

The increased influx of migrants in the Republic of Serbia

Since the beginning of 2015, until December 31, the state border of the Republic of Serbia was passed by 579,518 migrants from the Middle East and Africa. This number is significantly higher than the number of asylum seekers in 2014. Despite a challenge, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, in cooperation with other state authorities and in accordance with its responsibilities, defined by the Law on Asylum and the Law on migration management, based on decades of experience in reception, care and integration of forced migrants, managed to provide housing and support services necessary for a dignified staying of persons passing through the Republic of Serbia.

Although essentially a transit country, the Republic of Serbia meets all the standards regarding the protection of migrants. Since the beginning of increased

influx of migrants in June 2015, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has chosen a proactive approach to ensure adequate protection and assistance to people in need. Enormous efforts have been made to provide migrants, during their stay in Serbia, with adequate assistance, appropriate reception, temporary accommodation, medical care, food and medicines, as well as all information about the asylum procedure, with full respect for their human rights. At the same time, efforts are being made to strengthen border control and prevent smuggling and human trafficking.

Recognizing the need for urgent and coordinated action, the Government of the Republic of Serbia on 18 June 2015 established a Working group to resolve the problem of mixed migration flows, consisting of five ministers of the relevant ministries (Minister for Labor, Em-

ployment, Veteran and Social Affairs, who is also president of Working group, Interior Minister, Minister of Defense, Minister of Health, Minister without portfolio responsible for European Integration) and the Commissioner for Refugees and Migration. The working group was formed with the mandate to monitor, analyze and discuss questions of mixed migration flows in the Republic of Serbia, to provide analyses of the situation and propose measures to solve the identified problems.

Commissariat for Refugees and Migration thanks all international and civil society organizations, states and numerous companies that have helped financially and with human resources so that Serbia in the best way responds to the challenges in the course of an increased influx of migrants. We expect such a fruitful cooperation to continue in 2016.



Activities undertaken

18 June - The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted a Decision on the establishment of the Working Group for solving the problem of mixed migration flows.

8 July – Reception center was opened in the town of Presevo, with the aim to provide at one place security checks, medical screening, registration, assistance in food and water and shelter.

In mid-September Hungary closed its borders to migrants and the route has changed. On 16 September, due to changes in migrants' route to Croatia, One stop center in the building of the former children's hospital "Principovac", near the town of Sid, was opened.

7 October - In cooperation with the City of Belgrade and the GSP "Belgrade", bus service was introduced for migrants to transport them from the hotel "Bristol" to the Center for asylum seekers in Krnjaca.

16 October - Temporary registration center in the town of Bujanovac, in the premises of Public Company "Svetlost", was opened. In the Center in Bu-



12 August - Center for urgent reception of migrants in Kanjiža was opened.

24 August - The Serbian government adopted a Conclusion by which local self-governments, in whose territories there is an increased number of migrants, are provided with the funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia.

4 September - The Serbian Government adopted a Response Plan in case of an increased influx of migrants with the needs assessment. Response Plan defines measures, activities, human, financial and other resources necessary to provide urgent accommodation for migrants and unhindered access to their rights.

8 - 9 September - Commissariat for Refugees and Migration organized two-day training for local trustees for refugees and migration on the subject of acceptance and humanitarian care of migrants, in order to improve the efficiency of the local self-governments in this area in case of increas-



22 September - Serbia has activated the EU Mechanism for Civil Protection, in order to receive financial support to help migrants. Serbia has requested funds for the purchase of beds, mattresses, hygiene products, vehicles, fuel and food.

janovac up to 1,500 migrants can be registered per day. Also, it can provide shelter from cold and rain for about 150 people during their registration. Also, in October Center for the registration of migrants in the town of Dimitrovgrad started to operate.



30 October 2015 - Reception center for migrants in the town of Kanjiža was closed. Complete equipment and the rest of humanitarian aid were transferred to other reception centers.

3 November 2015 - New regime for the transfer of migrants from the Serbian territory to Croatia by trains has started to operate, on the basis of agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Croatia.

