

# IKAM

**RAISING AWARENESS AND BUILDING CAPACITY**  
*on migration in Afghanistan, Iraq and Western Balkan*

# Managing Mixed Migration Flows and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

*Good practices from the Western Balkans and Austria*

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The information and views set out in this study are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the funding partner and ICMPD.



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The goal of this report is to provide an overview of some of the good practices in managing mixed migration flows and preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings in the Western Balkans. The practices have been compiled in cooperation with key stakeholders, such as representatives of Western Balkan authorities, especially from North Macedonia and Serbia, but also Bosnia and Herzegovina and Austria, academic institutions, civil society organisations and various experts from the Western Balkan region. The list of practices outlined is not exhaustive and many other good practices could be identified in more extensive research.

The report has been prepared by Biljana Lubarovska, Protection Expert, with the expert advice of Pierre Cazenave, Anti-Trafficking Specialist at the ICMPD Anti-Trafficking Programme, as well as Melita Gruevska-Graham, Head of the ICMPD Anti-Trafficking Programme, with the support of the ICMPD Western Balkans and Turkey Regional Office (Admirela Ancion, IKAM Western Balkans Project Manager, Asmir Kedic and Manja Vitasovic, Project Officers, Enisa Musai, Project Assistant and Eva Kitzler, Portfolio Manager).

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This report is available in English, German, Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian, as well as Albanian and Macedonian, in the hope that it will be a useful guide for first responders in dealing with human trafficking and mixed migration flows.



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## ACRONYMS

BH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSW	Center for Social Work
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MYLA	Macedonian Young Lawyers Association
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OG	Open Gate/La Strada
PO	Prosecutors' Offices
RMT	Regional Monitoring Teams
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
WB	Western Balkans





## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

All but one of the definitions presented in this section come from the UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms.<sup>1</sup>

**Asylum:** The grant, by a State, of protection on its territory to persons outside their country of nationality or habitual residence, who are fleeing persecution or serious harm or for other reasons. Asylum encompasses a variety of elements, including protection against refoulement, permission to remain on the territory of the asylum country, humane standards of treatment and access to durable solutions.

**Country of transit:** A country through which a person or a group of persons travels, possibly involving temporary settlement, on the way to a given country of destination.

**Irregular movement:** Cross-border movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the countries of origin, transit and destination. The term is predominantly used from the perspective of host countries when referring to unauthorized entry and/or stay in the country.

**Mass influx:** A displacement situation which may, inter alia, have some or all of the following characteristics: (i) considerable numbers of people arriving over an international border; (ii) a rapid rate of arrival; (iii) inadequate absorption or response capacity in host States, particularly during an emergency; (iv) individual asylum procedures, where they exist, which are unable to deal with the assessment of such large numbers.

**Migrants in an irregular situation:** A migrant who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, expiry of a visa or stay permit, or failure to comply with an expulsion order, has no legal permission to stay in a host country.

**Migration management:** The management and implementation of the whole set of activities, primarily by States within national systems or through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, concerning all aspects of migration and the mainstreaming of migration considerations into public policies. The term refers to planned approaches to the implementation and operationalization of policy, legislative and administrative frameworks, developed by the institutions in charge of migration.

**Mixed movement (or mixed migration):** Refers to people on the move, travelling generally in an irregular manner, over the same routes and using the same means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and may include asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless people, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated children, and migrants, in an irregular situation. Mixed movements are often complex and can present challenges for all those involved.

**Mixed migration flow:** It can be defined as composed of migrants with a variety of protection needs and motivations. It could therefore include refugees, asylum applicants, migrants, trafficked people, smuggled migrants and unaccompanied children. These people's protection needs, status and motivations may change according to the stage in the migration journey in a country of origin, transit or destination, and may not necessarily align with the legal status they have in a country. Finally, the intended destination of people in mixed migration flows may change based on the opportunities available to them or the dangers in certain geographic areas. Therefore, all of the people travelling in mixed migration flows are referred to throughout this study as **people on the move**.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> The definition of the mixed migration flow comes from the 2019 ICMPD Study "The Strength to Carry On" available [here](#)



**National Referral Mechanism:** A cooperative framework through which State actors fulfil their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficked persons, coordinating their efforts in a strategic partnership with civil society. The basic aims of an NRM are to ensure that the human rights of trafficked persons are respected and to provide an effective way to refer victims of trafficking to services.

**Potential victim of human trafficking:** Potential victims are people who have not yet been trafficked, but due to their vulnerability or other circumstances, are at risk of being trafficked. A presumed victim is a person whose circumstances indicate that they may have been trafficked, but no final determination has yet been made, perhaps pending further inquiries. In the interim they should be treated as a victim and immediately provided with protection and assistance

**Trafficking in human beings:** The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Such exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

**Victim of human trafficking:** Any person who is subject to the crime of trafficking in persons.

**Vulnerability:** The limited capacity to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from harm. This limited capacity is the result of the unique interaction of individual, household, community, and structural characteristics and conditions. *Note: Vulnerability implies exposure to and susceptibility to some form of harm, which can take a variety of forms (including economic hardship, crisis and disaster, discrimination, violence, or human rights abuses). Among the groups most susceptible to harm are children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, and persons of diverse sex, sexual orientation and gender identity.*





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes good practices in response to managing mixed migration flows, and identification and referral of victims of human trafficking, including within mixed migration context. The report aims to help regional knowledge creation, encourage and assist policymakers, practitioners, and civil society in the Western Balkans to learn from each other, build on the existing knowledge and experience, and use it to improve their own response.

Geographically, the report specifically targeted the Western Balkans and Austria. However, the methodology and approach used in this report, can be replicated in different regions and the practices are transferable and can be used in different contexts when dealing with mixed migration flows on the one hand, and identification of victims of human trafficking within mixed migration flows on the other.

A total of fourteen good practices that were implemented between 2015 and 2020, in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia were identified in the course of the assessment. Prior to this report, a minority of these good practices were documented which impedes exchange and transfer of knowledge that has been gained through the implementation of those practices. To counteract this, the report aimed to document the process of developing and implementing a practice.

### Practices

The following practices - structured in four clusters - are presented in this report:

- Under **Regulatory Framework**, the practice describes how a Government can use the law or executive power as instruments to provide a response to mass influx situations.

Documented practice:

1. Right to 72 hours legal stay (North Macedonia and Serbia)

- Under **Service Provision**, the selected practices focus on services for people in mixed migration, or victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking. The practices show cooperation models that improve efficiency in service delivery, describe dynamic and proactive practitioners, who reach out to local communities, building trust and identify those in need of a support, and show example of inclusive Governments that diversify services.

Documented practices:

2. Mobile Teams contribute towards THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)
3. CSOs support police in registering people crossing the border (North Macedonia)
4. Licensing CSOs for service provision (Serbia)
5. CSOs outreach work in reception and transit centers (North Macedonia)
6. Model of social work in an emergency (North Macedonia)

- Under **Cooperation and Coordination**, the practices describe how different institutions and organizations cooperate when working with victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking. The practices show a victims-centered approach in police investigation, how to build a more accessible national referral mechanism, describes a partnership that shapes policy and legislation, transnational cooperation that allows for better support to victims, and how more human resources and local presence can lead to an increased number of identified THB victims.



Documented practices:

7. Data driven restructuring of the National Referral Mechanism (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
8. Government and CSO form partnership (North Macedonia)
9. CSOs transnational cooperation (Serbia and Austria)
10. Police and CSO joint efforts to identify and support THB victims (Austria)
11. National Police Tasks Force supports early THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)

- Under **Capacity Development**, the selected practices describe continuous learning as way to catch up with changing contexts, legislation or building knowledge/skills of personnel, and how to create an institutionalized training system that is using the available national expertise.

Documented practices:

12. Schools equipped to identify potential victims among school population (North Macedonia)
13. Commissariat supports learning and continuous development of staff (Serbia)
14. Continuous training on the asylum process for all police officers working on asylum (North Macedonia)

## Recommendations

- Document the process of developing and implementing a practice. Use that information to learn and exchange knowledge, or to lobby/advocate for a practice to be institutionalized within the state response system.
- Create a legal basis for cooperation between CSOs and state authorities, to ensure clarity in the division of roles and responsibilities, and security in the functioning of such partnerships.
- Develop a plan on how a practice will be sustained and include analysis of all resources that are required to establish and maintain such a practice, including current gaps in the availability of resources and how those resource will be secured.
- A contract between a state authority and CSO for outsourcing state services to the CSO, should also include a financial payment for covering the expenses for the service provision.
- Establish a system to support identification of trafficking victims within mixed migration flows. The system needs to be culturally-sensitive, target a moving population and include a cross-border component in order to link up service provision in different countries.
- Adapt statutory victims' identification systems to make them faster in assessing and to and the needs of potential trafficking victims among people on the move. Pair it with building CSOs capacities in preparing solid case reports to help state identification efforts.
- Establish a system for continuous education and training of staff within the institutions mandated to train and teach relevant public administration staff.
- Improve the state data collection system to provide uniform and accurate data on the identification of THB victims. Assess how state authorities collect, collate, analyze and disseminate THB data, how data management is regulated and implemented, and what definitions and indicators are used. Focus on addressing the gaps in availability, adequacy and quality of data.



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Western Balkans is a region located at the doorstep of the European Union, comprised of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The region has a combined population of nearly 18 million people. One of the overarching priority for all economies in the region and a core driver of reforms is the European Union integration process.

### Mixed Migration

Over the past few years, the so-called ‘Western Balkan Route’ became one of the main migration routes towards the EU, starting from Turkey to Greece, through the Balkans, and to Central Europe. As a result, the Western Balkans have been confronted with a large number of people on the move coming from countries outside of Europe and transiting through the region. In the summer of 2015, the flows through the region increased dramatically until the signing of the EU-Turkey Agreement in March 2016. This led to new border restrictions introduced by Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia. The official ‘closure’ of the route in March 2016 reduced the flow of people on the move significantly, without stopping them entirely. In 2020, the Western Balkans migration route<sup>3</sup> remained one of the busiest into Europe, with close to 100,000 registered new arrivals across the Western Balkans region.<sup>4</sup>

Today, the Western Balkans is mainly a transit zone for people on the move from the Middle East, West and South Asia and Africa aiming to reach Western and Northern Europe. As of end of July 2021, an estimated 10,812 refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers remain in the region. North Macedonia having the lowest number (117), with similar numbers in Kosovo<sup>1</sup> (202), Montenegro (170), and Albania (160). The overwhelming majority are in Bosnia and Herzegovina (5,462) and Serbia (4,701), on the border with Croatia.<sup>5</sup>

In the last decade, the Western Balkan stakeholders have worked on improving the **legal and strategic frameworks**, regulating the treatment of foreigners and international protection. The legal and policy framework on the entry, stay, residence and exit of foreigners is mainly shaped by the legal frameworks regulating the treatment of foreigners, border control, and to a certain extent relates to laws regulating international protection.<sup>6</sup> The adoption of national strategic documents with accompanying action plans has been done in continuity. These changes target combating irregular migration, integrated border management, anti-trafficking etc., and are providing an insight on the strategic course a migration management system is taking. Nearly all of the relevant international and regional documents regarding the treatment of different categories of migrants and refugees have been signed and ratified.

Most of the **institutions** are established at central level, while authorities at the local level have limited

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<sup>3</sup> The Western Balkan route is to be understood as a route comprised of two routes: One route is leading from North Macedonia through Serbia into Hungary, and the second is from North Macedonia, then Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and ending in Slovenia.

<sup>4</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/103?sv=41&geo=0>

<sup>5</sup> Mixed Migration Center (2021), Mixed Migration Review 2021

<sup>6</sup> ICMPD (2020), *An assessment of the migration situation in the Western Balkans and the implications of COVID-19 on migration management*

<sup>1</sup>All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood in the context of United Nations resolution 1244 (1999).



competences in relation to migration management. The central role in managing migration is held by the respective ministries in charge of internal affairs/security, under which different sectors such as border control, asylum, asylum centres, operate. Besides these ministries, the ministries for social affairs have a role, particularly for the protection of vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied and separated children. The ministry in charge of justice matters have competence when dealing with migrants in prisons and detention (for those who are sentenced by a court).

There are numerous **Civil Society Organizations** that provide various forms of direct assistance and support, implementing activities directed at research, capacity-building, developing policies, and direct service delivery.

