

South-Eastern Europe



Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia
Montenegro
Serbia (and Kosovo: SCR 1244)
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

A refugee from Croatia benefited from a UNHCR-sponsored income-generating programme, in Vojvodina Serbia.



| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- UNHCR helped convene a Regional Conference on Durable Solutions in Serbia in March 2010. The conference mobilized the various stakeholders to end the protracted displacement arising from the 1990–1995 conflicts in the western Balkans.
- Years of UNHCR advocacy culminated in the adoption by the Parliament in 2010 of the Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- UNHCR helped States in the subregion to conduct surveys to update information on the number and the needs of the remaining refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people at risk of statelessness. Nearly 47,000 people were estimated to be at risk of statelessness in the subregion.
- More than 3,000 people found housing and improved their self-reliance with UNHCR's support, while 6,700 received vocational training and help to engage in small-scale income-generating activities. Some 2,500 people were assisted to repatriate voluntarily, mainly to Kosovo.
- UNHCR continued to provide technical support to improve the legislative and administrative frameworks on asylum and the prevention of statelessness.
- Nearly 1,300 asylum-seekers received help to avail themselves of refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. Some 30,000 individuals benefited from legal assistance and support in obtaining the civil documents necessary to allow them to exercise their basic civil and socio-economic rights.



Working environment

The driving force for several States in South-Eastern Europe was the prospect of accession to the European Union. International actors shared the understanding that peace and stability in the Balkans could be secured only with broad European support.

The political climate in the subregion was beset by tension between and within Serbia and Kosovo as they awaited the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo. Intensive diplomatic efforts followed until September when a new Resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly, co-sponsored by Serbia and the European Union, envisaging the start of a dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina under EU aegis. The talks would address issues affecting people's everyday lives. However, the constitutional crisis in Kosovo delayed the start of these talks until 2011.

Croatia's EU accession process continued throughout the year. In November, the visit of the Serbian president to Vukovar opened a new page in the chapter of reconciliation in the region. In a subsequent meeting at the presidential level, Croatia and Serbia agreed to work together to find mutually acceptable solutions for those refugees still in need of housing and other support.

Achievements and impact

UNHCR pursued three main objectives in the subregion: (i) sustainable durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs; (ii) the development of asylum systems in line with international and EU standards; and (iii) a reduction in statelessness while responding to the needs of stateless people.

Concrete progress was achieved on several fronts. In March 2010, the Government of Serbia, with the co-sponsorship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro, organized the International Conference on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons in Belgrade with the participation of the European Union, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and UNHCR. The conference addressed outstanding issues which continue to hinder the achievement of durable solutions for those displaced during the conflicts of the 1990s. A donor conference in 2011 will mobilize support for a comprehensive effort to resolve these issues.

The adoption of the Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement opens prospects for durable solutions for IDPs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A survey conducted by Serbia with UNHCR support showed that four out of five people displaced from Kosovo would opt to integrate locally if possible.

In its efforts to develop asylum systems, UNHCR provided technical expertise and advice on key legislation and administrative acts. It also gave training in refugee law and provided other capacity-building support to state officials, NGOs and civil society in the region.

The provision of legal aid and civil documentation to persons of concern as well as advocacy at the legislative level 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 meant that difficult economic conditions persisted across the subregion.

Unemployment rose dramatically in all countries and affected young people particularly severely.

The period preceding the release of the ICJ opinion on the status of Kosovo brought a slow-down of political activity in the region as Governments awaited the court's opinion. Intense political and diplomatic activity resumed in the latter part of the year. Effective governance remained problematic, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo. Elections in these countries were followed by political stalemates owing to ethno-national divisions.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **BiH and Serbia (and Kosovo: SCR 1244)**, are described in separate chapters.

2010 was one of the most successful years for UNHCR in its efforts to find durable solutions for refugees, returnees and IDPs. The political momentum created by **Croatia's** EU accession process brought new opportunities for addressing issues of concern. Following the Belgrade Conference on Durable Solutions in March, UNHCR played an important role in the exchange of data on refugees between Croatia and Serbia. This resulted in the de-registration of some 12,500 refugees, reducing the official number of Croatian refugees in Serbia to 52,500.

UNHCR welcomed the November 2010 political agreement between the Presidents of Croatia and Serbia to find durable solutions for the remaining displaced people in their countries. Conditions for return were improved with the possibility for IDPs to purchase their housing under privileged conditions and the extension of the deadline to apply for housing care in urban areas.

