

South- Eastern Europe

| Working environment |

Three-quarters of the nearly three million people displaced by conflict in South-Eastern Europe during the 1990s have since returned home, or found other durable solutions. But some 450,000 people – refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – remain displaced in the subregion. There are also considerable numbers of stateless people in this subregion, as well as persons at risk of statelessness, some of whom are also displaced. However, the precise numbers of stateless people are not known.

Ending displacement in the subregion remains a key humanitarian and political imperative. In 2010, there has been an increase in cooperation among these countries, in a bid to make progress toward this goal. While many obstacles to repatriation or local integration have been eliminated or mitigated, a number of issues are still outstanding. These include:

- The lack of adequate housing, especially for the most vulnerable, including those still living in collective centres and in substandard private accommodation. These groups often include elderly persons as well as those with disabilities and other medical conditions.
- An absence of livelihood opportunities, often due to a lack of skills among the displaced, a long period of dependency on humanitarian assistance, as well as the generally high unemployment rates in the subregion.
- The lack of civil registration and documentation, and related difficulties in exercising socio-economic rights (including rights to health care and social welfare).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Croatia

Montenegro

Serbia (including Kosovo)

**The former Yugoslav Republic
of Macedonia**



A Serbian IDP woman in Mitrovica receives advice and assistance from UNHCR.



Steps towards accession to the European Union, including visa liberalization, remain an important driving force in the subregion, one which is also encouraging progress in the development of asylum and migration management systems that are aligned with European and international norms. This is of particular importance, as mixed flows of migrants and asylum-seekers heading for the European Union are increasingly on the move in and through these countries.

Strategy in 2011

UNHCR will pursue three principal objectives in the subregion: (i) to achieve sustainable durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs; (ii) to ensure the development of asylum systems in line with international and EU standards; and (iii) to reduce statelessness and respond to the needs of stateless people.

With respect to people displaced in the early 1990s, UNHCR's programmes focus on the right to return to countries and places of origin as well as the possibility of local integration for those who do not wish to return. Following the High Commissioner's visit to the region in August 2009, the Conference on Durable Solutions, convened in March 2010 in Belgrade, has given a new impetus to this effort.

Serbia and Croatia have confirmed their shared objective of closing the long-standing refugee chapter by the end of 2011. UNHCR shares this ambition, and expects 2011 to be a turning point in efforts to resolve the protracted displacement. To bring

this about, UNHCR will work closely with the governments concerned, the EU and other international partners. By the end of 2011, UNHCR intends to begin phasing down its operational involvement with respect to persons displaced by the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s.

At the same time, UNHCR will continue to work with partners to find solutions for the large number of persons displaced in and from Kosovo. There, as elsewhere in the subregion, raising awareness of, and responding to, sexual and gender-based violence among refugees, returnees and IDPs will remain a protection priority.

UNHCR will support authorities in the subregion to develop and implement effective national asylum systems. Training and capacity-building actions will be undertaken for border police and other law enforcement agents, as well as for officials involved in the status determination process, reception centre staff and others. Engaging civil society actors in refugee protection will be an important objective.

To reduce statelessness, UNHCR will focus on access to documentation for people who are or may be stateless. While all States in the subregion are already parties to the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons, only one has ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Office will promote accession to that Convention by all countries in the subregion. In all these endeavours, UNHCR will work closely with governments, local and international NGOs and other key partners including the EU, the OSCE and other UN agencies.

| Constraints |

Resolving the displacement situation in the subregion is dependent on overall political stability and political will.

Opportunities for return and sustainable reintegration, as well as local integration, depend on improved socio-economic conditions.

The continued interest of the international community in this region, availability of resources and the dynamism of the European integration process will influence progress.

| Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Serbia**, including **Kosovo**, are presented in separate chapters.

In early 2011, **Croatia** is expected to host some 700 refugees and asylum-seekers, both from within and outside the subregion. The continued development of Croatia's asylum system remains vital, in view of its expected accession to the EU.

In 2010, Croatia introduced important legislative changes, harmonizing its Asylum Act with the EU *acquis* and with the 1951 Refugee Convention. UNHCR will support Croatia in implementing this new legislative framework in 2011. Adequate protection and assistance for unaccompanied and separated children and other vulnerable individuals will remain a priority.

In addition to refugees and asylum-seekers, there are nearly 23,000 other people of concern to UNHCR in Croatia who have not yet resolved outstanding housing and status issues. Following the end of the conflict in the 1990s, a voluntary repatriation programme was launched to help displaced Croatian citizens to return home. This process is still under way and open to some 70,000 Croatian refugees in the region (primarily in Serbia) and several thousand IDPs, mainly of the Serb minority, who are still displaced in Croatia. The achievement of durable solutions and closure of the refugee chapter is an important challenge for Croatia.