## Trafficking in Human Beings

Over the past decade, the Western Balkan region has been recognized as a region of origin, transit and destination for trafficking in human beings (THB) involving mostly women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation. In 2020, there were 289 identified THB victims in the WB. The victims were mostly nationals, with the exception of Montenegro where 83 per cent of the identified THB victims were foreign nationals.<sup>7</sup> Other THB forms are present, but rarely recognized. For example, in North Macedonia, there are cases where forced marriages were not considered as a harmful traditional practice or a possible form of trafficking, but rather a ‘traditional’ issue.<sup>8</sup>

A common challenge in the Western Balkan region is the **identification of victims of human trafficking** as well as potential victims of trafficking. The changing nature of the commercial sex market, and the decreasing numbers of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in the region points to the need to adapt the indicators for identification and investigation of such cases. Due to the increased number of women seeking income in the commercial sex market<sup>9</sup>, there is less need for coercion or violence to recruit victims of trafficking which may have an impact on the detection and prosecution of trafficking crimes. Brutal control tactics are still reported by victims of trafficking, which may be used by traffickers when women decide to stop their engagement in commercial sex.<sup>10</sup> The lack of a victim-centered approach in prosecution of cases leads to possible re-victimization by the state system. In some cases, prosecutors or judges tend to bring lesser charges, classify the criminal act at a “lower” level or give lenient sentences. This can prevent identification and access to justice for the victims and again it can lead to re-victimization.<sup>11</sup> Official identification of trafficking cases among people travelling the routes is limited and unlikely to reflect the actual prevalence. For example, as part of the 2009 ICMPD Study, a total of 69 potential trafficking cases involving one or more potential victims were identified.<sup>12</sup> Those who have been identified along the Balkan route are mostly from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria, and mostly boys and men.<sup>13</sup>

Western Balkans has invested significant effort in the development of **legal and strategic frameworks** to combat human trafficking, including in an effort to bring their legislation further into alignment with EU anti-trafficking norms and standards<sup>14</sup>. In continuity, the region has improved or strengthened the legal protection and brought it closer in line with the international standards. All have developed

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<sup>7</sup> ICMPD internal document

<sup>8</sup> ICMPD (2019) The Strength to Carry On

<sup>9</sup> UNODC (2020) Measuring Organized Crime in the Western Balkans

<sup>10</sup> UNODC (2020) Measuring Organized Crime in the Western Balkans

<sup>11</sup> IOM (2018) Enhancing Counter Trafficking in Crises in the Western Balkans

<sup>12</sup> ICMPD (2019) The Strength to Carry On

<sup>13</sup> ICMPD (2019) The Strength to Carry On

<sup>14</sup> ICMPD (2021), Beyond Joint Actions: Towards Integrated Anti Trafficking Responses between EU Member States and the Western Balkans, available [here](#)



anti-trafficking strategies complemented with action plans. There are also statutory standard operating procedures that include indicators and guidelines to support the identification and referral of trafficked persons. These are established at both national and transnational level(s).

A lot of efforts have been invested in building **institutional frameworks** to counteract human trafficking and provide support to victims. Institutional responses are generally involving different sectors/departments within five key ministries that govern justice matters, police, social affairs, health, and education. There are National Referral Mechanisms in place, which serve as a framework for the identification and referral for victims and potential victims of human trafficking. Across the region, there are national coordinators for the fight against trafficking in human beings, established with the aim to coordinate the state response to combating human trafficking, and facilitate a better cooperation among different national and local institutions and organizations.

There are numerous **Civil Society Organizations** (CSOs) that work in partnership with state institutions in the provision of services. CSOs funding mainly comes from international organization/donors, and some funding comes from the national state budget. CSOs provide prevention, protection, health, education, and social services. The role of CSOs is also to collect and disseminate information, educate citizens and policy makers, advocacy and lobbying, support citizen participation, provide input in policy development, monitoring and oversight. There are CSO-run shelters for THB victims and potential victims across the region.

### Human trafficking in relation to migration

There are many indications of trafficking in human beings among people using the migration routes to Europe, including the “Western Balkan Route”. The routes that people on the move are required to take, become more dangerous as migration policies of the countries along the route and in destination become more restrictive. The effects of the war and the need to move away from their homes to seek opportunities in the absence of alternatives in their communities of origin, is placing people in a situation of increased vulnerability to trafficking in persons, that have in some cases resulted in actual trafficking cases. Along the routes, traffickers take advantage of people’s vulnerabilities, to exploit them while in transit or when arriving at their final destination, including for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, exploitation in forced criminal activities, forced marriages etc. This has not, however, manifested itself in a significant increase in the identification of trafficking in mixed migration context and humanitarian crises by the authorities. Most trafficking cases among people on the move are not identified, and trafficked people rarely report their case and seek help. Challenges to identification of human trafficking victims along the ‘Western Balkan Route’ were many. First, there was a massive and rapid transit movement of people on the move that made assessing vulnerability or specific aspects that indicate human trafficking difficult to impossible. Second, the extraordinarily high number of vulnerable people coming from many different countries and cultural backgrounds, speaking many different language, further complicated identification efforts. Third, the lack of capacity and tools among national authorities and CSOs to identify potential trafficked people among people on the move. Finally, the low number of identifications is also due to the lack of harmonization and incorporation of anti-trafficking procedures into the first reception and asylum systems for new arrivals, leading to a disconnect between the two processes.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Brunovskis & Surtees (2109) Identifying trafficked migrants and refugees along the Balkan route. Exploring the boundaries of exploitation, vulnerability and risk; & Forin, Roberto & Healy, Claire (2018). Trafficking Along Migration Routes to Europe: Bridging the Gap between Migration, Asylum and Anti-Trafficking. Vienna: ICMPD



## ABOUT THE REPORT

This section of the report provides a brief overview of the rationale, objectives, scope and the methodology, as well as information on the criteria used to select the practices presented hereunder.

### RATIONALE

The whole region has done a lot of progress in managing mixed migration and combating human trafficking. Nevertheless, a lot of what was done has not necessarily been documented. For example, while different stakeholders took many initiatives to address mass migration influx no initiative invested in documenting what had been done and what lessons came out of it. Availability of such knowledge would not only benefit the people who implemented those initiatives, but also others if they had access to it.

This report aims to describe practices in response to managing the mixed migration flow, and identification and referral of victims of human trafficking across the Western Balkans including identification of victims within mixed migration flows.

For the purpose of this report, a practice is understood in its broad meaning, and includes: policy, legislation, or strategy development, capacity building, curricula/manual development, funding, service provision, multi-agency cooperation, coordination, etc. The assessment sought to identify practices that led to a positive change, describe that practice, point out some of the results it achieved and what were the lessons learned.

The final users of this report are practitioners from the Western Balkans working on mixed migration and/or combatting trafficking in human beings. It is hoped that this report will encourage and assist policymakers and practitioners, as well as civil society in the Western Balkans to learn from each other, build on the existing knowledge and experience, and use it to improve their own response.

The report will therefore also contribute to facilitating access to regional knowledge on managing mixed migration, and identification and referral of human trafficking cases. The methodology and approach used in this report, can be replicated in different contexts globally, while the practices can be applied in contexts similar to the Western Balkans.

### OBJECTIVES

This report presents good practices in managing mixed migration flows and good practices in identifying cases of human trafficking in the Western Balkans and Austria. The objective is to collect and share these practices with Western Balkans front-line officials, so they can be applied in other countries, besides the countries where they were envisioned.

### SCOPE

The timeframe covered with the assessment is 2015 to 2020. The geographical location covered is North Macedonia, Serbia, and Austria. However, during the desk review and/or interviews with partners, the consultant identified a good practice from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is also included in this report. The initial material scope was good practices in managing mixed migration flows, and in the identification and referral of human trafficking victims. In the course of making this report, several good practices on identification victims of human trafficking among people on the move were discovered. As a result, the material scope was expanded, and it includes identification of victims of human trafficking among people on the move.





## DEFINITION AND CRITERIA

For the purpose of this assessment, a definition and set of criteria were designed as basis for selecting a good practice.

The proposed definition for a practice comes from the “*Discussion Note on Collection of Good Practices in Protection*,” developed by the global Protection Cluster Working Group and it states:

*An action or a set of actions that, based on quantitative and/or qualitative evidence, has been demonstrated to have had a positive and tangible impact on a given protection issue, problem, or challenge, thus resulting in enhanced protection of and respect for the rights of persons of concern.*

The proposed set of criteria is presented in the Table 1 below. They are based on the criteria outlined in the Protection Cluster Working Group, 2008, Discussion Note on Collection of Good Practices in Protection, the OECD-DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance and the ICMPD Assessment of Anti-Trafficking Gaps, Needs and Transferrable Practices in the ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania.

In order for a practice to qualify as a good practice, it had to fulfil the following key criteria: relevance, effectiveness, respecting and protecting rights, and non-discrimination/equality. The additional criteria on efficiency, impact, sustainability, and innovation were non-mandatory, and any or none were combined with the key criteria.

Table 1 – Criteria for selection of a good practice	
Name of criteria	Description of criteria
<b>Key Criteria</b>	
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that addresses the needs and priorities of persons of concern.</li> <li>▪ A practice that ensured consultation and participation of the persons of concern in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the practice.</li> <li>▪ A practice that encouraged local ownership.</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that achieved its aim.</li> </ul>
Respecting and protecting rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that improved the protection of the persons of concern and ensured respect for their rights.</li> <li>▪ A practice that anticipated and addressed the potential risks to the safety and well-being of the persons of concern.</li> </ul>
Nondiscrimination and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that is gender-sensitive and/or child-sensitive and contributes to reach out to the most marginalized individuals.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional criteria</b>	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that made efficient use of the available financial, human, and other resources.</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that generated or is expected to generate significant</li> </ul>

	positive or negative higher-level results.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that has a sustainable impact with lasting benefits.</li> <li>▪ A practice that is linked to a policy and/or legislation and imbedded in the institutional set-up of the system.</li> </ul>
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A practice that is new and/or innovative.</li> </ul>

One of the objectives of this assessment was to collect good practices and exchange them between the WB stakeholders. The goal was for the WB stakeholders to learn from each other’s good practices, to adapt them to the context and circumstances, and put them in practice. While the possibility of transferability is very important, it was not used as a criterion to select a practice. For each of the selected practices, the context and the condition for their transferability is described.

## METHODOLOGY

The assessment started with a desk review that covered available project documents, national reports, strategies, legal documents, online news websites, existing studies as well as various administrative and statistical data relevant to the subject. The desk review was used as the basis for the identification of the potential practices, and interview partners for the primary data collection.

The identified potential practices were further examined through the interviews. A total of 19 interviews were conducted with stakeholder representatives from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The interviewees were a diverse group coming from institutions, civil society organizations, international organizations etc. All interviews were conducted remotely and served to get an in-depth knowledge of the potential practice.

The analysis was done in three stages, the initial desk review, in depth analysis to explore the issues arising out of the primary data collected, and a final analysis bringing these aspects together. The draft final report was reviewed by ICMPD, and its findings were presented at the two regional meetings, organized as part of the IKAM<sup>16</sup> project. While the key points from the discussions during the two regional meetings are incorporated in this report, the workshops reports are available in Annex 2.

<sup>16</sup> Full name of the IKAM project: Information measures and capacity building on asylum, legal and irregular migration in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Western Balkans

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Implemented by



## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

There are fourteen practices described here that were identified in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia. The practices are divided in four sections: Regulatory Framework, Service Provision, Cooperation and Coordination, and Capacity Development.

Under Regulatory Framework, the practice describes how a Government can use the law or executive power as instruments to provide a response to mass influx situations.

Under Service Provision, the selected practices focus on services for people in mixed migration, or victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking. The practices show cooperation models that improve efficiency in service delivery, describe dynamic and proactive practitioners, who reach out to local communities, building trust and identify those in need of a support, and show example of inclusive Governments that diversify services.

Under Cooperation and Coordination, the practices describe how different institutions and organizations cooperate when working with victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking. The practices show a victims-centered approach in police investigation, how to build a more accessible national referral mechanism, describes a partnership that shapes policy and legislation, transnational cooperation that allows for better support to victims, and how more human resources and local presence can lead to an increased number of identified THB victims.

Under Capacity Development, the selected practices describe continuous learning as way to catch up with changing contexts, legislation or building knowledge/skills of personnel, and how to create an institutionalized training system that is using the available national expertise.

The practices presented in this report are the following:

### Regulatory framework

1. Right to 72 hours legal stay (North Macedonia and Serbia)

### Service Provision

2. Mobile Teams contribute towards THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)
3. CSOs support police in registering people crossing the border (North Macedonia)
4. Licensing CSOs for service provision (Serbia)
5. CSOs outreach work in reception and transit centers (North Macedonia)
6. Model of social work in an emergency (North Macedonia)

### Cooperation and Coordination

7. Data driven restructuring of the National Referral Mechanism (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
8. Government and CSO form partnership (North Macedonia)
9. CSOs transnational cooperation (Serbia and Austria)
10. Police and CSO joint efforts to identify and support THB victims (Austria)
11. National Police Tasks Force supports early THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)

### Capacity Development

12. Schools equipped to identify potential victims among school population (North Macedonia)
13. Commissariat supports learning and continuous development of staff (Serbia)
14. Continuous training on the asylum process for all police officers working on asylum (North Macedonia)



## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The practice described here comes from North Macedonia and Serbia. This practice shows how a Government can use the law (North Macedonia) or its executive powers (Serbia) as instruments to provide effective and human responses to situations of mass influx.

The practice presented here is the following.

