



RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation



Irregular Migration and Its Effects on Security

06-08 June 2012

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EXTERNAL REPORT

Abstract

Irregular migration is a highly complex and multifaceted phenomenon. In order to better understand it and provide assistance to the SEE countries in managing irregular migration, RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation and the Migration Asylum Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) organized a Round Table on “Irregular Migration and its Effects on Security”.

Background

In order to successfully prevent and combat irregular migration, organized crime and their effects on security, many different measures and courses of action must be developed and implemented, such as improvements with regard to the following: legislation, co-operation with third countries, particularly the cooperation among neighbouring countries situated along the irregular migration “routes”, capacity building, exchange of data/statistics, visa policy, integrated border management, travel and identity document security, establishment of a coherent common policy on readmission and return, integration, rules on stay and residence, and permanent education and training systems.

In this regard, and with the aim to foster dialogue and cooperation on security matters in South East Europe (SEE), the subject matter of the Round Table on Irregular Migration and Its Effects on Security was recognized both by MARRI and RACVIAC as a platform for strengthening the confidence and cooperation in the SEE region by building a more open, transparent and stable environment in the region, as well as by encouraging the exchange of information, views and ideas.

Purpose

The purpose of this Round Table was to discuss the legislative aspects, standards, procedures, lessons learned and the main challenges faced by the EU, the countries in the region and international/regional organizations, in their efforts to manage/tackle the complex and diverse phenomena of irregular migration, human trafficking, document security, crime and terrorism, and their effects on security.

Acknowledgements

RACVIAC would like to thank the Migration Asylum Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) for all the support and assistance in co-organizing the Round Table.

Venue and participation

The Round Table was held in the town of Ohrid (MK) at the Hotel Granit from 06 to 08 June 2012. The event gathered a total of 23 participants from RACVIAC MAG / MARRI member countries (officials at the decision-making level and experts representing relevant institutions dealing with the activity subject matter).



Irregular Migration and It's Effects on Security
06-08 June, Ohrid, (MK)

Group photo

The Agenda

The official part of the Round Table started with the welcoming addresses of H.E. Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski, RACVIAC Director, who emphasized that leaving apart the traditional military approach about international security issues resulted in identifying new non-traditional security threats. He pointed out that international migration had become one of those threats in the recent times, mostly due to the unprecedented scale of this phenomenon. All European countries faced the challenges resulting from the migratory movements, although the scale, patterns and characteristics of migration flows varied significantly across the continent. The countries of the European continent are affected by a multitude of challenges and opportunities in the area of migration and its effects on security. To manage mobility in a secure environment, the countries need to continue with their prioritized dialogue and cooperation in the EU, in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond. Mr Todorčevski spoke about the current flows of immigrants from different countries and their pressure on the borders of transiting and destinations countries. He stressed that illegal migrations posed numerous security questions and risks.



From left to right: Dr Trpe Stojanovski, MARRI Director, Ms Barbora Zamrska, EU Delegation, and Amb Nikola Todorčevski, RACVIAC Director

On behalf of the European delegation, Ms Barbora Zamrska, Political, Justice and Home Affairs, EU Delegation in Skopje, expressed in her welcoming address gratitude to RACVIAC and MARRI for their kind invitation to the event. She explained that the management of migration flows was a priority topic on the EU agenda, while the prevention of and fight against irregular migration was in the focus of the European Union. Thus, the Council of Europe adopted the new Global Approach to Migration and Mobility in May 2012. Ms Zamrska also pointed out that the EU recognized the Western Balkan (WB) countries as

priority partners and the WB region as one of the main transit routes of irregular migrants towards the EU. She mentioned four main risks identified with regard to irregular migration flows through the region: large secondary movements from Greece through the WB, the risk of large and sustained misuse of international protection system in the EU member states by nationals from the WB visa-exempt countries, the risk of abuse of international protection system in the WB to avoid detention and return, and the risk of irregular migration from the East through the WB to the EU.

Mr Trpe Stojanovski, Ph.D., MARRI Regional Centre Director, welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of the regional cooperation. The flows of incoming immigrants over the Western Balkans “bridge” open possibilities for smuggling drugs, arms, and human beings. Director Stojanovski particularly highlighted the scope of activities and priorities, networks and projects of MARRI. Talking about the projects, he informed the participants about the joint comprehensive approach in building co-operation between MARRI and Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA) member states border police on international airport border crossing points, as well as about the Migration and Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB) project conducted by the International Organization for Migration and MARRI and dedicated to regular (working) migration.

