Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans

As part of the project Capacity Building, Information and Awareness Raising towards Promoting Orderly Migration in the Western Balkans, IOM in partnership with ILO and local National Employment Centres, is operating 22 Migrant Service Centres (MSCs) in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under UNSCR No 1244, Montenegro and Serbia.

The MSCs provide migrants and potential migrants with individualized assistance and counselling on the reality and risks of irregular migration and possibilities and procedures for decent work opportunities in the country and/or for legal emigration. The MSCs also provide referral services to relevant local institutions for individual skills development in view of improving employment potential both at home and abroad.

IOM collects a variety of important statistics about visitors to the MSCs. The total number of clients during the first six months of their operation (June-Nov 2008) was 2,187, with the total number of visits totalling 2,224. The majority of the clients were nationals, with a small proportion of queries coming from immigrants to these countries (6.9%). The highest number of visitors was registered in Kosovo under UNSCR No 1244, with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania also registering a high number of visitors. 73% of clients were men, on average in their early thirties. Majority of clients came from urban areas.

Unemployed constituted a large proportion of MSC clients (60%). A multitude of employment sectors was represented. Among those who migrated before, Germany, Italy, Greece and Switzerland were the most popular destination countries. The majority of the clients were interested in labour migration, declaring Canada, Italy, Germany, USA and the EU in general their preferred destinations.

The project is funded by the European Commission AENEAS 2006 programme as well as the Swiss Federal Office for Migration, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the Government of Liechtenstein and the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs/Italian Cooperation.

For more information and full statistical reports refer to the project’s website at www.migrantservicecentres.org

See also page 5 for Migrant Service Centre in Sarajevo
IOM Director General Discusses IOM Cooperation with the Czech Presidency of the European Union

On 22 January, IOM Director General, Ambassador William L. Swing, visited Prague, the Czech Republic, to meet with the Czech Government in the context of the Czech Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2009. The Director General met the Minister of Interior, Mr Ivan Langer, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Tomas Pojar and the MOI Director of Asylum and Migration Policy Department, Mr Tomas Haisman. IOM’s possible contribution to the Czech Presidency and the future IOM strategy were discussed.

Minister Langer thanked IOM for the excellent cooperation and called for its further enhancement within the IOM-related Presidency priorities such as Modern Technologies and Information Networks, From Migration Dialogues to Migration Partnerships and Protection of Children’s Rights, which the Director General warmly welcomed.

The key priorities of the Czech Presidency of the EU are the three ‘E’s’: Economy, Energy and Europe in the World and the Presidency motto is ‘Europe without barriers’. Key migration-related priorities of the Presidency are: legal migration and the removal of transition periods applied to the free movement of workers within the EU; combating illegal migration (with the objective of finalizing negotiations on a Directive providing for sanctions against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals); building a Common European Asylum System; fostering the integration of foreigners and supporting their socio-economic potential, multicultural dialogue and effective cooperation with third countries. In April 2009, the Presidency will hold a ministerial conference on Building Migration Partnerships, which will bring together the EU Member States as well as the Schengen Area countries along with the regions neighbouring with the EU to the east and south-east.

Human Traffic Has No Limits – Mobile Exhibition in Poland

A mobile photo exhibition raising awareness on the dangers of human trafficking was organised by IOM at the railway stations of a number of major Polish cities: Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Katowice, Kraków, Łódź and Gdańsk between October and December 2008. The exhibition was composed of 18 posters telling victims’ stories: children, teenagers, adults, women and men from variety of backgrounds who were trafficked for a variety of reasons.

Information about trafficking in human beings in Poland such as statistical data, legal context was also included as well as ways to prevent and address trafficking such as a hotline number for victims. The exhibition was shown for one week in each location and is currently hosted by the Police Academy in Katowice.

To wider the audience and increase the impact a website [Stop Trafficking in Persons](http://www.stophandelludzmi.pl) was also created, including an official exhibition blog [http://stophandlowiludzmi.blogspot.com/](http://stophandlowiludzmi.blogspot.com/).

In 2007, 1021 people were recognized in Poland as victims of trafficking by the prosecutor’s office. The real figure of victims is believed to be significantly higher.

The exhibition is supported by the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration and the Embassy of the United States in Poland.
Posters Displayed at the Mobile Exhibition on Trafficking in Poland

Pozbawiane są nie tylko dokumentów i rzeczy osobistych, ale także swojej tożsamości.

