

# BULLETIN

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## SASHKO KOCEV

Director of MARRI Regional Centre

***"The commitment towards regional cooperation and coordinated response to the common challenges has stood the test of time"***



## MARRI FEELS LIKE HOME

KATERINA KULISHEVSKA  
MARRI Coordination Officer



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

MARRI Presidency-In-Office

June 2018 - June 2019

## What is "Readmission"?

*Christoph von Harsdorf*



***"The commitment towards regional cooperation and coordinated response to the common challenges has stood the test of time"***

**Sashko Kocov**  
**MARRI RC Director**

Dear MARRI partners, supporters and friends,

This year, we are proud to mark the 15th anniversary of MARRI as a catalyst for regional cooperation on issues concerning migration, asylum and refugees in the Western Balkans. Back in 2004, MARRI was established with a decision by the Stability Pact of South-Eastern Europe. It has since evolved from a donor-supported organisation to a regional initiative jointly owned by its Participants.

Looking back, I am amazed by the hard work done and the progress made during this challenging but rewarding period. In 2008, the Participants took over the full ownership and leadership of MARRI, while securing its sustainability by funding the running costs for its Secretariat - the MARRI Regional Centre.

Initially, MARRI has been established by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, (North) Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. Over the years, its composition has changed with the leaving of Croatia and joining of Kosovo\* as a full-fledged MARRI Participant. Nevertheless, the commitment towards regional

cooperation and a coordinated response to the common challenges has stood the test of time.

Proof of that is the recognition of MARRI as an important mechanism for regional cooperation by the Western Balkans Interior/Security Ministers under the Berlin Process. This was reiterated in the European Commission's Evaluation of Regional Organisations in the Western Balkans, where MARRI was assessed as a bottom-up regional initiative whose objectives and activities are contributing to the EU accession processes of its Participants.

None of this could be achieved without the continuous support of our donors and partners. This long-standing cooperation is formalized with the Memoranda of Understanding with IOM, ICMPD, SEPCA, RCC, PCC SEE, RACVIAC, FRONTEX, and CEI.

MARRI has also taken part in many migration management projects. The recently closed BORDAIRPOL II project, which has lasted for nine years, is a successful example of

regional cooperation under the auspices of MARRI, realised with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

Going forward, a key priority for MARRI is to become a regional hub for training in the area of asylum, with the support of EASO. We are also exploring opportunities for strengthening the cooperation on readmission, through targeted interventions with the support of IOM. MARRI will also participate in the upcoming GIZ-implemented project on prevention and combating THB and migrant smuggling.

In closing, I would like to thank the MARRI RC staff members for their hard work, the MARRI Coordinators and Participant Representatives for their daily support, the MARRI Committee and Forum Members for their guidance and advice, and, particularly, the Participant administrations for their contribution to the development of MARRI as we see it now. I am looking forward to the great things MARRI is sure to accomplish in the years to come! ■

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence



Interview with **KATERINA KULISHEVSKA**  
MARRI RC Coordination Officer

## MARRI FEELS LIKE HOME

**I believe that many professionals from the Western Balkans and beyond, with any connection to the migration management, at some point have been contacted by Katerina (Simjanoska) Kulishevsk. For those who have not met you, who is Katerina?**

An eager beaver. Someone who welcomes the challenges of the everyday work and the changing environment.

My office is always busy and is the main communication channel of the Centre and consequently the position I hold entails coordination of all activities of the Centre. The numerous tasks I have during the working hours offer a great communication span from government officials to local retailers, from financial matters to strategic papers and logistics. It is an overwhelming job, meaning it's never boring and very dynamic. I am very grateful to have an



*I am very grateful to have an excellent team I can always rely on in many aspects, so that the work is done proficiently*

excellent team I can always rely on in many aspects, so that the work is done proficiently.

Few months ago, I voluntarily took over the advisory role on gender and equality and it is another professional challenge and a field I have started to explore. I always regret to not have more time so that I can read extra about the related topics of the work, since migration is a wide subject matter and the working hours are only 8.

