

**REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR
MIGRATION (GCM) IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

SKOPJE, March 2022

Introduction

The Global Compact for Migration (Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, i.e., GCM) was adopted on December 10, 2018 at an intergovernmental conference in Marrakesh, Morocco, and

formally adopted by a resolution of the UN General Assembly on December 19 of the same year. The UN General Assembly resolution was supported by 152 countries, including the Republic of North Macedonia. The document covers all dimensions of international migration in a comprehensive manner and is a legally non-binding, cooperative framework, based on the obligations contained in the Declaration on Refugees and Migrants adopted by the UN Heads of State and Government on September 19, 2016 in New York. It encourages international cooperation between all relevant stakeholders on migration, by respecting the sovereignty of states and their obligations under international law. The policies and objectives of the document affirm human rights and freedoms, systematize the needs and care of migrants as a vulnerable category and are the basis for further strengthening the instruments for comprehensive migration management.

The GCM is implemented by national governments with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other UN agencies, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, in a manner consistent with the rights and obligations under international law. The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia welcomed the establishment of the UN Migration Network globally and locally and expressed expectations for its effective and coherent support.

1. Methodology for preparation of the Report

The methodology for preparation of the Report on the status of implementation of the GCM for 2019 and 2021 of the Republic of North Macedonia is based on the basic Methodology adopted by the GCM (Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration / GCM¹), the Note for monitoring and review of the Global Compact on Migration and Migration Management Indicators: North Macedonia².

The report refers to the projected and undertaken activities in the Republic of North Macedonia, in 2019 and 2021.

The Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the State Statistical Office and the Emigration Agency are government institutions that have great authority in regulating migration flows and their activities largely comply with GCM policies and the implementation of the 23 goals for safe, orderly and regular migration. Also important is the role of other government institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Employment Agency and others, which have authority in migration processes, and thus in achieving the goals of the GCM in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The involvement of NGOs, the academic community, as well as regional and international organizations with a mandate to act on migration flows complement the Report and the content of activities, but also indicate additional activities that the Republic of North Macedonia should undertake for more effective implementation of the GCM.

The obtained information is incorporated in the text and essentially reflects the influence of the GCM on the migration situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, namely the policies and involvement of the GCM in the implementation of government measures by stakeholders, the progress made, but also the challenges facing the country. The report contains information on the progress in achieving the GCM

¹ https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/docs/indicative_outline_for_member_states.pdf

² IOM, July 2021

in the Republic of North Macedonia, especially on the status of implementation of the 23 goals of the GCM, with an illustration of policies or promising practices related to achieving the goals.

The Report also contains the steps that the Republic of North Macedonia is taking and will continue to take in order to comprehensively integrate the vision and principles of the GCM in the national strategies and implementation plans. The difficulties and the lack of resources encountered by the institutions in achieving the goals of the GCM are presented, as well as measures that the state takes in order to better mobilize funds for the implementation of activities.

This Report aims to present the status of implementation of the goals of the GCM in the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019 and 2021.

2. Policies and conditions

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development and recognizes international migration as a multidimensional reality of great importance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination (Goal 10.7), which requires coherent and comprehensive answers.

Pursuant to the **Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Communities and their Member States** (SAA), the Republic of North Macedonia has undertaken to cooperate in the areas of visas, border control, asylum and migration. In addition, the Republic of North Macedonia in 2018, by joining the first United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), together with 151 countries has committed to cooperate in all dimensions of international migration.

The comprehensiveness advocated by the GCM presupposes that finding the many answers that countries lack for more efficient migration management should be sought through scientific research and projects that will produce practical results with practical value. The Horizon program, but also other EU programs that encourage innovation, enable better results to be achieved³.

The Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia was prepared in order to establish a legal framework in the field of migration, harmonized with the UN Conventions⁴ and the legal framework of the European Union. It is worth mentioning that the new Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021 - 2025 has been prepared and it has been adopted by the Assembly at its 177th session held on December 23, 2021.

In addition to the Migration Policy Resolution, other important documents in the Republic of North Macedonia that are important in defining migration policies are the Strategies in the field of combating trafficking in human beings and illegal migration; integrated border management; cooperation with the diaspora, etc. Most of the strategic documents are valid until 2025. In the most important documents, such as the Resolution of the Migration Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021 - 2025 and the Migration Profile of the Republic of North Macedonia, the GCM is recognized and the

³ The significance of the projects from the European program Horizon 2020 has many positive aspects. Examples of this claim can be drawn from the implementation of two projects under this program, the Unity project under the FCT-14 program: Enhancing cooperation between law enforcement agencies and citizens - Community Policing and MIICT (ICT Enabled Services for Migration). More at <https://www.facebook.com/unityeuproject/> and www.Miict.eu

⁴ International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention on Employment Migration (revised), 1949 (No. 97), ratified in 1991, United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (so-called Geneva Convention), 1951, ratified in 1994, United Nations Convention on Statelessness, 1954 and 1961, ratified in 1994, 2020, ILO Convention on Migrant Workers (Additional Provisions), 1975 (No. 143), ratified in 1991, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, ratified in 1993, United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000, ratified in 2005; more in: Migration Management Indicators: North Macedonia, IOM, July 2021, p. 5

contents are harmonized with the GCM, in order to integrate it as an important instrument in the field of migration.

The National Roadmap for Migration Statistics in the Republic of North Macedonia has been developed to provide support to migration management authorities in aligning their migration frameworks, procedures and practices with EU Migration Statistics Regulation 862/2007 and other international requirements and further harmonization of migration statistics in the Western Balkans region.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 marked 2020 and 2021 and continues to seriously affect the situation and the conditions in the country, in all areas. The risk of infection, when irregular migration increases, is a real threat to migrants. Smuggling of migrants during the pandemic is on the rise. New circumstances also increase the risk of infecting police officers, social workers and volunteers.

The GCM is recognized as an important comprehensive document in the planning and implementation of activities in the field of migration management. In the period of preparation and adoption (2018) the document was analyzed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and other competent institutions in the country, and it was determined that the GCM policies and goals affirm human rights and freedoms, systematize the needs and concerns of migrants as a vulnerable category and are the basis for further strengthening of the instruments for comprehensive management of migration flows by the institutions of the Republic of North Macedonia. In that sense, support for the adoption of the GCM was presented, but also the positive assessments for its integration by the competent authorities in the country.

In 2019 and 2021, during the first years of its existence, the GCM confirmed the positive impact and provided more synergy in the creation of important national documents on migration, such as the Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021 - 2025, The migration profile of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021), the National Roadmap for Migration Statistics (2021), the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration 2021-2025 (2021), and other strategic documents.

The EC Annual Report for 2021 continuously confirms the good progress made by the Republic of North Macedonia, including in terms of legal compliance in the field of migration⁵.

In the strategic documents prepared in 2021, the GCM is recognized as an important document that provides comprehensiveness for migration policies in the Republic of North Macedonia. The new Strategy for Integrated Border Management 2022-2025 has been adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in March 2022. The further use of the GCM in future strategic documents in the field of migration will help to better identify policies for managing migration flows.

In the field of social affairs, the MLSP recognizes the GCM as a document that provides a platform for further strengthening of support for orderly and organized provision of social services such as reception, humanitarian aid and integration. This is a good basis for further integration of the GCM policies in the methodology of strengthening social support by national institutions.

The civil society sector welcomes the government's policies in managing migration and how the country handles migration flows. However, a challenge expressed by the civil society sector is that a more comprehensive approach should be developed in the management of migration processes in the Republic of North Macedonia. This is an opportunity for the GCM to be used as a platform that will help for a more balanced, comprehensive, sustainable approach in the country dealing with migration challenges.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/north-macedonia-report-2021_en p.41

3. Progress in achieving the goals of the GCM

In 2020 and 2021, progress was made in implementing the legal framework with the adopted amendments to the Law on International and Temporary Protection⁶ and the Law on Foreigners⁷. The implementation of the new legal solutions in the past two years, by the civil society and the academic community is assessed as further harmonization of the national regulations with the international instruments and with a better, more balanced approach in the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers.

