An elderly woman with short, grey hair is the central figure. She is wearing a light beige, textured cardigan over a blue and white polka-dot blouse, and a matching blue and white polka-dot skirt. She is wearing dark socks and dark shoes. She is leaning forward, focused on tending to a collection of potted flowers. In her right hand, she holds a pair of black pruning shears. The flowers include several bright yellow chrysanthemums and some purple ones. The pots are on a wooden table. The background shows a white wall with some peeling paint and a glimpse of a blue sky and green trees. The overall scene is peaceful and suggests a sense of daily life and care for her garden.

An elderly returnee in Serbia  
tends to her flower garden.

# South-Eastern Europe

**Albania**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Croatia**

**Montenegro**

**Serbia (including Kosovo)**

**The former Yugoslav Republic of  
Macedonia**

## | OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- UNHCR reinvigorated its efforts to find durable solutions for displaced populations, specifically for those in protracted situations originating from conflicts in the 1990s. The Office facilitated the resumption of subregional dialogue on durable solutions, in particular by assisting in the preparation of a Regional Ministerial Conference on Durable Solutions for Refugees held in Belgrade in March 2010.
- UNHCR's consistent advocacy resulted in the adoption by Montenegro of a National Action Plan which opens the prospect of permanent residence and sustainable integration for populations of concern. UNHCR's efforts had a similar impact in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where a National Action Plan was approved in November 2009.
- UNHCR continued to implement the "Social inclusion of and access to human rights for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Western Balkans" project. This aims to reduce the risk of statelessness among these populations. The Office provided legal assistance, helped beneficiaries to obtain nearly 9,400 personal civil documents and assisted some 2,800 individuals in completing their civil registration. These efforts allowed minorities in the subregion to exercise their basic civil and socio-economic rights.
- Technical expertise provided by UNHCR helped States in the subregion to consolidate legislative and institutional frameworks on asylum that meet international standards. New laws and by-laws were adopted or went into force in Albania, Montenegro, Croatia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.





## Working environment

Changes in the political situation affected the implementation of UNHCR's programmes in the region. Political tensions between some States emerged in early 2009, linked to unresolved bilateral issues or opposing views over the status of Kosovo. In the second half of 2009, the tensions were reduced and bilateral relations normalized.

Changes in legislation relevant to populations of concern to UNHCR were encouraged by States' objectives of integration into the European Union (EU). Some countries made significant progress in this regard.

New laws affecting the status of asylum-seekers, refugees and foreigners were introduced, and strategies to assist the returns of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) or their local integration were revised or adopted. These developments, accompanied by the resumption of subregional dialogue on protracted displacement, created new opportunities for durable solutions. Despite difficult socio-economic conditions, some countries made progress in addressing the needs of extremely vulnerable refugee and IDP groups, primarily through housing and self-reliance assistance.

## Achievements and impact

### Main objectives

- Ensure protection for all people of concern.
- Find sustainable durable solutions for refugees, IDPs and returnees.
- Assist people at risk of statelessness to obtain civil documentation and register with the authorities.

- Promote the voluntary repatriation or the local integration of refugees and support resettlement where needed.
- Affirm and develop an international protection regime and strengthen national asylum systems.
- Develop dynamic partnerships with international and national stakeholders.

UNHCR continued to seek solutions for some 460,000 displaced persons. The protracted displacement situation in the subregion has affected the living conditions and livelihoods of refugees and IDPs, particularly those belonging to ethnic minorities or living in collective centres. The latter are mainly older people, single-headed households, the chronically ill or other socially and economically vulnerable individuals.

The Office worked to ensure durable solutions for refugees through repatriation, naturalization and local integration, and through return and local integration for IDPs. Priorities were given to assistance linked to housing and livelihoods, community services to promote self-reliance, access to social services on behalf of targeted groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo, as well as in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Through UNHCR's advocacy, the authorities have become more open to local integration and some countries, such as BiH and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have adjusted their strategies accordingly, including by designing national action plans.

