



## **MARRI STRATEGY & PROGRAMME OF ACTION 2008**

**Zagreb, May 2008**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
1. ASSESSMENT OF MARRI ACHIEVEMENTS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES.....	5
2. MARRI REGIONAL CO-OPERATION PRIORITIES FOR 2008.....	7
2.1. MARRI PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR 2008.....	7
2.1.1. Building Capacity of MARRI MS for Successful Implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission.....	7
2.1.2. MARRI Interactive Migration Map.....	9
2.1.3. Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States.....	11
2.1.4. Promoting a Regionally Integrated Approach for Successful Preventing and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings.....	13
2.2. MARRI PRIORITY AREAS FOR 2008.....	15
2.2.1. Migration.....	16
2.2.2. Trafficking in Human Beings.....	16
2.2.3. Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.....	17
2.2.4. Document Security.....	17
2.2.5. Border Management.....	17
2.2.6. Asylum and Refugees.....	17
3. MARRI RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION.....	18
3.1. Strengthened Regional Ownership.....	18
3.2. Implementation of MARRI Projects.....	18
3.3. Development of Partnerships and Strong Cross Organisation Relationships.....	18
3.4. Continued International Involvement.....	19
3.5. Communications Strategy.....	19
4. CONCLUSIONS.....	20

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following MARRI<sup>1</sup> Strategy & Programme of Action for 2008 represents a summary of MARRI priorities, as elaborated by the Croatian MARRI Presidency-in-Office (PiO). The MARRI PiO, held by Croatia (April 2007 – May 2008) introduced new activities and set higher standards for the initiative. The Republic of Croatia assumed the role of active leader in committing MARRI Member States to increase their capacities and resume ownership and responsibility of decision making within main MARRI areas of work. The activities of the Croatian MARRI PiO were focused on strengthening of the regional ownership, promoting the European dimension of the region and enhancing the operational capabilities of regional co-operation and intensifying co-operation among MARRI Member States in MARRI fields. The goal of MARRI and the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje is to invest special efforts in the process of further development and implementation of MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008 by the upcoming Macedonian MARRI Presidency (along with other MARRI Member States and relevant international actors).

In the course of the past four years the main objective of promoting and implementing MARRI issues has been achieved as far as MARRI could support it. The MARRI Regional Centre is the principle forum established by the region itself bringing together the countries of the region on migration issues. The fact that the countries of the region regularly come together through MARRI events and their valuable contribution to activities show the importance the countries themselves place in this forum. The concept of regional co-operation is now firmly embedded in the region.

MARRI has been under regional ownership since 2004, but the process is now fully complete thanks to the appointment, in June 2007, of a Director coming from one of the MARRI Member States (Macedonia) and the decision that the MARRI Member States will fund the MARRI Regional Centre's running costs from January 2008 onwards. Unfortunately, the Centre found itself in financial difficulties throughout 2007 because of the lack of funding both for running costs and for project implementation. The difficult financial situation diverted attention from the implementation of relevant MARRI activities. The MARRI Member States started in principle to fund the running costs of the MARRI Regional Centre in January 2008.

During the Croatian MARRI Presidency four substantial project proposals have been submitted to interested donors who have indicated that support will be forthcoming in areas such as building capacity for the implementation of visa facilitation and readmission agreements, interactive migration map, an assessment of identity documents in MARRI Member States and prevention/combating of trafficking in human beings. Steps have also been taken to formalise co-operation with relevant international and regional organisations such as ICMPD and SEPCA (MoUs signed with the MARRI Regional Centre in December 2007 and March 2008, respectively).

While the MARRI Member States have committed to funding the MARRI Regional Centre, a more effective financial management system needs to be put in place urgently to ensure a sustainable funding situation, securing adequate funds from both MARRI Member States and donors. This is necessary to avoid the 2007 experience where the financial crisis diverted attention from technical work. Successful implementation of the new projects is vital for the MARRI Regional Centre in the upcoming period. MARRI credibility will be enhanced if MARRI can develop good working relations with a range of relevant international and regional bodies. This would allow the MARRI Regional Centre to participate in a range of projects either as the lead or as a supporting partner and to develop its experience and expertise.

The MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008 outlined below should start with the MARRI Regional Forum on 19 May 2008.

---

<sup>1</sup> The objective of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) and the MARRI Regional Centre is to deal with the issue of population movements in the Southeastern Europe (SEE) by promoting closer regional cooperation and a comprehensive, integrated, and coherent approach to the issues of asylum, migration, border management, visa policies, and refugee return and settlement in order to meet international and European standards. MARRI's top priority is the enhancement of regional cooperation in its fields of activities among countries in the region, as a vital part of EU integration process and in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda. The MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje was opened in September 2004 to serve as a secretariat to the MARRI Regional Forum and to accomplish MARRI political commitments. At the MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum held in Sarajevo on 26 April 2007, the Republic of Croatia took over the one year Presidency of the MARRI Regional Forum.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of the MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008 is to provide a basis for the future MARRI activities, along with the Zagreb Declaration, as adopted during the MARRI Regional Forum on 19 May 2008. Based on this first assessment of the achievements and remaining challenges in MARRI activities during the Croatian MARRI Presidency (April 2007-May 2008), this document provides an overview of past activities and recommendations on future MARRI activities and regional co-operation activities in Southeastern Europe (SEE).

