



UNHCR NGO Regional Consultations 2018 - Joint Regional Workshop for the Central and South Eastern European Regions

Plenary room - Atrijum

Title of the session	Responses to protection incidents at borders in the context of increasingly dangerous routes and shrinking access to territory in South Eastern and Central Europe 7 November 2018
Countries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia
Focal Points	<p>Moderators:</p> <p>UNHCR: Davor Sopf, Senior Regional Protection Officer, RRSEE (sopfd@unhcr.org); Ljubimka Mitrović, Assistant Protection Officer, UNHCR Serbia (mitrovic@unhcr.org) and Ota Hlinomaz, Protection Associate, RRCE (hlinomaz@unhcr.org)</p> <p>NGO: Martin Rozumek, Executive Director, Organization for Aid to Refugees (martin.rozumek@opu.cz); Sonja Tošković, Executive Director, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (sonja@bgcentar.org.rs)</p> <p>Note taker: (to be completed by ECRE Secretariat)</p> <p>Speakers/Panellists:</p> <p>Ms. Alice Haeyeon Jeong, UNHCR Serbia</p> <p>Mr. Nikola Kovačević, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, and Ms. Aniko Bakonyi, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, involved in cross-border strategic litigation at Serbian-Hungarian border</p> <p>Ms. Selena Kozakijevic and Mr. Emir Prcanovic, representatives of the Danish Refugee Council and Vasa Prava operating in the Sedra Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina</p>
Background	After the large influx of refugees and migrants in 2015 and early 2016, several countries in Europe adopted stricter asylum and border policies, resulting in the deterioration of access to territory and asylum procedures. While UNHCR recognises the importance

ECRE is a pan-European alliance of 99 NGOs protecting and advancing the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

Rue Royale 146, 1000 Brussels, Belgium • +32 (0)2 234 3800 • ecre@ecre.org • www.ecre.org

	<p>of securing national and EU borders, people in need of international protection must be able to seek asylum. Border controls, therefore, should be protection sensitive.</p> <p>Although the influx was followed by a sharp decrease of new arrivals in the last two years, new routes have emerged including the “Western Balkans route” where refugees and migrants arrive in and transit through The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia and onward to Slovenia.</p> <p>The journey to and through South Eastern and Central Europe has never been more dangerous and difficult. At many European borders, including in the Balkans, a number of police and border authorities continue to allegedly push back refugees and asylum-seekers from inside their territory to neighbouring countries, often denying access to asylum procedures, and in many instances resorting to violence.</p> <p>Concerted responses are needed to minimise protection incidents in border areas and to contribute to ensuring access to territory and procedures for those in need of international protection. To that effect, a wide variety of responses is available to UNHCR and NGOs with various levels of escalation. This includes border protection monitoring (through cooperation with authorities but also monitoring of border areas in countries without a formal agreement with the authorities), discussion and sharing of trends and incidents (substantiated by evidence and sufficient details) with the authorities, facilitating information sharing with relevant EU bodies, identification of vulnerable individuals and their referrals for assistance, training of border officials including possibilities to influence standard operating procedures and bylaws, publishing of reports, submissions to national and international supervisory and monitoring bodies, identification of cases for legal action and their strategic litigation before national and international courts, support to infringement proceedings with DG HOME, etc.</p>
Objectives of each session & Guiding Questions	What are the most effective and innovative responses available to UNHCR and NGOs to minimize protection incidents at borders on routes in South Eastern and Central Europe?
Methodology	Combination of panel discussions, presentation of examples of good practice (guest speakers), breakout sessions in groups to come up with effective responses to protection incidents (every group will receive a different scenario/protection incident), and then a report back session with a compilation of proposed solutions.
Agenda (Outline of the workshop)	<p>2x90 min, 60-80 participants expected, full merger of the workshop for Central European and South Eastern European region</p> <p>I. Setting the scene (30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context and reasons for the topic; - Current trends in mixed movements in South Eastern and Central Europe; - Short presentations of selected country/region-specific challenges; - Presentation of the question to be answered; - What are “protection incidents” and what are “effective responses”? - Main approaches to answer the question.

	<p>II. Presentation of examples of successful and innovative responses to protection incidents at borders (60 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A successful and effective border monitoring activity/project: use of new technology - presentation of BPMIMS (speaker: Ms. Alice Haeyeon Jeong, UNHCR Serbia); - Cross-border strategic litigation at Hungarian-Serbian border (speakers: Mr. Nikola Kovačević, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, and Ms. Aniko Bakonyi, Hungarian Helsinki Committee); - Opening of a centre for vulnerable individuals in Una Sana Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina (speakers: Ms. Selena Kozakijevic and Mr. Emir Prcanovic, representatives of the Danish Refugee Council and Vasa Prava operating in the Sedra Centre). <p>III. Group work (45 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Division into four groups with different scenarios/topics and protection incidents to be covered (e.g. protection incidents at land borders, at airports, related to accelerated asylum procedures); - Identification of most effective responses to protection incidents based on background scenarios distributed to the groups; <p>IV. Report back session (45 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentation of group work, compilation of proposed solutions, wrap-up and identification of concrete follow-up actions.
--	---