The new Law on Foreigners (2018) improves the position of foreigners in relation to the procedure for obtaining a permit for temporary and permanent residence, and the amendments to the Law on Employment of Foreigners contribute to a facilitated procedure for obtaining a work permit for self-employed foreigners.

The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration 2021-2025 was adopted in April 2021. The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. One of the structural goals of the National Commission is decentralization, through the creation of local commissions at the municipal level⁸.

The EC in the annual progress report of the Republic of North Macedonia⁹ notes the progress and division of tasks between the institutions dealing with migration. Responsibilities are divided between the Department of Border Affairs and Migration at the Public Security Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (dealing with security and border management), the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (managing access to services and socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees) and the specialized unit of the Serious and Organized Crime Department, which fights against human trafficking and smuggling. The goals contained in the GCM can help in further specifying the competencies of the institutions, but also in strengthening the inter-institutional cooperation.

The policies contained in the GCM, as well as the 23 goals elaborated in it, are not new when it comes to the development of migration policies in the Republic of North Macedonia¹⁰. The measures are implemented by state institutions, as well as in close cooperation with domestic and international organizations, e.g., in the labor sector, in the field of employment of foreigners, human trafficking, integration of refugees, readmission and reintegration of our citizens. But the approach offered by the GCM, the comprehensiveness that results from the content of 23 goals, raises the horizon of strengthening the capacities of all stakeholders and improving the cooperation between them.

Stakeholders in the Republic of North Macedonia recognize the GCM as a comprehensive migration document, which has a major impact on national programs and strategies¹¹. Certainly, there is a possibility for greater institutional support in all phases of transposing the goals of the GCM in the national regulation, in the existing strategic documents or documents that are prepared in order to maintain continuity, such as: The National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for cooperation with the diaspora 2019-2023, with the Action Plan; The National Strategy for Sustainable Development in

⁶ Law on International and Temporary Protection, Official Gazette of RM no. 64/18

⁷ Law on Foreigners, Official Gazette of RM no. 97/18 and Official Gazette of RNM no. 108/19, Law Amending the Law on Foreigners no. 294/21

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/north-macedonia-report-2021_en p.38

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/north-macedonia-report-2021_en p. 40

¹⁰ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2015-2020, Official Gazette of RM No. 8/2015

¹¹ Within the National Convention for the Republic of Macedonia, on October 15, 2018 in Skopje, before the representatives of the academic community, civil society, government officials and international organizations, the Global Migration Agreement was presented as a new, comprehensive UN document that should be integrates in the future management of migration flows, <https://nkeu.mk/mk/category/rabotni-grupi/rabotna-grupa-4/page/2/>

the Republic of North Macedonia 2009-2030; The National Employment Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2016-2020; The National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020; The Strategy for Gender Equality 2013-2020 and The National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2016-2020.

Information connection is an important prerequisite for fast, accurate and efficient communication between the competent institutions. There is progress in strengthening this goal, but there is also a great need for comprehensive connection (networking) of all state institutions and the creation of conditions for efficient operation. The information connection will provide the basis for the creation of a centralized statistical data management system, which can be used in real time.

Recognition of these priorities should be integrated into the strategic documents to be renewed, and the GCM should be further recognized as a source of policies that ensure comprehensiveness in migration operations.

4. Means of implementation

For the integration of the GCM in the migration policies, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia expressed its strong readiness through active participation in the preparation and adoption of the Global Compact in Marrakech, in 2018.

More thorough implementation of the GCM in the national migration policy is done in the strategic documents and in the annual work programs of the government institutions, where significant financial resources are planned for the regular activities of the ministries in the field of migration, as well as through the means for implementation of the measures set out in the individual sectoral policies. The coordinated approach emphasizes the importance of greater and more effective inter-institutional cooperation in the implementation of migration activities with other sectoral policies. The national documents on migration provide for work on projects and research with their own, but also with the funds and support of international organizations in the country. The implementation of the 23 goals should be a priority.

Migration, regular and irregular, is also recognized as a priority by the European Commission and UN bodies. The European Commission through the programs IPA, HORIZON and others funds projects aimed at consolidating migration capacity building efforts.

UN bodies assist the efforts of the Republic of North Macedonia in strengthening the capacities for sustainable implementation of migration operations, with expertise, but also with institutional and material support, within project activities. This type of cooperation is confirmed as a good basis for creating sustainable results.

Studying the GCM and its goals, the institutions of the Republic of North Macedonia recognize the following priorities, which require financial resources:

- Expertise in drafting and further harmonization of legislation;
- Development of a modern, comprehensive IT system for documenting migration flows in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Construction of infrastructure to improve the provision of social services (human resources, facilities, IT systems for data collection);
- Better realization of the rights and services for the persons with regulated residence, as well as the persons under international protection;
- Improving the referral system in order to improve the quality of services for vulnerable persons - migrants, especially children;

- Implementation of COVID-19 management measures for collective and individual protection at entry points, as well as in reception centers;
- Analysis of the situation and undertaking activities for establishing full operational functionality of the Integrated Database for Foreigners, covering asylum, migration and visas (IDF)

5. Next steps

The United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is an international reference instrument, whose policies and objectives have been translated into a number of national documents (strategies and action plans). In the next period, they will be incorporated in the other strategic documents, during their renewal.

The implementation of the set goals, as part of the instruments of the migration policy in the country, will be monitored. The ministries responsible for the implementation of the strategic documents will submit annual reports on the progress of their implementation. The new Migration Policy Resolution and the Action Plan for the period 2021-2025 transpose the relevant goals of the GCM through the envisaged activities of the stakeholders in the established general and specific goals.

Following the progress (monitoring) of the institutions in charge of migration, policies will be carried out in order to determine the progress in the implementation of the adopted measures and activities and identify the reasons for the slower dynamics of their implementation, to increase efficiency, to synchronize inter-institutional action as well as for more rational use of resources.

The recommendation of the GCM for preparation of indicators for measuring progress is already being implemented through the adopted new Resolution on Migration Policy and the established indicators for monitoring the Action Plan for the period 2021-2025 by the inter-ministerial body responsible for the development of migration policy in the Republic of North Macedonia in which the goals of the GCM are transposed. Migration Management Indicators have also been prepared: Profile of North Macedonia (September 2021). This profile contains a brief overview of the well-developed structures for migration management in North Macedonia, and an overview of the areas that need further improvement, in accordance with the assessment prepared based on the Migration Management Indicators (MMI). The MMI is a standard set of approximately 90 indicators that help countries identify good practices as well as areas for further improvement, and may indicate which tools countries should use to improve migration management structures.

Goals for safe, orderly and regular migration

(1) Collection and use of accurate and disaggregated data as a policy basis

Collecting accurate data on migration flows has always been a challenge¹². This applies to regular migration, but also to irregular migration. A big challenge is the phenomenon of migration itself, which is very dynamic. The challenge is the inequality of the mechanisms related to data collection and migration monitoring used by several state bodies. On the other hand, the need for accurate and disaggregated data is a prerequisite for realistic measures that the state seeks to take and make precise recommendations for more efficient management of migration flows.

Taking into account the above needs, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia with the support of IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations is

¹²The Resolution on Migration Policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2015-2020 points out the difficulties when it comes to data on emigration from Macedonia, the registration of irregular migrants, the different methodologies used by the competent state institutions in the registration of migrants and activities with them, the different methodology used for statistical recording, the difficulties and different figures for the same situation of the institutions participating in migration activities, etc.

implementing a joint project "Evidence-based migration policy planning and discourse in North Macedonia" funded by "Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund" which aims to support national institutions in improving the management of the country's demographic and migration dynamics.

Within the project, among other things, in 2021 an Assessment of the mechanisms for collection and exchange of data on migration in the Republic of North Macedonia was made. The report includes information on: the situation with migration in the Republic of North Macedonia, international obligations in the field of migration statistics, management of migration data collection, data sources, exchange and statistics on migration, analysis and recommendations for further improvement of mechanisms for collection and exchange of data between key institutions with competencies for migration management and statistics¹³.