It is imperative to show that the countries of Southeastern Europe are in a position to co-operate in an institutionalised and systematic way. Such a plan should contribute to the institutional enhancement of MARRI and in this respect to the promotion of MARRI issues in the region. While it is agreed that MARRI has achieved much of its original purpose in contributing to enhancing regional co-operation and supporting the EU integration process of the countries of the region, it is equally clear that there is a continuing need for a framework for further promoting and developing regional co-operation that would facilitate European integration. Ensuring sustainability of the regional co-operation processes is the joint responsibility of both the countries of the region and the international community, in particular the EU and the European Commission.

Based on the assessment of the continuing need for regional co-operation in the MARRI region, the question arises as to how the required co-operation can be facilitated. There is an urgent need to better organise and utilise regional ownership for regional co-operation activities. In order to ensure sustainability of regional co-operation process and thus preserve the positive legacy of MARRI, a number of principles for a future regional framework for co-operation should be kept in mind – these are the guiding principles for the recommendations below: strong involvement of both the MARRI Member States and the EU through a close relationship to the SAP and aligning regional co-operation even more closely with EU integration; a clear focus on priority areas to ensure full political commitment by the countries of the region and to prevent duplication and continued involvement of EU donor countries and key international organisations.

The feasibility of these recommendations and timelines depend on a number of factors, in particular the upholding of the enlargement perspective on the side of the EU as the key reform engine for SEE and the commitment of the SEE countries to increasingly take ownership of these co-operation processes. Ultimately, the outcome of this process as well as the speed depends on the commitment of the countries of the region and the decision should thus primarily be taken by the MARRI Member States themselves.

This Strategy & Programme of Action provide the basis for MARRI activities in 2008 in order to come to conclusions on the future priorities and corresponding set-up for implementation, as a basis of future work for the upcoming MARRI Presidency-in-Office and the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje. Having a dedicated framework for these activities will facilitate them being kept firmly on the agenda of the governments of MARRI Member States. Based on these criteria, MARRI has identified priority areas for further regional co-operation on MARRI issues (see chapter 2).

## 1. ASSESSMENT OF MARRI ACHIEVEMENTS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES

The MARRI objectives are to foster regional co-operation in MARRI fields (asylum, migration, border management, visa policies, and refugee return and settlement) and to support the European integration of the countries of the region. The main objective of achieving these goals has been achieved as far as MARRI could support it. The concept of regional co-operation is now firmly embedded in the region.

The prospect of EU integration has been the key reform engine for governments of MARRI Member States. Most of the success achieved within the framework of MARRI would not have been possible without this incentive. This complementary relationship is of great importance as evidence of the importance of regional co-operation as an accession criterion and should be enhanced in the future.

MARRI provided a framework where countries could re-engage on the larger regional level. This was achieved by providing a number of different functions, such as promoting and instigating a regional approach to addressing common migration problems in the region. The concept of improved regional co-operation has made inroads in all the beneficiary countries, encouraged as an important precondition for further European integration.

A stronger degree of regional ownership and resulting commitment by the countries of the region is a precondition for ensuring sustainability. But when looking at the different activity areas of MARRI, individual approaches will be necessary. Different activity areas will require different kinds of ownership from the side of MARRI Member States and different types of support from the international community.

In the course of the past four years, important steps towards stronger regional ownership of MARRI activities have already been taken. The MARRI Regional Centre has been established, fully functioning as a Secretariat for the MARRI Regional Forum, which is staffed with personnel from the MARRI Member States (primarily from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, along with two representatives of the Ministry of Interior).

Matchmaking is an important function, which has been used successfully by the Croatian MARRI Presidency-in-Office, the MARRI Regional Centre and the Stability Pact for SEE. Bringing together donors and beneficiary countries, available funds and possible projects, in an overarching forum where all players interested in a particular topic can jointly set priorities is a new development, which has proved very useful. The MARRI Friends of MARRI/diplomatic briefings (Skopje, 25 October 2007; Rakitje-Zagreb, 6 November 2007 & Skopje, 10 March 2008) provided the opportunity for diplomatic and donor community to present ongoing and planned national and regional MARRI projects. As a result of intensive donor approach, the funds for the MARRI Regional Centre were gathered in order to cover the costs of the MARRI Regional Centre for 2007. This thorough donor approach and practice of convening donor meetings on a regular basis is most welcome for future action, as it proved to be an effective forum in providing a clear overview of the needs and activities of MARRI to the donor community.

The contacts with competent institutions of the donor countries and international organisations were intensified during the Croatian MARRI PiO, aimed at promoting this Initiative and providing the funds for the MARRI activities in 2008 and beyond. The most important outcome of two Extraordinary Meetings of the MARRI Regional Forum (Skopje, 26 June 2007 & 1 October 2007), as well as the MARRI Regional Forum held in Zagreb on 10 December 2008 are the Decision of the Extraordinary Meeting of the MARRI Regional Forum on the introduction of practice of annual contribution of the MARRI Member States to the Running Costs of the MARRI Regional Centre since 1 January 2008; Decision of the Extraordinary Meeting of the MARRI Regional Forum to appoint a new Director of the MARRI Regional Centre for a three year mandate; Decision to introduce the Deputy Director of the MARRI Regional Centre from the MARRI Presidency-in-Office, as well as the Introduction of the MARRI Regional Centre Internal Work Procedure Rules, defining the general rules of conduct of the MARRI Regional Centre in its capacity of employer and of its employees as well as the mutual obligations of the parties in their employment relation.