**You are part of MARRI RC team since 2008. How did MARRI change through out the years and what is your share in creating that change?**

My contract with MARRI RC is from 01 January 2008. This is the date that MARRI also started a new chapter of its existence and became sustainable i.e. its, back then Member States, begun financing the Centre on an annual basis. I started as a Project/Finance Assistant and was the only local staff in the Centre. All MARRI Participants were represented in the Centre with professionals from various migration related areas of work.

This later brought bigger recognition of MARRI through signing MoUs with relevant International Organizations, Working Arrangement with Frontex and series of project grants from the Swiss Government throughout the years, as well as grants from the Czech Republic, Liechtenstein and others. Many strategic partnerships have been achieved, the specter of partners, donors and collaborators widened



5 April 2019, 15 Anniversary of MARRI

and most of all regional cooperation strengthened and improved. Number of successful projects rose. With broadening the span of activities came changes in personnel and strengthening the capacities in the Centre with experts allocated from partners and donors. I have witnessed political processes, financial struggles and regional and international recognition.

Since 2015 my position was changed to Coordination Officer which expanded my obligations and responsibilities. I have contributed towards more than 150 well organized events at first logistically, later both logistically and conceptually. And that would be only one segment of the work. Shortly, I was a great part of the changes happening to MARRI.

After 11 years in MARRI I can say I am proud and honored to be part of it as I have changed and grew together with MARRI.

**You are referred to as an institutional memory of the Initiative. How do you feel about it?**

That is because I am the longest in the Centre, and have a very good memory, can recall dates, places and events very easily, a walking MARRI diary. It is

flattering and complimenting on one hand, but also burdening and placing great responsibility on the other. I have witnessed changes in managerial level in the Centre and changes on Representational level by the Participants and for quite long I was running the office by myself, so I was the only person who could introduce the new Director or the Representatives with the work of the Centre and establish continuity. The changes always brought new energy and quality to the work and this is something to be valued.

**What do you like most about MARRI? Are there some aspects that you find to be less positive?**

MARRI feels like home. I like the people I work with in the office, I like the people I cooperate with and whom I meet, I like the tension, which can be exhausting, but seeing the results afterwards is a reward by itself. Change of seconded Representatives in the Centre has its positive and less positive aspects. Every seconded Participant Representative is covering one of the migration areas, depending on the background they have and the respective Ministry, and after the end of the mandate, there usually is a time gap until the next appointment of a Representative which creates disruption of continuity and lack of people.



**Do you still find professional challenge in MARRI? What keeps you excited about being part of the team?**

Although working here for so long, it is never boring. On the contrary, I see challenges in daily work and I learn something every day. MARRI gathers people from different nationalities and ethnicities which enriches the working environment. The activities and collaborators together with the strategic approach and perspectives of MARRI change, leaving space for improvement and development of capacities. I have worked so far with around 30 Representatives and staff in the Centre alone and some of them beside being my colleagues are also my friends. This is the niche I like about this variety of people.

**Where do you want to see MARRI in the future?**

Having the current pace, I want to see a greater team of professionals in MARRI, strengthened and diversified Regional Centre, meaning more open to cooperation with other stakeholders in the area of migration from the non-governmental sectors. Serving its mandate, I think it would be realistically to expect for MARRI to become a hub for training and analysis in the areas of its scope of work and a name to be recognized by migration professionals, not only in Western Balkans, but on European level as well.

In addition, I want to see MARRI Regional Centre as a place offering professional improvement and advancement. ■



## Short Description

- 6 Workshops, one in each MARRI Participant;
- Participants from governmental institutions, international organizations, research/academic institutions and civil society;
- Areas of interest - asylum, trafficking of human beings, border management, readmission and labour migration;
- The findings and conclusions to be presented at Regional Conference planned for September 2019 in Skopje;
- New project should be developed reaching agreed findings and priorities.

