



International Organization for Migration

European Migration Crisis
IOM Emergency Response
Plan for Serbia and the
former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia
September—December 2015



Woman and child migrant transiting through Gevglija © IOM 2015 (Photo by IOM Skopje)

September 2015

3,000+ / day

Persons crossing into FYRM

2,000+ / day

Persons crossing into Serbia

IOM RESPONSE
PLAN (USD)

(September - December 2015)

TOTAL 3.95 Million



Information
Sharing Net-
work

300,000



Registration &
Reception
Assistance

1,000,000



Migration
Management
& Support

750,000



Assistance to
Vulnerable
Populations

400,000



Health

1,500,000

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Until recently, the focus of Europe’s escalating migration crisis has been on those migrants risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean from north Africa into the European Union (EU). However, with the exponential increase in the number of migrants and refugees passing through the Western Balkans (WB) region, the interest of the international community has expanded to this critical route and the WB is receiving much needed attention. The WB is a key transit route into the EU, and in 2014, Frontex reported a sharp increase of Syrian and Afghan migrants and refugees utilizing this route. By 2015, an increasing number of migrants and refugees continue to transit through the WB regions to reach the EU.

In recent months, the WB countries of Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have both witnessed a sharp surge in the numbers of people arriving in or transiting through their borders. The Serbian Asylum Office reported that between January and July 2015, over 66,400 persons had been registered. In July and August 2015, there was an average of 1,200 people arriving per day at the country’s border. In response to the surge in arrivals, the Serbian government has formed a Working Group on Mixed Migration Flows, recognizing the importance of providing an immediate and longer-term response that would entail inter-sectoral coordination and inter-agency cooperation. In order to manage the flows of people and to deliver the most urgent assistance to those arriving and transiting, the government has asked for technical support from the humanitarian community.

On 20 August, the government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia declared a state of emergency due to the increased level of migration flows on its southern border with Greece. According to the Ministry of Interior, between June and August 2015, 52,757 persons had been registered at their border, representing a sharp increase compared to the whole of 2014, during which the number of registered persons was estimated at 1,750. Taking into account the lack of a proper registration mechanism prior to June 2015, the numbers only

represent an estimate; however, the scale of the shift is tremendous, even when controlling for the potential inaccuracy in data collection. The current average arrival rate at the southern border is estimated at 3,000 and above per day and the government is faced with difficulties in addressing the basic needs of those arriving.

The migration flows into the WB route through Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia include large numbers of persons seeking international protection, as well as a wide range of vulnerable migrants, undocumented persons, unaccompanied and separated children. The majority originate from countries facing significant strife. Although the route through the WB countries may not be as treacherous as crossing the Mediterranean—where by the first half of 2015, more than 2,800 migrants have died or gone missing in their attempt to reach European borders—the route through the WB is still perilous, as vulnerable migrants are preyed on and at risk of exploitation, threats and abuse from smugglers, traffickers and criminal networks. The latest tragedy occurred in August 2015 when 71 migrants, including a one-year old girl, were found dead and abandoned in a lorry truck along an Austrian highway.

There is a growing gap in information and a need to regularly provide government counterparts, humanitarian actors and other stakeholders with updated data on the locations, numbers, movements and multi-sectoral needs of the vulnerable migrants moving through the WB region. In view of the growing humanitarian crisis in this region, IOM has published this response plan as an addendum to IOM's Mediterranean Response Plan. This response plan will focus on providing lifesaving emergency interventions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, in the areas of information management, registration and reception assistance, migration management and support, assistance to vulnerable migrants, and health services. The overall objective is to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the governments affected by the crisis throughout the region. In doing so, IOM will help them address the emergency situation and provide assistance to vulnerable migrants and refugees.

The implementation of some of the interventions outlined below has already been initiated by the region's governments, IOM, UNHCR, and other key stakeholders. However, gaps remain, and it is crucial to strengthen the interventions in view of the current migration realities. Furthermore, the rise in the volume of migrant flows has created new needs and challenges, which require urgent attention and action by the international community.

IOM Response

IOM has been present in the Western Balkans since the early 1990s, when it established presence in the region to help governments address the highly complex mix of migration and displacement challenges which had emerged following the major political changes of that period. As the migration trends continue evolving, IOM remains committed to providing comprehensive support to governments in refining their policies, frameworks and practical mechanisms for migration management at national and multilateral levels, and ensuring protection and assistance to migrants and refugees in need. IOM is well positioned to do so with offices in all of the Western Balkan countries and territories and well-established cooperation with the governments, including at the local level, international organizations and civil society.

