



**Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
**Croatia**  
**Montenegro**  
**Serbia (and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 (1999))**  
**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**



# South- Eastern Europe

## | OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- The signing in November 2011 of a Joint Ministerial Declaration in Belgrade by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia reflected a firm commitment to find a durable solution for some 74,000 individuals displaced by the 1991-1995 conflict in the Balkans and still without durable housing. A five-year Regional Housing Project has been designed to address the needs of these displaced people, and a donor conference to fund the project was held in Sarajevo in April 2012.
- UNHCR along with UNDP sought to identify ways to pursue durable solutions for the people displaced as a result of the Kosovo conflict, whose situation was not addressed by the Joint Declaration nor the Regional Housing Project.
- A Regional Conference on Statelessness supported by the European Union took place in Zagreb in October 2011, co-organized by UNHCR and the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the OSCE. It resulted in the adoption of the Zagreb Declaration, aimed to improve civil status documentation and registration for a considerable number of people belonging to minorities, including Roma, and ultimately to reduce the number of stateless people and those at risk of statelessness. Croatia and Serbia acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- UNHCR assisted the Governments in the region to enhance their search for durable solutions for vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs) still living in collective centres.
- UNHCR continued to provide technical support to improve the legislative and administrative frameworks on asylum and prevention of statelessness in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia (and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 (1999)).

A new social housing project for displaced persons in Rogatica, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## Working environment

Accession to the European Union (EU) remained an important driving force in the subregion, one which also encouraged progress in the development of asylum and migration management systems aligned with European and international norms. This assumed particular importance, as mixed flows of migrants and asylum-seekers heading for EU States have become a growing phenomenon in these countries. The political climate in the subregion was characterized by increased tension between and within Serbia and Kosovo, with the status of the latter still unaddressed.

Some 75 per cent of the nearly 3 million people displaced by conflict in South-Eastern Europe during the 1990s have returned home or found other durable solutions. But some 450,000 people, both refugees and IDPs, remain uprooted. Ending this displacement has remained a key humanitarian and political imperative, and States concerned have demonstrated the political will to address the issue.

## Achievements and impact

UNHCR's three principal objectives in the subregion remained to: (i) achieve sustainable durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs; ii) ensure the development of asylum systems in line with international and EU standards; and (iii) reduce statelessness and respond to the needs of stateless people.

The main focus was on efforts to find durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs. The major achievement in this respect was the landmark Joint Ministerial Declaration by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia in November 2011, reflecting a firm

commitment to achieving durable solutions for nearly 74,000 of the vulnerable displaced without housing solutions. An integral part of the declaration is a Regional Programme and Work Plan setting out concrete steps, including the accelerated provision of civil status documents to refugees and returnees, to help them enjoy their rights.

The Regional Programme was presented at a donor conference in 2012 which sought international support for housing solutions over a five-year period for all refugees now in collective centres and other vulnerable people, including those holding former tenancy rights.

UNHCR provided technical expertise and played a catalytic role in mobilizing stakeholders and funds, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under the Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement, adopted in 2010, UNHCR assisted the Government to close the remaining collective centres in the country with the support of development actors.

Following an assessment of the needs of IDPs from Kosovo in Serbia that indicated the willingness of nearly 80 per cent of them to remain in their place of displacement, UNHCR helped the authorities in Serbia to enhance local integration or voluntary return whenever possible. Serbia's National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons has provided a framework to tackle the problems of IDPs in the area of housing, health, education, employment and documentation.

UNHCR provided technical expertise and comments that were fully or partially incorporated into key legislation and administrative acts. Capacity-building and refugee law training were offered to State officials, NGOs and civil society. Legal support and civil status documentation, as well as legislative interventions, have decreased the risk of statelessness, and ensured access to basic rights for many

individuals, particularly among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) minorities.

## Constraints

The international economic crisis aggravated economic difficulties across the subregion. Unemployment rose dramatically in all countries and hit young people the hardest. The unaddressed status of Kosovo at times generated tensions. Problems related to effective governance remained, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, where elections were followed by political stalemates due to internal divisions and complex institutional structures.

Demanding financial and administrative requirements prevented the vast majority of people of concern from completing their application for permanent residency status by November 2011, as required by an Action Plan of 2009.

## Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Serbia** (and **Kosovo**: S/RES/1244 (1999)) are described in a separate chapter.

UNHCR's primary aims in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** in 2011 were to improve the capacity of the national authorities to develop a functioning asylum system, and to assist persons at risk of statelessness to obtain civil status documentation. It also sought to strengthen collaboration with the national authorities to end the protracted displacement of more than 113,000 IDPs; to help find solutions for some 8,600 vulnerable IDPs residing in collective centres; and to bolster efforts to promote durable solutions for the remaining refugees from Croatia. A multi-year strategy for protecting and assisting victims of gender-based violence was developed.