UNHCR will encourage Croatia's accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Office will also assist stateless people in Croatia to obtain civil registration documents that are prerequisite for access to health care, education, employment and housing.

In **Montenegro**, UNHCR will continue to help find durable solutions for over 16,000 people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, including Kosovo, who are still displaced in the country 18 years after the outbreak of conflict in the region.

UNHCR will also continue to promote and support voluntary returns. At the same time, Montenegro has made significant progress towards the local integration of persons who do not wish to return, and has adopted an Action Plan to enable them to obtain permanent residency. In 2011, efforts will be made to ensure that all those who wish to remain in Montenegro are able to file the corresponding applications for permanent resident status. UNHCR will assist people of concern to secure the civil

status documentation required for permanent residency, and will actively support the implementation of the country's local integration framework, in close partnership with the EU and other stakeholders. In addition, the Office will continue to provide limited assistance to vulnerable people of concern through legal aid, basic health care, social welfare and housing assistance.

UNHCR will assist the Government of Montenegro to implement its new national asylum system and legislation. Although the number of asylum-seekers from outside the region remains low, as the country's European integration process moves forward, it is important to develop and strengthen the asylum system in line with international and European standards. UNHCR will also assist persons who are or may be stateless to resolve their situation, primarily through access to civil documentation, and will encourage Montenegro to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia hosts nearly 1,600 refugees, mostly of Roma ethnicity, who left their homes as a result of the 1999 conflict in Kosovo. The number of asylum-seekers from outside the region is also steadily increasing, even though most depart for third countries within weeks of arrival, substantiating the perception of the country as a transit destination. UNHCR will nonetheless place priority on continuing to help the Government to adjust its asylum, legal and institutional frameworks to international and European standards; preserve asylum space in the broader migration context; and consolidate a sound and efficient asylum system, compatible with the EU accession requirements.

With the aim of bringing the programme for Kosovar refugees to a successful conclusion in the near future, UNHCR will pursue voluntary repatriation and local integration. Within this framework, the main gap remains the lack of housing solutions. UNHCR will work with the authorities and key stakeholders to address the housing needs of some 100 vulnerable families who are expected to opt for local integration.

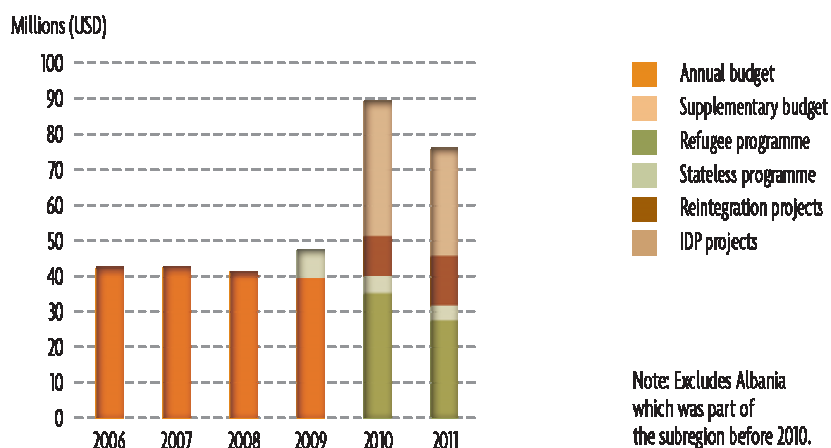
UNHCR will also provide support in obtaining identity documents for Roma refugees and other minorities who are or may be stateless, to enable them to enjoy their basic rights. UNHCR will also advocate for the country's ratification of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

| Financial information |

The budget for this subregion in 2011 is USD 75.6 million, of which 36 per cent is allocated for refugees, 40 per cent for IDPs, 18 per cent for reintegration and 6 per cent for stateless persons.

This budget is 15 per cent less than in 2010, reflecting the progressive downsizing of UNHCR's operations and the gradual resolution of the long-standing displacement chapter in South-Eastern Europe. The breakdown of the budget reflects a prioritization of reintegration and local integration activities.

UNHCR's budget in South-Eastern Europe 2006 – 2011



UNHCR budget for South-Eastern Europe (USD)

OPERATION	2010 REVISED BUDGET	2011				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	19,283,745	3,984,363	1,233,886	0	12,295,174	17,513,423
Croatia	6,494,640	1,342,558	491,331	5,031,409	0	6,865,298
Serbia	53,179,757	13,625,344	2,014,277	8,647,739	17,941,550	42,228,910
Montenegro	5,959,572	5,036,743	437,226	0	0	5,473,969
The FYR of Macedonia	4,250,661	3,174,489	338,319	0	0	3,512,808
Total	89,168,375	27,163,497	4,515,039	13,679,148	30,236,724	75,594,408