The Republic of North Macedonia collectively does not have accurate data on emigration. In accordance with the Law on Registration of Residence and Temporary Residence (Official Gazette 302/2020), citizens who intend to live abroad for more than 3 months or work abroad for more than 12 months are required to report departure to one of the local offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, border crossings or consulates abroad. However, the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia often do not register their departure for personal reasons or out of not knowing that they have a legal obligation to do so.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs - Border Police is involved in the CIRAM 2 project¹⁴, where in partnership with Frontex a methodology for collecting statistical data related to border management is being developed, according to a methodology followed by Frontex member countries. The project develops a model, and the main actors are Frontex - EBCGA and cooperate with member states and partner countries, including North Macedonia. The aim of the project is to establish a conceptual framework that will help Frontex and its Member States to develop a risk analysis using a single methodology. The concept is based on the Schengen border code and is used in our country, as well as in the member states.

This methodology is based on unique standards in Europe and is a good example of overcoming a number of current challenges. The national authorities from the Republic of North Macedonia, but also from other WB countries, state that there is progress.

The importance of this issue is recognized by the EC, which through the regional project "Regional support for migration management aimed at protecting the rights of migrants in the Western Balkans and Turkey", funded through the IPA 2 program, from 2016 provides technical support to countries in the region towards strengthening migration statistics systems. This activity is implemented by IOM on two levels. The first level is national where the activities aim to strengthen the national capacities for collection, systematization and exchange of statistical data related to regular and irregular migration. The second level is regional level and aims to harmonize migration statistics in the region, for greater comparability and opportunity for regional analysis. The benefit is that the EU methodology is used in relation to the EC Regulation 862/2007, which should ultimately ensure better harmonization (national and regional) with the EU. Furthermore, in the IPA 3 program, in the period 2022-2025, IOM will provide support at the national level in order to strengthen the capacities for effective inter-institutional data exchange, as well as to improve the quality of data in the field of migration.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders of this activity are the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Department for Border Affairs and Migration and Department of Forensic Intelligence), as primary collectors of data in the field of migration, and the State Statistical Office, as an institution responsible for statistical data in the country.

¹³The activity is part of the Joint Program for Evidence-Based Migration Policy Planning and Discussion in Northern Macedonia, aimed at supporting national institutions to improve the management of the country's demographic and migration dynamics; IOM, 2021

¹⁴<https://frontex.europa.eu/intelligence/ciram/>

For the purpose of regional networking and the possibility of data exchange, IOM developed the "Regional Platform for Migration Data Exchange in the Western Balkans", i.e., WB-MIDEX¹⁵. This Platform will enable the exchange and publication of official statistical data between the countries in the region through common templates and methodologies. At the same time, these forms are harmonized with the standards of Eurostat, which means that the exchange of migration statistics through the WB-MIDEX Platform will enable direct analysis and comparison with the statistics of the European Union on this topic. This platform is administered by the MARRI Regional Center, an intergovernmental regional initiative dealing with migration issues. Following the initial data exchange via WB-MIDEX in 2022, MARRI is expected to prepare a regional analytical report.

The partnership with Frontex is a good model on how the Republic of North Macedonia can quickly overcome the challenges and create sustainable solutions, which will further accelerate the process of creating prerequisites for creating accurate, systematic data, which will be able to make more comprehensive analyzes, with greater use value.

Stakeholders in the Republic of North Macedonia agree that there is progress in the data collection methodology. At the same time, they agree that further improvement and data management involving all stakeholders in the country needs to be significantly improved.

(2) Minimizing the unfavorable instigators and structural factors that force people to leave their country of origin

Modern migratory movements abroad, dominated by economic emigration, which began in the mid-1960s, continue to this day with undiminished intensity. The Republic of North Macedonia does not have relevant data on "emigrant" migration and their descendants (second and third generation), as well as those who have returned to the country.¹⁶ An additional problem in terms of providing statistics on emigration abroad remains the lack of relevant data from domestic sources on the scope and basic characteristics of persons temporarily or permanently leaving the country. In such circumstances, only on the basis of data from foreign sources can the trends and peculiarities of the emigration of Macedonian citizens abroad be identified.

The lack of relevant data on the volume and structural features of emigration abroad in recent decades is conditioned by the fact that only a small part of the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia officially declare their temporary and permanent residence abroad. Efforts to change these conditions have failed. Hence, today their coverage in the database of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and with the regular statistical survey of the State Statistical Office is very small and shows only the number of people who have officially reported their departure and stay abroad. Regardless, these data provide indications regarding the change in the demographic and socio-economic structure of people who have gone abroad, as well as the reasons for the manifestations of the movements after 2015¹⁷.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office, the number of Macedonian citizens who went abroad in the period 2015-2019 is 2104 people, and their number after certain years ranges from 141 people (2017) to 612 (2019).¹⁸ Although these data do not show the real volume of emigration, they still confirm that the most common destinations for Macedonian citizens in European countries of reception are Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Slovenia. As far as overseas countries are concerned, there is

¹⁵The platform is available here: <https://wbmidex.marri-rc.org.mk/>

¹⁶The existing territory of the Republic of North Macedonia is a traditional emigration area from which the emigration movements abroad date back to the 19th century.

¹⁷More in: Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p.43.

¹⁸Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, MAKSTAT database http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat_Naselenie_NadvoresniMigracii/176_Migracii_drzavi_VkDosOts_mk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=87fad243-9c7d-45e2-a2b5-6b7900e99625

still great interest in emigrating to Australia, the United States and Canada. At the same time, the number of our citizens in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates and other countries is increasing.

Table 1. Emigrant citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia abroad, in total and by countries 2009-2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
TOTAL	769	923	1143	1330	945	740	767	440	141	144	612
Continent - Europe	532	679	733	792	480	318	407	277	98	139	561
Austria	31	23	49	41	7	3	14	13	11	8	40
Albania	24	57	8	5	6	2	23	8	-	-	-
Bulgaria	12	35	65	52	23	18	23	16	4	8	3
Germany	124	107	168	208	183	101	121	110	40	36	214
Denmark	15	22	10	15	11	4	11	16	1	-	1
Italy	96	130	82	75	42	29	44	16	11	15	69
Slovenia	16	38	46	32	20	14	14	12	3	12	64
Serbia	54	42	38	35	47	23	27	16	2	4	5
Netherlands	12	18	24	23	15	11	10	2	1	-	5
Switzerland	77	83	88	166	53	39	39	25	14	30	75
Sweden	19	14	61	61	25	31	28	6	-	2	21
Other countries - Europe	52	110	94	79	48	43	53	37	11	24	64
Continent America	98	142	147	240	229	234	230	131	42	5	38
Canada	14	16	18	38	32	32	23	16	2	-	1
USA	84	126	129	202	197	202	206	115	39	5	37
Other countries America	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Continent - Asia	3	-	2	1	1	5	2	2	-	-	3
Qatar	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
United Arab Emirates	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	1	-	-	2
Taiwan, Province of China	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other countries Asia	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-
Continent - Africa	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Africa	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other countries Africa	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Continent Oceania	136	102	257	297	235	183	128	30	1	-	10
Australia	136	101	254	295	234	182	127	27	1	-	10
New Zealand	-	-	3	2	1	1	1	3	-	-	-

Other countries	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oceania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat__Naselenie__NadvoresniMigracii/176_Migracii_drzavi_VkDosOtsmk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/b45

The Migration Profile of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021), p.30

In connection to these migration movements, it is important to point out the phenomenon of so-called potential migration, which is reaching worrying proportions. There is a growing number of young highly educated people, as well as students in the last years of faculty, not only from the engineering and natural sciences, who are considering or planning to go abroad. The peculiarities of the migration wave confirm that with the emigration the Republic of North Macedonia directly and indirectly loses a significant part of its young population and the human capital. Available data and research results show that even after 2015, the emigration of highly educated staff from the Republic of North Macedonia is taking place with undiminished intensity. This is confirmed by the "brain drain" indicator of the World Economic Forum, which since 2012 is divided into two indicators: *Ability to retain talent* and *Ability to attract talent*. In the period 2015-2016, according to both indicators, Macedonia is ranked among the 15 countries in the world that have very small capacity to retain and attract talent¹⁹.