While providing direct support to people of concern, UNHCR worked to build the capacity of officials within the system. All asylum-seekers were provided with information

and access to legal representation throughout the refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. UNHCR supported voluntary return by providing transport, repatriation grants, legal aid and counselling to those who wished to return to their country of origin. In addition, the Office conducted advocacy, undertook legal and technical interventions and offered training to officials, the judiciary and legal aid partners.

Roma at risk of statelessness benefited from UNHCR's Roma Registration project, which resolved more than 1,500 cases. Measures included birth and civil status registration, as well as the establishment of residency, citizenship and social protection. Work was undertaken to develop a strategy for addressing statelessness.

Ending the protracted displacement of IDPs, particularly those remaining in collective accommodation, has been central to UNHCR's activities in the past year. With UNHCR's technical support to the authorities, sustainability projects benefited some 5,700 IDPs and returnees throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, while more than 3,350 people of concern received free legal aid from an implementing partner. Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were provided counselling, safe houses, as well as vocational and educational training to help them become self-reliant.

**Croatia** entered the final stage of negotiations for EU accession in 2011. However, some key return and reintegration measures were considered to be inadequate, and the EU established a monitoring mechanism focused on housing assistance for returnees and their access to rights.

Although some progress was made, many Croatian refugees in the subregion still awaited durable solutions. Implementation of the Housing Care Programme (HCP) improved, as the Government re-opened the application process for those who still wished to return to Croatia. With the existing house purchasing option, this was seen as the biggest improvement in the overall implementation of the

## Budget and expenditure in South-Eastern Europe | USD

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Budget	3,918,465	1,233,886	0	12,295,172	<b>17,447,523</b>
	Expenditure	2,444,924	819,667	0	2,653,760	<b>5,918,351</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	Budget	1,502,558	491,331	5,031,409	0	<b>7,025,298</b>
	Expenditure	690,067	260,541	2,082,278	0	<b>3,032,886</b>
<b>Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))</b>	Budget	1,156,000	1,220,470	8,562,066	3,469,916	<b>14,408,452</b>
	Expenditure	1,154,986	1,010,410	3,554,467	2,023,804	<b>7,743,667</b>
<b>Montenegro</b>	Budget	5,049,243	437,226	0	0	<b>5,486,469</b>
	Expenditure	2,863,519	269,274	0	0	<b>3,132,793</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	Budget	13,022,355	773,805	85,668	14,471,631	<b>28,353,459</b>
	Expenditure	9,180,666	728,310	0	5,506,470	<b>15,415,446</b>
<b>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</b>	Budget	3,206,489	338,319	0	0	<b>3,544,808</b>
	Expenditure	1,920,663	167,743	0	0	<b>2,088,406</b>
<b>Total budget</b>		<b>27,855,110</b>	<b>4,495,037</b>	<b>13,679,143</b>	<b>30,236,719</b>	<b>76,266,009</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>18,254,825</b>	<b>3,255,945</b>	<b>5,636,745</b>	<b>10,184,034</b>	<b>37,331,549</b>

HCP. The annual 2009 benchmark of 2,070 housing units was fully met.

UNHCR contributed to the work of thematic regional working groups focusing on pensions, exchange of data and status matters. The exchange of data on all those who achieved durable solutions was fully completed by Croatia and Serbia, but pension and status issues were still pending.

Implementation of the asylum legislation amended in 2010 was monitored by UNHCR on a continuous basis. This was of particular importance in view of a 180 per cent increase in the number of asylum-seekers as compared to 2010, spurred by Croatia's imminent accession to the EU.

UNHCR continued to provide free legal assistance to asylum-seekers in the first-instance procedure, as the Asylum Act provided for free legal aid only in the appeal procedure.