1. Right to 72 hours legal stay (North Macedonia and Serbia)

<b>Name of practice</b>	
<b>Country</b>	North Macedonia and Serbia
<b>Geographical Scope</b>	National
<b>Summary of approach</b>	<p>The Governments of Serbia and North Macedonia allowed people travelling as part of mixed migration flow, to legally stay in the country for 72 hours, through the expression of an intention to seek asylum in North Macedonia, while in Serbia was done by the Government issuing a certificate for migrants coming from countries where their lives are in danger. This allowed for a fast and safer transit route, initially offering passage through Serbia to Hungary, later deviating towards Croatia and Slovenia.</p> <p>In 2015, North Macedonia and Serbia witnessed an unprecedented wave of migration, which peaked in the second half of 2015. Both countries were transit countries, and most of the people were transiting with an intent on reaching their planned destinations in central and northern Europe. As a result, they did not apply for asylum, typically crossing the countries in a matter of days, and continuing their journey most commonly via Croatia or Hungary. However, before North Macedonia changed the law, the state authorities treated these people as migrants in an irregular situation, so they would be either detained or deported. In absence of a legal way of traveling through the country, the people resorted to the use of smugglers and unsafe traveling routes. They walked along the highway and railway tracks leading to Serbia, sometimes resulting to their death. The latter triggered intense pressure by the public.</p> <p>In this context, in June 2015, the Macedonian authorities adopted changes to, what was at the time, the Law for Asylum and Temporary Protection<sup>17</sup>. These changes provided that every person can express an intention to seek asylum at the border crossing points or to any police officer after entering the country, allowing that person to reside legally in North Macedonia for 72 hours, in which time he or she can apply for asylum. The significant part of these changes was that it provided a possibility to those who did not wish to seek asylum, to transit through the country legally. People were no longer treated as migrants in an irregular situation and did not have to hide from state authorities. As a result, there was a significant increase in the number of people arriving at the southern border and transiting through North Macedonia, but then the influx of people between Macedonian-Greek border was organized by the state authorities.</p>

<sup>17</sup> Official Gazette of RM, No. 101, from 18.06.2015



	<p>Following the Macedonian case, in September 2015, the Serbian authorities introduced a special legal status for persons transiting through the country with the intention of travelling to other countries. A Government Decision<sup>18</sup> allowed the state authorities to issue a certificate of entry on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, for migrants coming from countries where their lives are in danger. These people were issued with “certificates for migrants coming from countries where their lives are in danger”. This certificate served migrants to legally stay in the Republic of Serbia for a period of 72 hours of its issuance.</p> <p>In March 2016, the Western Balkans Route was officially closed when the EU and Turkey reached an agreement to end the irregular migration from Turkey to European countries and to replace it with safe and regular path.</p>
<i>Key results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This practice allowed for a fast and safer transit route, providing for a legal way of traveling through the countries, thus avoiding for the people to resort to the use of smugglers and unsafe traveling routes.</li> <li>• Between 2015 and 2016, over half a million people received a certificate of entry or expressed an intention to seek asylum.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Innovations/Lessons Learned</i>	<p>This practice has shown that Government can use the law (North Macedonia) or its executive powers (Serbia) as instruments to provide a response to mass influx situations. However, such legal/regulatory interventions should be complemented with immediate short-term measures to ensure legal protection and humanitarian aid, efficient screening procedures upon arrival to identify extremely vulnerable individuals and facilitating the granting of international protection to people who are likely to qualify for it.<sup>20</sup></p>
<i>Transferability</i>	<p>The practice is relevant in a context where there is a need, in a short period of time to legally facilitate movement of a high number of people within mixed migration flows.</p> <p>The practice is applicable in a country/-ies where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possibility to mobilize high-level Government and/or political commitment exists.</li> <li>• A high-level decree or a law, to give grounds to implement the high-level Government and/or political commitment, can be adopted.</li> <li>• Border management system is in place with sufficient capacities to register the legal stay.</li> </ul> <p>The country is a transit country on the route of mixed migration.</p>

<sup>18</sup> A decision on the issuing the certificate of entry on the territory of the Republic of Serbia for migrants coming from countries where their lives are in danger.

<sup>19</sup> <https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Human-trafficking-in-context-of-migration-and-refugee-rises-2015.pdf>; <https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Priracnik-MK-za-web.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.icmpd.org/authors/zoran-drangovski>

## SERVICE PROVISION

The practices described here come from North Macedonia and Serbia with focus on service provision to people on the move, including victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking. The practices show how building cooperation between Government and CSO can improve efficiency in service delivery. The practices reveal the necessity of bringing the services to the people, by having dynamic and proactive practitioners, who reach out to local communities. They also show that outreach work is a model that helps identify those in need of support and helps build the trust between people and institutions. Furthermore, the practices tell how an inclusive and open-for-cooperation Government can diversify its services. All the practices presented in this section, are practices of partnership between the civil society sector and the Government.

The practices presented here are:

1. Mobile teams contribute towards THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)
2. CSOs supports police in registering people crossing the border (North Macedonia)
3. Licensing CSOs for service provision (Serbia)
4. CSOs outreach work in reception and transit centers (North Macedonia)
5. Model of social work in an emergency (North Macedonia)

<i>Name of practice</i>	<b>MOBILE TEAMS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THB IDENTIFICATION EFFORTS</b>
<i>Country</i>	North Macedonia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	Local, in five cities: Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Bitola and Gevgelija.
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Mobile Teams are led by the: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) and its National Referral Mechanism Office (NRM), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and its Unit to Combat Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration (hereafter: Unit) and two Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Open Gate/La Strada and Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA).</p> <p>In 2018, the MoIA and the MoLSP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU provided for the legal basis to establish mobile teams. The objectives of the teams were to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation and increase the identification of potential and victims of human trafficking among vulnerable population. The latter includes the nationals and people on the move</p> <p>Five mobile teams were established in Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Bitola and Gevgelija. The criteria for selection of the cities were: the highest number of cases, availability of services, highest number of people who were recruited, and border cities where people on the move are present. Each team has a social worker from the local Center for Social Work (CSW), a police officer from the Unit and a representative from the civil sector. The mobile teams are responsible for: identification of persons/families vulnerable to THB, including potential and victims of trafficking. They do the initial referral and identification, early risk assessment, and provide information on the available help and support.</p> <p>The CSW is responsible to identify the families and persons that the team should visit. The CSW identifies them through their data base of</p>





persons/families who are already in contact with social services and are in a need of assistance or are in a vulnerable situation. Access to information was also supported by distributing information materials in six languages (Macedonian, Albanian, Roma, English, Farsi and Arabic). The team would meet and make a monthly plan which families/persons they will visit and do outreach work at least two times per week.

The teams follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for identification of potential and victims of human trafficking,<sup>21</sup> and the Programme for the work of the mobile teams that is aligned with the SOPs.<sup>22</sup> If they identify a victim or potential victim of human trafficking, the team will provide for safe shelter, access to health and education services, free legal aid, and inform the victim on her/his rights, the course of the procedure and her/his role, and the right to compensation. The work of the mobile teams is supported with funds from the Direct Assistance Fund. This Fund provides support in food and hygiene materials, clothing, medical assistance, legal aid, vocational skills training and other activities for reintegration and resocialization of THB victims.

Due to COVID-19, the outreach work was stopped in 2020 and during the first half of 2021.

#### *Key results*

- This practice has increased the number of identified and potential THB victims, improved cooperation between institutions, helped build trust of citizens in the state institutions and allowed for CSOs to be actively involved in service provision together with state institutions.
- In 2019, the mobile teams identified 5 THB victims.<sup>23</sup>
- From 2015 to 2019, the number of potential victims identified by state authorities increased, from 11 potential victims in 2015 to 86 potential victims in 2019.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2021, the mobile teams identified 10 potential THB victims, out of whom 5 were children. Two (age 13 and 15) were identified among irregular migrants.<sup>25</sup>
- Direct Assistance Fund established.
- In 2018, 40 persons received support through the Fund, 9 identified victims of human trafficking and 31 potential victims of human trafficking.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Innovations/ Lessons Learned*

The practice is new for the country because it actively involves CSOs in state service provision. The state authorities use the CSOs expertise to complement their work and CSOs are equal partners, in service delivery, with the state institutions.

<sup>21</sup> The SOPs is available [here](#)

<sup>22</sup> In North Macedonia, there are three SOPs that guide the work of professionals in the identification of THB victims; an SOP for working with victims of human trafficking, an SOP for unaccompanied children, and an SOP for processing vulnerable categories of foreign nationals.

<sup>23</sup> National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (2018&2019) Annual Report

<sup>24</sup> National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, Annual Reports 2015 and 2020.

<sup>24</sup> National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (2018), Annual Report.

<sup>25</sup> NRM data for 2021.

<sup>26</sup> National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (2018), Annual Report



The direct contact between the social services, police and on the other side the vulnerable families, builds the trust of people in the work of the state institutions. It also helps to raise the awareness of the potential risks to human trafficking, so people are more able to recognize and more willing to report human trafficking.

The participation of the state employees in the mobile teams was secured through changing of their job description. The job description of the social workers and the police officers were changed to include their work on mobile teams as one of their core assignments. In this way, they could be compensated with time or money by their employers, for the out-of-office hours they spend with the mobile teams. Sustainability remains an issue as far as the participation of CSOs is concerned as funds are not secured institutionally but rely on external donor support. The MoLSP is exploring ways to secure funds from local municipalities who have earmarked funds to support CSOs that provide social protection activities at local level.

### *Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:

- A low number of identified potential and victims of human trafficking.
- An environment where populations display a variety of vulnerability factors and are further exposed to risks, receiving social protection services, susceptible to becoming victims of trafficking.
- Low level of awareness and knowledge on human trafficking among the vulnerable population.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- State authorities trust and are willing to work with CSOs.
- Multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with potential and victims of human trafficking is recognized and established.
- Service delivery is decentralized.
- Legal basis for the establishment and functioning of the teams exists.
- Responsibility for the management of the teams is within one authority/institution.
- Committed, educated, skilled and highly experienced professionals work both in the government institutions/services and CSOs.
- The team is well networked and recognized within a national referral mechanism and can pull in resources and services (legal counseling, shelter etc.)
- The team is recognized and integrated into a system's approach to combating trafficking in human beings.



**Name of practice** CSO SUPPORTS POLICE IN REGISTERING PEOPLE CROSSING THE BORDER

<i>Country</i>	North Macedonia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	Local, limited to the southern border with Greece and northern border with Serbia
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Ministry of Internal Affairs and its border police partnered with the Macedonian Lawyers Association (MYLA), a civil society organization, to provide registration and referral services to people in a mixed migration context.</p> <p>The cooperation started after the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection was changed in June 2015. The changes introduced a new possibility for people to express an intention to seek asylum. Following the changes to the Law, the Border Police at the southern border town of Gevgelija began issuing intentions to seek asylum to the people in mixed migration flows transiting through the country. The registration and issuing of the intentions to seek asylum was conducted at the Police Station, which is adjacent to the train station where the people boarded the trains to travel to the northern border village of Tabanovce.</p> <p>MYLA began its field activities and daily presence at the train station since the first day the border police began issuing the intentions to seek asylum. The field team, consisting of two lawyers, provided information about the intention to seek asylum and the asylum procedure, and assisted the border police in issuing the intentions to seek asylum. With the increasing number of daily arrivals and the increased numbers of women, families and vulnerable groups, MYLA's lawyers started to conduct protection referrals and registration prioritization to the most vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>With the opening of the Vinojug Transit Center, (south border) MYLA work scope and the team expanded. There were 40 new members, of which 8 were field lawyers, 22 data entry collaborators and 10 translators from Arabic and Farsi. The data entry collaborators cooperated with the border police and assisted in the registration and issuing asylum applications. Priority in registration and transportation was given to vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied children, pregnant women, the elderly and the sick. The field lawyers, with the help of the translators, provided free legal aid and referral.</p> <p>In addition to the 24-hour presence of the MYLA team in the field, the people in mixed migration had the opportunity to receive a legal advice through a free telephone line. Most of the calls to this line were made by people themselves, and a few from activists and aid workers who were with the people during the call. The call center team provided information on the application for asylum in a police station, referral to field lawyers in case of informal returns from Serbia and lost registration documents, and referral to the Red Cross in cases of family separation. Access to information was also supported by distributing information materials in English, Arabic and French at the major train stations and crossings used by the people on the move.</p> <p>The work of the MYLA's teams, at the border and in the Transit Center, was complemented with the MYLA Antenna Lawyers, an initiative launched in 2014, with the aim to establish a team of attorneys across the country that will provide immediate legal counselling and assistance to asylum seekers along the transit route and the border entry points. In 2015, the team consisted of seven members, and it monitored developments in cities with the largest</p>



migration movements (Gevgelija, Bitola, Kavadarci, Delchevo, Kumanovo and Veles). In 2016, the network grew to nine Antenna Lawyers, who worked in the field of monitoring migratory movements in seven regions throughout the country. Their activities included monitoring visits near the borders in places where according to the available data the largest migrations movements have been observed.

*Key results*

- As a result of MYLA/border police cooperation the registration process became more efficient. MYLA’s data entry clerks, while closely working with and supporting the Border Police, improved the registration process and significantly increase the number of issued intentions to seek asylum, leading to a fewer people on the move transiting through North Macedonia unregistered.
- In 10 months, there were over 500,000 issued intentions and over 300,000 people informed about the asylum and legal procedures. In the same period, protection referrals and interventions were done for over 2,500 persons.<sup>27</sup>

*Innovations/  
Lessons Learned*

As part of the registration process, the teams identified people of need for assistance. Assisting people that are transiting though the country proved to be challenging. This was the first time that the state authorities had to register, but at the same time provide assistance, to a high number of people who were transiting and not staying in the country. The national system was prepared and used to assist people who stayed in the country, not only transit. In this context, the state should work on developing new tools, which would allow to support people while in transit.

The situation with the registration of new arrivals during the 2015/2016 migrant crises was exceptional, because within 24 hours there were 15,000 new arrivals. As part of the registration process, creating a possibility for short individual screening or interview with the persons arriving in the country would further yield positive results. This would give them a possibility to report issues or to conduct some kind of referral based on vulnerability.

In addition, putting a photo of the applicant on the registration forms may contribute to the proper identification and avoid potential misuse.

*Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:

- A need in a short period of time to register a high number of people in a mixed migration context.
- Insufficient knowledge among the border police to identify and refer people in vulnerable situation.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- The police have trust and are willing to work together with CSOs.
- There is legal or administrative framework which sets out the process of registration and referral of people.
- Skilled and experienced CSO professionals exist and can provide highly specialized service.
- There are flexible human and financial resources available that are able to follow the influx of people and scale up the work.