3 November 2015 - Temporary Reception Center Adaševci, near the town of Šid, began to receive migrants. In the Center they are provided with assistance and food while waiting to get on

the train from Šid to Slavonski Brod in Croatia.

16 November - After two months of adaptation works and expansion of existing facilities, Reception-transit center in Subotica was opened. Its capacity is up to 150 beds in the size of 580 square meters.

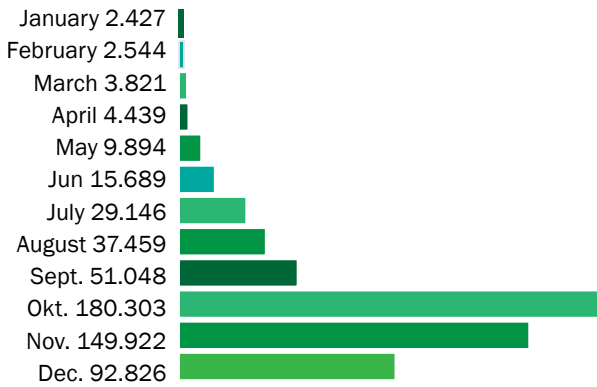
24 November - Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, in cooperation with the municipality of Šid, opened a facility for the reception and accommodation of migrants at the train station. The capacity of this facility is 200 beds for longer stays and 100 seats for transit.

18 december - Commissariat for Ref-

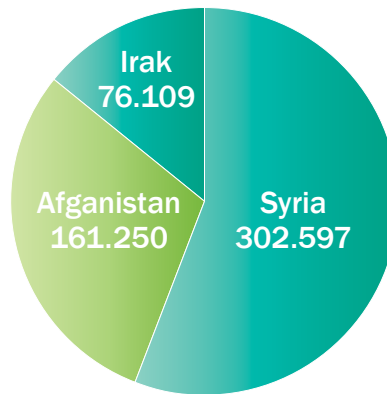
ugees and Migration and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation marked the International Day of Migrants. On this occasion, a panel discussion "Migratory flows in 2015 and future challenges" was organized in cooperation with the magazine "Vreme". The panelists were Vladimir Cucić, Commissioner for Refugees and Migration, Jean-Daniel Ruch, Swiss Ambassador to Serbia, Anne-Birgitte Krum-Hansen, Head of Department for Legal Protection of Refugees, UNHCR, Dragana Savic from the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and Andrej Ivanji, Editor at the magazine "Vreme".



EXPRESSED ASYLUM INTENTIONS BY MONTHS



THE MOST DOMINANT NATIONALITIES



GENDER RATIO

M -	422.330
F -	157.188

AGE STRUCTURE

ADULTS	406.234
MINORS	173.284

ACCOMMODATED IN THE CENTERS

12.508

NUMBER OF GRANTED PROTECTIONS

24

Expanded map with routes and centers



PEOPLE TESTIMONIALS

We thought the war would last for several days



Hatab Jashem, a dentist from the Syrian city of Deir al-Zor, had a wonderful life, a big house, private practice and the position of director of the Health Center in his hometown. All this disappeared in 2011, with the beginning of the war. "People thought that the war would last for several days and that the gunfire, that was heard around the city, would quickly stop. However, it was not like that - said Hatab in excellent Serbian. During the eighties he studied dentistry in Belgrade. After his studies he married a colleague Duška from the Serbian town of Bosilegrad and they together moved to Syria, where soon they got two children, Tamara (1995) and Omar (1999). Many of his compatriots keep coming via land-sea route risking their lives. Hatab helps them as a translator in Presevo working at the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia. Unlike his compatriots, he and his family went on time by plane, owing not only to the money he had, but also the fact that his wife is from Serbia. In these days he is waiting for residency documents, because he wants to obtain Serbian passport.

Photo SAŠA ĐORDEVIĆ, COMMISSARIAT FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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The views in this publication are those of authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SDC and the Swiss Government.



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