Croatia amended its Asylum Act, adopting almost all of UNHCR's comments, and bringing the legislation in line with EU and international standards. However, the country has not yet established a comprehensive migration strategy

which would include provisions for integration. The implementation of a number of legislative guarantees remained to be tested, for instance with regard to non-discrimination, free legal aid, mediation and minority rights.

In 2010 some 290 persons sought asylum in Croatia; however 60 per cent left the country within a short time, often before their claims had been fully examined. UNHCR focused on strengthening the capacity of the authorities and NGO partners to deal with refugee and migration issues, such as access to territory, the provision of free legal aid and integration assistance. The goal was to help Croatia adapt to the role of a country of asylum rather than just a country of transit.

Unaccompanied children remained of concern to UNHCR, which advocated for their treatment in accordance with international and regional standards. Anti-statelessness projects were implemented on a limited scale. A comprehensive survey on the issue could not be carried out due to lack of resources.

In **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, UNHCR looked for lasting solutions for the remaining Kosovo caseload, while enhancing asylum and protection systems for refugees and stateless people. UNHCR's interventions focused in particular on aligning national legislation to EU and international standards and on strengthening the capabilities of the authorities and civil society.

In 2010, some 170 people requested asylum in the country. UNHCR intervened successfully to prevent *refoulement*. Increased monitoring of status-determination practices led to the identification of two refugee cases who were at risk of removal of their status on national security grounds. Interventions with the Administrative Court resulted in positive decisions in these cases.

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
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Budget	5,959,717	778,718	0	12,903,279	19,641,714
	Expenditure	2,085,148	756,831	0	3,903,248	6,745,227
Croatia	Budget	5,915,140	534,500	2,079,100	0	8,528,740
	Expenditure	903,547	534,321	1,963,186	0	3,401,054
Kosovo¹	Budget	1,947,250	1,459,161	8,196,075	3,626,049	15,228,535
	Expenditure	698,864	1,161,374	4,247,784	2,579,600	8,687,622
Montenegro	Budget	5,632,160	412,550	0	0	6,044,710
	Expenditure	2,654,114	404,506	0	0	3,058,620
Serbia	Budget	15,393,817	968,855	0	18,078,644	34,441,316
	Expenditure	7,331,554	952,676	0	8,562,004	16,846,234
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Budget	3,877,756	324,106	0	0	4,201,862
	Expenditure	2,367,230	320,820	0	0	2,688,050
Total budget		38,725,840	4,477,890	10,275,175	34,607,972	88,086,877
Total expenditure		16,040,457	4,130,529	6,210,970	15,044,852	41,426,808

¹ Activities in Kosovo were previously reported as part of activities in Serbia.

By the end of 2010, the adoption of a package of judicial reforms affecting the judicial review of asylum cases allowed the Administrative Court to review cases. The newly established Higher Administrative Court will begin reviewing Administrative Court decisions by mid-2011. In parallel, UNHCR focused on the prevention and reduction of statelessness through legal counselling and help in obtaining documentation.

In September, UNHCR and local authorities conducted a durable-solutions survey. Out of 1,620 refugees and asylum-seekers, some 80 applied for local integration, 300 others expressed interest in local integration and 230 opted for return to Kosovo. UNHCR helped 80 people regularize their stay and assisted 250 people in civil-registration matters. In March, the Government assumed responsibility for providing monthly financial assistance to people granted asylum and asylum-seekers. It was agreed that UNHCR's financial assistance to people in a refugee-like situation would be phased out in 2011.

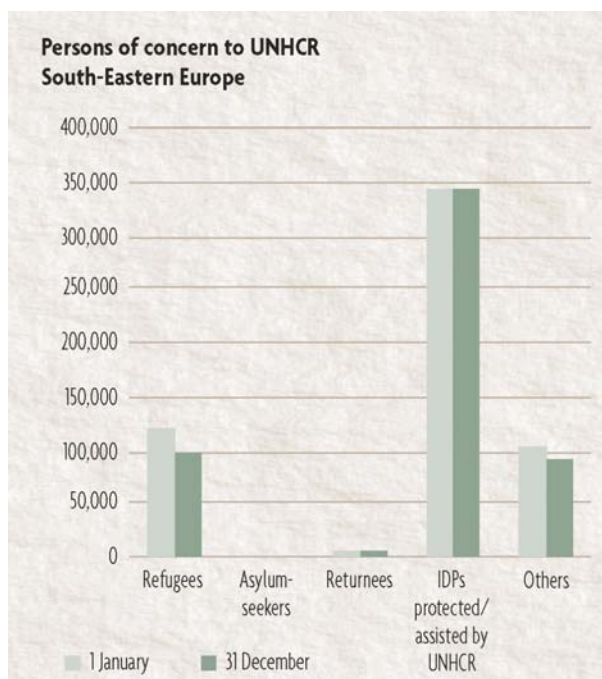
Transport and logistical support were provided to vulnerable refugees. Urgent medical health care, limited vocational training, non-food assistance, hygiene parcels and education support with extra classes, school books and scholarships were also provided in some cases. Some 130 people who returned voluntarily to Kosovo received a one-time cash-grant and help with documentation and clearances.