IOM promotes regional approaches to addressing mixed migration flows as a way to complement and reinforce national strategies. Together with UNHCR, it has been spearheading the Western Balkan Initiative on refugee protection and international migration, which aims to assist the governments in the Western Balkans in developing and operationalizing a sustainable, comprehensive and cooperative framework for concrete action in the area of refugee protection and migration management, at national and regional levels. IOM can build on these long-term initiatives and existing partnerships to increase the effectiveness of the needed humanitarian response and to promote their sustainability.



Information Sharing Network

In order for relevant government agencies and humanitarian actors to be better prepared in their response, it is critical to ensure the provision of real-time information on the migrant flows taking place in the region. IOM has established an informal network through which the Organization has been able to provide basic information concerning the flow of movement, including the numbers of arrivals and assessed vulnerabilities, which has proven both useful and effective in ensuring that adequate support is available, especially to vulnerable migrants.

\$300,000

Funding required

Target no. of individuals:
42,000/week

IOM will formally establish an **Early Warning Information Sharing Network** to assist in coordinating and managing the migration flows by the Border Police and other national authorities. The Network will involve the two heavily affected countries of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, so that when migrant flows reach their borders, the respective government will be informed and aware of the nature, composition, and scale of the flows. They will therefore be in a better position to provide tailored assistance that responds to the vulnerabilities identified. In both countries, IOM will strengthen presence in the field to better monitor and track the situation in the affected areas.

At the initial stage, information collected and shared will be relatively basic, in order to expedite the establishment of the network, focusing on numbers and key vulnerabilities. However, once operational, the network would be enhanced to ensure the provision of more detailed information on what is happening along the routes. It is important that the network is designed in such a way that it can provide responses and quick information to basic queries from authorities. In the longer term, there is scope for it to constitute a system that provides real-time answers to the questions posed by institutions of the two countries and other national and international stakeholders operating within the emergency, whilst allowing for the monitoring of any shifts in the flows within and around the region.

In order to enhance information sharing, IOM will organize one briefing per month for relevant embassies in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. This will ensure further dissemination of information and enhanced preparedness for arrivals in the destination countries.



Registration and Reception Assistance

In Serbia, IOM will provide the Working Group on Mixed Migration Flows and the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration with technical assistance in setting up additional **transit/reception centres**. IOM will further build the capacities of staff deployed by the Serbian authorities to manage reception of people, and provide necessary equipment to improve proper functioning of the reception centres. With an aim to further support the ongoing efforts of the government to ensure better coordination between the central and local level, IOM will deploy its staff to support government teams in the border areas of Presevo and Subotica, provide equipment, vehicles, and technical support to border management staff, and conduct further needs assessments.

\$1,000,000

Funding required

Target no. of individuals:
42,000/week

Due to the high volume of migrants and refugees arriving in Serbia every day, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has reallocated its existing staff (i.e. local police units and gendarmerie) to support the registration and processing of migrants in border areas. In this context, additional staff need to be trained in order to ensure proper screening, profiling, and the provision of targeted assistance, as well as referral to the appropriate authorities. IOM proposes to increase the capacities of Serbian Border Police and other relevant government institutions in order to ensure effective registration and profiling of migrants and refugees, and that their needs and vulnerabilities are taken into account.

The Border Police assessment indicated that there is an immediate need for the transfer of at least 200 additional police officers to cover locations in Miratovac, Presevo Border Crossing Point and Presevo reception and registration centres. The situation is especially crucial in Presevo as it has become the critical point of the registration and reception system and has been under heavy pressure as the inflow of migrants and refugees grows. It is served by 90 officers, with a daily turnover of 2,000 cases. The Ministry of Interior struggles to process and register the ever growing number of migrants and refugees, as they are under-staffed and under-equipped for responding to a demand of such proportions. IOM will provide the necessary technical support through:

- Provision of needed equipment for registration;
- Provision of vehicles for border patrolling and transfer of vulnerable migrants and refugees from the green border towards the registration centres;
- Establishment of mobile teams that will be deployed to the border or registration points with the highest flows of people;
- Identification and engagement of qualified interpreters; and
- Training of additional field staff appointed by the MoI to support the registration.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, IOM will assist in the provision of temporary accommodation for those migrants and refugees awaiting registration. IOM will support the government's registration process through provision of equipment, stationary, and technical enhancement of the operational system for the Border Police, which will improve the migrant and refugee identification procedure. Furthermore, IOM will assist in enhancing the registration system and profiling of migrants which will help to facilitate and introduce a framework for analysis of the migration flows. The analyses would ultimately feed into the government's measures for addressing the migration emergency. All activities will be closely coordinated with the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Body on the Migration Crisis, as well as with local governments in the most affected municipalities.