## **“Strengthening regional dialogue and cooperation on migration” Project**

**supported by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through German International Cooperation (GIZ)**

by Aleksandar Todosiev MARRI Programme Manager

*Migration management is very complex issue. We are all familiar that it is almost impossible to be done at national level. These issues must be managed at least at regional level, with comprehensive approach to all challenges that are arising with it. Although MARRI helps migration to be manage at the regional level, in the recent years we saw that still something is missing.*







Analysing all the influences, we concluded that for a comprehensive approach we lack consultations and involvement of other stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, professors and representatives from the academia, as well as other relevant international and regional organizations, especially when is coming Western Balkans.

In this regard, MARRI RC and GIZ Office Skopje started an activity within the project **“Strengthening regional migration governance”**, titled “Strengthening regional dialogue and cooperation on migration”, where all stakeholders have been consulted regarding the needs and possible input in overall migration management, something different from previous experiences where only governmental institutions have been consulted.

The objective of this activity is strengthening the regional dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders involved in the area of migration (governmental administrations,



international organizations, research/academic institutions as well as civil society) at all levels (local, national and regional) and bringing them together in creation of migration management policy.

Starting from January 2019, Workshops have been organized in Albania, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Workshops were organized in two Sessions:

#### **Session I – Consultation on MARRI’s five thematic objectives.**

Presenting the MARRI Strategy 2018-2020 and performed and planned MARRI’s activities in five different thematic objectives (Asylum, Integrated Border Management, Readmission, Trafficking in Human Beings and Circular/Labour migration). The participants worked in 5 Thematic Working Groups composed of representatives of different sectors (governmental administrations, international organizations, research/academia institutions and civil society) and they discussed from different point of view their involvement and possible contribution in this area/s.

**Session II – Identification of areas of cooperation: Development of “White Paper on Migration” and “MARRI’s Pool of Experts”.** In this session, participants were divided in 4 Sectorial Working Groups (governmental administrations, international organizations, research/academia institutions and civil society) where they have been discussed for the content and their possible input in the White Paper on Migration, as well as their involvement and be part of the MARRI’s Pool of Experts.

We had very positive and vivid discussions, followed by analysis of specific cases from everyday work and suggestions, concrete proposals for improving the work procedures, as well as direct



involvement of MARRI in capacity building through joint activities with other international and regional organizations, particularly with the civil society and the research/academic institutions.

Through this project, MARRI’s visibility is significantly increased and MARRI RC staff capacities are upgraded, knowing that all measures for organizing the Workshops, moderation of the events and presenting the MARRI’s activities and products were done by MARRI RC staff.

In the forthcoming period, findings/outputs from all Workshops will be elaborated and presented at Regional Conference, second half of 2019. Except the White Paper on Migration and MARRI’s Pool of Experts, the outputs of these consultation processes will be a base for programming a new 3-5 years project where those findings will be addressed.



Having in mind that this is the first time all different stakeholders in migration to be gathered at one place in the Western Balkans, we, the MARRI RC staff, are very proud that this initiative was positively accepted and recognized by all Workshops’ participants■



# IOM support to MARRI: Data Exchange and Remote Interpretation

*Within the IPA II 'Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management' project, IOM is supporting MARRI to develop its capacity as a provider of specific services which are currently lacking in the region, including extra-regional language interpretation and migration data exchange. The first phase of the project - which began in January 2016 – ends this June, seamlessly transitioning to the second phase which is to start this July, lasting until June 2021*



*Training in Tirana, 12 April 2019*

## **MARRI Regional Interpretation Service (RRIS)**

MARRI RRIS –initiated by MARRI RC and fully developed by IOM – is embedded as a regular service rendered by MARRI. At the end of June 2019, MARRI Participants are to take the full ownership of the service, and MARRI RC is to be responsible for its management, maintenance and sustainability.