The valuable results achieved during the following expert meetings: Round Table “Strengthening the Cross-border Police Co-operation among the Countries in the Region (Zagreb, 14 March 2008) and the Round Table on “Suppression of Trafficking in Persons – Repatriation and Reintegration of Victims” (Zagreb, 9 April 2008) are also worth mentioning.

The MARRI Regional Centre has successfully implemented the fifteen-month MARRI Project on Document Security and Establishment of Identity in the MARRI Region (UK financed) that ended in March 2008. Four Working Group meetings and Concluding Conference on Document Security and Establishment of Identity were organised, contributing to the strengthening of cooperation in order to decrease irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling in human beings and to increase effectiveness of capacity-building of national administrations managing migration in the region.

MARRI continued cooperation and developed partnerships with major stakeholders in the area of migration, such as partnership with ICMPD within Project on Trans-national Referral Mechanisms and Project on Data Collection and Information Management, as well as Swedish Migration Board projects funded by AENEAS Programme in the MARRI Member States.

In addition, during the Croatian MARRI Presidency mechanism for regular gathering and exchange of information in the format of migration questionnaires for 2007-2008 was established, i.e. Overview of migration management in the MARRI Member States, Country overview on illegal migration/combating trafficking and smuggling of human beings in the MARRI Member States, Overview of technical aspects of implementation of readmission agreements in MARRI Member States, Overview of asylum systems in the MARRI Member States, Overview of types of identity and travel documents in the MARRI Member States, Visa Questionnaire, Overview of personal data protection standards in the MARRI Member States, Overview of labour migration management and diaspora matters in the MARRI Member States.

The active participation of the experts from the MARRI Member States in the work of the round tables and other MARRI meetings, as well as kind contribution of the MARRI Member States in the regional exchange of information is appreciated and provides an additional impetus for the continuation of successful cooperation within MARRI initiative. The remaining tasks are to ensure these co-operation processes are sustainable in the long-term by enhancing regional commitment and ownership and to support the countries of the region on their path towards European integration. This is where the focus of the countries of the region is and where the priority of the upcoming Macedonian MARRI Presidency-in-Office, as an active leader of the initiative, and the MARRI Regional Centre, as the Secretariat of the MARRI Regional Forum, has to be as well.

## **2. MARRI REGIONAL CO-OPERATION PRIORITIES FOR 2008**

While regional co-operation as such has improved significantly over the past years both on the bilateral and multilateral level, its effectiveness and substance still has room for improvement. As regional co-operation is regarded as one of the preconditions for the further EU integration of the SEE countries, all available support mechanisms should be used to ensure further progress in regional co-operation. Having a dedicated framework for these activities will ensure that they are kept on the political agenda of the governments of the MARRI Member States. The question therefore is, what should be the composition of such a framework for regional co-operation and European integration and what issues it should focus on.

### **2.1. MARRI PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR 2008**

In the framework of MARRI, four major projects were developed during the Croatian MARRI Presidency-in-Office by the MARRI Regional Centre, as submitted to the potential foreign donors from EU countries:

#### **2.1.1. Building Capacity of MARRI MS for Successful Implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission (required funding - 337,770.00 EUR for a period of 16 months);**

The region of MARRI Member States<sup>1</sup> is strongly affected by irregular migration both in terms of inter- and intra-regional migratory movements. Apart from being primarily countries of emigration, the MARRI Member States increasingly found themselves in the role of transit countries for migrants from the East and the South aiming to enter the EU. They are and will become destination countries in their own right as the process of economic transition will advance. Currently, it appears that to carry out the terms of the Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission, the MARRI Member States need to develop a comprehensive, integrated migration management system tailored to their specific needs. Various responses have started in the MARRI Member States but they are relatively small in scale and uncoordinated in nature.

This project is built upon recent initiatives to extend activities related to migration issue on inter- sectoral level. It seeks to scale-up existing successful activities, introduce a range of new activities and strengthen overall coordination and cooperation on national and international level. It will link to effective implementation of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements, so as to pave the way towards a visa-free travel regime with each of MARRI MS. The three project objectives are to build and strengthen the co-coordinated inter-sectoral national approach for handling migration in MARRI MS; to support the process of development and implementation of Migration Policy Strategy paper in each of MARRI Member States; to carry out a public awareness campaign on migration related issues in each of MARRI MS. The expected results of the project will not only assist MARRI Member States in being able to fulfil the EU requirements on the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement, but will also foster the capacity of MARRI Member to exchange information and best practices concerning the implementation of the readmission agreements through improved EU knowledge and expertise.

It is planned that the project implementation is to be carried out by the MARRI Regional Centre and MARRI Member States in a period of sixteen months.

