

South-Eastern Europe

Major developments

Despite some setbacks in the sub-region, the prospects of eventual stability and renewed growth came into sharper focus. Durable solutions continued to be found for significant numbers of refugees from the wars of the early 1990s. Undeterred by the political gains made by radical parties in central government, minority returns continued apace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) – for the third successive year more than 100,000 people chose to return. The steady resolution of property claims is clearing the way for many who are still displaced. In Serbia and Montenegro (SiM), implementation of the Serbian national strategy was slowed down by political uncertainty. This delayed naturalisation for many who no longer wish to return to BiH or Croatia.

In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), the return by year's end of nearly 95 per cent of those displaced in 2001 allowed some confidence that the Ohrid Agreement would be fully implemented. In Kosovo, the UN developed a set of standards and benchmarks – many of them

Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
(Serbia and Montenegro)
The former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia



addressing minority rights and return – which amount to the requirements to be met by the Provisional Government before Kosovo’s final status is considered. Unfortunately, little progress was made on the return of minorities to this area, where freedom of movement and security are not yet fully established.

UNHCR’s emphasis in the region is shifting away from humanitarian assistance and towards longer-term, core protection activities (as recommended by the Humanitarian Issues Working Group at its meeting in June). In concert with our partners in Europe, work is progressing on the passage of appropriate refugee-related legislation, increasing the capacity of governments and NGOs to meet the challenges ahead and build national asylum systems consistent with international standards.

Challenges and concerns

Not least among the challenges facing the region is the gap between expectations (those of the author-

ities and of the population at large) and resources. Much is being demanded of a region still struggling to recover from the devastation of war and to understand the shifting focus of the international community. At a time when support is needed for sustainable solutions, significant shortfalls are seen in funding for housing, job creation and public service improvements. While limited progress is being made in some urban areas, many rural areas remain largely neglected. The economic stagnation could well give rise to new migratory movements, adding to an already difficult and complex asylum environment in many parts of Europe.

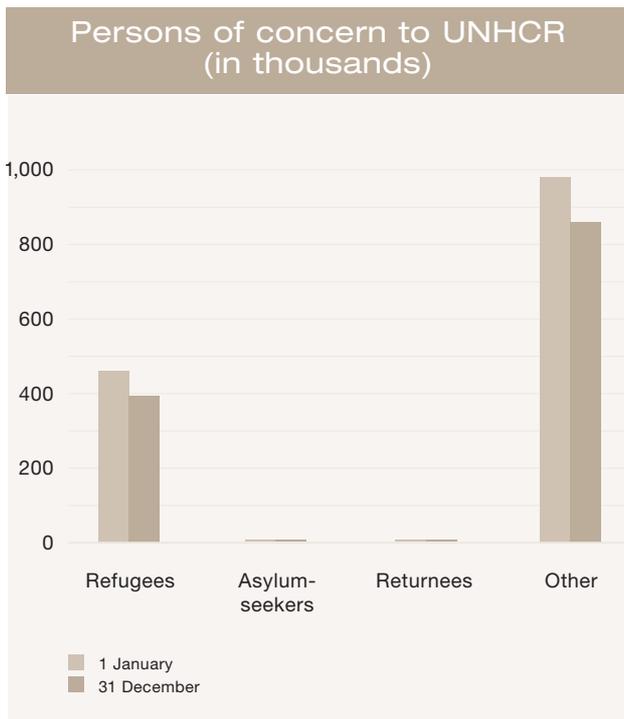
In Kosovo, the return of displaced minorities remains subject to political pressures and delays in the establishment of a rights-based provisional government. Some 3,500 refugees from the conflict in FYROM remain in Kosovo awaiting further stabilisation in their villages of origin. Conversely, a similar number of ex-Kosovo refugees remain in collective centres around Skopje, equally uncertain of their security should they return home.



FYR Macedonia: Ethnic Albanian family returning from Kosovo although their house had been destroyed in the conflict.
 UNHCR / M. Shinohara

In BiH, the slow development of a viable, effective central authority has delayed progress in many fields, not only that of a viable state-wide asylum

system. The oft-repeated intention of the Croatian government to resolve all outstanding refugee and return-related issues remains a hope brought only to partial fruition. This is particularly important for the 22,000 Croatian Serb refugees still in BiH, as well as for the tens of thousands of refugees in SiM from Croatia. In Albania, recurrent government restructuring and limited funds have impeded progress in addressing the pressing issue of trafficking, or indeed making effective use of the facilities already established by UNHCR to assist the authorities in establishing an orderly migration and asylum system.



Progress towards solutions

More than 102,000 minority returns were registered in BiH in 2002, while Croatia recorded some 11,000 cross-border returns. From SiM, some 1,500 refugees were transported to Croatia. Due to a UNHCR-supported policy of co-operation between SiM and BiH, cross-border returns between these two countries encounter few obstacles, and many

refugees enjoy unimpeded access to their original homes. Within this open environment, UNHCR assisted more than 1,800 vulnerable refugees to return to BiH. In addition, some 1,900 IDPs returned to Kosovo from SiM.

