



The increased influx of migrants in the Republic of Serbia

Assistance to migrants in the form of “gift cards”

The Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Mr. Aleksandar Vulin and the representatives of the international humanitarian organization, “Mercy Corps,” visited the “Reception – Transit Centre” in Presevo on the 1st of February 2016 wherein the latter was engaged in the distribution of “gift cards” to migrants.

“Mercy Corps” commenced a pilot project set to last a total of two months, over the course of which some 1,600 MasterCard payment cards will be issued to the most vulnerable migrants. Aside from those cards reserved for the migrants themselves, a certain number of the cards will be issued to local citizens deemed as falling under the socially vulnerable category.

In its entirety the project is worth 270,000 EUR and is set to be implement-

ed by the end of March. The “gift cards” with a value of 210 EUR are to be issued to families while the cards which will be issued to individual recipients will have a value of 70 EUR.

Tanja Kačar amongst the women noted in “Blic Zena” weekly magazine

One of the most widely read magazines in the Balkans, “Blic Zena,” assembled ten of the most notable women as selected by the editorial staff of the publication in Belgrade in the beginning of February, amongst whose number was Mrs. Tanja Kačar, an employee of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, who was being recognized for her dedication in her work with the migrant population in an article published by the magazine.



PHOTO: BLIC ZENA

Tanja expressed her gratitude to the editorial staff for their recognition of her work and added that it is an honour to be numbered amongst such hardworking and intelligent women, all of whom, by means of the values and courage they portrayed, won the hearts of the readers of “Blic Zena”.



Senator McCain visited migrants

American Senator John McCain, accompanied by a delegation of the American Congress, paid a visit to the Reception – Transit Centre in Sid on the 12th of February 2016.

The high level delegation initially visited the Reception – Transit Centre in “Adasevci” where they were met by the Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Aleksandar Vulin and the Commissioner for Refugees and Migration, Vladimir Cucic.

Following their visit to “Adasevci” and their conversations with the migrants themselves, the delegation paid a visit to the Reception - Transit Centre “Sid Station”, where they were met by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Nebojsa Stefanovic, who familiarized them with the security aspects of the centre and its functioning in the reception of migrants.

American Senator John McCain stated that he will request additional assistance from the United States for the Re-

public of Serbia in order to combat the migration crisis.

“It is clear that Serbia needs additional help in its fight against the migration crisis and once I return to the United States, I will ask my colleagues to vote for such assistance,” Senator McCain said to the journalists in Sid

Senator McCain acknowledged that the migration crisis in itself is a costly affair and offered his thanks to the Serbian government for, “wonderful work,” they were doing under very difficult circumstances.

A Minister of the Government of the Netherlands, made a donation of ambulances in Sid

On the 16th of February 2016, the Minister for External Trade, Development and Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ms. Lilian Ploumen, made a donation of four ambulances to the city of Sid intended to provide assistance to migrants within the Republic of Serbia along with 4,000 sleeping bags.

The donation was made to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Ms. Plumen, following her visit to the railway station in Sid, stated that mutual cooperation was paramount in order to provide those refugees transiting through the Republic of Serbia with adequate conditions.



The Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands met with the Commissioner for Refugees and Migration, Mr. Vladimir Cucic, on this occasion as also with the representatives of international and non-governmental organizations engaged in the field.



PHOTO: EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

New regulations for transiting migrants

The police chiefs of Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia on the 18th of February 2016, agreed to implement new regulations for the joint registration of refugees on the Greek – Macedonian border.

By means of this process, identification checks are performed and the biometric information of migrants is collected in order to determine whether or not the migrants are arriving from those countries where their lives are imperilled such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The migrants will not immediately receive the status of asylum seekers at the Greek – Macedonian border, but instead this is to be performed in Austria or else some other country towards which they are headed.

Since the 22nd of February 2016 on the border between Macedonia and Greece, all countries which signed an agreement in Zagreb, are engaged in the profiling of migrants. This means that migrants from war torn areas will be allowed to traverse the West – Balkan route, provided they possess such documentation as is to be issued on the Greek – Macedonian border and which bears the appropriate stamp as also the photograph of the individual carrying it.



The Government of the Confederation of Switzerland donated vehicles to the town of Presevo



On the 18th of February 2016, Mrs. Isabel Perich, Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the Republic of Serbia made a donation of three vehicles to the representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs in the Reception – Transit Centre in Presevo.

The aforementioned donation comes as part of a project being implemented by the International Organization for Migration, financed in part by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and intended for providing assistance to the Government of the Republic of Serbia in resolving those problems associated with migration flows, as also providing adequate support to migrants traversing through the country. By means of the said project, aside from the donated vehicles, support has been provided to the Government of the Republic of Serbia through the engagement of additional personal for field operations, together with the augmentation of the capacities of those employed within the system for works with the migrant population.