<sup>27</sup> MYLA (2016), Field Report and MYLA (2016), Annual Report



**Name of practice LICENSING CSO FOR SERVICE PROVISION**

<i>Country</i>	Serbia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	Local
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (hereafter: Ministry) granted a license to the civil society organization (CSO) Atina for provision of “assisted housing” service to victims of human trafficking.</p> <p>The Serbian Law on Social Protection (2011)<sup>28</sup> prescribes licensing as option for provision of social services, and it is further regulated by the following Rulebooks: the Rulebook on Licensing of Social Protection Organizations, the Rulebook for Conditions and Standards in Providing of Social Protection Services, the Rulebook on Professional Affairs in the Social Protection and the Rulebook on Licensing of Professional Workers in the Social Protection.</p> <p>As part of the licensing procedure the state examines if an organization or an institution meets the criteria and proscribed conditions for provision of social protection services. The outcome of this procedure is a license, a document confirming that the applicant meets the established conditions. The license is issued by the Ministry for a duration of six years with a possibility for extension, or a limited license that can be issued only once and for a period not exceeding five years. After the expiration of the validity period, the license can be extended for the same period following the same procedure as for obtaining a license. If the conditions prescribed by the Licensing Regulations are not followed, a license may be suspended and/or revoked.</p> <p>Founded in 2003, the CSO Atina focus is on combatting human trafficking and all forms of gender-based violence and providing support to victims. In 2018, the CSO Atina was licensed to provide housing and victim assistance in a halfway house or as the law defines it – semi-independent living with support. This became the first licensed service for victims of trafficking in Serbia.</p> <p>The licensing process of CSO Atina took one year. In order to obtain the license, CSO Atina had to apply and be assessed if the organization fulfils all the standards prescribed in the Rulebook for Conditions and Standards in Providing Social Services, that are obligatory. This Rulebook prescribes two types of standards: the structural standards (organizational, infrastructure and staff requirements) and functional standards (what is the process of accommodating a person, assessment of person’s needs, planning and service provision and expertise in providing the service). Local governments can introduce higher standards for specific services. The supervision over the work of licensed CSOs is performed by the Ministry through the inspector of social protection. Once a year, CSO Atina as the licensed service provider is submitting an Annual report to the Ministry. The report is filled in a software program developed for the purpose of reporting.</p> <p>In Serbia, the CSOs engaged in social service provision can also obtain funding through government grants. The Law on Associations gives several funding possibilities namely, from the state budget, the budgets of</p>

<sup>28</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 24/11



autonomous provinces or municipal/city budgets. According to the Law, funding should be provided through an open competition and contracts are signed by the state authorities. The national budget includes lines for funding social services provided by CSOs. Although finding opportunity is included in the law, the CSO Atina has yet to receive state funds.

*Key results*

- In the period 2018-2020, CSO Atina provided services to 56 women and girls. Out of them, 41 were domestic citizens, 10 refugees and 5 foreigners. It proved that this service is extremely important and necessary in order to achieve successful recovery of the victims. One third of the total number of identified victims used this service, which indicates a great need for it to exist.

*Innovations/  
Lessons Learned*

The government has issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the identification, referral, and support of trafficking victims, including standardized indicators and guidelines to identify victims. However, the SOPs need to provide a clear roles and responsibilities for civil society. Otherwise, it might be a great challenge for the CSOs, that provide licensed services to plan their activities and services for victims of trafficking without knowing whether and to what extent their services will be included in the referral process. Therefore, updating the national referral mechanism can be a way forward. It can help formalizing cooperation with CSOs and delegating them specific roles and responsibilities, thus ensuring that victims have access to all necessary support services, especially if the services provided by CSOs are the only special services available for certain vulnerable groups, like the one for human trafficking victims.

The quality assurance and compliance with Government set standards is important and must be in place. However, when the state is outsourcing the services through licensing, the license holder needs to have sufficient independence to modify service/approach to every particular person. It must not be forgotten that the service was primarily created in order to respond to specific needs of particular individuals and not to fill out formal gaps in the system.

*Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where there is a lack of state services to address the needs of trafficking victims.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- Legal or administrative framework for CSOs licensing exists.
- State authorities are ready and willing to formalize their commitment through an official agreement with a CSO.
- A state inspection and monitoring system is in place to ensure compliance.
- Skilled and experienced CSOs professionals exist and can provide highly specialized service.
- State financial resources are allocated to support the service.
- A national referral mechanism exists.
- State lacks capacities to develop or maintain certain necessary services itself.
- The CSOs have a role and constitute a part of the national referral mechanism. Such role is clearly articulated in the regulatory framework.





**Name of practice** CSO OUTREACH WORK IN RECEPTION AND TRANSIT CENTERS

<b>Country</b>	North Macedonia
<b>Geographical Scope</b>	Local, limited to the southern border with Greece and northern border with Serbia
<b>Summary of approach</b>	<p>The CSO Open Gate/La Strada was contracted to recruit, guide, train and monitor outreach teams that will provide support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in provision of services to people in mixed migration contexts.</p> <p>The outreach work started in 2014, with the CSO`s support to the MoIA in the Vizbegovo Reception Center for Asylum Seekers (hereafter: Vizbegovo Center) where the CSO provided psychosocial support and counseling, educational and occupational workshops, humanitarian aid etc. In 2015, the scope of the work was expanded and included setting up outreach teams at the northern and southern border of North Macedonia.</p> <p>Open Gate/La Strada<sup>29</sup> established a total of seven outreach teams, that worked 24/7. Four were in the Reception and Transit Centers, at the northern border with Serbia and at the southern border with Greece, one was in the Vizbegovo Center and two mobile outreach teams located at the south and north border. The outreach teams employed 120 persons with different background in social work, pedagogy, psychology, translators, etc.</p> <p>The overall goal of these teams was to identify the most vulnerable among the persons that were in the centers or on the move, identify their needs and refer them to services. There were two types of outreach teams, one was providing psychosocial support, including identification of THB victims, and the other was providing educational and occupational services to children. The primary target groups for the outreach work were families, women, children, single parents, gender and sexual based violence victims, unaccompanied children<sup>29</sup> and as well man showing signs of trauma.</p> <p>In the period between mid-2015 to beginning of March 2016, the outreach teams faced difficulty to assess and/or identify risks, due to the high number of people entering North Macedonia and their short duration of stay. As of March 2016, when the border was closed, people starting to stay from few days to a month in the centers. Thereafter, the outreach team proactively approached people who were accommodated in the centers. For each person who was assessed in a need for support, the outreach team would create an individual plan for action that was delivered though individual or group sessions. Special attention was paid to unaccompanied children, people with disabilities and children separated from their families. These three groups were considered more vulnerable to become victims of trafficking, so they were provided with counseling as a prevention measure.</p>

<sup>29</sup> Building on the successful cooperation with the MoIA and MoLSP, in 2018 Open Gate/La Strada was included in the mobile teams that supported THB identification efforts, described as first practice in this section.



Open Gate/La Strada developed the concept for the service, identified and hired the team members, developed a list of indicators to identify victims of human trafficking, prepared a manual for the outreach teams and tools for conducting an interview and case management. In addition, the CSO provided orientation and training to the outreach teams, the border police and the CSW representatives focusing on identification/referral of THB victims and developed a programme for burn-out prevention in working with trauma.

The CSO also developed cross-border cooperation with Greece and Serbia and when the Greek partner would identify a potential victim of trafficking, Open Gate/La Strada would receive this information, and the CSO would pass on the information to the Serbian partners. In addition, the CSO developed a map of organizations that can provide victims support on the route, but also a list of organizations that can provide support in their final destination, such as Austria, Germany etc. The CSO also developed a self-assessment tool with the aim to make potential and victims of human trafficking aware of what trafficking is so they can themselves recognize if they had been/are victims of human trafficking.

#### Key results

- A model of outreach work in reception and transit centers developed. The model included developing a concept for the service, identification and hiring the outreach team, training the team, developing a list of indicators to identify victims of human trafficking, developing a manual for the outreach work and tools for conducting an interview and case management.
- In the period 2015 to 2019, the outreach teams supported 118,610 persons, out of whom 30,459 were men, 44,128 were women, and 44,023 were children (4,201 were unaccompanied children)<sup>30</sup>
- Between 2015 and 2018, the outreach teams identified 267 potential THB victims.<sup>31</sup>

#### Innovations/ Lessons Learned

The identification and referral system was in place at state level, but that system was not functioning in the reception, transit or centers for asylum seekers. Being fast and easy adaptable was crucial during the European Migrant Crises in 2015-2016. Therefore, choosing a CSO as a partner was a good model, because the CSO was fast, flexible and adaptable to fill in the gap of the state service delivery in an emergency situation.

People who are moving fast, and from one country to another, don't really want to stop and stay until they reach their final destination, be they or not identified as potential or actual victims. The biggest challenge remains the short timeframe, when people were not staying, to identify (potential and) victims of trafficking.

Many people on the move have experienced hardship and were exposed to

<sup>30</sup> <https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/migracija.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <https://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Human-trafficking-in-context-of-migration-and-refugee-crises-2015.pdf> and the Annual report of the National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration, available [here](#)



traumatic events in their country of origin but also along the way., As a result, they were showing similar or same behavior as victims of human trafficking, and even when they were identified as victims of trafficking, they didn't want to stay. Thus, it was important to create a link in the service provision in different countries and establish cross-border cooperation.

In service provision, the coordination among different parties is crucial. In this case it was the state institutions, the CSOs, and the international organizations. Therefore, it is important from the very start to define all services that will be provided, and what will be the role of each individual/institution/organization in the delivery of that specific service.

When an organization develops a concept for a new service, such as this, then documenting the service should be part of the initial concept that you develop for the said services. The service should be documented in detail.

### *Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:

- Lack of identification and referral system available in the reception, transit or centers for asylum seekers.
- Lack of coordination between the border police and the identification and referral services.
- Fast moving vulnerable population that experience multiple traumas and are at ad high-risk group for human trafficking.
- Insufficient awareness about smuggling of people and human trafficking, among the local population where there is mixed migration.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- There is a national identification and referral system in place.
- The CSOs have a role and constitute a part of the national referral mechanism. Such role is clearly articulated in the regulatory framework.
- The state authorities are ready and willing to cooperate with CSOs.
- Skilled and experienced CSOs professionals exist and can provide highly specialized service.
- State authorities and CSOs share the same understanding of what human trafficking is and apply similar approaches to the identification and referral of potential and human trafficking victims.
- All parties are open to cross-border communication and cooperation.
- Local communities are committed in participating in raising awareness activities.
- Low level of awareness and knowledge on human trafficking among the vulnerable population.



**Name of practice** MODEL OF SOCIAL WORK IN AN EMERGENCY

<i>Country</i>	North Macedonia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	Local, limited to the southern border with Greece and norther border with Serbia
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) in partnership with non-governmental and international organizations introduced a model of social work in emergency. They installed case managers in the Reception and Transit Centers (hereafter: Center), ensuring identification of vulnerable population and access to protection services.</p> <p>During the migration crises in 2015 and 2016, there was a large influx of people arriving at the Macedonian – Greek border in the south and continuing to the Macedonian – Serbian border on the north. The border police focus was on checking the documents of the people arriving at the border, and they did not have the human capacity or the knowledge to identify or support people who are in need of protection, such as the human trafficking victims. Once the people were registered at the border, they were referred to the Center, also at the border.</p> <p>At the beginning, there was no presence of the local Centre for Social Work (CSW), because the CSW based in Gevgelija and Kumanovo, the two cities closest to the borders, were already overstretched with their common caseload. In 2017, the MoLSP decided to place a social worker inside the Centers, who would be a case manager. However, there was a lack of social workers to respond to protection needs of the in-transit population, so they had to hire new people. These people would report to the CSW in Gevgelija or Kumanovo but would be outposted in the respective Center.</p> <p>The case managers were initially hired under the MoLSP and paid with donor funds. An agreement was reached, at the highest level, between the MoLSP and the donor for an exit and sustainability strategy. The strategy was to assign the case managers to the local CSWs where there are reception and assistance facilities for people on the move, depending on the needs at the time of the takeover.</p> <p>The main role of the case manager was to identify vulnerable groups of people and match them with services that they might need. The services varied from appointing a guardian, access to health services, accommodation in asylum center, connection with family member to access a safe house for children who were witness and/or victims of crime, such as human trafficking. The case manager would first complete an initial vulnerability assessment and based on the assessment they would make an action plan together with the person who was the target of the plan. The case managers served as a coordinator and a link between different systems, social protection, health, asylum, etc.</p> <p>Previously, the social protection system was not actively involved or directly providing services in emergencies. Therefore, there was a need to train the state social workers on social and child protection in emergency settings. For that purpose, the state Institute for Social Activities developed a training package for working in humanitarian emergency, natural disasters, wars and internal clashes and trained state social workers, thus ensuring preparedness and sustainability of services for similar future situations. In addition, each CSW appointed a focal point for people from the mixed migration flows. In this way,</p>



the case managers from the Centers had a direct access to the CSW through these focal points.

*Key results*

- A model for social work in emergency developed. The model includes initial assessment and interview with the vulnerable person, development of personalized plan, referral and access to services, development of training material and training of staff.
- An exit and sustainability strategy agreed between MoLSP and the donor, at highest level.
- The Reception Center team expanded with social workers.
- A Training manual developed by the State Institute for Social Activities.
- Between September and December 2017, a total of 164 social workers were trained on topics related to child protection and work with adolescents in emergencies.<sup>32</sup>
- Inter-agency coordination and referral was strengthened, and information sharing was improved.

*Innovations/  
Lessons Learned*

The innovative approach is training social workers to work in emergency. The usual target group to receive training on working in emergency are police officer, doctors, fire brigades, but not social workers. The development of the model of social work in emergency was new for the country. Prior to modeling this approach, the social worker did not know what to do in an emergency and didn't want to be included.

This approach involved hiring case managers outside of the system. As such, the case managers needed to build trust and cooperation with colleagues who were inside the system. It would have been better if the case managers came from inside the system and then just train them, rather than to need to fully integrate them in the system.

*Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:

- An emergency where the affected population needs social protection services.
- Lack of knowledge and skills of border authorities to identify and/or support people who are need of protection.
- Insufficient knowledge among social workers to respond to protection needs in an emergency.
- Poor inter-agency cooperation.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- There is a fully established and functional social protection system.
- The social protection system is accommodating, focused on peoples' needs and protection of their rights.
- There is a legal and/or administrative framework that ensures the model is embedded in the social protection system.
- There are sufficient human resources within the state social protection system.