Challenges - Reducing the volume of permanent outflows of the population and labor force from the country and supporting temporary-circular migration are the biggest challenges of migration policy for the coming period. Government programs to provide employment after graduation and to subsidize the employment of young people may slow the rate of emigration. A significant challenge can be the use of development potentials and the establishment of cooperation with Macedonian citizens abroad, as well as encouraging feedback and reintegration. The lack of data on permanent and temporary emigration from the Republic of North Macedonia abroad from domestic sources was and remains one of the problems in understanding the peculiarities of these migration movements. Statistics from foreign sources provide some knowledge about the changes in trends, but still their inconsistency and different methodological basis should be taken into account²⁰.

Further strengthening of the capacities of state institutions is needed in order to minimize the unfavorable instigators and structural factors that force people to leave their country.

(3) Providing accurate and timely information at all stages of migration

The Republic of North Macedonia does not have an evaluation of the situation by providing accurate and timely information at all stages of the migration process.

In the area of regular migration, the Employment Agency has a Migration Information Center, which provides information on migration procedures established with the support of IOM.

The Emigration Agency has made informative materials in Macedonian and Albanian, which contain useful information about the Macedonian diaspora and returnees, and refer to the personal status (citizenship, personal documents, rights and obligations of expatriates who do not have citizenship to enter the Republic of North Macedonia, Pension and Disability Insurance, Manual 2018), both for investment in the country and for financial support from the state (Economic Manual 2019).

The Law on Foreigners²¹ is largely in line with the relevant regulations of the European Union. It prescribes a wider range of possibilities for applying for temporary residence through regional offices, and

¹⁹ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p.45

²⁰ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p.43

²¹ Law on Foreigners, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 97/2018

adopts the approach to individual case assessment. The law stipulates an obligation for the bodies to provide information ex officio. An analysis is continuously performed in order to determine the level of application of the law in practice, within which the focus is on the remarks of the parties, the officials working on the issue, as well as the voice of the non-governmental organizations.

The new Law on Foreigners envisages provisions for improving the position of foreigners in relation to the procedure for obtaining a permit for temporary and permanent residence, and the amendments to the Law on Employment of Foreigners have contributed to facilitating the procedure for obtaining work permits for self-employed foreigners and providing more information on regulating residence. The representatives of the non-governmental sector, interviewed for the needs of this review, point out that continuous improvement is needed in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the procedures.

With regard to irregular migration, there is a general belief that there is no information among migrants from the Far East, Africa and other countries that can deter migrants from leaving home. They often do not know about the dangers and challenges they will face, making them an easy target for traffickers and human smugglers.

When irregular migrants arrive in the Republic of North Macedonia, they receive initial information in several languages at the reception transit centers, usually in conversation with social workers. Additionally, with the support of IOM, mobile applications have been developed through which migrants can obtain information in their home languages.

UNICEF emphasizes the importance of maintaining communication between countries in order to create a regular channel for the flow of information.

The NGO sector points out that there is a continuing need to improve access to and sharing of information with irregular migrants.

Challenges: There is a lack of information, on two levels: a) between countries of origin, transit and destination and b) between migrants and the institutions that migrants meet.

Lack of information in their mother tongue often leads to inability to communicate. There is a need to establish communication between the countries of origin, transit and destination, in order to enable the flow of information.

(4) Ensuring that all migrants have proof of identity and adequate documentation

When it comes to regular migration, migrants usually have the proper documentation and can prove their identity. Problems with the inability to prove identity occur with irregular migrants²². In the summer of 2020, around 50,000 irregular migrants were stranded in Southeast Europe. Unable to continue their journey, they are convinced that only smugglers can help them²³.

In the Republic of North Macedonia there is a category of persons without any documents and rights. These are people who were found in the country after the declaration of independence, who come from the former Yugoslav republics, and their citizenship status has not yet been resolved, and people who were born and live in the country but are not yet registered in the birth registers. Article 132 of the Law on Foreigners regulates the special conditions for granting permanent residence for this category of persons, and the latest proposed amendments to the Law on Foreigners provide for a period of 3 years after the entry into force of The Law on Foreigners for submitting a request for regulation of residence on this basis, to be deleted and the persons who have not done the same by this deadline, to have the opportunity to do so in the next period.

²² In the first eight months of 2020, on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, 7 migrants were registered who became disabled without limbs, in 28 cases they had a serious operation and 4 deaths; interview with a representative of the Macedonian Red Cross, September 11, 2020.

²³ Same

The Republic of North Macedonia strives to contribute to finding solutions to this challenge. Through the Stability Pact and later through the South East European Cooperation Process, the MARRI²⁴ initiative holds a high-level discussion forum to find sustainable solutions for refugees and displaced persons from the former Yugoslavia. The initiative, based in Skopje, initiates projects of interest to countries and works closely with European bodies active in migration processes.

A challenge for stakeholders is the further harmonization of the Law on Civil Registry (current solutions are restrictive) and the Law on Persons without Regulated Civil Status. Expertise that can help create better solutions is needed in order to strengthen institutional capacity and create a systemic solution.

(5) Improving the availability and flexibility of roads for regular migration

Legal immigration in the Republic of North Macedonia refers to the temporary and permanent residence of foreigners on various grounds, including the employment of foreigners. In addition, it covers the short stay of foreigners up to 90 days on the basis of private visits, business and tourist visits.

The Republic of North Macedonia is a moderately attractive country for migrants. The number of registered foreigners living in the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019 is 7014, which is 0.3% of the country's population; for comparison, the percentage of foreigners living in EU countries is 4.4% of the population²⁵.

Challenges - The number of foreigners with temporary and permanent residence in the Republic of North Macedonia is not large²⁶. However, given their characteristics, the need remains for efficient management of economic and non-economic immigration in accordance with the demographic and socio-economic development of the country, as well as further facilitation of the integration process of immigrants. In conditions of still high unemployment, the Republic of North Macedonia should continue to pursue a flexible and market-oriented policy of hiring foreign workers according to the long-term goals of employment policy. According to the identified specific needs, the need to conceptualize policies and procedures for admission of highly educated and immigrants with financial capital, also seasonal employment of foreigners for certain sectors based on bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as for different types of temporary employment is still relevant (short-term stay of contract workers, inter-company transfer, managers in multinational companies, trainers, etc.).

The efforts of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia to promote the country as a good place for investment, initiate further improvement and acceleration of the procedures regarding the employment of foreigners. These efforts of the Government to attract foreign capital should continue to develop more transparently with the Macedonian business diaspora.

The Government work program of the Republic of North Macedonia 2022 -2024²⁷, envisages Education of the new time, as part of social inclusion and development of human capital. Adapting the options and paths for regular migration, in a way that facilitates mobility and optimizes opportunities for higher education and scientific work, can attract talented students to highly educated and scientific jobs, who will contribute to social inclusion and human capital development, in the development of the country in terms of science and as a future highly educated workforce in the labor market.

Having in mind the different authorities of the institutions, primarily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Education and Science, further simplification of administrative procedures remains a challenge in this area.

²⁴Migration, asylum, refugee regional initiative, www.marri-rc.org

²⁵ Analysis of policies and services available to foreigners in the Republic of North Macedonia, p.8

²⁶ The assessment of this goal is derived from the Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2015-2020, p.16

²⁷ Government Program 2022-2024

Improving the availability and flexibility of the roads for regular migration should be taken into account when it comes to economic emigration from our country, in accordance with the history and tradition of emigration from the country.

In accordance with the Resolution on Migration Policy in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025 as well as the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023 a challenge in the field of emigration in the coming period will be to reduce the volume of permanent emigration of the population and labor force and support temporary circular migration. It will be important to further use the development potentials and establish cooperation with Macedonian expatriates abroad, as well as to encourage feedback and reintegration. The Emigration Agency continues to nurture contacts with expatriates, including successful businessmen, researchers, people who have realized themselves abroad. Better information and economic measures provided by the Republic of North Macedonia should encourage development projects in the country or abroad, which will provide new employment and new investments.