**TIMETABLE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**PROJECT NAME: Building capacity of MARRI Member States for succesfull implementation of Agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission (16 months)**

<b>CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR 16 MONTHS</b>																	
<b>Activities and their duration</b>	<b>Responsible/ Implementing agencies</b>	<b>Chronological monthly plan of the activities (2008 – 2009)</b>															
		<b>2008</b>												<b>2009</b>			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4
Workshop for building and strengthening National Intersectoral Migration Committee	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Workshop for reviewing the work progress of the National Intersectoral Migration Committee	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Policy planning seminar on Asylum	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Policy planning seminar on Legal and Illegal Migration	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Policy planning seminar on Integration	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Regional conference on Migration Policy	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Promoting materials on migration related issues	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Media campaign on migration related issues	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Regional training for media on migration related issues	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Monitoring and evaluation	MARRI Regional Centre, MRCPG, PAB, External Financial Auditing and External Narrative Evaluation																



### 2.1.2. MARRI Interactive Migration Map (required funding - 392,227.00 EUR for a period of 24 months);

The MARRI Regional Centre was tasked with providing practical solutions that would enable prompt exchange of information among regional institutions by developing an appropriate IT tool. The objective is to develop a comprehensive overview of the state of affairs in the specific areas of national migration management, which will lead to a harmonised regional approach in dealing with the challenges of population movements in the Western Balkans. The MARRI Interactive Migration Map will serve as a tool for prompt exchange of information between MARRI Member States on national legislation in the area of migration (both regular and irregular), institutions and contact points responsible for managing migration, operational and statistical data relevant to migration management, international legal instruments and best national and international practices of all stakeholders involved in migration management. To this end, MARRI RC would offer a two-fold advantage to its beneficiaries: MARRI Member States national institutions in charge of migration management would have an access to a visual user-friendly interface for storing and exchanging information and the Interactive Map would contain thematic crucial data on - areas of migration which, so far, have not been compiled and made available for use in one central place in the region.

The MARRI Regional Centre will create a visual layout of the MARRI Interactive Migration Map (fields and categories of information to be contained in the Interactive Map). The proposal is that the Web-based, on-line interactive map would for each beneficiary provide access to information on regular and irregular MARRI Member States' national trends including:

- Statistical and geographical country specifics (population, total border length and border length with neighbouring countries, number of border crossing points);
- Organigrams and main contact points in the national institutions in charge of migration management;
- Overview of national legal framework in the area of migration with recent changes and regionally applicable international law;
- Overview of bilateral/multilateral/regional cooperation agreements in the area of migration (regular/irregular);
- Identified irregular migration routes;
- Operational structures and best practices of national institutions involved in combating irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling in human beings and organized crime;
- Characteristics and modus operandi used by criminal groups involved in irregular migration specifically identified for each country
- Statistical data related to migration (irregular border crossings, victims of trafficking, fraud in civil status matters, misuse of original ID documents and falsified ID documents etc.);
- Ongoing projects in which national institutions are involved in the area of migration;
- Training programmes and capacities for civil servants in all areas of migration as well as identified gaps and needs in national training capacities;
- Information on Diaspora (National institutions relevant for management, statistics, legislation, organizations, associations, events, cooperation).

Interactive Migration Map will also contain links to relevant international organizations and institutions as well as links to the web sites with applicable international legal instruments.

Beneficiaries of the MARRI Interactive Migration Map are institutions from MARRI Member States responsible for migration management (namely, Ministries of Interior, Border Management Institutions, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Labour and Social Policies, etc.). Other international institutions/organisations could be included as the beneficiaries (e.g. Europol, Frontex).

**TIMETABLE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES – PROJECT NAME: MARRI Interactive Migration Map (24 months)**

**Timetable of Project Activities and Outcomes for Project Year I**

<b>Project Activities and Outcomes</b>	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	<b>M4</b>	<b>M5</b>	<b>M6</b>	<b>M7</b>	<b>M8</b>	<b>M9</b>	<b>M10</b>	<b>M11</b>	<b>M12</b>
Establishing of Project Steering Committee		X										
Drafting of Memorandum of Understanding		X										
Steering Committee Meetings			X			X			X			X
Establishment of Regional Working Group and National Working Groups			X									
Regional and National Working Group Meetings on Interactive Map Structure				XX	XX	XX						
Regional Working Group Meetings						X			X			X
Adoption of the Structure of MARRI Interactive Migration Map						X						
Development of the Software for MARRI Interactive Migration Map									X	X	X	

**Timetable of Project Activities and Outcomes for Project Year II**

<b>Project Activities and Outcomes</b>	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	<b>M4</b>	<b>M5</b>	<b>M6</b>	<b>M7</b>	<b>M8</b>	<b>M9</b>	<b>M10</b>	<b>M11</b>	<b>M12</b>
Training of Regional and National Working Groups in data collection	X	XX	XX	X								
Collection of Data and Content for MARRI Interactive Migration Map		X	X	X	X							
Input of Data into MARRI Interactive Migration Map						X	X	X				
Nominating End-Users of MARRI Interactive Migration Map				X								
Training of End-Users on procedures of administration, access and usage					XX	XX			X	X		
Publishing and Dissemination of Operation's Manual					X	X			X	X		
Meeting for Launching of MARRI Interactive Migration Map											X	
Steering Committee Meetings			X			X			X			X
Regional Working Group Meetings			X			X			X			X

### **2.1.3. Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States (required funding-341,850.00 EUR for a period of 18 months).**

In order to improve document security as one of the key prerequisites in meeting EU standards in migration management (regular and irregular), as well as moving towards EU integration and visa facilitation as core political objectives, MARRI MS identified the need for capacity building of national institutions responsible for migration management in the field of document security and policy harmonisation on regional level. At this stage, a variety of new and old identification documents are in use in MARRI MS. In their efforts to achieve political objectives and to improve capacities of national institutions responsible for managing migration in the field of document security, MARRI MS have recently introduced projects on new identification documents in accordance with required ICAO minimum security standards. As an outcome and follow up of these activities, MARRI RC has recognised the need to produce a Compilation of all types of identification documents in MARRI MS. The overall objective is to enhance capacities of MARRI MS national institutions responsible for migration management in the field of document security (police, border police, civil servants, staff from diplomatic and consular representations, ID expertise centres and ID development units, etc.) to successfully prevent and combat misuse of Identification Documents. The project will strengthen regional co-operation and info exchange mechanisms and promote policy harmonisation in the field of document security in the MARRI Member States.

