

# INFORMATION NOTE

SECURITY FOR HUMAN BEINGS AND BORDERS –  
COMBATING SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS  
FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION



This project is  
funded by EU

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| <b>Lead applicant:</b>        | Group 484   |
| <b>Implementing partners:</b> | Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC); Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), Civic Alliance from Montenegro (GAMN); Civil Rights Program Kosovo* <sup>1</sup> (CRP/K); Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), Vaša prava Bosnia and Herzegovina (VP BiH) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC). <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>Associates:</b>            | Republic Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Serbia, National Reception Center for Asylum Seekers from Albania, Ministry of Interior of Montenegro, MARRI RC (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative Regional Centre) from the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Department for Citizenship Asylum and Migration of the Ministry of Interior Affairs in Kosovo*. |

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Western Balkans (WB) continued to be a transit route for irregular migrants trying to reach Western Europe from Turkey. Migrants cross the borders illegally, mainly by using alternative methods and routes as well as smuggling services provided by individuals and organized criminal groups. Smuggled migrants are vulnerable to different forms of crime, especially the most vulnerable among them (women, children, unaccompanied minors): violence, rape, theft, kidnapping, extortion and trafficking in persons. Although deaths along the WB route are relatively rare, they do occur.

Smuggling of migrants (SoM) is continuously among the main topics in EU Progress Reports for WB countries. Bearing in mind that it is a cross border phenomenon, the WB states need regional response to this common problem and one of the main objectives should be enhancing regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations in the WB through the development of a unified regional response to migrant smuggling.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

The Action was developed as **a regional response of 7 CSOs affiliated in the Balkan Refugee and Migration Council (BRMC) and the DRC** to the burning common problem along the Western Balkans Migration Route - smuggling of migrants. The Action will engage 90 CSOs in the process of developing a 'protection-sensitive' practice and the legislative and policy framework for suppressing migrant smuggling in the WB countries. They will be empowered to develop and implement national projects aimed at preventing migrant smuggling and providing services to smuggled migrants while developing cooperation with state bodies, the media and the academia. The Action will contribute to the development of the **comprehensive regional protection-sensitive migration management, based on multi-dimensional partnership.**

<sup>1</sup> \* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo\* Declaration of Independence.

<sup>2</sup> Group 484, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), Civil Rights Program Kosovo\* (CRP/K); Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), Vaša prava Bosnia and Herzegovina (VP BiH) are the members of the network Balkan Refugee Migration Council (BRMC).

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Activities will be divided into four clusters leading to the impact of the Action:



Security and border  
protection



Protection of migrants'  
human rights and freedoms



Contribution to the  
EU approximation process

## 1. Preparatory activities

**2. Capacity building activities** of local grassroots organizations in the WB countries in the area of combating migrant smuggling

**3. Granting and supporting** 24 national and 6 regional projects, as well as organization of several regional conferences in order to present national and regional responses to migrant smuggling issues

**4. Advocacy activities** for harmonisation of practice and advocacy activities for the legal and policy framework harmonization in the WB region (advocacy materials, 6 national round tables and 2 regional conferences)

## TARGET GROUPS

The main target group is 90 CSOs active in the field of migration, security, human rights, women's and children's rights, and youth along the WB migration route. The final beneficiaries are: migrants, including smuggled migrants, relevant state representatives, the academia, the media and the citizens in the WB countries.