The lack of complete data on the permanent and temporary emigration from the Republic of North Macedonia abroad from domestic sources remains a problem in understanding the peculiarities of these migration movements. Although statistics from foreign sources provide more realistic knowledge of the manifested changes, due to their inconsistency and different methodological basis, they cannot be accepted as a permanent alternative to statistics from domestic sources. The large emigration that has further intensified in recent years is one of the biggest challenges for the country, both in terms of changes in the volume and structure of the migration contingent, and due to the large representation of permanent migration. At the same time, there is an increase in circular migration, for which there are almost no relevant data on its features.

(6) Facilitation of fair and ethical employment and protective conditions that provide decent work

The facilitation of fair and ethical employment and protective conditions that provide decent work applies both to foreigners employed in our country and to Macedonian expatriates residing and working abroad.

The Law on Foreigners and the Law on Employment and Work of Foreigners are basic acts that prescribe the conditions for employment of a foreigner in the Republic of North Macedonia. The resolution on migration policy advocates for consistent integration of international instruments in domestic regulations, which is improving. The legal provisions concerning the employment of foreigners are a strong guarantee of their rights. The measures taken by the state and which provide favorable conditions for quality living of the immigrants, as well as creating prerequisites for the immigrants to have fair conditions to become active and responsible participants in the social life and the overall development of the Republic of North Macedonia is one of the goals of the Migration Policy in the country²⁸.

According to the data of the Employment Agency, the employment of foreigners in the country has been growing steadily in recent years²⁹. The increase in the number of employed foreigners in the country is due to the increased foreign direct investment in the Republic of North Macedonia and the simplified procedure for employment of foreigners in the country. Although the procedure for obtaining a work permit is easier compared to previous years, it is still, as in many other countries, long and complex.

Table 13: Immigrant foreigners with temporary residence in the Republic of North Macedonia, on the basis of employment and by countries, in 2009, 2015 and 2019

²⁸Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p. 24

²⁹Analysis of policies and services available to foreigners in the Republic of North Macedonia, p.23

2009			2015			2019		
	Number of persons	Participation in%		Number of persons			Number of persons	Participation in%
TOTAL	332	100,0	TOTAL	892	100,0	TOTAL	852	100,0
Turkey	171	51.5	Turkey	166	18.6	Turkey	403	47.3
Serbia	24	7.2	Serbia	128	14.3	Serbia	76	8.9
Greece	21	6.3	Greece	82	9.2	Greece	67	7.9
Bulgaria	15	4.5	Bulgaria	65	7.3	Bulgaria	66	7.7
Austria	14	4.2	Austria	59	6.6	Austria	20	2.3
USA	12	3.6	USA	51	5.7	USA	19	2.2
China	8	2.4	China	36	4.0	China	18	2.1
Croatia	7	2.1	Croatia	35	3.9	Croatia	16	1.9
Slovenia	7	2.1	Slovenia	26	2.9	Slovenia	12	1.4
United Kingdom	6	1.8	United Kingdom	24	2.7	United Kingdom	11	1.3
Other countries	47	14.2	Other countries	220	24.7	Other countries	144	16.9

Source: data from the documentation of the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia

Challenges - A key challenge for foreigners remains the need to effectively manage economic and non-economic legal immigration in line with the country's demographic and socio-economic development. In conditions of still high unemployment, the country should continue to pursue a flexible and market-oriented policy of hiring foreign workers according to the long-term goals of employment policy. Despite the high unemployment, there is a growing shortage of labor force from certain profiles of skilled and highly skilled workers, such as highly educated staff in certain areas. In such circumstances, a different approach to immigration and employment of foreigners is necessary, in order to meet the demand for labor, as an important precondition for the development of certain sectors and the overall development of the country.

According to the identified specific needs and labor deficit, there is a need to conceptualize appropriate policies and procedures for admission of foreign labor, also seasonal employment of foreigners for certain sectors based on bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as for different types of temporary flexible employment (short-term stay of contract workers, between company transfers, trainers, etc.).

Having in mind the different competencies of the institutions, primarily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, further simplification of the procedures for admission of foreign labor remains one of the important challenges in this area. From the aspect of immigration and employment of foreigners, the need to build a consistent policy to facilitate the integration process of immigrants is indisputable. In order to present the new, improved conditions prescribed by the Law on Foreigners (2018), the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy proposes the opening of an information office on the manner and procedures for exercising certain rights of foreigners in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The protection of Macedonian citizens traveling or residing in foreign countries or of citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia who need to perform consular service abroad is within the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic and consular network. The implementation of the protection of the interests of the citizens is in accordance with the Law on Foreign Affairs (Articles 8, 26

and 28), which is harmonized with the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations from 1961 and 1963³⁰.

Macedonian embassies and consulates in the consular-administrative services are authorized to perform: notary affairs; legalization of documents; conduct part of the procedure for admission or release from Macedonian citizenship; preparation and certification of power of attorney, statements and other documents, legal advice; mediate in the registration of births, marriages and deaths; carry out the process of issuing or exchanging passports; issue travel documents in cases of loss or theft of a passport; perform activities in the field of family, alimony, custody of minors; protection of legally incompetent persons; labor protection; issuance of certificates of life, validity of domestic regulations or authenticity of national documents and other services of an administrative nature necessary to regulate certain rights before the authorities of the country in which they reside.

Diplomatic and consular offices also provide consular assistance in the following cases: deprivation of liberty, detention or imprisonment; accident or illness. At the request of a Macedonian citizen, the consular representatives contact their family members and inform them; get in touch with the competent authorities of the foreign state and are informed about the details of the indictment in order to provide appropriate legal assistance; indicate possible violations of human rights and humane treatment; request of a legal representative or translator. In case of accident or illness, consular protection is aimed at informing the family and the competent institutions to take the necessary measures for hospital treatment, transportation or evacuation from the endangered area.

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts at the request of Macedonian citizens who need consular service abroad or are required to legalize a public document to be used in foreign countries that are not signatories to the Hague Convention on Legalization.

Challenge - Improving the quality of consular services provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic and consular offices of the Republic of North Macedonia abroad is one of the priorities in Macedonian foreign policy. Activities are undertaken for better informing the Macedonian citizens for certain consular services, as well as shortening of the time procedure necessary for realization of part of the consular activities³¹. In addition to protection through consular offices, the continued provision of information on legal migration procedures, protection through intergovernmental cooperation agreements in the field of labor migration, as well as the regulation of private employment agencies abroad are of particular importance.

Strengthening regional cooperation between the countries in the region, in order to create a network between employment agencies, in order to exchange information on the required profile of workers is an idea that should be tested in practice.

Further harmonization of procedures, with emphasis on ethical and fair procedures for foreigners, continues to be a challenge.

(7) Addressing and reducing vulnerability in migration

The great migrant and refugee crisis initiates numerous activities, as lessons learned, in order to reduce the vulnerability of migrants. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy have developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for a number of aspects: SOP for dealing

³⁰ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2015-2020, p.37

³¹ National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023, p.29

with a vulnerable category of persons; SOP for police officers on the first line of action; The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, supported by the UNHCR, developed and adopted the SOP for dealing with vulnerable categories of foreigners and the SOP for dealing with unaccompanied foreign children.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy with the support of UNHCR developed and adopted: Rulebook on dealing with vulnerable persons and unaccompanied children on the manner of care and accommodation of unaccompanied minors and vulnerable categories of persons with recognized right to asylum in the Republic of North Macedonia; Rulebook on standards for accepting asylum seekers; Rulebook on the more detailed criteria and the manner of using a suitable apartment for accommodation or financial assistance needed to provide accommodation for persons with refugee status in accordance with their needs; Rulebook for assessing the best interests of the child, as well as other tools for improving the protection of vulnerable people. In cooperation with IOM, a National Tool for Screening and Identification of Vulnerable Categories was developed.

It is very important that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy continuously conduct trainings that cover police officers, social workers, people from reception centers.