The MARRI Regional Centre will create Compilation of types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States (web-based, online IT tool and hard copy format/publication).

This Compilation will contain data on:

- Travel documents (personal, diplomatic, service, aliens),
- ID cards (personal, aliens, diplomatic, asylum seeker, recognized refugee, person under humanitarian protection etc),
- Driving licenses,
- Visas,
- Certificates/extracts for the civil status (birth, marriage, death, residence, certificate of nationality).

Both electronic and hard copy versions of the Compilation will contain visual layout and narrative description of documents, embedded security features (biometrics, UV reaction, watermark, fibres, security thread, protective foil, perforations, stamps, etc), which national institutions are responsible for production/issuance of identification documents, validity of ID`s, description of standardized procedures for issuance of identification documents as well as contact details of designated national institution`s focal points and additional notes where needed. Electronic version of the Compilation will be available to the beneficiaries through secure internet connection, while hard copy format/publications will be disseminated to those with no access to internet connection. The Compilation will also contain links to relevant national institutions (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc.) and international organizations and institutions (ICAO, OSCE, etc) which are dealing with identification documents.

In order to successfully make the Project ``Assessment on types of identification documents in MARRI Member States`` functional, MARRI Regional Centre will ensure that the designated end users from the beneficiaries receive proper training and information packages regarding procedures, access and usage.

**TIMETABLE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES – PROJECT NAME: Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States (18 months)**

**Timetable of Project Activities and Outcomes for Project Year I**

<b>Project Activities and Outcomes</b>	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	<b>M4</b>	<b>M5</b>	<b>M6</b>	<b>M7</b>	<b>M8</b>	<b>M9</b>	<b>M10</b>	<b>M11</b>	<b>M12</b>
Establishing of Project Steering Committee	X	X										
Drafting of Memorandum of Understanding	X	X										
Steering Committee Meetings			X			X			X			X
Establishment of Regional Working Group and National Working Groups			X									
Regional and National Working Group Meetings on ``Assessment of ID``				XX	XX	XX						
Regional Working Group Meetings						X			X			X
Adoption of the Structure of ``Assessment of ID``						X						
Development of the Software							X	X	X			
Training of Regional and National Working Groups in data collection										XX	XX	XX
Collection of Data and Content for ``Assessment of ID``											XX	XX
Input of Data into ``Assessment of ID``												XX

**Timetable of Project Activities and Outcomes for Project Year II**

<b>Project Activities and Outcomes</b>	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	<b>M4</b>	<b>M5</b>	<b>M6</b>	<b>M7</b>	<b>M8</b>	<b>M9</b>	<b>M10</b>	<b>M11</b>	<b>M12</b>
Collection of Data and Content for ``Assessment of ID``	XX											
Input of Data into ``Assessment of ID``	XX	XX										
Printing /Publishing of hard copy publication			X									
Nominating End-Users of ``Assessment of ID``			X									
Training of End-Users on procedures of administration, access and usage				XX	XX	XX						
Dissemination of hard copy publication				X	X	X						
Publishing and Dissemination of Operation's Manual				X	X	X						
Meeting for Launching of ``Assessment of ID``						X						
Steering Committee Meetings			X			X						
Regional Working Group Meetings			X			X						

**2.1.4. Promoting a Regionally Integrated Approach for Successful Preventing and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) (required funding 300.930,00 EUR for a period of 16 months)**

The region of MARRI Member States serves as a transit zone for Trafficking in Human Beings meanwhile much trafficking derives from and takes place within the region. Almost all the areas of the region serve as recruitment source, transit route and final destination for Trafficking in Human Beings. Smuggling of migrants and particularly trafficking of human beings is currently one of the most urgent and complex human rights issues and one of the priority concerns of international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime.

The project "Promoting a Regionally Integrated Approach for Successful Preventing and Combating of THB" is built on recent initiatives to extend activities related to Trafficking and Smuggling of Human Beings issue in order to promote a regionally integrated approach. It seeks to scale-up existing successful activities, introduce a range of new activities, strengthen overall coordination and cooperation on national and international level and establish national and regional mechanisms providing for a cross-sector cooperation and coordination between police services, border guards (other law enforcements) and the judicial system. It will link to effective implementation of National Plans of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, so as to pave the way towards preventing and combating THB within each of the MARRI Member States. The goal of this project is to build a coordinated national and regional response of MARRI Member States for Combating and Preventing THB.

It is planned the project implementation to be carried out by MARRI Regional Centre and MARRI Member States in a period of sixteen months, in partnership with IOM. This project is focused on achieving four specific objectives around which eight activities are grouped. These have been selected based on the need to focus efforts on key elements identified as most needed for creating the baseline for effective and sustainable implementation of Anti – THB Policies. This has been done by means of a broad consultative process which has included not only all key players within the MARRI Regional Centre and IOM, but has also drawn on external technical inputs.