RRIS consists of an online Interpreter-Scheduling Platform populated by a pool of extra-regional language interpreters who are nominated by the MARRI Participant Asylum Departments. In its current form, RRIS is most easily accessible to asylum departments since it offers a possibility to schedule an interpreter in advance. The legal basis for this service is the "Protocol on the Use of Joint Interpretation Pool in the Area of Migration and Asylum". The actual interpretation is conducted remotely, through the video-conferencing service Skype for Business.

To ensure effective use of RRIS, IOM procured laptop computers, additional mobile PC equipment and annual Skype for Business subscriptions for the asylum departments of all six MARRI Participants. In the period from March to June 2019, IOM IPA II project staff delivered On-the-job Trainings for asylum officers in each MARRI Participant Asylum Departments. The aim was to demonstrate the entire interpreter-scheduling and remote interpretation interview-conducting process from an asylum officer's perspective. The training participants gained hands-on experience of using

the online Interpreter-Scheduling Platform and Skype for Business for conducting remote asylum interviews.

## **Regional Platform for Non-Personal Data Exchange in the Western Balkans (WB - MIDEX)**

Official, comprehensive and compatible statistics on regular and irregular mixed migration and international protection in the Western Balkans have been identified as a key challenge by the national administrations and the EU. To address this challenge, IOM developed the WB - MIDEX Platform which allows the six MARRI Participants to easily exchange migration data in a format compatible with relevant EU regulations and standards. The Platform is based on a validated regional migration data template, which mirrors the templates used by EU Member States to report migration statistics to Eurostat. Once operational, the MIDEX Platform will be owned by MARRI Participants and hosted by MARRI RC.

The MIDEX Platform has been finalized and validated by MARRI Participant administrations at a workshop in April 2019. The official data exchange is expected to start in 2020, with sharing of monthly and quarterly statistics. The first comprehensive data exchange, however, will be completed by the end of 2020 with the sharing of annual data for 2019. With the support of IOM and other partners, MARRI RC is to develop the first regional analytical report based on the migration statistics exchanged through WB-MIDEX in the course of 2021. ■

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# What is “Readmission”?

by Christoph von Harsdorf

*The Encyclopedia Britannica does not contain the term “readmission”. Merriam-Webster mentions the term’s first known English use in 1647. The Oxford Latin Dictionary defines the verb “admittere” as follows: “grant, permit, let go, let in, admit, receive, urge on, put to a gallop”. The term “readmission” is worldwide mainly used for repeated hospitalization. The “Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program”, as an example, is a Medicare value-based purchasing programme improving healthcare for Americans by linking payment to the quality of hospital care and recidivisms. “Readmission” is also used for students who have voluntarily or involuntarily interrupted their academic education. In a readmitting process they would be granted readmission.*

## The EU and Readmission

Every year, between 400.000 and 500.000 foreign nationals are ordered to leave the EU because they have entered or they are staying irregularly. However, only less than 40 % of them are sent back to their home country or to the country from which they travelled to the EU. Ensuring the return of irregular migrants is in fact absolutely essential in order to enhance the credibility of policies in the field of international protection and legal migration. In the Migration context, Readmission is part of the common immigration and asylum policy. The foundations for a common immigration and asylum policy were laid down in the Schengen Acquis strengthened by the Treaty of Amsterdam, which gave the European Community powers to negotiate a common immigration and asylum policy. At the Tampere European Council in October 1999, Heads of State and Government called for a common EU policy on asylum and

immigration. At the European Council in Laeken on 14 and 15 December 2001 the Justice and Home Affairs Council was requested to draw up an action plan on the basis of the Commission Communication of 15 November 2001 on a common policy on immigration and asylum, adopted on 28 February 2002. As a result, the Commission published a Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on a **Community Return Policy on Illegal Residents** that highlights in particular the need to step up operational cooperation and the necessity to adopt common legal standards to facilitate the work of national authorities handling return operations and to ensure full mutual recognition of removal decisions. It suggests the elaboration of an integrated programme covering the different stages of the return process. Closer cooperation with third countries is a *sine qua non* for the success of a Community return policy on illegal residents. In July 2004, as requested by the Brussels European Council

