



**MARRI REGIONAL FORUM**  
Sarajevo, 26 April 2007

**Declaration**

We, the Ministers responsible for managing issues in the areas of migration, asylum and refugees of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Welcome the Republic of Montenegro as the new MARRI Member State as of October 2006.

Guided by the principles expressed in the Belgrade Declaration adopted at MARRI Regional Forum on 7 April 2006 and the priorities set by Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency of MARRI.

In line with the Declaration adopted at the Founding MARRI Regional Forum held in Herceg Novi on 5 April 2004 and followed by the principles expressed in MARRI Memorandum of Understanding signed in Tirana on 5 April 2005:

Reiterate the commitment of our Governments for managing population movements in Southeastern Europe, with particular focus on enhancing regional cooperation, regional ownership and increasing MARRI Member States' capacities to further develop migration management as part of responsible and good governance.

Welcome the efforts undertaken in preparing Governments of the MARRI Member States for European integration according to the recommendations of the Thessaloniki Agenda, as agreed at the EU-Western Balkans Summit on 21 June 2003, as well as for the Stabilization and Association Process which will remain the framework for the European course of the Western Balkan countries.

Appreciate the progress and achievements accomplished by MARRI Member States in all areas of regular and irregular migration, primarily in combating irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling in human beings and visa facilitation.

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.

Continue to support development of best possible practices in successful implementation of readmission agreements in MARRI Member States and with other countries, as well as the development of sound integration policies.

Encourage efforts of MARRI Member States are undertaking in the process of harmonisation of visa policies and consular cooperation with European Union *acquis communautaire* and standards.

Commit to finding out more durable and sustainable solutions for refugees and displaced persons as stated in common priorities identified in Sarajevo Declaration from January 2005.

Underline the commitment of MARRI Member States to, through individual activities and activities organized by MARRI, implement international conventions on refugee protection and international human and refugee rights documents, particularly to the development of guiding rules on protection of vulnerable groups.

Emphasise the relevance of establishing and developing cooperation by MARRI Regional Forum with other international organizations and initiatives based on the principle of complementarity in order to avoid overlapping of activities.

Express satisfaction with the MARRI Regional Centre becoming 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, such as EUROPOL and FRONTEX.

Encourage MARRI Regional Forum to explore the possibilities of establishing specific Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) in order to enhance cooperation with other international intergovernmental organisations and regional structures (Council of Europe, OSCE, SEECP, Budapest Process, RACVIAC etc.)

Commit to improve the level of regional ownership of MARRI Member States 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.

Reaffirm commitment to the concept of regional ownership, and, accordingly, agree that the position of a new Director of the MARRI Regional Centre will be assumed before the summer of 2007 by the most qualified candidate from a MARRI Member State.

Introduce a practice that the position of the Deputy Director of the MARRI Regional Centre gets occupied by the Centre's State Official of the MARRI Member State that presides over the MARRI

Regional Forum, starting with the upcoming MARRI Croatian Presidency on 26 April 2007. The Deputy Director shall also act as Acting Head of the MARRI Regional Centre until the arrival of a new Director. These modifications shall be introduced within the basic MARRI documents by the end of May 2007.

Fully support the MARRI Regional Centre Action Plan for 2007 in order to improve national capacity building in different areas of migration by providing training and indispensable knowledge of migration related issues.

Assist MARRI Member States to approximate and harmonize their standards with EU *acquis communautaire* enhance regional cooperation, exchange of information and best practices.

Appreciate the significance of established network of national experts by the MARRI Regional Centre. In this context, we appreciate the work of the Working Group on Irregular Migration, its two sub-groups, and the Working Group on Document Security and Establishment of Identity are 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.

Encourage MARRI Presidency and the MARRI Regional Centre to seek out further modalities and IT tools to enhance exchange of information, practices and know-how dealing with all areas of migration.

Express gratitude to the donors that have provided and enabled essential support for the implementation of MARRI Regional Centre's activities and projects: Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, United States and, to this end, underline the significance for continuing support that will increase regional cooperation within MARRI scope of work.

Thank the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for its contribution and logistical support for the operation of the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje.

Appreciate the partnership, cooperation and expert contribution of other international organisations and institutions, namely the Stability Pact for SEE, ICMPD, IOM, OSCE and UNHCR.

Thank the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency for coordination and cooperation of activities performed during its Chairmanship-in-Office of MARRI.

Place full trust in the Republic of Croatia that will assume the Presidency for the period of April 2007 – April 2008.

Thank the Director of the MARRI Regional Centre for her valuable efforts at the expiry of her mandate on 26 April 2007.

Sarajevo, 26 April 2007