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF (2017) Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe Humanitarian Situation Report # 26



## COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

The practices described here come from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia. They present the cooperation and coordination between different institutions and organizations in working with victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking. The practices show how data and information from the field gave insight into the functioning of the National Referral Mechanism, and how that insight was used to create more accessible mechanism with better knowledge of the local circumstances. Furthermore, the practices describe a victims-centered THB police investigation done in cooperation with CSOs, and how that leads to better victim protection and higher conviction rates. This section also talks about partnership between Government and CSO, a partnership that shapes policy and legislation, and defines the THB national agenda. But it also presents a referral and support mechanism to victims as part of a cross-border cooperation, which is key to fighting transnational crime. Lastly, it presents how the police allocated more human resources and secured better local presence and how that can lead to more identified victims and/or potential victims of human trafficking.

The practices presented here are the following:

1. Data driven restructuring of the National Referral Mechanism (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
2. Government and CSO form partnership (North Macedonia)
3. CSOs' transnational cooperation (Serbia with Austria)
4. Police and CSO join efforts to identify and support THB victims (Austria)
5. National Police Tasks Force supports early THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)

### **Name of practice** DATA DRIVEN RESTRUCTURING OF THE NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

<i>Country</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Department for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings within the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), through a consultative process and using data restructured the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).</p> <p>Until 2020, the Bosnian NRM was comprised of four regional monitoring teams (RMT) in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla and Mostar. The team composition was representatives of different ministries, the law enforcement agencies, the relevant Prosecutors' Offices (PO), Centres for Social Work (CSW), health and educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Their main mandate was to establish local referral mechanisms for victim identification and assistance. The RMTs were large bodies, in some cases with 60 to 70 members thus providing mainly a forum for exchange of information. Due to their size, operational coordination and referral in concrete individual trafficking cases was difficult. The RMTs work was based on the Rules on Protection of Victims and Witnesses of Human Trafficking who are citizens of Bosnia and the Rulebook on Protection of Foreign Victims of Trafficking in Persons.</p> <p>Each year, the Ministry of Security is preparing a report on the situation with human trafficking in the country, and the progress the country made. In preparing the report, the Ministry collects data and information from various institutions and organizations, including the RMTs representatives.</p>





The data collected was on the number of identified victims, the number of initiated prosecutions, how many court procedures were completed, etc. These numbers were low, and among other it reflected how the NRM system functions, meaning that few persons were identified and supported through the NRM. In addition, there were new trends and forms of trafficking that appeared with the migration flows, for which the RMTs needed to be trained.

The analysis of the existing data and information showed that the RMTs were big and too cumbersome to function. They were few, with limited outreach to communities and had lack of knowledge of the local context. These were considered as some of the reasons for the low number of identified THB victims. As a result, the Department for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings launched an initiative to improve the RMT capacity, to ensure that the teams provide adequate identification, assistance and support to victims of human trafficking. In 2019, the State Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration started the process of restructuring the NRM. Different institutions from all levels of government were involved in the process. A series of meetings were held with the RMTs members but also with the representatives of the Ministries of the Interior of the BH Federation, BH Cantons, Republika Srpska and the Police of the Brčko District. The topic was the RMTs reorganization and reconstruction, but there was also a discussion around individual cases and the roles of different institutions/organizations. These discussions helped to put forward proposals about the role and composition of the new RMTs.

In January 2020, the Council of Ministers adopted the 2020–2023 Strategy to Suppress Trafficking in Human Beings, that gave the basis for the NRM reform. The Government completed the restructuring process in 2021. From initially four RMTs, now there were 18 coordination/monitoring teams established: ten in the Federation; six in the Republika Srpska; one in Brčko District; and one overarching team at the state level. The coordination/monitoring teams consist of government and NGO representatives and an MoIA official as the coordinator, and they are based on PO jurisdiction. The government, with financial and technical assistance from NGOs, trained the members of the new coordination/monitoring teams. They also, organized discussions with the Romani community on trafficking, and recruited and trained Romani activists to join the coordination/monitoring teams.

The key change expected with this restructuring is a more efficient NRM with increased scope of outreach. The new coordination/monitoring teams are smaller in size, thus addressing the previous system weakness, when due to the RMT many members (60 to 70) the coordination and referral in concrete THB cases was difficult. The new coordination/monitoring teams are in a higher number (18 compared to 4 previously). As such, the teams will be able to reach more people on a bigger territory, plus they will have more in-depth knowledge of the local situation, compared to the old RMTs.



<i>Key results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRM restructured and eighteen coordination/monitoring teams established.</li> </ul>
<i>Innovations/ Lessons Learned</i>	<p>The NRM should not be considered a fixed mechanism, rather than flexible and adjustable. Follow, collect and analyse data that comes from the functioning of the NRM. Use the data to improve, adjust or restructure NRMs to better address the needs of victims of human trafficking.</p> <p>The old RMTs were large and few. They did not have an overview of the needs of the people residing in the territory that the RMTs covered. With the restructuring and establishment of more and smaller coordination/monitoring teams, more people can be reached across a larger territory and there is better coordination and action taken on individual cases. The teams are better trained, more aware and more knowledgeable.</p>
<i>Transferability</i>	<p>This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ineffective national referral mechanism that fails to cover the entire territory of the country where it is established.</li> <li>• A low number of identified and referred victims of human trafficking.</li> <li>• A need for evidence-based adjustment of the systems/mechanisms currently in place.</li> </ul> <p>The practice is applicable in countries where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A national anti-trafficking authority is established and functioning.</li> <li>• A functional national referral mechanism exists.</li> <li>• A legislative or administrative framework is in place, which sets out the process for collection, analysis and dissemination of human trafficking data.</li> <li>• A functional data collection system is in place.</li> <li>• An official reporting system is set up in the institution that will perform data collection and reporting.</li> </ul>

**Name of practice** GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY FORM PARTNERSHIP

<i>County</i>	North Macedonia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (the Commission) is the main anti-trafficking coordination structure in the country. It is a multi-disciplinary body, bringing together different governmental and non-governmental actors who are involved in the provisioning of the anti-trafficking response and are dealing with irregular migration issues.</p> <p>The Commission is comprised of representatives from the ministries that govern matters of justice, police affairs, social protection and employment, foreign affairs, health and education. Its members also include members of the justice system and the Public Prosecution. The Commission is headed by a National Coordinator, supported by two Deputy National Coordinators (one responsible for anti-trafficking and the other for irregular migration issues) and a Secretary of the Commission.</p> <p>Within the Commission, there is the Secretariat, which functions as the operational body of the Commission, as well as a Subgroup for Combatting Child Trafficking that has a focus on children and their protection. The Secretariat is comprised of seventeen members and the Subgroup is comprised of thirteen members. The members are representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the National Referral Mechanism Office, international organisations, citizens' associations and experts from government institutions.</p> <p>Within these two bodies – the Secretariat and the Subgroup – the cooperation between government and other institutions and organisations is continuous and strong, and all members are active contributors to the work of the Commission.</p> <p>The Secretariat is using the expertise and experience of its members to build a stronger response to human trafficking and irregular migration issues. For example, together, the members are developing consecutive strategies and action plans. The Subgroup's annual operational plan is comprised of the activities of all Subgroup members (Government, CSOs and international organisations). The members contribute by providing analysis and opinion, by drafting laws and by giving views on the legal changes that are presented to the Government and the Parliament.</p> <p>The Commission prepares annual reports on all activities implemented by its members, including the results achieved by CSOs. CSO members are also involved in conducting research and studies and the design and implementation of public awareness campaigns, and are responsible for direct service provision, for example to victims of human trafficking supported by state funds.</p>



<i>Key results</i>	<p>The CSO's expertise contributed to designing the overall anti-trafficking response by providing in-depth knowledge to inform government response and shaping policy and legal framework . More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Strategy(-ies) and Action Plans developed.</li> <li>• Standard Operating Procedures for the identification and referral of trafficked persons developed and operationalised.</li> <li>• Various laws revised based on the analysis and or expertise of the members of the National Commission and its Secretariat.</li> <li>• In 2020, a draft Law on Compensation of Victims of crimes prepared.</li> </ul>
<i>Innovations/ Lessons Learned</i>	<p>CSOs and international organisations have a voice and equal treatment within a governmental coordination structure. They meet regularly and often, which allows for quick follow-ups and responses to different matters.</p>
<i>Transferability</i>	<p>This practice is relevant in contexts where there are many actors, states, CSOs, international organisations and academia that are active and need to work together in the provision of the overall anti-trafficking response and when dealing with irregular migration issues.</p> <p>The practice is applicable in countries where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A national coordination mechanism is in place.</li> <li>• CSOs and international organisations that have knowledge, experience, skills and resources exist.</li> <li>• CSOs and international organisations are formally included and participate in the national coordination mechanism.</li> <li>• Coordination and cooperation are a priority for the stakeholders.</li> </ul>

**Name of practice** CSO TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

<i>Country</i>	Serbia and Austria
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The CSO Astra and the CSO LEFÖ-IBF have established transnational cooperation in the referral and support of victims of trafficking.</p> <p>The CSO Astra, which is based in Serbia, manages an SOS help line and works on providing guidance on assistance and support programmes, legal aid, psychological counselling, medical assistance, support throughout institutional procedures, (re)integration and social inclusion and assistance throughout the return process. The CSO LEFÖ is based in Austria, and among other things, it runs an Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women.</p> <p>The partnership between the CSOs started in 2001 and has been ongoing ever since. They cooperate by consultation and exchange of knowledge, participation in training sessions and referral of individual cases. The cases they have cooperated on so far have involved Serbian nationals, identified as victims of human trafficking in Austria. LEFÖ supports the exchange of contacts between the CSO Astra and the victims. The goal is that when the victims return to Serbia, they will have a contact, information and access to services, and that the CSO Astra will support their recovery and reintegration.</p> <p>In some cases, the victim would need to return to Austria in order to testify before the courts or support their right to receive compensation. In those cases, the two CSOs exchange regular calls to plan and organise their travel to Austria and discuss all the logistical issues. They provide the victim with travel tickets, medical certificates, if necessary, and detailed information about the court procedure, and facilitate a meeting with a lawyer to understand their rights. They also secure a person who will meet the victim at the airport. Once the person has given their statement, the CSOs organise their return to Serbia. They have also facilitated victims' statements via a video link. The two CSOs are in continuous contact while working on a case.</p> <p>In managing the case, they cooperate with different state authorities, such as police, prosecutors, social services and other CSOs who implement, for example, economic empowerment programmes. As the court procedures can be lengthy and can take several years, the CSO provides continuous support in that time, such as informing the victim of what they can expect in court and providing legal aid, information on their right to compensation, information on which institution does what to empower victims so that they can make their own decisions, facilitating support from psychologists and therapists for victims of human trafficking, etc.</p>



<i>Key results</i>	In the last five years, the CSOs cooperated on approximately five cases. <sup>33</sup>
<i>Innovations/Lessons Learned</i>	When multiple parties work together on a case, it involves a lot of coordination and communication. Therefore, it is important to set up a coordination and communication system and have a clear division of roles and assignments, including time frame and means to support the given role/assignment. It is recommended to organise regular meetings to discuss and evaluate your progress in the process and to plan future steps.
<i>Transferability</i>	<p>This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A need for transnational cooperation on individual cases.</li> <li>• A need for the establishment of support structures in procedures before the national judicial authorities.</li> <li>• A low number of court procedures resulting in conviction.</li> <li>• Failure to exercise the right to compensation.</li> </ul> <p>The practice is applicable in countries where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are CSOs that have knowledge, skills and resources to support victims of human trafficking.</li> <li>• Special measures are in place to protect the victim of trafficking during the trial and while they give their statement.</li> <li>• The right to compensation is a legal right.</li> <li>• There are available financial resources.</li> </ul>

<sup>33</sup> Information obtained through interview with key stakeholders.