of October 2004, the Commission presented a report to the Council and European Parliament in which it outlined the future priorities for a successful development of a common readmission policy. In response to this communication, in November 2004, the Council adopted a resolution on the matter. Following the invitation made by the 2003 European Council in Thessaloniki and as a result of initial reflections on the creation of a Community Return Programme, the Commission put forward the idea of launching preparatory actions for 2005 and 2006 for integrated return programmes. In June 2004, the Council adopted conclusions on the elements for establishing preparatory actions for a **financial instrument for return management**. Such actions facilitate operational co-operation between Member States and also promote integrated return plans, which are conducive to effective and sustainable returns.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-05-351\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-05-351_en.htm)



## EU Readmission Agreements (EURAs)

EURAs are based on reciprocal obligations and are concluded between the European Union and non-EU countries to facilitate the return of people residing irregularly in a country to their country of origin or to a country of transit. They operate alongside but take precedence over bilateral readmission agreements between individual EU Member States and non-EU countries. They are negotiated in a broader context where partner countries are usually granted visa facilitation and other incentives such as financial support for implementing the agreement or special trade conditions in exchange for readmitting people residing without authorisation in the EU.

The **legal basis for concluding EURAs** is Article 79(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). They are negotiated with the partner country on the basis of a negotiating mandate granted by the Council to the Commission. They are then concluded after the European Parliament has given its consent. Once they come into force, their effectiveness can vary significantly from country to country. In the past, the European Parliament (EP) has raised concerns that EURAs do not provide sufficient human-rights safeguards to ensure the protection of returnees at all times.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_BRI\(2015\)554212](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2015)554212)



## EU Return Directive's main content **DIRECTIVE 2008/115/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 December 2008** on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third- country nationals<sup>1</sup> says:

- Member States should ensure that the ending of illegal stay of third-country nationals is carried out through a fair and transparent procedure. According to general principles of EU law, decisions taken under this Directive should be adopted on a case-by-case basis and based on objective criteria, implying that consideration should go beyond the mere fact of an illegal stay;
- International cooperation with countries of origin at all stages of the return process is a prerequisite to achieving sustainable return;
- It is recognised that it is legitimate for Member States to return illegally staying third-country nationals, provided that fair and efficient asylum systems are in place which fully respect the principle of non-refoulement;
- A third-country national who has applied for asylum in a Member State should not be regarded as staying illegally on the territory of that Member State until a negative decision on the application, or a decision ending his or her right of stay as asylum seeker has entered into force;
- Voluntary return should be preferred over forced return;
- In order to promote voluntary return, Member States should provide for enhanced return assistance and counselling and make best use of the relevant funding possibilities offered under the European Return Fund;
- A common minimum set of legal safeguards on decisions related to return should be established to guarantee effective protection of the interests of the individuals concerned. The necessary legal aid should be made available to those who lack sufficient resources;
- The situation of third-country nationals who are staying illegally but who cannot yet be removed should be addressed. Their basic conditions of subsistence should be defined;
- The use of coercive measures should be expressly subject to the principles of proportionality and effectiveness with regard to the means used and objectives pursued;
- The effects of national return measures should be given a European dimension by establishing an entry ban prohibiting entry into and stay on the territory of all the Member States;
- The use of detention for the purpose of removal should be limited and subject to the principle of proportionality with regard to the means used and objectives pursued. Detention is justified only to prepare the return or carry out the removal process and if the application of less coercive measures would not be sufficient;
- Detention should, as a rule, take place in specialised detention facilities;
- The requirement for a fair and transparent procedure for decisions on the return of irregular migrants;
- An obligation on EU States to either return irregular migrants or to grant them legal status, thus avoiding situations of "legal limbo";