The creation of regional initiatives and bodies (Regional Cooperation Council, MARRI, SELEC, etc.) funded by the countries in the region is a confirmation that the countries invest in the determination to address the migration challenges from all aspects.

The impression is that there is progress in the actions of the state bodies. Of course, the challenge remains to further strengthen the capacity of state institutions, by delegating greater responsibilities to the MLSP and the Ministry of Health (MoH), in order to reduce migration vulnerabilities. Particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable categories of migrants, especially children, for whom customized programs to reduce vulnerability should be created.

IOM, in close cooperation with the competent institutions and the non-governmental sector, implements activities in the field of strengthening the capacities for assistance to the vulnerable categories of migrants, as well as information campaigns for addressing the vulnerability in the migration process.

(8) Saving lives and establishing coordinated international efforts for missing migrants

States are aware that with the increase in smuggling of migrants, the harmful consequences for migrants are increasing in direct proportion.

There is confidence that there is progress in many areas on how institutions are working to protect and save the lives of migrants. UNHCR, together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Red Cross, participate in several cases of detecting a family member and enabling for them to be reunited with their family in another country.

The civil society sector points to the need for improvement in the procedures of the state authorities in cases of death of a migrant and the protocol that should follow. The Ministry of Internal Affairs points out the complex procedure and the real difficulties they face in providing accurate information for finding and contacting the family of a deceased migrant. When the institutions know the identity of the deceased, the consulate of the country of the deceased is usually informed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (if it is possible to get in touch with the authorities of the state). In case the identity of the person is not known and it is difficult to determine, it is necessary to make a clear procedure of acting and delegating clear authority between the institutions.

The challenge remains to further strengthen child protection. It is also necessary to further strengthen the institutional capacities and regulate the procedures, which will significantly facilitate the work of the competent institutions.

(9) Strengthening the transnational response to smuggling of migrants

The current risk faced by the border police is the irregular movements of migrants who are interested in going to Europe, where there are better living conditions.

In 2018, the National Unit for Combating Smuggling of Migrants and Human Trafficking (Task Force) was established, in order to improve coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Public Prosecutor's Office. In the first year of its formation, four organized criminal groups were detected and neutralized. The suppression of criminal groups prevented the smuggling of 1,529 migrants, whose number also increased by 71.6% compared to the previous year³².

In 2018, after the establishment of the national unit (taskforce), IOM organized a coordination workshop between representatives of the national unit, MLSP, centers for social work and the NGO sector in order to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation and coordination in the fight against human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

In 2019, with the support of IOM, 38 two-day joint trainings were conducted on the topic of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, which covered 889 social workers, members of the National Unit (Task Force) and mobile teams for identification, referral and protection of VHT, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, judges and prosecutors. 48% of them were women. The purpose of the trainings was to strengthen mutual cooperation in the field of human trafficking. Additionally, with the support of IOM, during 2021, began a series of trainings for the members of the Task Force and the detached officers who cooperate with it, on the topic of combating smuggling of migrants and other forms of trans-national organized crime. The training program includes topics that include the collection, analysis and exchange of information, reactive and proactive activities in the fight against smuggling of migrants, international cooperation and joint investigation teams, etc.

Within the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, there is a Secretariat, which is an executive and operational body composed of representatives of government institutions, international organizations and citizens' associations. At the initiative of the Commission, SOPs were adopted for dealing with victims of trafficking (revised in 2018), with the assistance and support of IOM, SOPs for unaccompanied foreign children and with the support of the UNHCR, SOPs for dealing with vulnerable categories of foreigners (2016).

There has been progress in providing interpreters in the language spoken by migrants, in order to establish communication with them, to understand their specifics and needs. This information is necessary for further referral and action.

Challenge: - Further strengthening of the material, technical and human resources to deal with increased migration flows, in order to more effectively combat smuggling of migrants, as well as to treat and protect migrants, especially women and children.

Due to the large number of cases of undocumented migrants, cooperation with countries of origin is needed in order to establish their identity and the reasons for migration.

³² Annual Report of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration for 2019, p.41, <http://nacionalnakomisija.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/%D0%93%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%9D%D0%9A-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%A2%D0%9B-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2019.pdf> Accessed on 02.02.2022

It is necessary to further strengthen the institutional capacities, strengthen the regional cooperation, especially between the police officers and the public prosecutor's office, in response to the fight against smuggling of migrants.

(10) Preventing, combating and eradicating trafficking in human beings in the context of international migration

Human trafficking is a form of organized crime, which is recognized and the authorities in the Republic of North Macedonia are taking comprehensive measures for prevention, prosecution and adjudication of it. Significant comprehensive progress has been made with the establishment of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (2001) which is the creator of the measures and initiatives taken by the state in the criminal law field, but also in strengthening social and protection measures, when it comes to the victims, the vulnerable categories and especially the children. The new National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in the Republic of North Macedonia (2021 - 2025) was approved by the Government in April 2021. The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration is responsible for implementing the Strategy.

The National Commission pays significant attention to the prevention and fight against human trafficking, to identifying the causes of human trafficking, to strengthening the capacity to carry out activities, to raising awareness and education, to reducing vulnerability, to supporting and protecting victims and migrants, to identification and referral of victims, to assisting victims and migrants, as well as to the improvement of criminal legislation for more effective prosecution of criminals.

In preparing the strategic documents for combating trafficking in human beings, the recommendations and good practices of the following international documents have been taken into account and incorporated: Recommendations given by the Council of Europe in the GRETA report on the Evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention "Action against Trafficking in Human Beings", as well as the Recommendations given in the GRETA report from the second round of evaluation; The EU Strategy for the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings and Directive no. 2011/36/EU on the prevention of THB and protection of VHT; The OSCE Action Plan for combating THB; Decision no. 557 to supplement the plan to combat THB; The decision of the OSCE Ministerial Council to step up efforts to combat all forms of trafficking of children, including sexual exploitation of children, as well as all forms of sexual exploitation of children, as well as relevant reports and recommendations for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia contained in the annual reports for human trafficking provided by the U.S. Department of State. The mentioned reports recognize the comprehensive, organized and effective response in dealing with human trafficking in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Table 3. Crimes and perpetrators of the crime "Trafficking in human beings" (under Article 418-a), Republic of North Macedonia, 2009-2019

Year	Crimes	Perpetrators	Victims	Type of exploitation
2009	1	1	1	Labor - 1
2010	0	0	0	-
2011	2	6	2	Forced marriage - 1 Sexual - 1
2012	3	6	3	Sexual - 2, Labor - 1
2013	0	0	0	-
2014	1	1	1	Sexual - 1

2015	0	0	0	-
2016	1	6	2	Sexual - 1 Labor - 1
2017	0	0	0	-
2018	0	0	0	-
2019	0	0	0	-

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia, Migration Profile of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021), p.45

Greta's recommendations for the Republic of North Macedonia are appropriately implemented in the Action Plan for 2020.

The MLSP initiated and implemented measures and activities for better prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking. It also undertakes activities to strengthen the capacity of professionals in the centers for social work and labor inspection. It coordinates the activities through social workers in the centers for social work in 30 cities in the country, which have an important role in the process of identification, resocialization and reintegration of victims of trafficking.

From December 2017 to the end of 2019, IOM in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Justice implemented the project "Strengthening national capacities in the field of asylum, migration and trafficking in human beings" which was funded by the European Union. Within the same project, 5 mobile teams were formed to identify vulnerable categories, including victims of human trafficking in Skopje, Bitola, Kumanovo, Gevgelija and Tetovo. The mobile teams are composed of a social worker, a police officer and a representative of a citizens' association and work according to methodology and developed indicators, contributing to the deepening of cooperation between the concerned institutions in identifying vulnerable categories of asylum, migration and human trafficking, especially children. With the support of the teams in 2018-2019, 14 victims of human trafficking (all women), 190 potential victims of human trafficking and 593 vulnerable categories of persons were identified. The number of identified victims is almost twice as high as in 2016-2017 (a total of 8 VHT). For 89 victims and potential victims, direct assistance was provided through the Fund for direct assistance in the form of medical assistance, legal aid, food and hygiene materials, clothing, support for strengthening professional skills and more.