Over the course of the visit, the Public – Sanitation Company “Moravica” from Presevo, received a new truck for the collection and transportation of garbage. The truck is itself worth some 70,000 EUR and was purchased by means of those resources provided by the European Union and the Government of the Confederation of Switzerland through the program, “European PROGRESS.” During the handover ceremony, Mrs. Perich stated that Serbia, owing to the efficiency and humanity it has demonstrated in caring for refugees and migrants, stands as an example in its own right within the region.

Following the completion of the donation ceremony, the representatives of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation paid a visit to the Temporary – Reception Centres in Presevo and Miratovac wherein they conversed with those employed therein about their daily tasks, the challenges they faced in the field as also about the migrants that were accommodated there.

Isabel Perich used this opportunity to visit the maternity hospital and the Department for Gynaecology of the Health Centre in Presevo. All these medical facilities has got the support of the Swiss Government in 2015 and 2016.

Switzerland and the Republic of Serbia have enjoyed a partnership stretching many years and the two countries began their migration partnership in 2009, by means of which they established a regular dialogue between the two countries focused on the topic of migration. In the past four years, within the migration partnership, the Government of Switzerland donated to the Republic of Serbia and its institutions 4 million CHF, out of which one million was donated during the migrant crisis. The latest, 7th Migration Dialogue is to be held in Belgrade in sometime around the beginning of March 2016. The said meeting will be used as a venue for the presentation of the new strategy of the Confederation of Switzerland for partnerships within the field of migration for the Western Balkans (2016-2019) and is set to address the migration related themes in an all-encompassing manner.

PHOTO: EMBASSY OF THE CONFEDERATION OF SWITZERLAND



STATISTICS

712 persons have expressed their asylum intention

36.141 persons have been registered as migrants

GENDER RATIO

22.656 Male

14.197 Female

AGE STRUCTURE

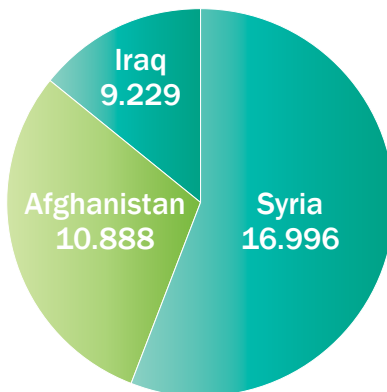
22.294 Adults

14.559 Minors

ACCOMMODATED IN THE CENTERS
570

NUMBER OF GRANTED PROTECTIONS
2

THE MOST DOMINANT NATIONALITIES



PEOPLE TESTIMONIALS

Babies born in migrant stream

Amongst the number of those migrants passing through Serbia, there are women in the final stages of pregnancy. Hajiba Hosein, the wife of a teacher from Afghanistan, gave birth to her fifth child, a baby girl who was given the name Bahara, in Sremska Mitrovica. The woman went into labour at the railway station in Sid where they were waiting for the train to Croatia.



- "We gave our daughter the name Bahara which means spring as a symbol of the beginning of our new life," said the father Mohamed. He and his family escaped from debt collectors within his country several months ago.

He said that he worked as a teacher in an Afghan village for a monthly salary of some 70 USD which was not enough for him to be able to provide for his family. Over the last two years he became increasingly indebted to a local food merchant to the point where his total debt climbed to 800 USD.

- "The food merchant sold my debt to debt collectors who came knocking at my door and demanded that the debt be paid by tomorrow morning or else they were going to take my 7 year old daughter. That same night we packed our things and ran away," the father recalls.

He wanted to reach Tehran, the capital city of Iran, wherein he hoped that he could find work. But instead the refugee life and the stream of migrants escaping war in the Middle East brought him to Sid. His wife Hajiba went into labour on the 16th of October at the railway station.

The doctors stationed at the railway station located in close proximity of the Reception – Transit Centre of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration called the ambulance and quickly transferred Hajiba to the maternity hospital in Sremska Mitrovica whereat, that same day she gave birth to a healthy baby girl. Three days later, both mother and child returned to Sid where they were reunited with the remaining members of their family who awaited them within the Reception – Transit Centre.

- "I would like to thank all those who helped us, thank you, thank you, thank you. May Allah preserve you," the father Mohamed was quoted as saying while he said his farewells to the employees of the Commissariat who cared for his family during their stay and who upon the occasion in question provided the family with a package of baby essentials including diapers, blankets and a baby carriage.

Bahara is the first baby to be born amongst those migrants leaving Serbia via Sid. One day later, another baby was born to a migrant family, this time a baby boy, Ali.

Expanded map with routes and centers



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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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