**Name of practice** POLICE AND CSO JOINT EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT THB VICTIMS

<i>Country</i>	<b>Austria</b>
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Federal Ministry of Interior (hereafter, The Ministry) together with CSO LEFÖ-IBF cooperate on the identification of THB victims and investigation of cases. The main aim was to create a victim-centred approach and to protect the victim of human trafficking.</p> <p>The cooperation with the CSOs began in 2001, when the police and the CSO attended seminars together. This provided a forum for the police and the CSO to have discussions and exchange knowledge, but most importantly, it helped the police gain a victim-centred perspective and an understanding of how they should approach and lead the investigation with the victim at the heart of it.</p> <p>The legal basis for this cooperation is an agreement signed between the Ministry and the CSO. The Security Police Act, together with the Law on Data Protection, gives the basis for a contract between the CSO and the Ministry and for the CSO to have access to the case information. At the beginning, the CSO signed a limited, three-year contract, but later, it was substituted for an indefinite cooperation agreement, which any of the parties can terminate with a one-year notice period. Today, LEFÖ-IBF operates nationwide on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs.</p> <p>The Ministry considers the CSO a partner and an essential part of the investigation team. The CSO is involved in the THB case from the beginning with the identification of the THB victims. The referral process from the Ministry to the CSO is based on an internal Ministry decree, which gives police officers instructions on how to proceed in cases of human trafficking. In those cases, the police should refer victims of trafficking to the specialised NGOs (subject to the victim’s consent). Alongside the cooperation on individual cases, LEFÖ-IBF offers training for the police on a regular basis and their close co-operation enables a close safety assessment and exchange of information on any potential threats.</p> <p>When cooperating on a case, the victim is at the centre of all actions, and the whole process is organised around victim protection and care and providing the victim with knowledge of their rights and information on available services including with regard to the relevant judicial and administrative proceedings. Besides information on their rights, the victim is also consulted on all decisions that have an impact on their life. When the victim is a child, the youth and welfare authorities are also invited to support the child, and the interview with the child can be conducted in a child-friendly interview room.</p>



<p><i>Key results</i></p>	<p>At a minimum once a year, all concerned parties (CSO, judges, prosecutors, police) come together at a round table to discuss procedures, specific cases or good examples of their joint work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formalised cooperation between the police and the CSO led to the establishment of a victim-centred approach in the identification and investigation of human trafficking cases.</li> <li>• The state secured funds to fully cover the LEFÖ-IBF operations. The funds come from the budgets of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Innovations/Lessons Learned</i></p>	<p>Conducting an investigation of sufficient quality requires cooperation, resources and time. In the past, the police work was target/suspect oriented, just to gather evidence as part of the investigation. However, the police learned that victim-oriented investigations help the police to advance further in the case against the suspect in the investigation and building trust with the victim is essential. If the investigation team does not reach a good level of trust with the victim, there is very little chance of cooperation, and consequently, very little success in the case.</p> <p>Building a team between the police and the CSO is a process, and it can take from three to five years of cooperation to reach a level of trust and understanding and become close partners who work together on a case. Working together as a small team on seminars and training sessions for police units or national stakeholders helps build that trust and cooperation.</p>
<p><i>Transferability</i></p>	<p>This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of victim-centred approach in police investigations.</li> <li>• Victims are not willing to cooperate with state authorities.</li> <li>• A low number of court procedures resulting in conviction.</li> </ul> <p>The practice is applicable in countries where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a national identification and referral system in place.</li> <li>• The CSOs have a role and constitute part of the national referral mechanism, and such role is clearly articulated in the regulatory framework.</li> <li>• The state authorities are ready and willing to cooperate with CSOs.</li> <li>• There are CSOs that have the knowledge, skills and resources to support victims of human trafficking.</li> <li>• Financial resources are available.</li> </ul>

**Name of practice** NATIONAL POLICE TASK FORCE SUPPORTS EARLY THB IDENTIFICATION EFFORTS

<b>Country</b>	North Macedonia
<b>Geographical Scope</b>	National
<b>Summary of approach</b>	<p>The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and the Public Prosecutor’s Office for Prosecution of Organised Crime (hereafter: The Prosecutor’s Office) established a National Unit for the Suppression of Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking (hereafter: Task Force).</p> <p>The establishment of the Task Force was foreseen within the National Strategy for Combatting Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (2017–2020) as a mechanism that would build the national capacities and increase the efficiency of the police and the prosecutors in combatting migrant smuggling and human trafficking and improve their coordination and cooperation. The Strategy was the basis for the establishment of the Task Force.</p> <p>The Task Force was established in 2018 following the signing of a Memorandum on Cooperation between the MoIA and the State Public Prosecutors Office. Its mandate is for three years, with the possibility of an extension. The Task Force is funded by the allocated budgets of the MoIA (staff and operational costs), as well as by donor funds (equipment and training).</p> <p>The Task Force is headed by a prosecutor, its deputy head is also a prosecutor and the assistant head is a member of the police, who is, at the same time, MoIA Head of the Unit for Suppression of Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling. The Task Force has 32 permanent police members, 14 police officers who work at central level and 16 police officers who work at local level, two in each of the eight Sectors of Internal Affairs. The Task Force also has also an analyst and works closely with 21 focal points from the different police departments (border police, computer crime, national criminal police cooperation on an international level, etc.) who support the investigation depending on the case being investigated.</p> <p>The role of the 16 police officers who work at local level is to gather information and data about the criminal acts and the perpetrators of crime, and also to conduct early detection and identification of THB victims. Ten out of the 16 police officers working on the local level became members of the mobile teams for early identification of potential THB victims established within the National Referral Mechanism.</p> <p>As part of its work, the Task Force follows different standard operating</p>



procedures (SOPs) for working with victims of human trafficking and unaccompanied children and processing vulnerable categories of foreign nationals. These SOPs target various institutions and foster a multi-sectoral approach in working with victims or potential victims of human trafficking. The Task Force also follows MoIA standard operating procedures for risk assessment and risk management, which helps them identify and mitigate risks in relation to the victim, perpetrator, police officers and the investigation itself.

From first contact with the victim, the Task Force provides information to the victim about their rights; the availability of medical, social and legal services; and the different court procedures (trial and compensation) that might require victim's participation. The social services are called in, when the Task Force identifies a victim who is a child, unaccompanied children, a migrant or a person with a disability. The Task Force cooperates with different CSOs and refers victims to specialised services, such as shelters, or builds awareness through events and social media presence, but also, together with the CSO, delivers training to other professionals, such as labour inspectors.

#### *Key results*

- The number of identified victims gradually increased from 2 in 2017, to 7 in 2020. The majority of the identified victims were female.<sup>34</sup>
- From 2015 to 2019, the number of potential victims identified by state authorities increased almost 8 times, from 11 potential victims in 2015 to 86 potential victims in 2019. The majority of the potential victims were female.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Innovations/Lessons Learned*

Allocating resources and securing a local presence was key to the success of this practice and the increase in the number of identified victims and potential victims of trafficking. With the establishment of the Task Force, more human resources were allocated (the team grew from 5 to 32 individuals), local presence was secured, with more than half of the Task Force members coming from the eight Sectors for Internal Affairs and, through the deployment of mobile teams, the police were involved in the early detection and identification of victims and potential victims of human trafficking.

Although the Task Force is institutionalised within the MoIA and the Prosecutors Office, sustainability remains a question. It has a three-year mandate (with the possibility of extension), its existence is based on the National Strategy for Combatting Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration and it requires political will to continue existing. A possible solution may be to include the Task Force in the MoIA's organisational structure.

<sup>34</sup> North Macedonia, EU Progress Reports from 2017 to 2021.

<sup>35</sup> National Commission to Combat Human Trafficking, Annual Reports 2015 and 2020.



It is recommended that the prosecutors who are members of the Task Force be fully dedicated/specialised in human trafficking cases and that they do not take other organised crime cases. The prosecutor's knowledge and experience, or lack thereof, can have a major impact on how the case is led, what kind of evidence is collected and how well the victim is protected and their cooperation is secured.

*Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:

- A national identification and referral system in place.
- A low number of identified potential and victims of human trafficking.
- A centralised system of identification of THB victims.
- A lack of human resources to work on identification and referral.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- There is a national identification and referral system in place.
- Responsibility for the management of the task force is within one authority/institution.
- Public Prosecutors are leading the investigation procedure.
- There is a legal and/or administrative framework that ensures a task force that is institutionalised.



## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The practices described here come from North Macedonia and Serbia. The practices emphasise continuous learning and training as a way to catch up with changing contexts and legislation or building the knowledge/skills of new personnel. The practices highlight the importance of having a system for continuous training embedded in the national institutions responsible for delivering training to staff in order to ensure the continuity of skilled personnel over the longer-term. The practices also point to the use of available national expertise in the development of the training curriculum, materials and training of staff.

The following practices are presented below:

1. Schools equipped to identify potential victims among school population (North Macedonia)
2. Commissariat supports learning and continuous development of staff (Serbia)
3. Continuous training on the asylum process for all police officers working on asylum (North Macedonia)

**Name of practice** **SCHOOLS EQUIPPED TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AMONG SCHOOL POPULATION**

<i>Country</i>	North Macedonia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Bureau for Development of Education (hereafter: The Bureau) in partnership with two CSOs and academia has developed and delivered information and training materials targeting the primary and secondary school population. The purpose is the prevention of human trafficking, and the detection, increased identification and referral of victims and potential victims of human trafficking.<sup>36</sup></p> <p>The process began with the Bureau organising five focus groups with educational staff from primary and secondary schools. The aim was to prepare Indicators to identify child victims of human trafficking. This was accompanied by the training of trainers, the development of a training manual, the development of information and education materials to complement the training, the roll-out of training targeting teachers and educational staff in primary and secondary schools and information sessions targeting parents and children. All activities were linked to the existing bylaws and standard operating procedures for addressing violence within schools and dealing with human trafficking victims.</p> <p>The Bureau started the process with the training of trainers (ToT) for the professionals from their own list of trainers. The ToT covered, amongst other things, guidelines on how to discover and identify victims of human trafficking and how to conduct an interview with a child victim or potential victim of human trafficking. A gender-sensitive approach to working with children was included as part of the ToT. The Bureau developed a manual for teachers as well as information and educational materials to</p>

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that this practice relates to identification of the THB victims among the nationals in North Macedonia. This practice does not target people on the move.





complement the training. An expert on children's rights and psychosocial development was included in the development of the educational materials and the interview model video for the training.

Following the ToT, the Bureau made an action plan for the online roll-out of training in all primary and secondary schools, with a focus on the prevention and identification of victims of human trafficking. Special attention was paid to disseminating knowledge on techniques of how to interview a child in child-sensitive manner. In addition to the roll-out of the training, information sessions were organised for parents and the children focusing on children's rights and the rights of victims of human trafficking. All materials were produced in multiple languages, i.e. Macedonian, Roma, Albanian, and the training was conducted in two languages, Macedonian and Albanian.

As part of this practice, the BED trained 55 national trainers who delivered 80 training courses targeting 1,850 educational professionals in primary and secondary schools. The BED also organised practice-oriented training on interviewing techniques for the preliminary identification of potential child victims of trafficking for 30 school psychologists and educational professionals from Skopje and Bitola

*Key results*

- A THB training model for schools was developed and institutionalised within BED. The model includes the development of a training handbook and accompanying training materials (videos and information materials), the training of trainers, the delivery of training courses and the delivery of information sessions to parents and children.

*Innovations/  
Lessons Learned*

It is the first time that such an investment has been made in all schools at system level, accessible to all, in different languages.

This practice was supported by an external donor. However, the practice is fully embedded in the state system for the development of education. It is linked with the normative framework, i.e. with the relevant bylaws and standards for addressing violence in schools or the identification and referral of human trafficking victims. The trainers came from the Bureau, as a state institution responsible for the capacity building of school staff. The trainers receive additional credits for the training that they deliver. Such an approach ensures the continuity of skilled personnel over the longer-term (once donor support is withdrawn) but also sends a signal that the whole institution is intent on addressing THB.

The practice was based on the priorities identified in the state strategic documents and action plans, and as such, it received strong support from the highest multi-institutional coordination body in the country, i.e. the Subgroup to Combatting Trafficking in Children. Multiple institutions are represented within this Subgroup, and they gave their full support. This was key to the success of this practice.



### *Transferability*

This practice is relevant in contexts where:

- There is a lack of awareness within the school population of the potential risk of human trafficking.
- The majority of children can be reached through the national education system.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- The education system allows children to be educated in different skills and the prevention of violence.
- Prevention and increased identification through the education system are among the goals and priorities of the national anti-trafficking policies.
- There are by-laws in place that support the implementation of anti-trafficking priorities.
- A network of teacher-trainers exists, equipped with human and financial resources.
- There is a teacher training system in place that is flexible and adaptive.
- Expertise relevant to the development of training materials and the training of teachers is available



**Name of practice** COMMISSARIAT SUPPORTS LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

<i>Country</i>	Serbia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (hereafter: the KIRS) is the state institution that has a mandate to deal with matters related to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. KIRS' Central Office is located in the capital, and within its structure, it has five Asylum Centres, 14 Reception Centres, one Training Centre and a network of 191 trustees in each local municipality. In 2015, the total number of employees was 60 people, and since then, it has increased by 5 times; today, it stands at approximately 300.<sup>37</sup></p> <p>Three different laws mandate the work of KIRS. The Law on Refugees gives authority on the registration, reception and provision of assistance, determination/cessation of refugee status, accommodation and settlement, return, etc. The Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection gives authority on receiving and accommodating asylum seekers, managing asylum centres and integrating people who were granted international protection. The Law on Migration Management<sup>38</sup> mandates the definition and monitoring of the implementation of the migration policy, collection of migration management data, preparation of reports, etc. One of the duties of KIRS, according to the Law on Migration Management, is to provide training related to migration management.</p> <p>In the early stages, the training given to KIRS staff was provided by civil society organisations and/or donor organisations. As the capacity of KIRS grew, the institution was able to slowly take over the organisation and delivery of training. KIRS has now developed a training curriculum comprised of basic and advanced training. The training of trainers was also completed to create a pool of trainers among KIRS staff. In the period from 2017 to 2021, KIRS delivered 15 training of trainers courses, trained 64 trainers and completed 18 training courses. Every two years, KIRS develops a two-year training programme for all of their staff, which has been adopted by the government.</p> <p>KIRS has established a reporting system through which they collect data on all aspects of the functioning of the reception/accommodation centres. These reports are collected on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. In addition, there are monthly coordination meetings which, in combination with the reporting system, are used as a tool to collect information on staff training needs. Each head-of-centre, in coordination with the head-of-shift in each centre, is entitled to identify and report on different staff training</p>

<sup>37</sup> Information obtained through interview with key stakeholders.

<sup>38</sup> Law on Migration Management, Official Gazette of RS, No 107/2012



needs, which are then shared through the reporting system or at the coordination meetings.

Another important aspect to be taken into account are changes in the regulatory framework, which made the training of staff on new regulations mandatory. Having established the training system, it provides KIRS with the means for a fast and flexible response to the changing regulations. Responding to a turnover of staff, there is a system in place ensuring that all new staff receive orientation and training.

Another part of this practice is a programme for tracking staff training, through which the management of KIRS can see which members of staff have passed which training and what their future needs might be. The training needs are based on a person's position (e.g. camp management, cultural mediation, security, reception). The topics of the training are also determined based on the needs of the professionals that work in the centres.

