



**OHRID DECLARATION
MARRI Regional Forum
Ohrid, 29 May 2009**

We, the high representatives responsible for issues of migration, asylum and refugees of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have met in Ohrid, on 29 May 2009, in the framework of the Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI).

Also, participating at the MARRI Regional Forum, as special guests of the MARRI Presidency-in-Office, were the representatives of the Czech Presidency of the European Union and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

Recognizing the importance of regional cooperation in the field of migration, asylum, border management, refugee return, visa regime and consular cooperation, as a vital part of EU integration process.

Reaffirming the commitment of our Governments for managing population movements in Southeastern Europe, based on the recommendations of the Thessaloniki Agenda, it remains highly relevant and we support its full realisation.

Realising that the European perspective of the countries of Southeastern Europe and their integration into European Union constitutes both an incentive and a catalyst for closer regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

Welcoming the Albania and Croatia accession to NATO Alliance full-fledged membership at the Summit Meeting of the North Atlantic Council of Heads of State and Government, held on 3–4 April 2009 in Baden-Baden and Kehl, Germany, and in Strasbourg, France, and expressing hopes that Macedonia's invitation will be extended soon.

Underlining the importance of continuous dialogue between the MARRI Member States to promote security and stability, enhance the cooperation in MARRI areas and to strengthen the institutions dealing with it in the MARRI Member States.

Expressing gratitude to the donors that have provided essential financial support for the MARRI Regional Centre and the implementation of its activities and projects, namely the Czech Republic, the Republic of Macedonia for providing financial means for the premises and all MARRI Member States for annual contribution for the running costs of the Centre.

Noting with satisfaction the Republic of Macedonia's coordination and cooperation of activities performed during its Presidency-in-Office of MARRI (May 2008-May 2009).

Expressing our firm expectation that the forthcoming one-year MARRI Presidency-in-Office of Montenegro shall give its full contribution to future coordination and realisation of the activities and priorities laid out in the Priorities of Montenegrin MARRI Presidency;

We convened at the MARRI Regional Forum and confirmed the following:

Macedonian MARRI-Presidency-in-Office

Expresses satisfaction over the results achieved during the Macedonian MARRI Presidency-in-Office, in particular the following activities:

- Seminar "Comprehensive Migration Management Systems," Ohrid, 12 September 2008
- Friends of MARRI Meeting/Diplomatic Briefing, Skopje, 21 October 2008
- Workshop "Models for exchange of information in preventing/combating Trafficking in Human Beings," Mavrovo, 30 October 2008
- MARRI Regional Forum, Ohrid, 5 December 2008
- Seminar on citizenship legislation and practices in MARRI Member States, Tirana, 20 February 2009
- Workshop "Establishment of network for cooperation among border police on international airport Border Crossing Points in MARRI Member States," Skopje, 27 March 2009

Emphasises the importance of future implementation of the following MARRI project proposals: MARRI Interactive Migration MAP; Promoting a Regionally integrated approach for successful preventing and combating THB; Types of identification documents in MARRI Member States, as submitted to foreign donors (e.g. IPA), MARRI Migration Paper 2008/2009, which is fully developed by MARRI MS instruments and the proper implementation of these projects will be of crucial importance for the future work of the Centre.

MARRI Regional Centre/Presidency-in Office Coordination

Express satisfaction with the MARRI Regional Centre becoming a regional facilitator and a platform for exchange of information and practices among its Member States.

Underline the leading role and contribution of the Macedonian national institutions and organizations responsible in the field of migration, asylum, border management, visa regime and consular cooperation, refugee return in building partnership and cooperation with the MARRI Regional Centre as well as with respective MARRI Member States national institutions and organizations.

Reaffirm our readiness to continue cooperation between MARRI and other international organisations, such as signed MoU's with ICMPD, IOM and SEPCA and envisaged MoUs with RCC and SECI. MARRI shall continue cooperation and develop partnerships with major stakeholders in the area of migration such as partnership with ICMPD and other international organisations and institutions (SEECF, RCC, DCAF, ICMPD, IOM, RACVIAC, SECI, SEPCA, UNHCR and UNICRI) in the MARRI Member States.

Welcome further progress in the process of coordination and project cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). To that end, MARRI shall take necessary steps towards ensuring MARRI's close and all-round cooperation with and greater involvement with the RCC.

Place special emphasis on working towards achieving better cooperation with the EU and its programmes of support for the region (e.g. IPA). To that end, MARRI is envisaged as the region's medium of approaching the EU and highlighting problems of relevance for the region on MARRI issues.

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 2009 and beyond.

Express gratitude to the Republic of Macedonia for its contribution to the Initiative over the period of its Presidency and for successful organisation of the meeting of the MARRI Regional Forum.

We place full trust in Montenegro that is to assume the MARRI Presidency for the period of one year.

Done in Ohrid, 29 May 2009