The four project objectives are:

- (1) To build a regional network among Institutions dealing with THB, mainly based on the created legal background (bilateral agreements) providing for a cross-sector cooperation and coordination between police services, border guards, custom officers, criminal police, forensic and the judicial system;
- (2) To support the process of effective implementation of National Plans of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in each of the MARRI Member States, with focus in the areas of prevention of trafficking and prosecution of traffickers ;
- (3) To carry out a public awareness campaign on THB related issues in each of the MARRI Member States;
- (4) To support Institutional Capacity Building by training programmes for the police, immigration officers, border guards, other law enforcement personnel, public prosecutors and judges.

The expected results of the project will not only assist MARRI Member States in being able to fulfil the EU requirements on the combating THB, but will also foster the capacity of MARRI Member States to exchange information and best practices improved EU knowledge and expertise.

## TIMETABLE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**PROJECT NAME: Promoting a Regionally Integrated Approach for Successful Preventing and Combating of THB (16 months)**

<b>DRAFT CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR 16 MONTHS</b>																	
<b>Activities and their duration</b>	<b>Responsible/ Implementing agencies</b>	<b>Chronological monthly plan of the activities (2008 – 2009)</b>															
		<b>2008</b>												<b>2009</b>			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4
Workshop for building and strengthening a Regional Network among Institutions dealing with THB	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Workshop for reviewing the work progress of the Regional Network Against THB	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Policy implementation planning seminar on THB Combat	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Regional conference on THB Policy Implementation	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Promoting materials on THB related issues	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States									+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Media campaign on THB related issues	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Organization of training programmes for law enforcement personnel	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States																
Regional training for judiciary	MARRI Regional Centre, MARRI Member States												+	+			
Monitoring and evaluation	MARRI Regional Centre, MRCPG, PAB, External Financial Auditing and External Narrative Evaluation																

All these MARRI project proposals have been already submitted to foreign donors and the proper implementation of these projects will be of crucial importance for the future work of the Centre. In that respect, MARRI invites the European Commission and foreign donors to support financially and politically common efforts within the framework of MARRI.

## 2.2. MARRI PRIORITY AREAS FOR 2008

Considering the great extent of activities and the limited administrative capacities in most of MARRI Member States, priority setting is vital. In order to be successful, to prevent overlap and not to overburden the administrative capacities of the countries of the region, regional co-operation activities need to be in line with overall EU priorities for the accession process. While there are areas for regional co-operation that are not necessarily on an EU agenda, the priority for both the countries of the region and the EU is clear.

The assessment of the remaining challenges indicates that a more sustainable framework for co-operation needs to be further developed. Along with the existing regional initiatives such as the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), SEPCA, and relevant international organisations (ICMPD, IOM, OSCE, UNHCR), MARRI needs to enhance efficiency and prevent overlap.

While keeping in mind the changing environment and the need for adaptation, MARRI needs to continue with information exchange among the MARRI Member States and with the EU, in addition to the existing bilateral level, on questions of importance to MARRI and in light of EU integration. The MARRI Regional Centre shall continue to provide guidance for and receive substantive input from the MARRI Member States led by the Presidency-in Office, as well as to provide a forum for exchange between the MARRI Member States and the broader donor community.

Based on these criteria, the following have been identified as MARRI priority areas for regional co-operation in 2008:

### I. Migration management:

- Exchange of best practices on migration management;
- Support and assistance in establishing efficient information management systems that would connect national institutions dealing with migration management (combating irregular migration and THB, immigration and asylum institutions, visa and consular cooperation, border management institutions);
- Support and assistance regarding networking and data exchange between national information system and compatible information system of neighbouring countries and EU, based on *acquis* principles and EU standards;
- Training, support and assistance in development of special department in the main institution responsible for migration management that would deal with drafting of legislation and strategic planning in the field of immigration;
- Capacity building and training of persons in the departments dealing with strategic planning and legislation in all areas of migration, staff in the departments responsible for movement and stay of aliens, asylum, implementation of readmission agreements;
- Develop orderly migration systems, in particular labour migration;
- Enhance durable solutions for reintegration of labour emigrants and explore possibilities of the impact of remittances on development in the region;
- Develop a roster of national experts from institutions managing migration (both regular and irregular) should be developed for all Member States to be used as focal points for future MARRI activities.

### II. Enhance cooperation in the field of fight against illegal migration, anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling.

### III. Implement visa facilitation and readmission agreements in the MARRI region.

- IV. Support and assistance in establishing efficient mechanisms for authenticity and verification of travel documents (detection of forged documents), database of specimen, cancelled and lost travel documents.
- V. Work on establishing closer cross border cooperation to increase efficiency, facilitate trade and prevent/reduce crime and irregular migration.
- VI. Develop sustainable and effective asylum systems including protection of refugees and their integration:
  - Training and capacity building in the field of asylum and refugees;
  - Improvement of techniques and methods of proceeding conduct and talks;
  - Establishment of a database with all the information about the countries of origin.

The outlined points demonstrate the areas for a future regional framework for cooperation in the following MARRI fields: Migration, Trafficking in Human Beings, Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements; Document Security; Border Management, as well as Asylum and Refugees.