In both countries, IOM will develop information flyers for migrants and refugees in their native languages (including Arabic, Pashto, Dari and French), to inform them of their rights.



Migration Management and Support

IOM will work closely with government partners to support **migration management, policy development, and border management**. In both the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, IOM will develop brief, easy-to-use handbooks that outline the relevant laws, procedures, and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the management of mixed migration flows. The developed materials will serve as a key resource of information for Border Police as well as to service providers involved in the management of mixed migration flows.

\$750,000

Funding required

Target no. of individuals:
42,000/week

In both countries, IOM will also improve Border Police surveillance and patrolling capacities to tackle the problem of smuggling and trafficking of migrants. In order to enhance referral mechanisms for vulnerable migrants, IOM will facilitate the transportation of vulnerable cases to the relevant social services.

In Serbia, IOM will work closely with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration to strengthen capacities of local migration councils particularly in 1) responding in crisis situations (collecting and providing adequate local data and facilitating data sharing with the central level as prescribed by the Law on Migration Management) and in 2) facilitating the provision of local services for vulnerable migrants.

Moreover, IOM will aim to enhance communication between refugees/migrants and the authorities responsible for their registration in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia by setting up an interpretation hub in each country. The interpretation hubs will identify interpreters for all needed languages and ensure capacity building of interpreters, including trainings on cultural sensitivity. IOM will procure the equipment necessary for interpretation purposes (e.g., phones, installation of internet) and establish relevant cooperation procedures with the interpreters. After the procedures and equipment are in place, the interpretation hub will facilitate interpretation services 24/7 as well as translation of the documents signed by the refugees/migrants in their respective languages.



Assistance to Vulnerable Populations

In Serbia, IOM will establish **five mobile teams** to assist Border Police and the reception centre staff (Commissariat for Refugees and Migration) to identify the most vulnerable migrants and refugees, including victims of trafficking (including potentially trafficked persons), unaccompanied and separated Children, stranded irregular migrants, and other categories of vulnerable populations in need of protection.

Mobile teams will be comprised of the following: a social worker, an interpreter, an IOM local migration expert, a nurse/doctor, and a driver. The teams would support the local and national institutions with the provision of basic assistance to the most vulnerable cases, including:

- Information on their status and on services available while in transit, including counselling on risks of being an irregular migrant;
- Transportation to shelter/reception centre;
- Health care/ referral to emergency medical treatment.

IOM mobile teams will work in close coordination with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and the Border Police and will cover locations in South Serbia, the main receiving municipalities in transit through Serbia (Presevo, Vranje, Nis, Zajecar, Belgrade, Subotica), as well as other municipalities affected by the migrant flows.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, IOM will implement a series of onsite and specialized trainings tailored to the profile and needs of various stakeholders in order to enhance their performance in the screening of vulnerabilities. The trainings shall be delivered to police officials, NGOs, local municipality representatives, representatives of local service providers such as the Centres for Social Work and local health service providers.

\$400,000

Funding required

Target no. of individuals:
42,000/week



Emergency Health & Psychosocial Support

For Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, IOM will provide emergency primary health care assistance and referral for secondary care when needed to vulnerable migrants and refugees through mobile health teams that will be established in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and participating humanitarian partners. Depending on the needs, the IOM mobile medical teams will serve the first point of intervention to provide triage services, including outpatient care, wound dressing, medical referral and follow-up, nutrition, reproductive health services, mental health and psychological support and health education.

Travel health assistance and support will be provided to migrants for Government assisted/facilitated travel. To ensure safe and dignified migration, IOM will assist the Government in providing pre-departure fitness-to-travel health checks, post-arrival continuity of care, assess public health risks associated with travel and facilitate referrals and medical escorts if needed.

IOM also plans to assist the public health institutions of Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through provision of basic medicaments, medical equipment and medical vehicles for transportation of those migrants and refugees who can be soundly treated only in hospitals.

\$1,500,000

Funding required

Target no. of individuals:
3,000/week

Summary of IOM Response Plan:

Activities	Requested Amount (USD)
Information Sharing Network	300,000
Registration and Reception Assistance	1,000,000
Migration Management and Support	750,000
Assistance to Vulnerable Populations	400,000
Emergency Health and Psychosocial Support	1,500,000

Total Appeal: \$3.95 Million



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