The Round Table continued with the address by Mr Miroslav Papa from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, who focused on the current international and regional efforts towards refugees and internally displaced persons. He highlighted the Regional Housing Programme and joint efforts towards closing a protracted displacement chapter. Mr Papa informed the participants that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia - collectively referred to as Partner Countries – had launched, with the support of the international community, a regional initiative aimed at ensuring voluntary return and reintegration or local integration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Mr Papa added that Partner Countries had developed a Regional Housing Programme with the aim to provide housing solutions to 27,000 households or 74,000 individuals with a total investment of €584 million. Moreover, this

initiative would be beneficial not only for the refugees and IDPs displaced during the conflicts, but also for the region as a whole through fostering good neighbourly relations and providing for greater security and stability in the region.



From left to right: Mr Miroslav Papa, MFAEI (HR), and Mr Loris Kozlevac, Mol (HR)

The following speaker was Mr Dragos Neagu, SELEC representative who covered the topic of regionally integrated approach for successfully preventing and combating illegal migration. Mr Neagu offered elaborate information about the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center - SELEC from Bucharest, Romania. He described its foundation, strategic partners, advantages, and operational performance. He also mentioned SELEC working areas covered through 8 specialized Task Forces focused on: drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings (THB) and illegal migration, smuggling and customs frauds, stolen vehicles, financial and computer crime, terrorism, container security, and environment and nature related crimes. In continuation, he informed the participants about SELEC's analytical capacities, statistical data, a special operation "Undercover Police Officer", operation "Satar", other recent joint investigations, main routes of illegal migration in Europe, trends in migrant smuggling, risks of illegal migration and recommendations for improved combating of illegal migration.

On behalf of MARRI Regional Centre, Mr Toni Jakimovski delivered a presentation on MARRI activities in the area of irregular migration. Mr Jakimovski also highlighted the MARRI Strategy & Action Plan 2011-2013, and mentioned the following MARRI networks: Irregular Migration and Border Management Network for Cooperation, Asylum Network for Cooperation and THB Network for Cooperation. In the part of his presentation dedicated to projects, he informed the participants about the following projects: "Establishing of Network for

Cooperation between BP on IA in MMS", "Joint Comprehensive Approach in Building Cooperation between MARRI and SEPCA MS BP on IA", Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB) and "Document Security in the Western Balkans". After each address/presentation the floor was open for questions, comments and discussions.

The second working day started with national presentations delivered by national representatives, as follows:

- Mr Kumrija Ylli, Chief of Sector for Return & Readmission, Department for Border and Migration, Police of the Republic of Albania , made an interesting presentation entitled "Irregular Migration and Its Effects on Security";
- Mr Loris Kozlevac, Head of Department for Illegal Migration, Border Police Directorate, Croatian Ministry of Interior, informed the participants about "Irregular Migration in the Republic of Croatia";
- Ms Lidija Velkoska, Advisor, Sector for Border Affairs and Migration, Ministry of Interior (MK), presented "National Legal Aspects of Irregular Migration in MK";
- Ms Edina Jusufović, Conunsellor, Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in MK, talked about "Irregular Migration Tendencies and Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina";
- Mr Goran Bošković, Senior Police Commissioner, Border Police Sector, Police Directorate of Montenegro presented "Irregular Migration and Threat to Security";
- Mr Miloš Zatezalo, Head of Department for Foreigners, Ministry of Interior, and Mr Zoran Marković, Head of Visa Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia, gave an insight into "Border Security and Criminality" and "Irregular Transiting Migration of non-EU Migrants from Greece trough the Western Balkans";
- Mr Akbas Halil, Police Chief, Turkish Police, delivered a presentation entitled "Irregular Migration into Turkey".



Working session

Following the presentations on respective national points of view, the floor was open for participants' questions, sharing information and lessons learned.

Closing remarks

After the comprehensive presentations and intensive discussions over the two working days, participants shared some common concluding remarks:

- The influence of irregular migration has expanded on the security of both transit countries and destination countries. Diversity of criminal activities, which accompany irregular migration, starting with illegal border crossing and criminal activities during transit or illegal stay and activities in the countries, should be considered in creating and developing national security policies;
- The Round Table presented an excellent opportunity for the representatives from international and regional organizations to discuss challenges they are facing in improving management of irregular migration and exchange view on its effects on security;
- Irregular migration seriously affects the achievements in the national visa and asylum policies, in the countries and the region alike. All countries of the region deal with the increased number of misuse of the issued visas based on false documents and false asylum seekers;
- Statistics on irregular migration show that the number of migrant flows from East to West as well as from South to North, and further to the EU has increased significantly;
- A key challenge in the management of irregular migration is to consider influences of external factors on domestic policies: factors beyond the control of state policy and migration policies implemented by the neighbouring countries or other countries in the region;
- This co-organized event underpins and promotes the importance of and the need for a common approach and synergy among the regional organizations in the SEE;
- The purpose and objectives of the Round Table were achieved.

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