#### 2.2.1. Migration

- Reiterate the importance of channelling the needs, interests and concerns of MARRI Member States in dealing with population movements, strengthening regional cooperation and harmonisation of existing experiences and best practices on the road towards EU integration, as well as building the capacities, exchanging information and best practices, as well as raising awareness of their state administration on the migration issues.
- Emphasise the relevance of cooperation between governmental institutions and agencies responsible for migration on national and regional level with objective to develop sound migration management in the MARRI Member States.
- Welcome the efforts of the MARRI Regional Centre on promoting measures to combat irregular migration and plans to exchange information on labour migration into, within and out of our region.
- Work towards establishing a regional exchange of information and experiences among the countries of origin, transit and destination, aimed at reducing illegal migration. In order to cope effectively with illegal migration flows originating in or transiting through the region, we encourage co-operation between the appropriate authorities of the MARRI Member States.
- Take necessary steps to have the questions of labour migration and brain drain incorporated in the work of the Centre and the MARRI Regional Forum in the most effective way.
- Render its full contribution in the field of migration through organising seminars and other activities aimed at co-ordinating and monitoring action on MARRI issues in the region, based on the principle of complementarity with other international organisations and initiatives in order to avoid overlapping of activities.
- Develop a roster of national experts from institutions managing migration (both regular and irregular) should be developed for all Member States to be used as focal points for future MARRI activities.

#### 2.2.2. Trafficking in Human Beings

- Enhance and coordinate activities regarding the establishment of effective response mechanisms to combat trafficking in human beings in the MARRI Member States. We urge the MARRI Member States to act both domestically and regionally. In pursuit of this objective, MARRI shall take into account and build on action already underway, as well as seek to fill important gaps in action. Co-ordination of all international actors is essential. We place high priority on the areas of victim assistance, training programs of competent bodies, intelligence and exchange of information, public awareness and strategy development.



### 2.2.3. Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements

- Welcome the entry into force of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements between the EU and five MARRI Member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) on 1 January 2008. While aiming to achieve European standards, we reaffirm the importance of facilitation and harmonisation of visa regimes, respecting European Union commitments of the participating States.
- Stress the importance of these agreements in moving towards closer cooperation between the EU and the MARRI Member States in the sensitive areas of migration and movement of persons.
- Express readiness to enhance regional cooperation by further coordinating and improving the programmes and projects in the readmission area in the region and outside of it as well as to implement bilateral agreements on readmission in accordance with the EU practice.
- Taking into account the objectives of the EU-Western Balkans Summit Thessaloniki Declaration, we shall continue the discussion on further cooperation among our countries and the EU, in order to facilitate our respective visa regimes, having in mind national policies and the compatibility with the relevant EU policy and requirements.

### 2.2.4. Document Security

- Recommend the MARRI Member States to follow the EU standards in what concerns document security, as these activities improve capacity-building and regional cooperation as supportive instruments for freedom of population movements in the region.
- Support establishment of efficient mechanisms for authenticity and verification of travel documents (detection of forged documents), database of specimen, cancelled and lost travel documents.
- Appreciate the significance of established network of national experts by the MARRI Regional Centre within the 15-month Project on Document Security and Establishment of Identity in the MARRI Region (UK financed) that ended in March 2008. In this context, we appreciate the work of four Working Group meetings on Document Security and Establishment of Identity, contributing to the strengthening of cooperation in order to decrease irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling in human beings and to increase effectiveness of capacity-building of national administrations managing migration.

### 2.2.5. Border Management

- **Work** on establishing closer cross border cooperation to increase efficiency, facilitate trade and prevent/reduce crime and irregular migration. In that respect, we welcome the Guidelines for Integrated Border Management for Western Balkans drafted in the framework of the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, development and Stabilisation (CARDS) regional integrated border management (IBM) project “Support to and coordination of IBM strategies”. It calls on the countries concerned to take all the concrete and specific measures necessary for the achievement of the objectives defined in these documents.

### 2.2.6. Asylum and Refugees

- Develop sustainable and effective asylum systems including protection of refugees and their integration, as well as training and capacity building in the field of asylum and refugees.

### **3. MARRI RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION**

#### **3.1. Strengthened Regional Ownership**

The fact that the countries of the region have shown such willingness and enthusiasm for regional co-operation processes in MARRI areas illustrates the extent to which the value of regional co-operation processes has been recognised and accepted, not only for their contribution to European integration but because of their inherent value to the political, economic, social and security environment in the region. Identifying common problems and agreeing shared solutions provides many practical benefits.

The MARRI Regional Centre's commitment and assistance must be matched by a genuine commitment of the governments of the MARRI Member States and concrete steps to make the necessary reforms, to establish adequate administrative capacity and to co-operate amongst themselves. Building fully functioning state administrations capable of providing for the needs of their citizens remains a major challenge for the whole region.

In that respect, the MARRI Regional Centre can assist as a regional facilitator and a platform for exchange of information and practices among its Member States, as well as nucleus for gathering of migration-related data by other international organisations.

At the same time the commitment of the countries of the region has to continue in taking financial responsibility for the costs of the required structures such as the running costs of the MARRI Regional Centre. The level of regional ownership of MARRI Member States has already risen through taking full responsibility in decision-making and financial obligations, through jointly financing from 2008 onwards the running costs of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, as well as through financial contribution for concrete projects and activities implemented by the MARRI Regional Centre.

#### **3.2. Implementation of MARRI Projects**

Implementation is the key challenge facing the future MARRI activities. This means implementation of the various decisions that have been taken and ensuring that new structures become operational, efficient and self sustainable in a reasonably short period. If ambitious political commitments are to be met, political, technical, human and financial resources must be invested in implementation, so that the benefits that are inherent in regional co-operation processes are achieved. Failure to invest in implementation will mean that political commitments will not be achieved.