Zapotrzebowanie na tanią siłę roboczą i usługi seksualne z jednej strony, bieda, brak perspektyw i niski poziom opieki społecznej z drugiej, są głównymi przyczynami handlu ludźmi.

Osiary handlu ludźmi są torturowane, gwałcone, zamykane, głodzone, poniżane, straszone zemstą na bliskich.

Handel ludźmi nie zna granic smutku
Solutions for Sustainable Resettlement of Redundant Military Personnel in Bosnia & Herzegovina

The NATO/Partnership for Peace Trust Fund (NTF) was established by NATO Member States and other donors to support the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in providing reintegration assistance to personnel made redundant as a result of defence reforms. These defence reforms, which decreased the number of troops and integrated the armies previously divided along ethnic lines into a single state-level force, resulted in large numbers of personnel who were no longer needed. The NTF Programme aims to facilitate the transition of redundant personnel into civilian and economic life as well as to contribute to maintaining peace and security and fostering economic recovery in BiH.

As the implementing agency of the NTF Programme, IOM employs the Information, Counselling and Referral Service (ICRS) mechanism to support the reintegration of some 3,000 beneficiaries living across the country. Programme teams work from three field offices, housed in military barracks, providing individualized attention to NTF beneficiaries to identify and support economic projects that best reflect their skills, abilities and aspirations. At present, the NTF Programme has developed income-generating projects for 2,109 persons in the areas of agriculture, business, job-oriented education and employment.

Two-thirds of NTF beneficiaries opted for assistance with their agricultural activities. After demobilization in 2007, Dragoljub and Dragoljub invested their severance pay to start a joint venture to raise chickens to produce meat and eggs. NTF helped their agricultural business through the purchase of 2,500 egg-laying hens and 3,000 day-old chicks. Since receiving the assistance, Dragoljub and Dragoljub report that they are able to produce nearly twice as many eggs and ten times more chicken meat. They can rely on a steady demand for their products, which are sold to nearby restaurants and hotels, as well as at a popular weekend farmer’s market near the border with Croatia.

Over one-quarter of the Programme’s ongoing projects support new or expanding businesses. After his discharge in 2004, Bogoljub started a catering business with his wife and began selling lunches to some 2,000 employees of two nearby companies. Although there was additional demand from other companies, Bogoljub could not increase production without purchasing new cooking equipment. Through the purchase of a deep fryer, commercial refrigerator and other equipment, NTF helped this beneficiary expand his business by 40%. As the business revenues grow, Bogoljub is considering employing additional staff to further expand production.

Some beneficiaries opt for NTF assistance in pursuing education or vocational training. Helena is thirty years old. After losing her Ministry of Defence job in 2004, Helena completed a Bachelor’s degree in Economics. With financial support from the NTF Programme, Helena is now pursuing a Master’s degree in business administration. She is enrolled as an associate student, which allows her to keep a temporary job as a librarian at the National Library to support herself and her family.

About six percent of NTF beneficiaries have obtained help from the Programme to find full-time and long-term employment. Sedad, who lives with his wife and four children, is an experienced car mechanic and driver. Through its “employment with tools” strategy, the NTF Programme provided Sedad with car mechanic tools enabling Sedad to get a full-time job (with all social benefits) maintaining and repairing a fleet of vehicles for a transportation company.

Starting in September 2008, the NTF Programme began giving small sustainability grants to local NGOs and universities to offer business training and agricultural extension services to NTF beneficiaries. To date, the Programme has entered into seven sub-grants, including one with Women-to-Women International (Bosnia Branch) to provide business training with a special focus on the concerns of female entrepreneurs; over 300 beneficiaries have participated in these trainings.
IOM Working with Youth in Serbia

Serbian Minister of Youth and Sports, Snezana Samardžić-Marković, and Chief of IOM Mission in Serbia, Gregoire Goodstein, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the project “Strengthening Serbia’s Human Capital through the Active Involvement of Young People” on 2 December, 2008.

The project aims to ensure socio-cultural integration and active participation of young people in Serbia. The project will actively support the efforts of the Serbian Ministry of Youth and Sports to establish regional and local Youth Offices in close cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and will design and provide specific programs for youth aimed at their socio-cultural cohesion over the next three years.

To date, seven Youth Offices were opened and made operational and are in urgent need of resources and capacity building. Local youth consultants will strengthen the capacities of young people working in the Youth offices and through the skill development trainings, coaching and mentoring during the project’s implementation.