Repatriation remained at a low level in 2009, pending the resolution of outstanding issues related to refugee returns in Croatia, though there was some progress there because of a housing programme carried out by the Government. In BiH,

the Office used resettlement as a protection tool for a small group of Roma refugees.

The level of returns to Kosovo stagnated, although there was a slight increase at the end of the year. Returnees included Roma and affiliated minority groups as well as Serbs. UNHCR ensured the provision of assistance, including housing repairs, food and relief items, which contributed to the sustainability of returns. UNHCR focused its protection and assistance efforts on displaced Roma and affiliated minority groups who have specific needs, and who continued to face ethnic and social discrimination, in all the countries.

The lack of civil documents exposes many Roma to the risk of statelessness. The Office managed to decrease this risk and to ensure access to basic rights for many individuals in the subregion.

UNHCR assisted the authorities with capacity building and provided technical expertise, comments and recommendations that were fully or partly incorporated into legislation. The establishment of effective referral systems improved the situation at the borders.

## | Constraints |

Limited socio-economic development, housing problems and the absence of employment opportunities hindered sustainable return and reintegration. In some cases, returns were discouraged by lack of attention to the specific social, economic and cultural needs of vulnerable and minority groups.

## | Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **BiH, Serbia**, including **Kosovo** are described in separate chapters.

In **Albania**, UNHCR pursued protection, humanitarian assistance and capacity-building objectives in favour of refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR continued to support the implementation of the national asylum system through close cooperation with government counterparts and other actors. Expertise and financial support were provided to the Directorate for Nationality and Refugees, as was training for civil servants. UNHCR provided health and education services, shelter, and living and subsistence allowances to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in Albania.

In **Croatia**, the Office worked to create the legal and social conditions for refugee return and reintegration and closely monitored assistance programmes. It supported the authorities as they worked to implement fair housing programmes for returning refugees. At the end of 2009, a total of some 13,700 family applications for housing care had been filed. Of these, nearly 8,900 were positively considered for housing assistance, out of which 6,800 have already resulted in the provision of housing care. The Office successfully advocated for the acceptance of housing applications of those who missed the initially set deadline. UNHCR helped the authorities to accelerate the processing of 1,100 refugees' delayed housing applications.

Some 20 projects were implemented in Croatia to enhance returnee integration through the development of conflict resolution skills and reconciliation mechanisms. These helped prevent secondary displacement from areas of return. UNHCR also assisted in the development of the

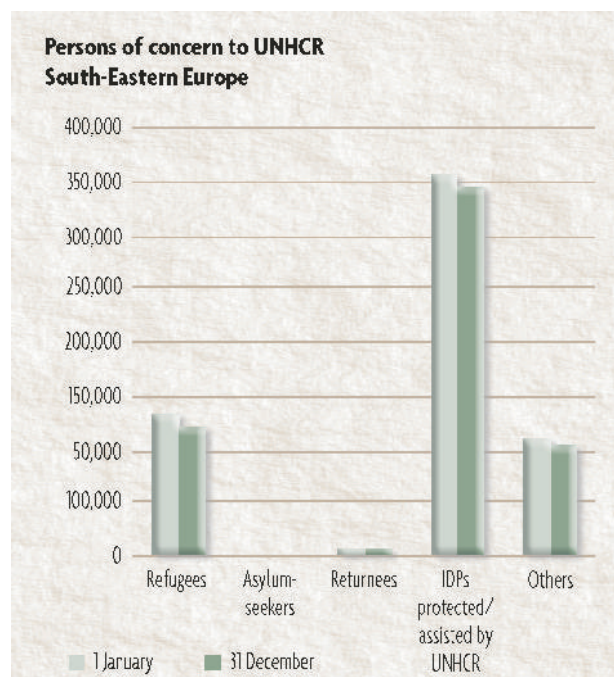
Croatian asylum system in line with international and EU standards and practices. The Office supported the implementation of a Border Monitoring Project which contributed to the implementation of the Law on Asylum and Law on Foreigners.