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cife.eu/Ressources/FCK/files/publications/policy%20paper/CIFE\\_PP28\\_Readmission\\_agreements\\_of\\_the\\_EU\\_Wild\\_January\\_2016.pdf](https://www.cife.eu/Ressources/FCK/files/publications/policy%20paper/CIFE_PP28_Readmission_agreements_of_the_EU_Wild_January_2016.pdf)

- Promotion of the principle of voluntary departure by establishing a general rule that a “period for voluntary departure” should normally be granted;
- Provision for persons residing irregularly of a minimum set of basic rights pending their removal, including access to basic health care and education for children;
- A limit on the use of coercive measures in connection with the removal of persons, and ensuring that such measures are not excessive or disproportionate;
- Providing for an entry ban valid throughout the EU for migrants returned by an EU State;
- Limiting the use of detention, binding it to the principle of proportionality and establishing minimum safeguards for detainees.

### **Operational cooperation between EU-States**

The Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX) plays a key role in operational cooperation on return. One of its tasks is to provide assistance for joint return operations and identify best practices on the acquisition of travel documents and removal of non-EU nationals irregularly present in the territory of an EU State.

### **Cooperation with non-EU countries on readmission of irregular migrants**

As of 20 March 2019, the following EURAs are concluded<sup>1</sup>: Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation, The Republic of Albania on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Russian Federation on readmission, Ukraine on the readmission of persons, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (today North Macedonia) on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Montenegro on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Serbia on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Moldova on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Democratic Republic of Georgia on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Azerbaijan on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Turkey on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, The Republic of Cape Verde on the readmission of persons residing without authorization.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy/return-readmission\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy/return-readmission_en)

### **EU – Renewed Action Plan 2017<sup>1</sup>**

The overall impact on the return track record across the European Union remained limited, showing that more resolute action is needed to bring measurable results in returning irregular migrants. Return rates at European Union level have not improved. While the total return rate from 2014 to 2015 increased from 41.8% to 42.5%, the rate of effective returns to third countries dropped from 36.6% to 36.4%. Moreover, if return to Western Balkans is disregarded, the European Union return rate drops further to 27%. A **Migration Partnership Framework** was launched in June 2016 and a third progress report on this Framework adopted. An effective return policy starts within the European Union. In the European Council Conclusions of 20-21 October 2016, Member States called for reinforcing national administrative processes for returns. Moreover, the Malta Declaration of Heads of State or Government of 3 February 2017 highlighted the need to start a critical review of EU return policy with an objective analysis of how the legal, operational, financial and practical tools available at Union and national level are applied. The EU wants to maximise the use of European Union financial or operational instruments, to create a collaborative space for exchanging information and for improving cooperation and coordination among Member States' and EU competent bodies.

### **EU Renewed Action Plan – 9 Ways Forward**

This Renewed Action Plan on Return with additional focused actions to be implemented in parallel to the ongoing actions launched under the existing Action Plan is addressed to Member States, European Union Institutions and Agencies to substantially improve return rates through The Return Directive, Addressing abuses of the Asylum procedures, Enhanced sharing of information to enforce returns, Enhancing return and supporting reintegration, A better return cooperation, The Integrated Return Management Application (IRMA), The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, European Union funding for return and readmission, Overcoming the challenges of readmission.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170302\\_a\\_more\\_effective\\_return\\_policy\\_in\\_the\\_european\\_union\\_-\\_a\\_renewed\\_action\\_plan\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170302_a_more_effective_return_policy_in_the_european_union_-_a_renewed_action_plan_en.pdf)





*"Regional Meeting on Readmission in the Western Balkans" on 14 May 2019 in Sarajevo.*

## MARRI and Readmission

### 1. MARRI Readmission Network recommended

The need for this network was highlighted at the Round Table "Prevention of Irregular Migration in the Region and Voluntary Return of Irregular Migrants", which was organized and hosted by MARRI Regional Centre, on 17-18 December 2013, in Skopje, in the framework of the Project between the Swiss Government and Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ministry of Security/Services for Foreigners. Members of the Readmission Network should be high level officials/experts of responsible national institutions of MARRI Participants.