Minister Samardžić-Marković expressed confidence that the project will increase the engagement of youth in social activities. The long-term goal is to prevent the brain drain and irregular migration, she added.

Italian Ambassador to Serbia, H.E. Alessandro Merola, said that the young can realize their chances in society only through participation in public life in the areas where they live. Head of the Local Technical Unit of the Italian Cooperation Office, Anna Zambrano, added that the special attention should be paid to the promotion of the socio-cultural integration of young people within their local communities, specifically in the multi-ethnic municipalities.

IOM Chief of Mission, Gregoire Goodstein, stressed that the youth offices are important tools for empowering young people and for creating favorable conditions for them to develop their skills and to play an active role in Serbian society. In its effort to address the challenges of migration, IOM is also concerned with youth migration, both legal and irregular, which Serbia experienced over the past 15 years.

The project is supported financially by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

IOM Migrant Service Centre Provides Services for Jobseekers in Bosnia & Herzegovina

On 17 December 2008, IOM Sarajevo participated in the second Employment Fair organized by the Sarajevo Canton Employment Service.

According to the Federal Employment Service, around 40 different companies participated and a couple of thousands job seekers visited the fair. Participants of the Employment Fair were welcomed by Miralem Saric, Director of Federal Employment Service; Huso Saric, Director of the Agency of Labour and Employment BiH; Minister Emina Dubravic from the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy, Displaced Persons and Refugees of Canton Sarajevo; as well as by Vahid Muharemovic, Director of Sarajevo Canton Employment Service.

IOM Sarajevo, together with the Federal Employment Service, participated in the fair to promote regular migration through provision of information, advice and referral services in the framework of recently-established Migrant Service Centres (MSCs).

IOM Sarajevo shared a stand with the Federal Employment Service, where information and promotional material about MSC services was offered. As the job seekers were the main target of the Job Fair, many expressed interest in receiving information about available job offers abroad.

Most of the visitors inquired about their chances of finding a job in specific countries or how difficult it would be to find a job in their own profession. Student visitors inquired about the degree validation process and chances of finding work with limited work experience.
A New Medical Clinic to Assist Four Thousand People in Varosh/Varoš in Kosovo

“I’m more confident for the future of people of this village because now we have a secured medical care” says Xhevdet Derguti, an elderly man standing in front of the building of the newly opened clinic in Varosh/Varoš in Ferizaj/Urosevac Municipality, Kosovo. “I just came here to see it. It’s beautiful; we have never had proper medical care here,” smiles Xhevdet.

The residents of this village and its surrounding area, which consists of almost 4000 inhabitants, used to travel to Ferizaj/Urosevac town, which is 10 km away. “Sometimes a small action makes a big impact and this is exactly what the people of this village say about this extraordinary opportunity created for them, having a medical facility in their own village,” says a pleased Dr Shemsie Selmani, who is the Head of the Medical Unit in the clinic.

During the IOM visit to the clinic, a little girl named Leonora has just finished her examination by Dr Selmani. “I catch a cold and the doctor will prescribe for me a sweet pink syrup and I will not cough anymore,” says little Leonora.

“The clinic is especially important for the children, elderly, chronically ill persons because it provides the necessary basic treatment that is crucial for the health of these categories of the population” says Dr Shemsie. The clinic currently employs a doctor, two nurses and the cleaner and provides basic medical care. However, there are some important medical services that are still not available. Dr Selmani needs a medical laboratory that would cover all primary medical needs of the population.

According to Paulo Marques, IOM Project Manager, the public health sector in Kosovo is in urgent need of improvement on all levels, especially in primary medical services in isolated areas, therefore, the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the IOM, KPC and local governance identified the need for a medical clinic in this village.

The new clinic was made possible through the IOM Trust Fund project for the Kosovo Protection Corps, and was financially supported by the UK Government through their Embassy in Pristina/Prishtina. In its nearly continuous implementation since July 2000, IOM’s Trust Fund Programme productively engages members of the Kosovo Protection Corps in civic and humanitarian work projects, which contribute to the reconstruction of Kosovo’s infrastructure and communities. Through these efforts, the KPC fulfils one of the central responsibilities of its civil protection mandate. Furthermore, since many of the projects have benefited ethnically mixed and ethnic minority communities in identified return areas, the KPC’s participation in the Trust Fund has contributed to increasing tolerance among the majority community towards members of ethnic minority groups, thereby bolstering the growth of an environment conducive to minority returns.

For more information about IOM activities in the region go to [http://www.iom.hu](http://www.iom.hu)
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