In cooperation with the Faculty of Organisational Science, KIRS is currently developing an online training platform, a combination of online training in an e-learning format and practical experience (praxis) in the field. On this platform, the trainees will access a training module where they will receive general information about the role and the mandate of KIRS. Afterwards, they will be sent out into the field to work two shifts and will return for a face-to-face debriefing session and discuss how to solve practical challenges from their experience in the field.

KIRS has also received accreditation from the European Asylum Support Office on delivering five training of trainers (ToTs) courses related to reception conditions and reception management, inclusion and fundamental rights and international protection. There are nine KIRS trainers.

#### Key results

- Institutionalised, in-service training is established and functioning.
- In the period from 2017 to 2021, KIRS delivered 15 training of trainers courses, trained 64 trainers and completed 18 training courses.
- In 2019, the reception conditions in the five centres for asylum met 95% of the relevant standards of the EASO guidance on reception conditions.<sup>39</sup> (Amongst other things, the standards relate to staff qualification and necessary and appropriate training, more specifically, the existence of a clear training syllabus and training requirements, training is provided on a regular basis, the minimum training provided includes gender- and age-specific concerns, etc.)

<sup>39</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/serbia-report-2021\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/serbia-report-2021_en)

The EASO Guidance prescribes a method for the provision of reception conditions. It sets out standards in different areas of living and there is a Staff Training Section. In this Section, there are minimum standards that need to be fulfilled on staff qualification and necessary and appropriate training. These standards are accompanied by specific indicators, such as a clear the existence of a training syllabus and training requirements, training is provided on a regular basis, the minimum training provided includes gender- and age-specific concerns, etc.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The training programme is accredited through the National Academy for Public Administration.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Innovations/ Lessons Learned</i></p>	<p>The establishment of a structured system for training was crucial to the success of this practice. This system entails curricula for both basic and advanced trainings, the training of trainers coming from KIRS and the delivery of training to staff employed in different centres, based on a two-year training plan. In addition, this practice is designed to be sustainable because it is conceptualised and led by KIRS, thus ensuring full ownership and commitment. In addition, the training programme is accredited by the National Academy for Public Administration, the central institution within the state system of public administration professional development. The training is delivered by KIRS trainers.</p>
<p><i>Transferability</i></p>	<p>This practice is relevant in contexts where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent legislative and/or context changes that require the continuous upgrade of staff skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• High staff turnover.</li> </ul> <p>The practice is applicable in countries where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a decision/regulatory framework in place to support the training and learning of staff.</li> <li>• Expertise relevant to the development of a training curriculum and materials and the training of staff is available</li> <li>• A network of trainers exists, equipped with human and financial resources.</li> <li>• An official reporting system is set up in the institution that will perform data collection and report on training needs.</li> </ul>



**Name of practice** CONTINUOUS TRAINING ON THE ASYLUM PROCESS FOR ALL POLICE OFFICERS WORKING ON ASYLUM

<i>Country</i>	North Macedonia
<i>Geographical Scope</i>	National
<i>Summary of approach</i>	<p>The Sector for Asylum (hereafter: the Sector) within the Ministry of Interior organises training for all first contact officials from the border crossing point and from the local police stations working on asylum. The Sector has developed training materials, and each year they provide training to selected staff members in all police stations, then the selected trained staff members transfer the knowledge to other colleagues within the same police station.</p> <p>Within the Sector, there are two departments, the department for the examination of procedure upon submitted applications for recognition of the right to asylum and assigning a personal registration number, and the department for the registration of asylum seekers, communication with the European System for Asylum and International Cooperation. The latter is responsible for the organisation and the delivery of the training.</p> <p>The Sector prepares an annual programme and plan with all activities and training planned for the year. The training plan is then shared with the Bureau for Public Safety, which is responsible for all police stations. In accordance with this plan, the Sector trains the police officers. Approximately 20 persons per police station are trained every year. Those 20 have are responsible for transferring the knowledge to their colleagues from the police stations and from the border crossing point.</p> <p>The Sector prepares the training materials. The training materials are based on the Law for International and Temporary Protection, which regulates the asylum procedure and the standards and guidelines from the European Asylum Support Office on the asylum procedure. The training materials refer to the asylum procedure, the non-refoulement principle, the indicators for determining an asylum seeker, the cooperation with the Centre for Social Work, the rights of the asylum seekers and the services available to them, etc. In addition, the Sector has translated the access to the procedure toolkit, which is also passed on to the national police stations and the border crossing point officials.</p> <p>The training targets all police officers that work on asylum, in the eight Sectors for Internal Affairs and all the police stations within those sectors, and the four Regional Centres for border matters. The aim of the training is to unify the asylum procedure in all police stations when working with asylum seekers, unaccompanied children and other vulnerable groups of people. A training package with all training materials is left in each police station, so police officers can access them as needed. Information brochures are available in 11 languages and information posters are made visible in all police stations. The training and information materials are changed following the changes in the regulatory framework. Approximately 50 days of training are allocated on an annual basis to cover training for all police stations.</p>





The system for seeking asylum is centralised, meaning that all asylum applications are sent from local police stations to the Sector. The Sector makes an analysis of the asylum applications and, based on that analysis, is able to understand if their staff has any knowledge gaps in terms of the asylum procedure. In addition, the Sector prepares annual reports on their work. As part of the reporting process, they make an analysis of all the asylum-related data they receive from all police stations. This helps them adjust their training and information materials in order to address the needs of people who are seeking asylum.

*Key results* Some of the results achieved: <sup>40</sup>

- A system for continuous training is developed and fully institutionalised within the MoIA.
- Training rolled out to approximately 20 people per police station on an annual basis.

*Innovations/Lessons Learned* When the Sector first developed the training materials, they tried to include most of the information that is available in the Law for International and Temporary Protection. They learned that those materials were heavy and difficult for the trainees to understand, especially for newly recruited police officers. As a result, the Sector simplified the training materials focused on the rights of the asylum seekers and obligations of the police officers, including on the principle of non-refoulement. They also included concrete steps and guidelines of what a police officer should be doing and the information on how to fill in the asylum application.

Due to COVID-19, face-to-face training was stopped. So, the Sector is doing an analysis of the IT capabilities of all police stations to roll out the training online. Because of high staff turnover within police stations, the Sector wants to ensure continuous training and availability of knowledge in each police station. It is likely that, in the future, training will combine both online and face-to-face methods.

*Transferability* This practice is relevant in contexts where there is/are:

- Frequent legislative and/or context changes that require the continuous upgrade of staff skills and knowledge.
- High staff turnover.

The practice is applicable in countries where:

- There is a decision/regulatory framework in place to support the training and learning of staff.
- Expertise relevant to development of training materials and the training of staff is available.
- A network of trainers exists, equipped with human and financial resources.
- An official reporting system is set up in the institution that will perform data collection and report on training needs.

<sup>40</sup> Information obtained through interview with key stakeholders.



## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Western Balkan countries have accumulated knowledge as a result of the 2015 Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe, a knowledge that is transferable and can be used in different contexts when dealing with mixed migration flows and the identification of victims of human trafficking within mixed migration flows. For the knowledge to be transferable, it must be made available and well documented. However, this was not the case with the practices presented in this report, prior to its publication. A number of sources had to be consulted, including an interview, in order to gather the core information and describe the practice. A practice that is poorly or not documented impedes exchange and transfer of knowledge that has been gained through the implementation of that practice. Furthermore, the absence of evidence on how a practice functions and what the necessary resources are to establish and maintain such practice might prevent the practice from being institutionalised and to becoming part of the state response system.

The practices presented in this report are very diverse in nature and scope. They come from four different countries and they refer to the cooperation of different state and non-state actors; some relate to the management of mixed migration flows, and others to the identification and referral of human trafficking victims, including in the context of mixed migration. The overarching conclusions relevant to the practices presented in this report are as follows:

- **CSOs substitute or complement services offered by state authorities:** Using a CSO to provide services in partnership or on behalf of the state authorities has proven to be a good model. This model is applicable to different situations, including: a need for a fast, flexible and adaptable state response (mass migration), to fill in the gaps of the state service delivery (identification of THB victims) and to provide highly specialised legal expertise (asylum-related information at border crossings), etc. Such partnerships can exist in countries where the state authorities are able and willing to work with CSOs.
- **Models that secure sustainability:** The practices showed several good models of securing the sustainability of donor-funded initiatives. Some examples include the institutionalisation of a practice within a state authority, changing job descriptions of public employees to secure funding for their work, signing a permanent cooperation agreement between a state authority and a CSO, or by providing a licence for a CSO service provision on behalf of the government. However, the financial sustainability of services provided by the CSOs remains a challenge, since most of the CSO funding in Western Balkan comes from donors. One exception is the practice from Austria, where the CSO funding comes from the state budget.
- **Challenge in the identification of victims of human trafficking among people on the move:** The 2015 Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe revealed weakness in the system of identifying THB victims. Firstly, the system was tailored to provide the identification and referral services to people who were staying in the country, not in transit. As such, the authorities did not have the tools to conduct initial screening and assessment of vulnerability or risk in a short period of time for a high number of people in transit and moving onwards to their final destinations. Even if THB victims were identified, the victims did not want to stay. Secondly, the system could not respond quickly and adapt the existing THB identification and referral system to support the identification of THB victims among people on the move. Thirdly, the CSOs lacked the skills to document a case based on which a person could be recognised as a human trafficking victim by the state authorities. Finally, the system was missing a culture-sensitive approach to people of different nationalities other than the local nationals. The absence of a culture-sensitive approach hindered the screening and identification of THB victims.
- **Importance of having a continuous training and learning system in place:** The Western Balkan countries operate in an environment with frequent legislative changes that require the



continuous upgrade of staff skills and knowledge. In addition, there is a high turnover of staff employed in state institutions. Unless there is a system in place that supports continuous learning and training, the state authorities cannot regularly build the knowledge of the newly employed/transferred staff or educate staff on the latest legal changes and how those changes translate into practice.

- **Lack of uniformed data collection system:** Numerous sources were consulted in order to gather data for the practices presented in this report. The process showed that there are discrepancies in the data collected from two different institutions regarding the same practice for the same period of time. For example, the data related to the work of the mobile teams, collected by the national referral mechanism, did not match the data on the number of identified THB victims in one year collected by the police.

The recommendations put forward should help stakeholders maintain and improve their practice but also support their transferability into other countries.

- **Document the process of developing and implementing a practice:** Use that information to learn and exchange knowledge or to support the institutionalization of a practice within the state response system. A documented practice could be used in other national emergency situations or shared with partners in other countries.
- **Create a legal basis for cooperation between CSOs and state authorities:** Have a law or a legal document (contract) in place that will serve as a basis for such a partnership, and ensure clarity in the division of roles and responsibilities and security in the functioning of a partnership between a CSO and a state authority.
- **Plan sustainability from the start:** From the beginning, when establishing a practice, create a plan for how that practice will be sustained. Such a plan should contain an analysis of all the resources that are required to establish and maintain a practice, followed by information on which resources are available/missing within the state response system, and concluding with an action plan for how those resources will be secured.
- **Secure state financial support for outsourced services:** When the state concludes a contract for outsourcing services to a CSO, the contract should include a financial payment to the CSO that provides the service.
- **Establish a culture-sensitive system with cross-border links to support THB identification:** Establish a system to support victims of human trafficking within the mixed migration population, a system that is culture-sensitive and targets a moving population. Consider interpreters and cultural mediators a key ingredient to managing mixed migration flows and supporting the identification of THB victims. The interpreters and mediators can help with sharing information, screening and the identification of victims and supporting the work of law enforcement and the judiciary. Establish a cross-border cooperation and create a link in the service provision with different countries to ensure a continuum of information and the provision of support services while in transit and moving through different countries.
- **Invest in making the state victims' identification system adaptable:** A system with the ability to adapt, to become faster to respond and to make quick assessments of potential victims among people on the move. At the same time, it should provide support to the CSOs and train them to write detailed reports on potential cases so that the national authorities may use those reports to acquire sufficient information to officially identify a victim and pursue a human trafficking case.
- **Establish a system for the continuous education and training of staff:** A system that should be placed within the institutions mandated to train staff in the public administration sector. A system that includes the development of training handbooks and accompanying training materials, the training of trainers delivered on a national level training delivered by national



trainers, the continuous monitoring and evaluation of knowledge acquired through training and building that information to continuously improve the training and education of staff.

- **Build a uniform data collection system:** Improve the state data collection system to provide uniform and accurate data related to the identification of THB victims. The starting point should be understanding which state authorities are mandated to collect THB data, how the system is set up, how the data is collected and recorded, how data flows within and outside of sectors/institutions and the data collation, dissemination, analysis and reporting. It should also provide information on how data management is regulated by different authorities, the definitions and indicators based upon which the data is collected and the quality assurance processes implemented by each institution. After such assessment is completed, each sector should focus on what it can do to improve its data collection system, what links should be established or strengthened to improve horizontal and vertical data sharing and how to address gaps in availability, adequacy and quality of data, including data disaggregation. It is recommended that such a comprehensive exercise is undertaken under the leadership of the National Referral Mechanism.



## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: RESOURCES CONSULTED

[all documents were accessed between November and December 2021, unless specified otherwise]

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## ANNEX 2: WORKSHOP REPORTS

# GOOD PRACTICES IN MANAGING MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS WORKSHOP REPORT

1st March 2022

### Objectives and participants

The workshop objective was to disseminate good practices in managing mixed migration flows and the identification and referral of victims of human trafficking in the Western Balkans, and to facilitate information sharing and learning.

There was a diverse group of 60 participants with geographical representation from Austria and the Western Balkan countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Participants were representatives from Ministries of Internal Affairs, border police, professionals who work on asylum matters or with people who need international protection; representatives from civil society organisations, such as Tirana Legal Aid Society, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), Legis, ASTRA, Open Gate/La Strada Macedonia, Novi put, Red Cross of Montenegro, Hilfswerk International, Association 'Medica' Zenica, Civic Alliance, Atina; and representatives from regional and international organisations including GIZ, OSCE, ICMPD, DRC, UNHCR, UNODC, IOM and UNICEF.

