards of protection;
- implement innovative and evidence-based initiatives that effectively prevent exploitation and abuse of (potential) migrants; including research, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E);
- positively influence regional and national migration policies through IOM's expertise in protecting migrants in need, and preventing their exploitation and abuse;
- elaborate a comprehensive and regional approach to human trafficking within the context of organized crime, gender-empowerment, health-migration, conflict resolution and M&E.



To ensure the **most inclusive and holistic approach**, IOM's migrant assistance work focuses on the following two thematic clusters:

1. **Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR):** Through IOM AVRR programmes, IOM aims at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. Reintegration assistance is vital to facilitate sustainable returns by addressing issues that originally compelled or forced migrants to leave these communities.
2. **Assistance to vulnerable migrants:** Trafficked migrants, exploited and stranded migrants, and unaccompanied migrant children need to be approached within the overall context of managing migration. The approach is based on three principles that govern IOM's counter-trafficking activities:
 - respect for human rights;
 - physical, mental and social well-being of the individual, and his or her community;
 - sustainability through institutional capacity building of governments and civil society,

Since 2000, almost 330,000 migrants have benefited from IOM's AVRR programmes, which are an integral element of IOM's migration management. Furthermore, IOM provided its expertise on more than 46,000 occasions during the last ten years on issues relating to counter-trafficking and assistance to vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied migrant children.

Most SEECA countries can be categorized as both countries of origin and transit of trafficked migrants. Some countries in the Region are among the top ten countries of origin for trafficked migrants assisted by IOM worldwide. At the same time, an increasing number of SEECA countries serve as a destination for trafficked migrants. The main types of cross-border trafficking in the Region are for sexual exploitation, forced labour and forced begging. An increasing number of both young and adult male victims of trafficking are also being assisted by IOM. Internal trafficking for sexual exploitation also takes place and primarily affects single, unemployed women between 16 and 30 without higher education. There are also cases of re-trafficking in the SEECA countries.

The persistence of the root causes of trafficking; lack of sustained protection measures for victims of trafficking; limited understanding of other forms of exploitation such as labour exploitation, begging and trafficking for the purpose of organ removal; widespread corruption; and a relatively small number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, are among the main challenges faced by SEECA countries to effectively counter trafficking in persons.

Building on IOM's experience and global presence, IOM Missions in SEECA countries strengthen the capacities of its government and civil society partners and sets operational standards to achieve **sustainable results** that will:

- provide protection and empower trafficked women, men, girls and boys;
- raise awareness and understanding of the issue;
- bring justice to trafficked persons.

IOM seeks to obtain these results in SEECA countries via **three main categories of activities**:

1. **Direct assistance** to victims of trafficking in collaboration with IOM's partners. This includes accommodation in places of safety, medical and psychosocial support, legal assistance, skills development and vocational training, reintegration assistance, and the option of voluntary, safe and dignified return to countries of origin, or resettlement to third countries in extreme cases.
2. **Building capacities** of government and civil society institutions to better address the challenges posed by human trafficking. This includes training of NGOs and government officials in the development of counter-trafficking legislation, policies and procedures, and infrastructural upgrades.
3. **Information sharing and awareness raising** to educate the general public (from both source and destination countries) about trafficking in persons, to encourage people to report suspected cases and to equip vulnerable populations with the information necessary to better protect themselves from the recruitment tactics of traffickers. This is achieved through awareness and information campaigns implemented by IOM. IOM also conducts both quantitative and qualitative research as an essential information source to improve the fight against human trafficking.



Denmark, Norway, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, the European Union, the UK and the USA are currently among the main donors of IOM's migrant assistance work in SEE-ECA countries.



**IOM IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE
THAT HUMANE AND ORDERLY MIGRATION BENEFITS MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY.**



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