

## **DURRËS DECLARATION**

### MARRI REGIONAL FORUM

Albania, 29 April 2011

We, the Ministers and High Representatives responsible for Migration, Asylum and Refugees of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, met in Durrës, Albania, on 29 April 2011, in the framework of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees, Regional Initiative;

**Guided** by the Budva Declaration adopted at the MARRI Regional Forum on 21 April 2010 and the priorities of the Albanian Presidency of MARRI;

**Reaffirm** the commitment of our governments for managing population movements in the Western Balkans in line with the EU recommendations in general and with the Thessaloniki Agenda of the EU/Western Balkans Summit on 21 June 2003, in particular;

**Realize** that the European Union integration perspective of the Western Balkans remains a strong motivation for deepening a continuous regional cooperation and dialog among the MARRI Member States;

**Commend** Croatia for the progress towards the conclusion of the EU accession negotiations as well as Macedonia's efforts to obtain the date to start accession negotiations with the EU;

**Welcome** Montenegro as the newest EU Candidate Country and encourage the efforts of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia in gaining the same status soon;

**Appreciate** the Schengen area visa lifting for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which represents an important step made by these two countries towards meeting the EU requirements;

**Express** satisfaction over the results achieved during the Albanian MARRI Presidency in Office, particularly in:

**Giving** further impulse to the work of the MARRI Regional Committee as a body designated to coordinate MARRI activities and provide guidance to the working structures and activities of MARRI;

Further strengthening the MARRI networks of cooperation among the relevant national institutions and experts, such as:

The network of cooperation of the Border Police units at international airport border crossing points in MARRI Member States by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainability of Established Co-operation Network;

The network of cooperation of the asylum experts by putting joint efforts to conclude an agreement among the concerned MARRI Member States on the provision and exchange of personal data of asylum seekers;

**Bringing** together relevant national representatives to exchange and share information, experience and best practices on visa and consular issues, aimed at further harmonizing the national practices with EU practices and contributing to maximal facilitation of the free movement of persons in the region and in the EU zone;

**Engaging** in facilitating the circulation of the citizens of our countries within the area covered by them, by using only the biometric ID. We are committed to finalize the bilateral agreements on this respect as soon as possible;

**Strengthening** the institutionalized basis of MARRI with the adoption of important documents such as:

The MARRI Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2013,

Amendments to Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the MARRI Regional Centre;

**Developing** the project-proposal "Joint Comprehensive Approach in Building Cooperation between MARRI Member States and SEPCA Member States' Border Police on International Airports Border Crossing Points";

**Placing** specific efforts to further promote MARRI and improve its visibility at regional and international level, especially towards EU institutions;

**Signing** the working arrangement in the form of exchange of letters between MARRI and FRONTEX;

**Emphasize** the importance of the implementation of the following MARRI project-proposals that have been submitted to potential donors for financing: MARRI Interactive Migration Map; Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States; Building a Regionally Integrated Approach for Successful Preventing and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB); MARRI Migration Paper; MARRI Compilation of Migration Strategic Documents; "Joint Comprehensive approach in Building Cooperation between MARRI Member States and SEPCA Member States' Border Police on International Airports Border Crossing Points";

**Welcome** the developed partnership and the participation of MARRI at the IPA 2009 Multi-beneficiary Program 2 "Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB)" Project of International Organization for Migration (IOM);

**Express** gratitude to the Swiss Confederation and Principality of Lichtenstein that have provided financial support for the implementation of a MARRI project;

**Appreciate** the level of partnership and cooperation with regional and international organizations and agencies such as SEECP, RCC, UNHCR, ICMPD, IOM, FRONTEX, SEPCA, PCC SEE, and DCAF;

**Note** with satisfaction the increased importance of MARRI in the region as a unique initiative possessing a clear regional ownership;

**Express** satisfaction with the work performed by the MARRI Regional Centre as a mean of the Forum to accomplish MARRI commitments;

**Thank** the Albanian Presidency for cooperation and coordination of activities during its Presidency-in-Office (April 2010-April 2011), as well as for the excellent organization of the meeting of the MARRI Regional Forum;

**Place** full confidence to the Republic of Serbia that will assume the Presidency for the period of April 2011-April 2012;

**Are grateful** to the special guests of the MARRI Presidency-in-Office, namely: the representatives of the Hungarian Presidency of the European Council, FRONTEX, SEPCA, SECI/SELEC, IOM, ICMPD, UNHCR for attending this Forum.

Done in Durrës, April 2011.