With varying degrees of alacrity, the countries of the region continued to begin to establish the necessary legal and institutional framework to ensure that persons requesting protection will be granted admission and access to an asylum procedure. In Albania, the process was slowed down because of a major restructuring of the main institutions dealing with asylum; however, the implementation of the pre-screening programme continued successfully. At year's end, Croatia's new asylum law had yet to complete its passage through Parliament. The interim procedures appeared to be stalled (not a single asylum case recognised). In FYROM, substantial progress was achieved in the adoption of a national action plan for the development of the asylum system. On the issue of citizenship, the NGO network continued to provide legal advice to people with problems of nationality/citizenship. The elections and the establishment of a new government slowed implementation of further activities in this field. In SiM, a new Constitutional Charter slowed down the process of asylum system building. In BiH, asylum issues have been adversely affected by the anti-terrorist environment: a new asylum law was drafted with greater emphasis on restrictive measures. Overall, governments of the region increased their emphasis on migration control measures.

In May and June 2002, the European Commission sent Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS), Justice, and Home Affairs Missions to the five countries of the region. In each case, UNHCR had an opportunity to brief the experts on asylum issues and make suggestions for inclusion in their final mission reports. UNHCR expects to strengthen its co-operation with the European Commission in the asylum area, both at the national and at the regional level.

Towards the end of 2002, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe launched the Migration, Asylum, Refugee Return Initiative (MARRI), which aims to develop closer co-operation among the

countries of the wider region on these issues. It is hoped that this initiative will accelerate progress towards the achievement of international standards in the fields of asylum and refugee protection.

Operations

Separate country chapters describe UNHCR's operations in **BiH, Croatia, SiM (including Kosovo)** and **FYROM**. In **Albania**, all aspects of the programme were affected by changes in government and the lack of appropriate government counterparts. Nonetheless, progress was made on linkages with the EU and the development of national legislation, while limited humanitarian assistance continued to be given to refugees and asylum-seekers. Training courses were conducted for border authorities and immigration officials.

Funding

With continuing prioritisation exercises and increasing demands on resources in other parts of the world, the South-eastern Europe budget was reduced from the ExCom-approved budget of USD 88.1 million, to a final allocation of some USD 74.7 million. The effect on immediate assistance to minority returnees was particularly regrettable.

Since 2000, the sub-regional budget has been reduced by some 70 per cent. Staffing levels are a mere 40 per cent of those established in 1999. A contraction in the number and size of programmes had been planned, but this process was forcibly accelerated by the global funding squeeze. However, donor interest in South-Eastern Europe has remained high, with some 66 per cent of the 2002 programme receiving earmarked contributions.

The emergency programme in FYROM was fully funded by earmarked contributions, ensuring that all those returning home received the assistance they needed.

Voluntary Contributions – Restricted / Earmarked (USD)

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
Albania					
	European Commission	660,729	660,729	0	0
	United States of America	300,000	300,000	0	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina					
	Germany	1,050,558	1,050,558	0	0
	Italy	539,906	539,906	0	0
	Japan	1,500,000	1,500,000	0	0
	Norway	266,312	266,312	0	0
	Switzerland	335,570	335,570	0	0
	United States of America	3,615,000	3,615,000	0	0
Croatia					
	Germany	147,638	147,638	0	0
	Japan	500,000	500,000	0	0
	Norway	266,667	266,667	0	0
	United Kingdom	156,250	156,250	0	0
	United States of America	1,803,576	1,803,576	0	0
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia					
	Canada	49,669	49,669	0	0
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung (GFR)</i>	137,795	137,795	0	0
	European Commission	4,616,108	4,661,462	0	0
	Germany	1,592,431	1,592,431	0	0
	Japan	1,250,000	1,250,000	0	0
	Luxembourg	88,000	88,000	0	0
	Netherlands	484,600	484,600	0	0
	Norway	799,467	799,467	0	0
	Private Donors Italy	173	173	0	0
	Switzerland	335,570	805,369	0	0
	United Kingdom	156,250	156,250	0	0
	United States of America	8,875,000	8,875,000	0	0
	Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KUW)	0	0	300,000	0
FYR Macedonia					
	Canada	186,335	186,335	186,335	186,335
	European Commission	524,935	524,935	1	0
	Germany	0	0	1,263,538	1,263,538
	Ireland	294,985	294,985	0	0
	Japan	0	0	1,000,000	1,000,000
	JTUC-RENGO (JPN)	84,746	84,746	0	0
	Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KUW)	0	0	150,000	150,000
	Netherlands	0	0	1,970,443	1,970,443
	United States of America	760,000	760,000	650,000	650,000
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Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
>>>					
South-Eastern Europe					
	Denmark	661,376	661,376	0	0
	France	673,173	673,173	0	0
	Greece	198,216	198,216	0	0
	Japan	2,150,000	2,150,000	0	0
	Norway	995,948	995,948	357,569	357,569
	Sweden	3,954,834	3,954,834	0	0
	United States of America	7,750,000	7,750,000	0	0
Total		47,761,817	48,276,970	5,877,886	5,577,885

¹ For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

Budget and Expenditure (USD)

Country	Revised Budget			Expenditure		
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total
Albania	2,014,281	537,364	2,551,645	1,580,099	357,078	1,937,177
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22,407,231	0	22,407,231	20,198,372	0	20,198,372
Croatia	10,409,986	0	10,409,986	9,697,767	0	9,697,767
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	47,485,243	2,978,466	50,463,709	38,730,058	2,428,344	41,158,402
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	4,733,737	8,223,162	12,956,899	4,242,556	7,697,011	11,939,567
Regional Projects ¹	64,000	800,000	864,000	20,000	735	20,735
Total	87,114,478	12,538,992	99,653,470	74,468,852	10,483,168	84,952,020

¹ Includes voluntary repatriation to South-Eastern Europe and international procurement for the FYR Macedonia emergency.