Of course, all envisaged MARRI project and activities will not be implemented without proper financial assistance. In that respect, the MARRI Presidency and the MARRI Regional Centre should work towards intensifying contacts with competent institutions of the donor countries and international organisations aimed at promoting this Initiative and providing the funds for the MARRI activities in 2008 and beyond. The practice of convening donor meetings on a regular basis on ongoing and planned national and regional projects aiming to provide a clear overview of the MARRI activities to the donor community should be continued.

#### **3.3. Development of Partnerships and Strong Cross Organisation Relationships**

The MARRI Regional Centre's role as a secretariat of the initiative means considerable day-to-day involvement in different regional activities relevant to MARRI issues. This knowledge helps the development of the overall strategies and allows for the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy as well as encouraging co-operation between different areas. In this respect, the MARRI Regional Centre staff will have to continue developing good working relations with relevant international actors and ensure that comprehensive information flows are well established and structured.

The partnerships, cooperation and expert contribution of other international organisations and institutions, namely the Stability Pact for SEE, ICMPD, IOM, SEPCA and UNHCR, are welcomed and these have proven indeed useful. MARRI shall continue cooperation and develop partnerships with major stakeholders in the area of migration, such as partnership with ICMPD within Project on Trans-national Referral Mechanisms and Project on Data Collection and Information Management, as well as Swedish Migration Board projects funded by AENEAS Programme in the MARRI Member States.

In the process of coordination and project cooperation with various regional initiatives and organisations in the area, the role of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) will become increasingly important and MARRI shall take necessary steps towards ensuring MARRI's close and all-round cooperation with, and greater involvement with the RCC. Also, special emphasis shall be placed on working towards achieving better cooperation with the European Union and its programmes of support for the region. To that end, MARRI is envisaged as the region's medium of approaching the European Union and highlighting problems of relevance for the region on MARRI issues. The already-existing practice of facilitating exchange of migration related information and practices with European organisations, such as EUROPOL and FRONTEX, is also very important.

### **3.4. Continued International Involvement**

While the leadership of the initiative has passed to the region, the wider international community is still involved and has demonstrated its intention to remain involved through developing support programmes and endorsing or supporting work plans. The nature of the support provided by the international community has changed. In that respect, the MARRI Member States are now responsible for financing the support structures while the international community provides technical and financial support for the activity programme.

### **3.5. Communications Strategy**

The MARRI Member States should provide the MARRI Regional Centre with detailed information on ongoing and planned activities, initiatives and projects on a regular basis. The MARRI Regional Centre would be responsible for further distribution of these and other migration information through its website, journals and other publications.

Considerable efforts will be required to ensure that the necessary cross organisation communication channels are enhanced. It is vital that MARRI is properly integrated into the broader socio-economic environment in the region. The MARRI Regional Centre's central position in the area of migration management should greatly facilitate this process. An effective communications strategy, promoting regional co-operation and its proven benefits, is required to enhance the MARRI Regional Centre's credibility and to make its work known to both the general public and the key relevant actors – regionally and internationally. It should deliver clear messages about its aims, the potential benefits of regional cooperation and its complementarity to national goals. A comprehensive communications strategy would also provide valuable support to the migration efforts in the region many of which would struggle to gain visibility within the region and beyond.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Safeguarding the achievements of MARRI and ensuring sustainability of the regional co-operation processes initiated under its auspices by enhancing regional ownership while keeping the donor community involved has been the guiding principle of this MARRI Strategy & Programme of Action 2008.

The recommendation of the Croatian MARRI Presidency is to keep advancing regional ownership and cooperation which is imperative for successful implementation of MARRI's objectives. The establishment and development of cooperation with other international organizations and initiatives in the region based on the principle of complementarity remains highly important. Also, it is crucial to increase cooperation between governmental agencies responsible for migration, asylum and refugees on regional and national level with objective to develop good migration governance in the MARRI region; endorse development of capacity building in the field of migration, asylum and refugees; increase its visibility and strengthen its role as the voice of the region in the MARRI fields; encourage MARRI Member States in the process of strengthening harmonisation of existing policies, synergising acquired knowledge, experiences and best practices on the road towards EU integration.

In order to ensure sustainability of regional co-operation process and thus preserve the positive legacy of MARRI, a number of principles for future MARRI co-operation have to be observed. This entails strong involvement of both the MARRI Member States and the EU through a close relationship to the Stabilisation and Association Process and aligning regional co-operation even more closely with EU integration. A clear focus should be on priority areas to ensure full political commitment by the countries of the region and to prevent duplication. Nevertheless, a continued involvement of EU donor countries and key international organisations is crucial for continuation of MARRI activities in 2008 and beyond.

The remaining tasks are thus to ensure long-term sustainability of these co-operation processes by enhancing regional commitment and ownership and to support the countries of the region on their path towards European integration, namely through four major MARRI project proposals. As regional co-operation is regarded as one of the preconditions for further EU integration of MARRI Member States, all available support mechanisms should be used to ensure further progress in this field.

In closing, during the Croatian MARRI Presidency-in-Office, the region has demonstrated increasing maturity and capacity to deal with the broad and complex range of topics involved. The MARRI Member States are increasingly bearing the financial burden for regional co-operation structures and experts from the region are actively engaged in the different activities. This foretells well for the future of regional co-operation in the MARRI region.

The transition outlined above should start with the MARRI Regional Forum on 19 May 2008, as organised by the Croatian MARRI Presidency.

Done in Zagreb, May 2008