Additionally, in 2018 and 2019, 42 two-day trainings were organized for 992 police officers, social workers, judges and prosecutors (52% women) on the topic of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. The preparation of three bylaws in accordance with the new Law on Foreigners (Official Gazette no. 97/2018) was supported, as well as an analysis of the protection of unaccompanied minors and the national legislation in the field of employment of foreigners. An informative video was made on the risks of human trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation and underage marriages, which reached over 70,000 people in the country and abroad through digital channels and social networks.

IOM provides continuous support through its programs to improve the work of mobile teams. In this context, IOM provided support for the revision of the Work Program of the mobile teams for identification of vulnerable categories, including victims of human trafficking. Additionally, training was prepared and conducted for members of the mobile teams for treatment of cross-vulnerabilities and actions of the mobile teams, including sensitized identification, referral and assistance to victims (foreigners and citizens); gender-sensitive protection services and gender-based violence as a vulnerability; stress management and quality of data collected to address the needs of vulnerable persons. The two-day training was attended by 35 members of the mobile teams, social workers from the Center for Asylum Seekers, and representatives of mobile teams from the transit centers in Tabanovce and Vinojug.

The OSCE provided support in the form of IT equipment for mobile teams.

UNHCR provides continuous support to the MoIA and the MLSP in order to improve the international protection system. In this context, within its annual program, UNHCR supported the preparation of SOPs for dealing with unaccompanied foreign children and SOPs for dealing with vulnerable categories of foreigners, as well as support for their continuous implementation.

In cooperation with its partners, UNHCR provides access to legal protection to persons seeking asylum, by providing free legal aid in all instances of the proceedings, including judicial protection, in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia and within the temporary transit centers in Vinojug and Tabanovce. It continuously provides support to the professional staff in the shelter for victims of human trafficking, through the partner NGO Open Gate-La Strada. It also provides psychosocial support to 973 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, potential victims and victims of human trafficking at the reception center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo and the reception and transit Center in Vinojug. With the help of the UNHCR, the services of a Farsi translator were provided at the reception center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo.

In order to deepen the mutual cooperation, the UNHCR office in the Republic of North Macedonia, within its annual program, continuously supports the process of coordination of the local commissions and the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

In addition, UNHCR in cooperation with its partners provides necessary and urgent humanitarian support in life-threatening situations and limited humanitarian assistance to refugees and persons in need of international protection. UNHCR continuously supports the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in the process of strengthening vulnerability protection systems, including alternative forms of care for vulnerable children as unaccompanied children.

UNICEF is active in supporting and harmonizing legislation that should strengthen the system, provide protection and ensure that all decisions made are in the best interests of children who come into contact with the law, refugee and migrant children, and regarding the protection of children from violence, including child trafficking.

Further strengthening of institutional capacity in the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings remains a challenge.

(11) Border management in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and other agencies in the Republic of North Macedonia with authority in border operations have many years of successful transformation and improvement of work capacities. The European Commission significantly supports and assists investment policies and building of institutions' capacity.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for border control.³³ The Border Police has the authority to carry out border checks, surveillance and control of illegal migration, illegal crossing of the state border and residence on the territory of the country and to detect and prevent cross-border crime. The National Coordination Center for Border Management is responsible for "coordinating activities and facilitating the exchange of data and information between state bodies with authority in border management".

The border police receive regular training organized by both state and international organizations. The training center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs trains police officers, mainly for border checks, border crime and detection of forged documents. In addition, there are periodic "trainings for trainers" on the same topics held by external performers, the last of which was conducted by trainers from Slovenia, in February 2020. Additionally, from 2018, the EU border agency, Frontex, provides regular training and

³³ Law on Border Control (2010) and the amendments to the Law on Border Control from 2018.

courses for border police, and IOM conducted a training for 300 border guards on combating trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.³⁴

Procedures for identifying, assisting and referring migrants at risk have been established. The institutions concerned follow the guidelines contained in the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Unaccompanied Foreign Children (2015) and the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Vulnerable Categories of Foreigners (2016).

The Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Unaccompanied Foreign Children (2015) contain guidelines for the procedures in the relevant institutions for the identification and referral of unaccompanied migrant children.³⁵ Identification in this context implies the steps to be taken if an institution or organization comes into contact with an unaccompanied migrant child, as well as the steps to be taken after the initial contact in order to determine the nationality of the child, country of origin, the language they speak, the family status and other characteristics of the child. In addition, the document contains comprehensive guidelines for providing legal, medical, psychological and other support; appointment of a legal guardian; and adequate accommodation of the child.

Similarly, the 2016 Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Vulnerable Categories of Foreigners contain guidance on the procedures to be followed by relevant institutions when dealing with migrants at risk.³⁶ Specifically, the document contains guidelines for: identification (first contact and active identification) and referral of migrants at risk; initial support and assistance (and initial accommodation); providing legal support (and assistance in regulating their stay in the country and applying for asylum); integration and long-term support (and providing long-term accommodation, health care and education); and voluntary repatriation procedures³⁷.

The new Strategy for Integrated Border Management³⁸ pays special attention to strengthening the partnership, stability, economic growth, but also to reducing security risks, especially in terms of combating illegal migration and cross-border crime. In order to further strengthen the working capacities of the Border Police, the Ministry of Internal Affairs in partnership with representatives from Slovakia and Slovenia implemented the twinning project "Harmonization of national systems with the requirements for EU and Schengen border management", supported by the EC. The project is based on two components: 1. Preparation of a Roadmap for the adoption of Schengen related legislation, upgrading the legislation in the field of integrated border management and preparation of a Schengen Action Plan, and 2. Strengthening the administrative and technical capacities in the field of integrated border management. This project builds on previous projects from the EC CARDS I Twining program and provides continuity in creating sustainable border management in an integrated, secure manner.

The project enabled the preparation of the new Strategy for Integrated Border Management 2022 - 2025, with an Action Plan. The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia should approve the Strategy.

Frontex is significantly present in the work of the border police in the Republic of North Macedonia. Its institutional capacities and expertise have a strong influence in strengthening the

³⁴ These IOM trainings on combating trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants were conducted from January 2018 to December 2019.

³⁵ The institutions involved in the implementation of this procedure are: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and civil society organizations.

³⁶ The institutions involved in the implementation of this procedure are: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, civil society organizations.

³⁷ Migration Management Indicators: North Macedonia, July 2021, p.15

³⁸ National Strategy for Integrated Border Management 2015-2019, p.6

capacities of domestic institutions and in supporting regional projects related to more efficient integrated border management. A challenge remains the completion of the cooperation agreement between the Republic of North Macedonia and the European Union, which will ensure even better cooperation and partnership between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Frontex. The signing and entry into force of the Status Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia for actions implemented by the Agency for European Border and Coast Guard in the Republic of North Macedonia will enable the deployment of Frontex personnel on our territory with executive powers, which is unique, but a very important area of cooperation for which there is currently no legal basis.

The Republic of North Macedonia has bilateral cooperation agreements with other countries in order to prevent the smuggling of migrants. There is a regular exchange of information and cooperation between the working group in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other countries to implement effective measures to combat smuggling of migrants and organized crime.

The Republic of North Macedonia is one of the founders of the Regional Initiative for Migration, Asylum, Refugees (MARRI). The regional dimension is important for the increased cooperation of the border police in Southeast Europe. The Regional Conferences on Border Security (2019) of the WB countries, organized by MARRI have a positive impact and contribute to strengthening cooperation and establishing a network of centers for integrated border management from countries in the region.

In this area, the country plans to further strengthen the integrated border management in accordance with the standards of the European Union.

