

PHOTO: SAŠA ĐORĐEVIĆ

The increased influx of migrants in the Republic of Serbia

Commissioner for Refugees and Migration Mr. Vladimir Cucic: “Serbia has provided an adequate response to the migration crisis.”

A round table was held on Monday the 25th of January 2016 on the topic of the, “Roles of the state and civil society in response to the refugee crisis.” One of those participating at the said event was Mr. Vladimir Cucic, the Commissioner for Refugees and Migration.

Mr. Cucic assessed that the Republic of Serbia has responded adequately to the migration crisis in large part owing to the experiences gathered over the course of the 1990's.

“The only new circumstance is that these people are in transit,” stated Mr. Cucic further adding that the country and civil society have managed to offer a well organized response in dealing with the effects of the migration crisis. His Excellency, the Ambassador of Norway in Belgrade Mr. Arne Sannes Bjornstad, offered his praise to the Republic of Serbia for their ‘fantastic’ response to the current crisis, one which as he stated, exceeded the efforts witnessed in some European countries.



PHOTO: MARIJA PIROŠKI



PHOTO: MEDIA RESEARCH CENTER

Photograph exhibition of Migrants in Serbia

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration regularly supports those programs organized by civil society which aim at further improving the position of asylum seekers, raising awareness about the problems and obstacles facing this category of migrants, promoting and strengthening tolerance on both the national and the local levels, trust building and the sensibilization of the local environment, removing prejudice as concerns persons seeking asylum, as also the de-

velopment of communication and dialogue at the national and local levels. In 2015 two public calls have been issued for the financing of projects of relevance to asylum seekers through which in turn 14 organizations of civil society have been supported. One of the projects supported in this manner was the project of the Media Research Centre entitled, "Migrants in Serbia." The project aims to depict, by means of photographs taken in the transit-reception centres around Serbia, from

Presevo to the Croatian border, the real circumstances facing migrants on their road to a better life, as also the challenges which the relevant institutions of the Republic of Serbia have been engaged in overcoming over the course of the past months in their efforts to manage the current crisis. The first in a series of exhibitions entitled, "Migrants in Serbia," was put up on the 26th of January and lasted until the 4th of February 2016 in the Creative center 'Deli' in Nis.

Swiss Support to Serbia in the field of migration

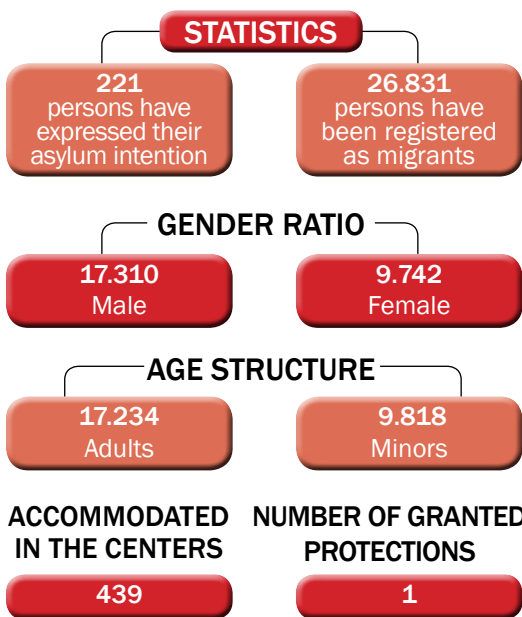
As of 2009 the confederation of Switzerland has actively supported the Republic of Serbia in the process of migration management through the Agreement on Migration Partnership. Since then the level of support provided by Switzerland to the system of migration management in Serbia has amounted to 9 million CHF, of which nearly one million CHF has been made available as of June 2015 in order to support those efforts exerted in response to the migration crisis. This assistance includes financial assistance provided through the equipping of reception-transit centers and the alleviation of the basic needs of migrants, but also knowhow provided by

Swiss experts within the field of migration. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is one of the key partners of Switzerland within the scope of this migration partnership. Within the framework of the project, "Support to the National Coordination for the Reintegration of Returnees - Phase II," with a total budget of 600,000 Swiss francs, implemented by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, support was provided to the Commissariat for more efficient implementation of activities in the centers, while the Reception-transit center in Presevo, as part of a package of aid worth more than 86,000 Swiss francs, was equipped with 100 metal bunk beds, 200 mattresses, dresser

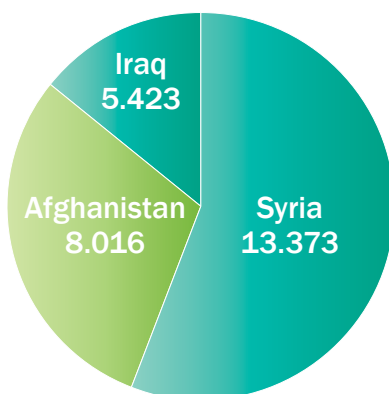
100 and 200 bedding sets, blankets and pillows, dining furniture, complete kitchen equipment. Through the Project, Reception-transit center in Presevo in the previous period was equipped with computer equipment, floodlights, a generator and hand tools necessary for the maintenance of the Center.

The support provided to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration through the aforementioned project is only part of the assistance which the Government of the Confederation of Switzerland provides to the Republic of Serbia in their effort to support an adequate response to the challenges occasioned by the increased influx of migrants.

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF INTERIOR



THE MOST DOMINANT NATIONALITIES



Expanded map with routes and centers



PEOPLE TESTIMONIALS


All that matters is a child's smile



PHOTO: OLIVER BUNIĆ/BLIC

When on the 5th of January 2016 Mr. Nemanja Bozovic, an employee of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, posted a video on his Facebook profile showing a snowball fight between migrant children and members of the Police force in the Reception-transit center in Šid, he could never have imagined the attention that his post would receive, nor else the sheer number of positive responses which this post would engender. Police officers Saša Tomić and Danilo Backović from the Indjića police station stated for the daily newspaper 'Blic' that the fact that they managed to produce smiles on the faces of the Middle-Eastern children, who had never before seen snow, was priceless in and of itself. The children began to play almost immediately, despite never before having felt the coolness of snow. Encouraged by the actions of Backović, some 20 Middle-Eastern children quickly began making snowballs and throwing them at officer Tomić, whose efforts at 'defending' himself proved futile. "Laughter resounded throughout the reception center and the children amused themselves for over half an hour. They made snowballs and threw them at me while I made as if I were defending myself from their onslaught. As their 'attacks' intensified, I was forced to withdraw and capitulate in the face of their spirited offensive. Their laughter was something that I will never forget. Our goal was to occasion some manner of happiness for those children in the midst of all that suffering. Both my colleague and myself are family men, we have children and we are well aware the importance of their smiles, as also that of their happiness," stated officer Tomić. Officers Tomić and Backović have been on duty in the numerous reception centers for some months now. "All those refugees express nothing but respect for the Police. And they say that our police officers are humane, full of empathy and are different from those police officers with whom they have had contact before they came to Serbia. For us they had nothing but words of praise," the officers were reported as saying.

This newsletter is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within the framework of the project "Support to the national coordination for the reintegration of returnees (Phase 2)". The aim of the project is to improve the overall process of migration management, the establishment of better conditions for the reception of asylum seekers, as well as reducing the risk of social exclusion of returnees. 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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