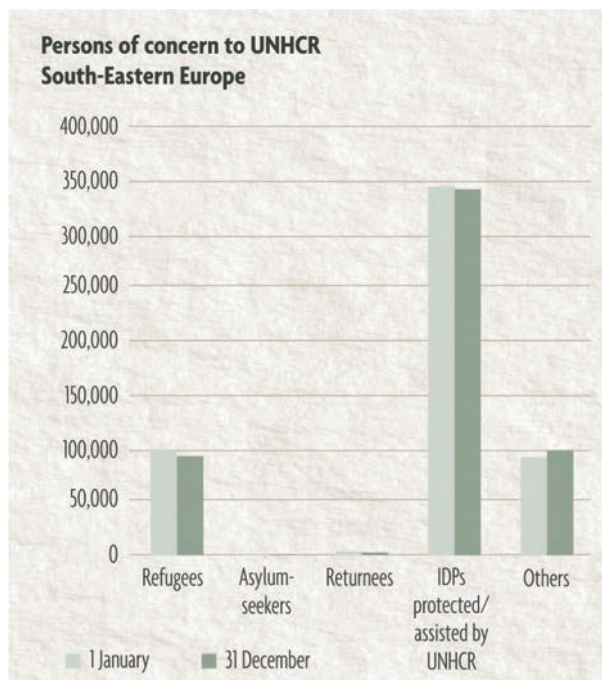
UNHCR's main priorities in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** were to find durable solutions for persons of concern (mainly Roma) and enhance the asylum and protection systems for refugees and stateless people. In parallel, it focused on the prevention and reduction of statelessness. UNHCR also participated in a working group drafting amendments to the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection to bring it more in line with EC Directives. A total of 740 persons requested asylum in the country, and UNHCR had to intervene in 62 cases. In addition, the Office contributed to reinstating the practice of subsidiary protection status to several cases.

In the last four years, returns to Kosovo facilitated by UNHCR increased, from 28 persons in 2008 to 193 in 2011. With UNHCR's support, 81 per cent of the total Kosovo population of concern opted either for local integration (696), or for return (179). At the same time, 56 former asylum-seekers regularized their residency through marriage to nationals. Assessments were made of the housing needs of the persons opting for local integration and the feasibility of vocational training and income-generation programmes. Support was also provided to the most vulnerable persons and urgent medical cases.

One of UNHCR's operational priorities was to gauge the scope and causes of the problem of lack of civil status registration among marginalized groups. Some 540 Roma and members of other minority communities were assisted to complete 940 civil status registration and citizenship procedures.

In **Montenegro**, following UNHCR's advice, the validity of the decree that guarantees refugees access to rights until the acquisition of the new legal status of foreigner as per new national legislation, was extended until the end of June 2013.

As a result of strong advocacy by UNHCR, the Government adopted a new strategy for 2011-2015 of durable



solutions to issues regarding displaced persons in Montenegro, with special emphasis on the Konik Area. UNHCR has been included in the Coordination Board to monitor and lead the implementation of the strategy.

Legal aid was made available to the displaced and persons at risk of statelessness, mainly in the RAE communities, in order to facilitate civil registration and acquisition of missing documents. Free legal aid was provided to 6,000 persons and about 2,750 obtained documents from Serbia (and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)), Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Camp management activities were supported in Konik camp. Housing construction material was made available to some 2,000 refugees. UNHCR continued funding life-sustaining medical support for some 130 persons, psychosocial assistance for 150 families, ad hoc financial assistance for more than 250 cases, and social welfare payments for some 140 families. Seventeen survivors of SGBV were identified and assisted.

UNHCR closely monitored a sharp increase in the arrival of asylum-seekers, which was expected to continue as Montenegro progressed towards EU membership.

## Financial information

UNHCR's budgets and operations in the subregion have been decreasing over the past five years, reflecting the shift towards Governments progressively taking on wider responsibility for bringing the displacement chapter to an end.

## Voluntary contributions to South-Eastern Europe | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
<b>SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE SUBREGION</b>						
United States of America					9,100,000	9,100,000
<b>South-Eastern Europe subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,100,000</b>	<b>9,100,000</b>
<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</b>						
Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)				102,333		102,333
European Union	405,741					405,741
Switzerland		130,925				130,925
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina subtotal</b>	<b>405,741</b>	<b>130,925</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>102,333</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>638,999</b>
<b>CROATIA</b>						
Belgium			128,603			128,603
European Union			312,832			312,832
<b>Croatia subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>441,435</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>441,435</b>
<b>KOSOVO (S/RES/1244 (1999))</b>						
European Union	190,099					190,099
<b>Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)) subtotal</b>	<b>190,099</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>190,099</b>
<b>MONTENEGRO</b>						
Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)	369,714					369,714
European Union	7,002					7,002
<b>Montenegro subtotal</b>	<b>376,715</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>376,715</b>
<b>SERBIA</b>						
Divac Foundation				118,653		118,653
European Union	379,386			1,358,336		1,737,722
International Olympic Committee	54,239					54,239
International Organization for Migration	157,630			21,040		178,670
Russian Federation				200,000		200,000
Serbia					58,086	58,086
Trust Fund for International Cooperation for Development				71,964		71,964
UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund				231,808		231,808
<b>Serbia subtotal</b>	<b>591,255</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,001,801</b>	<b>58,086</b>	<b>2,651,142</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,563,809</b>	<b>130,925</b>	<b>441,435</b>	<b>2,104,134</b>	<b>9,158,086</b>	<b>13,398,390</b>