

MARRI

Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative



PODGORICA DECLARATION

MARRI Regional Forum 2 July 2021

WE, the Ministers of Interior/Security and High Representatives responsible for matters of migration and asylum in the format of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI);

Inspired by the principles laid down in the founding documents of MARRI, the Prishtina Declaration 2020 and the Priorities of the concluded Montenegro Presidency-in-Office;

United by the principles of regional ownership and responsibility, whilst remaining committed to the European values and the ultimate goal of EU integration;

Recognising migration for security, development and prosperity as a human phenomenon accompanying mankind from the onset;

Determined to balance the interests of local citizens with the interests of migrants;

Decided to reduce irregular migration that endangers human rights and integrity, individual and public security, stability, welfare systems and environment;

Enabling, securing and furthering modalities for safe, orderly and regular migration;

Thanking the Montenegro Presidency-in-Office and previous Presidencies-in-Office and the Regional Centre (RC) Director for their farsseeing, thought and resourceful, pro-active and prudent furtherance and guidance of the Legal Framework Reform;

Appreciating the extensive, time-consuming and accurate work of all relevant experts from the Participants' Administrations (Delegations) involved in the Legal Framework Reform and the prudent guidance by the RC Director, the



rational, reform-oriented, consensus-bound negotiations of the Legal Framework Reform Working Group;

Esteeming the juridically excellent drafts and highly professional and patient moderating of the Integrated German Expert in the process of discussing and negotiating the Legal Framework;

Noting that the MARRI STRATEGY 2021 – 2024 was drafted by the Integrated German Expert and submitted by the RC Director to the Regional Committee and expecting its synchronization with the finalization process regarding the Legal Framework Reform;

Thanking the RC Director for his deep and consistent commitment to the RC over the last three years, promoting and advancing the Legal Framework Reform, initiating and implementing many relevant and important organizational reforms, rebuilding and restoring a high team spirit, applying a respectful, gender-sensitive behaviour and extending efficient collaboration with stakeholders,

Honouring the hard work of the Montenegro Presidency-in-Office, of the MARRI Regional Committee and of the RC Director to achieve outstanding results described hereunder:

- Having agreed with the German Government to continue with the secondment of the Integrated German Expert;
- Having agreed with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to continue providing support and seconding two experts to the RC;
- Having started a Digital Agenda Working Group under the RC Director
- Having elaborated a Concept for the RC becoming a Knowledge Hub;
- Having started attempts to make the RC a Hub for coordination of regional trainings in the area of Asylum;
- Progressing the successful implementation of the Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Western Balkans (PaCT) Project;
- Upgrading skills of RC Personnel through a comprehensive capacity-building funded by the German Government under the two GIZ Projects PaCT and Programme on Migration and Diaspora (PMD);
- Developing a genuine MARRI Gender concept, under the leadership of the RC Director and the Special Advisor on Gender and Equality;

The logo for MARRI (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative) features the word "MARRI" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative



- Running Remote Regional Interpretation Service (RRIS) and optimizing the Protocol;
- Administering a platform for migration experts;
- Working on making the Regional Platform for Migration Data Exchange in the Western Balkans (WB-MIDEX) platform fully operational;
- Delivering high quality communication services and products making MARRI and the work of the RC more visible, well known and recognised both in the region and beyond;
- Having increased transparency and accountability in financial matters and having professionalized the RC Finance, i.e., Budgeting, Accounting, Balancing.

We have gathered at the regular Annual Meeting of the MARRI Regional Forum and confirm the following:

- We welcome the efforts of all MARRI Participants and the MARRI RC in the MARRI Legal Framework Reform process and thus acknowledge a significant progress made by the MARRI Legal Framework Reform Working Group.
- We invite the MARRI Legal Framework Reform Working Group to continue with activities and meetings in orderly and timely manner so their work on the MARRI Basic Documents could be finalized during the North Macedonia Presidency-in-Office.
- We authorize MARRI RC and our Administrations to collaborate under the newly created MIDEX platform, making MARRI a Knowledge Hub and source of information and analyses;
- We approve the RC Director's Report June 2020 – June 2021;
- We adopt the RC Director's Financial Report for 2020, as audited;
- We agree that the next Presidency-in-Office will be with North Macedonia;
- We approve the Priorities and the Annual Plan of Activities of the Presidency-in-Office of North Macedonia;
- We request the RC refer to the European Commission for MARRI to be engaged into Migration relevant (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) programming and become direct implementing partner;

MARRI

Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative



- We appreciate the offer of the European Union (EU) Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Project Implementer (under the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior) to realise at least three Awareness Raising Events in MARRI Participants;
- We are satisfied that five Participants have seconded highly qualified Representatives to the RC, and we appeal to MARRI founding Participant Albania to fill the vacancy of a seconded Representative.
- Regarding RC Director: We have agreed that continuation and excellent functionality and work of the RC is essential. Being aware about newest developments related to the leadership posts in Regional Initiatives and Organisations of the Western Balkans, we decided to postpone the decision on election of an RC Director and to extend the tenure of the current Director until a new Director is elected and appointed, which shall be reviewed in six months' time at the next Committee Meeting in December 2021.

In line with the afore-mentioned

We thank the European Commission, IOM, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), FRONTEX and the German Government and its Agency Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) as well as other Governments for their most valuable support;

We encourage the MARRI Participants to benefit from the Protocol on the Joint Pool of Interpreters in the Area of Migration and Asylum;

We convey our full confidence to the Presidency-in-Office of North Macedonia in further active and energetic development of MARRI by achieving substantive and tangible results;

We advocate the spirit of mutual trust and cooperation, as a binding and connecting element of MARRI;

We assure our fullest support to the Presidency-in-Office and the RC Director in consolidating all organizational reforms for increasing fact-based knowledge and skills in the Region.