### 2. MARRI Readmission Network as part of the MARRI Strategy 2014-2016

The establishment of the MARRI Network for Cooperation on Readmission of Irregular Migrants (in further text: Readmission Network) is based on the MARRI Strategy 2014-2016.

#### "... 4.3.5 Readmission agreements

The suppression of irregular migration is closely linked, among others, with the proper implementation of readmission agreements and proper reintegration of returnees. MARRI will continue contributing to capacity building of the national institutions responsible for implementation of readmission agreements in order to develop an effective readmission policy with respect to the fundamental rights. A particular importance will be devoted to the implementation of readmission agreements and to the conclusion of new agreements and implementation protocols. The issue of the readmission of third country nationals will be addressed. The Readmission Network has the following aims: Strengthening regional and international cooperation to preventing and detecting illegal migration in the MARRI States, Standardization of measures on MARRI States level in determining the personal identity of illegal migrants, Establishing of cooperation among MARRI States regarding organizing return of illegal migrants to the country of origins, Considering the possibility for the countries of the region for joint Action in the process of readmission and exchange of data. The MARRI Readmission Network will have its plan of activities and is open for cooperation with other states and international organizations."

### 3. MARRI Strategy 2018-2020

#### 3. Protection of vulnerable migrants and combating of trafficking in human beings are strengthened. The rights of victims of human trafficking and the protection of migrants are guaranteed.

The rights of migrants, including refugees, returnees, victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable persons (e.g. unaccompanied children) are protected. Tangible results in this area directly reflect progress in the EU accession processes of MARRI Participants. The synergy of activities is to be achieved with key cooperation partners, where applicable: UNHCR, IOM, EU (EASO and FRONTEX).

#### 5. International and European support contributing to improved capacities for EU accession is strengthened. Intensified international ties allow improvement of MARRI's performance in providing support to Participants in the EU accession process, specifically in view of the Acquis' Chapter 24: "Justice, Freedom and Security", and for upgrading donor support to MARRI.

MARRI cannot successfully deal with migration issues on its own. Therefore, it needs partners and external support. The full complementarity, coordination and synergy of activities is to be achieved with main cooperation partners: EU (EASO and FRONTEX), global actors (IOM, UNHCR, ILO, OSCE) and relevant regional partners. The MARRI Participants' common ambition to become EU members is supported through harmonisation of legislation and practices with the EU Acquis. To this aim, MARRI needs to establish strategic cooperation and regular dialogue with

### Priorities of MARRI

#### PRESIDENCY-IN-OFFICE, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (June 2018 – June 2019)

Bosnia and Herzegovina took over the Presidency-in-Office of MARRI from the Republic of Albania at the MARRI Ministerial Regional Forum held on 12th June 2018 in Tirana. Bosnia and Herzegovina recommended the following priorities during the period of the Presidency-in-Office ... (inter alia) "Successful implementation of the readmission agreements among MARRI Participants; Strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Western Balkan migration and asylum authorities; Establishment of list of secure third countries..."

**MARRI / GIZ Workshops Tirana, Pristina, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje** have delivered suggestions for discussions which products MARRI RC could create in the area of "Readmission". ■

### Joint IOM - MARRI Readmission Meeting, May 2019

IOM and MARRI are engaging in a strategic partnership which provides targeted interventions aimed at strengthening the cooperation also on Readmission. Additionally, at the Regional Joint Meeting of MARRI Networks held in Budva on 8 November 2018, MARRI's Participants have called for further harmonization, strengthening and reinforcement of readmission in the region. The six Participants asked for support,

in alignment with the relevant EU Acquis on readmission, for increased cooperation with EU Member States and for establishing effective readmission cooperation channels with relevant countries of origin. In light of the above, IOM and MARRI have jointly organised a "Regional Meeting on Readmission in the Western Balkans" on 14 May 2019 in Sarajevo.



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