In **Montenegro**, UNHCR protected and assisted refugees; sought durable solutions for each displaced group; worked on the prevention of statelessness; and supported the development of an asylum system that would be fully compliant with EU norms. The Office assisted the most vulnerable groups of concern with legal aid, community services and medical and other assistance. It also helped the Government with implementation of the national asylum system.

Some of the recommendations for the resolution of the status of refugees from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were incorporated into an action plan which created a mechanism for this population to acquire the status of foreigners with permanent residence. UNHCR increased the provision of free legal aid and advocacy interventions, assisting some 1,900 persons. The Office also provided life-sustaining medical support to 880 persons, psycho-social assistance to 200 families and social welfare payments to 127 families.

In **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, UNHCR's programme responded to the basic needs of refugees pending durable solutions. The Office supported the Government and implementing partners with training, technical advice, capacity-building activities and strategic financial aid. Some 90 refugees returned voluntarily; 90 new asylum-seekers received legal aid and assistance while in the country; and 16 refugee families benefited from income generation or vocational training projects.

Most refugees in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia received financial support to cover basic needs and benefited from a variety of services in the areas of education, health and information. More than 4,100 Roma, mostly nationals, received legal support to obtain documents or register civil acts. The adoption of the Integration Strategy for Refugees and Foreigners was a major breakthrough for the refugee programme in 2009.



## Financial information

UNHCR's budgets and operations in the subregion have been decreasing over the past five years. Funding levels

were established to meet the most essential needs and did not allow for the enlargement of programmes. In 2009, country operations stepped up their efforts to raise funds locally.

Budget and expenditure in South-Eastern Europe (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Albania	635,284	0	635,284	599,139	0	599,139
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,103,311	0	6,103,311	5,847,831	0	5,847,831
Croatia	3,636,180	488,155	4,124,335	3,216,127	199,868	3,415,995
Montenegro	2,564,283	0	2,564,283	2,457,706	0	2,457,706
Serbia	24,228,908	6,860,900	31,089,808	21,528,848	1,667,887	23,196,735
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,047,472	0	3,047,472	2,734,776	0	2,734,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,215,438</b>	<b>7,349,055</b>	<b>47,564,493</b>	<b>36,384,427</b>	<b>1,867,755</b>	<b>38,252,182</b>

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related"(NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to South-Eastern Europe (USD)				
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
South-Eastern Europe subregion	Sweden	3,901,170		3,901,170
	United States of America	8,800,000		8,800,000
<b>South-Eastern Europe subtotal</b>		<b>12,701,170</b>		<b>12,701,170</b>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Council of Europe Development Bank	168,598		168,598
	European Commission	437,762		437,762
	Switzerland	261,614		261,614
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina subtotal</b>		<b>867,974</b>		<b>867,974</b>
Croatia	European Commission	406,081		406,081
	UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund	439,216		439,216
<b>Croatia subtotal</b>		<b>845,297</b>		<b>845,297</b>
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	European Commission	125,325		125,325
	<i>España con ACNUR</i> (Spain)	35,000		35,000
<b>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia subtotal</b>		<b>160,325</b>		<b>160,325</b>
Montenegro	European Commission	198,765		198,765
<b>Montenegro subtotal</b>		<b>198,765</b>		<b>198,765</b>
Serbia	Council of Europe Development Bank	302,575		302,575
	Divac Foundation (Serbia)	219,924		219,924
	European Commission	1,931,585		1,931,585
	Greece	100,000	18,600	118,600
	Japan	330,579		330,579
	Romania		91,561	91,561
	United States of America	100,000	930,000	1,030,000
	World Food Programme	100,000		100,000
<b>Serbia subtotal</b>		<b>3,084,663</b>	<b>1,040,161</b>	<b>4,124,824</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>17,858,193</b>	<b>1,040,161</b>	<b>18,898,355</b>

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related"(NAM) reserve.