### Main topics of discussion

The discussion was organised around six good practices including:

- 1) The right to a 72-hour legal stay (North Macedonia and Serbia);
- 2) CSOs supporting police in registering people crossing the border (North Macedonia);
- 3) Licensing CSOs for service provision (Serbia);
- 4) CSO outreach work in reception and transit centres (North Macedonia);
- 5) Model of social work in an emergency (North Macedonia); and
- 6) Training for all police officers working on asylum (North Macedonia).

Following is a summary of the main topics that were discussed:

- In 2015, during the migration crisis, a high number of people transited through North Macedonia and Serbia. The CSO worked with the authorities to legalise the transit of the people on the move. The authorities reviewed several models and decided to change the law and introduce a 72-hour legal stay by expressing an intention to seek asylum. Granting a 72-hour legal stay might not have been the best strategy to address the large influx of people transiting through the country. This conclusion is based on the fact that there was a big discrepancy between the number of expressed intentions to seek asylum (approximately 500,000) and the number of applications for asylum (approximately 200).
- Prior to 2015, it was very difficult, in North Macedonia, to establish cooperation between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the police. The CSOs tried to establish a model of cooperation and offer support to the police. The turning point was the 2015 migration crisis. On a daily basis, the border

<sup>1</sup>All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood in the context of United Nations resolution 1244 (1999).



police faced a high number of people arriving and did not have sufficient human and technical resources to register those migrants. The police decided to accept the support of MYLAs and UNHCRs in registering people who expressed an intention to seek asylum. In addition, the CSOs helped ease the tensions because it was easier for people to communicate with CSO representatives/translators/cultural mediators with migrants than with the uniformed police.

- In North Macedonia, the migrants were moving fast during the emergency and many decisions were made on an ad-hoc basis. Some decisions were based on a political agreement. One example is that there was a decision to restrict the movement for all, with the exception of migrants coming from Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan. The migrants from these three countries were allowed to submit an intention to seek asylum. The restriction was a result of a political agreement because the law did not state which nationalities could or could not express an intention to seek asylum.
- The officials who were registering people on the move sometimes made mistakes in the documents. Some of the mistakes resulted in migrants being returned from one country to another. For example, some migrants had to travel back from Serbia, through North Macedonia and return to Greece in order to correct the mistake.
- UNHCR North Macedonia shared an experience where all countries in Central Europe signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the border authorities, a model promoted by UNHCR. The MoUs were bilateral (border police/UNHCR) or trilateral (border police/UNHCR/CSOs) agreements. MoU samples have been published and can be used as a model in the Western Balkans.
- The migration crisis showed the need for a quick response from the system supporting the victims of human trafficking in Serbia. The system was tailored to provide long-term and continuous support to victims of human trafficking, not to people who are in transit. In Serbia, approximately one million migrants passed through Serbia, and despite numerous reports on potential victims of trafficking, only 20 victims of human trafficking were identified.
- The decentralisation of services is important. While many of the services are established in urban/capital areas, the people who might need those services are located near the border areas.
- In Serbia, licensing to provide a service does not necessarily come with financial support from the state.
- It is important to have community-based information as well as information coming from outside of the communities (smugglers, international organisations, CSO, government). The accuracy of the information provided to people on the move was also discussed. Different international organisations and CSOs have projects to address information sharing and the accuracy of the information provided to people on the move.
- Also key to managing mixed migration are interpreters and cultural mediators. One good practice from the IOM surrounds raising awareness among different stakeholders/persons who share common ground with migrants in terms of their countries of origin, their culture, their religion and various features of the populations that are migrating, etc.
- The importance of creating a network and cooperation beyond country borders has been emphasised. The potential victims of trafficking, identified amongst people on the move, did not want to stay in the country where they were identified. Thus, creating a network of services within different countries on the route and the final destinations, as a way to ensure assistance and continue the process of protection, is seen as crucial.
- A suggestion was put forward to include practices from other countries in the region, more specifically, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a high number of people on the move arriving in these countries. For example, certain procedures concerning unaccompanied and separated children, a child protection model that includes the appointment of a guardian, cooperation with the state institutions, development of vulnerability criteria, age assessment, the best interest of the child, etc. should be shared with other countries.



## Key points from the workshop

- Consider a humanitarian visa/transit visa or provide the legal option for people to voluntarily leave the country within a period of time as possible solutions to legalise the transit of people on the move.
- The key benefits of CSO/border police cooperation are a) sharing the burden of allocation and use of resources – the CSO brought in resources and staff, helped reduce the members of police staff registering and issuing intentions to seek asylum, and allowed more police officers to be present in the field; b) faster processing and registering of people; and c) supported confidence-building.
- All political decisions need to be anchored in the legal system of the country.
- Put a system in place to help correct mistakes made during the registration of people, especially with the arrival of large numbers of migrants. One solution could be to appoint a separate unit to deal with mistakes and corrections of the documents.
- Create a legal basis for cooperation between CSOs and state authorities. For example, if a CSO plans to cooperate with the border police, then signing a MoU is a must. This gives the legal basis for cooperation and helps define the duties and responsibilities of both parties. Mitigate the reluctance of border police to sign MoUs with advocacy, lobbying and trust-building.
- Organise a meeting between the Central European and the Western Balkan border authorities to facilitate discussion and cooperation. The model developed based on confidence-building could be replicated as a model of cooperation with others. MYLA, through cooperation with the border police, developed a model of services, which included the provision of legal aid, field presence and providing direct services to migrants. Now, MYLA offers this model of outsourcing services to other authorities; for example, the municipalities.
- Adapt the state victims' identification system and make it more responsive in making a quick assessment of potential victims. At the same time, provide support to the CSOs and train them to write detailed reports on potential cases so that the national authorities may use those reports to acquire sufficient information to pursue a case.
- Establish a system to support victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence within the migrant population, a system that is culture-sensitive and targets a moving population.
- Establish local teams to work on combating human trafficking, comprised of professionals who are living and working in the local communities where the teams are established.
- Link the communities in the countries of origin, transit and destination to help combat misinformation and facilitate accurate information sharing.
- Consider interpreters and cultural mediators as key ingredients to managing mixed migration flows. The interpreters and mediators can help in sharing information, screening and identification of victims and supporting the work of law enforcement and the judiciary.
- When creating a new service model, prepare a contingency plan containing all the information necessary to deliver that service. In the case of the outreach work model, the plan contains the approach, the programme, the list of experts (social workers, culture mediators, etc.) and may be used in other national emergency situations or shared with partners in other countries.
- Share the practices from this report with stakeholders in the countries surrounding Ukraine or with stakeholders who work in Ukraine to learn from the experience in the Western Balkans.





# GOOD PRACTICES IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## WORKSHOP REPORT

15th March 2022

### Objectives and participants

The workshop objective was to disseminate good practices in the identification and referral of victims of human trafficking in the Western Balkans and to facilitate information sharing and learning.

There was a diverse group of 60 participants with geographical representation from Austria and the Western Balkan countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Participants were representatives from the Ministries of Internal Affairs; border control; the centre for social work professionals; professionals working on asylum matters and with people who need international protection; professionals working on the development of education; civil society organisations and academia such as ASTRA, Open Gate/La Strada Macedonia, Civic Alliance, Hilfswerk International, Red Cross of Montenegro, Atina, Association "Medica" Zenica, Legis and South East European University; and representatives from international organisations, delegations and embassies, including UNODC, Council of Europe, ICMPD, IOM, UNHCR, Save the Children, OSCE, Austrian Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Office of the European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.

### Main topics of discussion

The discussion was organised around seven good practices:

- 1) Data-driven restructuring of the National Referral Mechanism (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- 2) Victim-centred approach in THB identification and investigation (Austria)
- 3) Mobile Teams contribute to THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)
- 4) Government and CSO form partnership (North Macedonia)
- 5) Cross-border CSO cooperation (Serbia and Austria)
- 6) Schools equipped to identify potential victims amongst school population (North Macedonia)
- 7) National Police Task Force supports early THB identification efforts (North Macedonia)

Following is a summary of the main topics discussed:

- In Austria, when the central level criminal police office was established, the focus was almost exclusively to discover and catch suspects. The police slowly changed this focus and started victim-centred investigation in close cooperation with the CSOs. Today, in any case where the police force thinks that there is a presumed or almost identified victim of human trafficking, they immediately contact the CSOs. Depending on the gender of the victims, the Austrian police contacts two different CSOs, one specialised to work with men and the other with women.
- The Austrian Ministry of Interior can have contract with a victim organisation. Once the contract is signed, there is no obstacle for a data protection; therefore, the police can forward and hand over interrogation reports to the CSO. In the same way, the police can request information related to the victim from the CSO.

<sup>1</sup>All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood in the context of United Nations resolution 1244 (1999).





- In Austria, the police and CSO work together from the beginning of the case. They discuss the best strategy for investigating the case. They also invite the prosecutor who liaises between the police and the CSO to decide on the best way forward for the collection of evidence and victim support. The Austrian law mandates special victim support measures, for example a victim can testify before the court via video link, the victim compensation is secured by confiscation order against the convicted person, etc.
- In Austria, once there is a judicial verdict against a suspect in a case, it does not mean that the case is closed for the police or the victim. The case may continue, and the police will have a role in it; for example, to secure a residence permit for the victim or support the integration process.
- In Austria, it's a must for the police to send information to the CSO LEFÖ-IBF about a victim of human trafficking. This is done based on an order, issued by the Minister of Interior to all 4,000 police officers working at local level.
- In North Macedonia, the mobile teams' work is based on a Programme for work adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Interior. The mobile teams are the first point of contact with regard to potential victims of human trafficking. The work of the mobile teams is aimed at the identification of victims of human trafficking and direct support, including referral to the competent institutions. From its establishment, the mobile teams have assisted 866 persons and identified 18 victims of human trafficking. The Direct Assistance Fund, despite being established in 2018, together with the mobile teams, doesn't exist anymore. The Fund allowed for humanitarian aid, psychological support, medication, expert support for the court procedures, etc.
- In North Macedonia, the SOS helpline supports the work of the mobile teams. As most people are scared to report potential or actual cases of human trafficking, the teams distribute the SOS helpline number during their outreach work, informing people that reporting is anonymous.
- In Serbia, the CSO Astra transnational cooperation goes beyond the cooperation established with the Austrian LEFÖ-IBF. The CSO Astra has established trust, relationships and cooperation with colleagues from North Macedonia, Spain, Netherlands, France and other countries. They are connected through their work supporting survivors of all forms of exploitation, but more importantly they share the same values of dedication, commitment and tenacity.
- Since 2002, the CSO Astra has been managing an SOS helpline. Since 2008, the CSO Astra has been a licensed SOS helpline service provider for the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy.
- In Serbia, one of the most common ways of recruiting people for the purpose of human trafficking is false job advertisements. CSO Astra provides support on the analysis of employment contracts. False contracts might have very high salaries, unclear legal employment terms, such as absence of working hours or work place, where the job will be performed.
- Challenges of the Sector for Asylum in North Macedonia include the lack of sufficient human resources and the absence of a standard operating procedure for the online interviewing of asylum seekers. The latter became important at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when physical interviews were no longer possible. The Sector for Asylum will continue building the knowledge of its staff. Currently, the Sector is preparing the 2022 – 2023 training plan, which will see the roll-out of training on interview techniques, interviewing vulnerable persons and assessing facts and evidence.

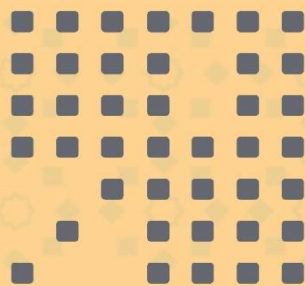
## Key points from the workshop

- The result of a victim-oriented approach to handling human trafficking cases is more efficient police investigation, higher satisfaction amongst the police and more satisfaction amongst the CSOs that work with the victim because the victims are stabilised and are better prepared for the court process.



- For the victim of human trafficking to testify against a perpetrator, mitigating any potential threats to the victim is important. A female victim is more willing to cooperate and provide evidence against a perpetrator if the safety and security threats against her child, residing in her country of origin, are eliminated; for example, by uniting the victim with the child.
- When police and CSOs work together on a human trafficking case, it is important to bring the CSO on board from the very beginning of the investigation to discuss the case together and agree on the best approach to identify THB victims and suspects.
- Legal regulation allowing the formal cooperation between CSOs and police in human trafficking cases is important. Such legal regulation would allow for the formal participation of CSOs in police investigations.
- When designing a communication campaign, it is important to establish different communication methods in order to reach out to potential or actual victims of trafficking. Many of the potential and actual victims of human trafficking identified by mobile teams in North Macedonia were illiterate. As such, they were not able to read the messages on anti-trafficking advertising campaigns around the cities.
- State resources must be secured in order to ensure the sustainability of the mobile teams in North Macedonia.
- Licensing CSO as a service provider contributes to achieving better quality, standardised and sustainable services.
- Using a publicly known case of human trafficking can help influence change. For example, in Serbia, as a result of a high-profile case of human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, the European Parliament passed a resolution on forced labour in the Linglong Tire factory, and a joint statement from the UN expert was issued expressing their deep concerns about the alleged trafficking of Vietnamese workers in Serbia.
- Monitoring judicial cases related to trafficking in human beings can be a good practice to understand how the laws are applied in practice and the possible challenges related to their practical implementation.





# IKAM

**RAISING AWARENESS AND BUILDING CAPACITY**  
*on migration in Afghanistan, Iraq and Western Balkan*