Montenegro adopted an Action Plan enabling displaced persons from the former Yugoslavia to apply for permanent resident status by the end of 2011. This status is a pre-condition for local integration. However, financial and administrative impediments prevented the vast majority of people of concern from completing their applications. Nevertheless, UNHCR and EU advocacy resulted in a significant reduction of administrative fees in July 2010.

In parallel, UNHCR promoted the adoption of administrative measures to enable refugees to have access to health care, education, employment and pensions, as well as social and child protection services, on a par with those available for Montenegrin citizens by 2012. An EU benchmark required Montenegro to consider return and local integration as equally viable durable solutions, in particular for displaced people residing in Konik Camp, Montenegro.

As a result of two re-registration exercises, the number of people of concern from the former Yugoslavia dropped by 30 per cent. The remaining populations at the end of the year included 1,560 people from Croatia; 3,860 from BiH; and 10,950 from Kosovo. Legal aid was made available to those in need, in particular to facilitate civil registration and acquisition of documents required to apply for permanent residency. Free legal aid was provided to over 4,500 people, and more than 1,000 obtained documents from Serbia (and Kosovo: SCR 1244), BiH and Croatia.

Support was also provided to local people at risk of statelessness, mainly from the RAE minority. Out of 1,500



people estimated to be at risk of statelessness, UNHCR assisted 210 to obtain civil documents.

The unresolved housing situation continued to be a serious obstacle for refugees opting for local integration in Montenegro. Camp management activities were implemented in Konik Camp, while housing construction material was made available for some 2,000 refugees.

UNHCR continued funding life-sustaining medical support for 860 people, psycho-social assistance for 370 families, financial assistance for 880 cases, and social welfare payments for 140 families. More than 40 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were identified and assisted. UNHCR expanded public-awareness activities on the problems of RAE, including the lack of civil registration.

While only seven refugees from Croatia and BiH repatriated in 2010, 190 from Kosovo, of whom the majority were RAEs, were assisted to return.

During the flash floods that hit Montenegro at the end of 2010, UNHCR provided assistance to some 1,600 affected local people and refugees.

UNHCR intensified its monitoring of border crossings. Montenegro remained mainly a country of transit for asylum-seekers, with only nine asylum applications lodged in 2010.

Financial information

Budgets and operations in the subregion have been cut over the past five years, reflecting the progressive downsizing of UNHCR's longstanding presence. Funding covered just under 50 per cent of the assessed comprehensive needs. Continuous exchange-rate fluctuations and losses challenged the stability of the operations in some countries.

Voluntary contributions to South-Eastern Europe | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE SUBREGION						
United States of America					12,762,000	12,762,000
South-Eastern Europe subtotal	0	0	0	0	12,762,000	12,762,000
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA						
European Commission	333,551	183,023				516,574
Netherlands				277,777		277,777
Slovenia					40,816	40,816
Switzerland		310,680				310,680
Council of Europe Development Bank				30,102		30,102
Bosnia and Herzegovina subtotal	333,551	493,703	0	307,879	40,816	1,175,949
CROATIA						
European Commission	22,093	88,126	315,619			425,837
UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund	121,340		242,760			364,100
Croatia subtotal	143,433	88,126	558,379	0	0	789,937
KOSOVO: SCR 1244						
European Commission	89,171	204,473				293,645
World Food Programme			104,505	34,835		139,340
Kosovo: SCR 1244 subtotal	89,171	204,473	104,505	34,835	0	432,985
MONTENEGRO						
European Commission	187,093	122,153				309,246
Montenegro subtotal	187,093	122,153	0	0	0	309,246
SERBIA						
Divac Foundation	71,546			255,891		327,437
European Commission	447,053	310,294		2,049,328		2,806,676
International Organization for Migration	54,570					54,570
Japan					322,928	322,928
Russian Federation				200,000		200,000
UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund				541,197		541,197
Fast Retailing Co., Ltd. (Japan)	171,416					171,416
United States of America				529,875		529,875
Serbia subtotal	744,585	310,294	0	3,576,291	322,928	4,954,098
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA						
European Commission		126,584				126,584
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia subtotal	0	126,584	0	0	0	126,584
Total	1,497,833	1,345,333	662,884	3,919,005	13,125,744	20,550,800

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.