In order to effectively assess migration management during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia has taken several measures and activities³⁹:

- publishes data on the number of migrants who tested positive for the Covid-19 test once a week. The weekly reports of the Institute of Public Health also give the number of foreign citizens who are positive for the SARS-COV-2 virus;⁴⁰
- The decree with legal force for the application of the Law on Foreigners during the state of emergency (2020), provided extension of the stay of foreigners in the Republic of North Macedonia after the expiration of their short-term stay with or without visas.⁴¹ The decree stipulates that "a foreigner with a short-term stay in the Republic of North Macedonia with or without a visa, can remain on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia after the end of his short-term stay, i.e., after the expiration of the short-term visa for the entire duration of the state of emergency."⁴²
- The Government has extended the work permits of migrants performing certain essential services. The Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Employment and Work of Foreigners during the state of emergency (2020) states that "the deadline for realization of the services provided by foreign workers and related to procurement of goods and installation, maintenance and servicing of machinery and equipment⁴³ is extended for the duration of the state of emergency, as well as 60 days from the day this decree enters into force."⁴⁴
- Preventive and protective measures have been taken in both reception centers in the country and in the Center for Asylum Seekers. In 2021, with the support of the EU, a project implemented by IOM,

³⁹ Migration Management Indicators: North Macedonia, July 2021, pp.22 and 23

⁴⁰ Institute of Public Health, Weekly report on the state of the covid-19 pandemic in the Republic of North Macedonia 14.09.-20.09.2020, 2020. <www.iph.mk/weekly-20-09-2020/>

⁴¹ The decree was in force from June 22 to August 31, 2020, <<https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/izmena-Zakon-za-stranci.pdf>>

⁴² Ministry of Internal Affairs, Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Foreigners during the state of emergency, 2020. <<https://mvr.gov.mk/zakon/73>>

⁴³ In a period not longer than 60 days in a calendar year, the deadline for realization of which has expired, i.e., expires during the duration of the state of emergency.

⁴⁴ Government of North Macedonia, Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Employment and Work of Foreigners during the State of Emergency, 2020. <<https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/vrabotuvanje-i-rabota-na-stranci.pdf>>

the temporary reception center "Vinojug" was adapted in accordance with the protocols for prevention of infection with Covid-19. Rooms with water, hygiene and sanitary facilities were renovated, and hand washing devices were installed in front of the individual accommodation units.⁴⁵ In 2020, IOM set up disinfection ports in the registration section of the Vinojug and Tabanovce centers to prevent the spread of covid-19. Additionally, IOM provides continuous education and sharing of information on the manner and measures for protection as well as the need for vaccination⁴⁶. Since the beginning of the 2020 pandemic, IOM has distributed over 100,000 individual pieces of protective equipment (masks, gloves, disinfectants, protective suits) to reception centers, intended for accommodated persons as well as employees. This significantly reduced the risk of transmission and infection in the centers.

- For the needs of the entry points, primarily intended for members of the border police, as well as for all stakeholders actively working in the reception centers, IOM has developed on-line training that contains all protocols for recognition, protection and prevention of Covid-19. It is available in the languages spoken in the region (Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian / Bosnian / Montenegrin, English) for wider availability.⁴⁷
- The Republic of North Macedonia has facilitated the procedures for donation from the diaspora for assistance in the implementation of measures against covid-19, and calls for donations are made in accordance with the Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities, which will be applied for the duration of the state of emergency (2020).⁴⁸

(12) Strengthening the reliability and predictability of migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral

Based on the experiences from the migrant and refugee crisis in 2015, the authorities in the Republic of North Macedonia recognized that they must improve the procedures for registration, screening and referral at the first meeting with migrants and persons in need of international protection at the border. Additionally, the police officers had training with domestic and foreign experts, which proved to be successful.

The work methodology of the border police is based on continuous contacts with the police from each of the neighboring countries and from the countries along the migrant route. The direct cooperation with the neighboring countries is usually realized through the joint border centers. The exchange of information and data is through regular contacts at all three levels and through the JCC for police cooperation (with the competent services of neighboring countries) and through the use of common platforms for information exchange, meetings, participation in international events, forums and initiatives

⁴⁵ IOM Republic of North Macedonia, Vinojug Temporary Transit Center in Gevgelija adapted to the Covid-19 prevention protocols with EU support, 2021. <[https://north-macedonia.iom.int/news/temporary-transit-center-vinojug-gevgelija-adapted-covid-19-infection-prevention - пртоколи-ey.>](https://north-macedonia.iom.int/news/temporary-transit-center-vinojug-gevgelija-adapted-covid-19-infection-prevention--prtoколи-ey.>)

⁴⁶ IOM North Macedonia, disinfection ports installed in the transit centers, 2020. < [https:// северна-Македонија.iom.int / news / disinfection-gates-installed-temporary-transit-reception-centers.>](https://северна-Македонија.iom.int/news/disinfection-gates-installed-temporary-transit-reception-centers.>)

⁴⁷ Point of Entry Training IOM / E-Campus <https://www.ecampus.iom.int/enrol/index.php?id=582>

⁴⁸ Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities during the State of Emergency, 2020. < [https://dejure.mk/zakon/uredba-so-zakonska-sila-za --primena-na-zakonot-za-donacii-i-za-sponsorstva-vo-javnite-dejnosti-za-vreme-na-vonredna -sostojba.>](https://dejure.mk/zakon/uredba-so-zakonska-sila-za--primena-na-zakonot-za-donacii-i-za-sponsorstva-vo-javnite-dejnosti-za-vreme-na-vonredna-sostojba.>)

and regular video conference meetings (with EU agencies and competent services of other countries, including neighboring countries).

The SOPs for identification of migrants, SOPs for dealing with unaccompanied foreign children, SOPs for dealing with a vulnerable category of foreigners, SOPs for victims of trafficking represent a substantial progress in the work. A challenge officials face is the screening to detect a migrant vulnerability, especially if it is a child, in order to be referred to an appropriate institution.

Web application for screening and identification of vulnerable categories of foreigners, prepared by IOM allows screening, identification and referral of the vulnerable category of foreigners to institutions that can timely respond to meet the special needs of the person identified as part of a vulnerable group. The application provides a basis on which the person is then referred to an institution, i.e., official.

(13) Using detention of migrants only as a last resort and work on alternatives

The new Law on Foreigners better regulates the matter of detention of foreigners on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, by simplifying the definitions of when a foreigner will not be able to leave the country and stay in it.

Article 158 refers to the grounds and the duration of the temporary detention of a foreigner. Those grounds are:

- (1) For the purpose of security in the removal procedure, the foreigner may be detained by the Ministry of Internal Affairs for a maximum of 24 hours.
- (2) The foreigner referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article shall be immediately informed regarding the reasons for detention and the possibility to inform the diplomatic-consular office of the state of which they are a citizen, to make contact with a legal representative and members of their family.
- (3) In the case of detention of an unaccompanied minor child the Center for Social Work and the diplomatic-consular office of the state of which they are a citizen shall be immediately notified.
- (4) The detention of the foreigner shall end immediately after the termination of the reasons for their detention, and at the latest until the expiration of the term determined in paragraph (1) of this Article.

Article 159 stipulates the grounds for accommodation of a foreigner in the Reception Center for Foreigners of the Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- (1) For accommodation of foreigners who cannot be removed from the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia for any reason within the deadline determined in Article 158 paragraph (1) of this Law, a Reception Center for Foreigners of the Ministry of Internal Affairs shall be established.
- (2) A foreigner who illegally resides on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, and for whom a return decision has not been made due to risk of escape or when the foreigner avoids or obstructs the return procedure, may be temporarily detained in the Reception Center.
- (3) A foreigner for whom a decision has been made to return and who does not have a valid passport due to which they cannot leave the Republic of North Macedonia voluntarily may be temporarily detained in the Reception Center.
- (4) An asylum seeker may be accommodated in the Reception Center, for whom a decision has been made to restrict the freedom of movement in accordance with law.

The same article, in paragraphs 5-7, contains provisions for minors when they stay in the reception center.

- (5) An unaccompanied juvenile who for objective reasons cannot immediately surrender to the body of the state of which they are a citizen will be accommodated in a special room for juveniles within the Reception Center and the Center for Social Work will be notified for appointing a guardian in accordance with the Law on family.

(6) In the cases referred to in paragraph (5) of this Article, the principle of the best interest of the child shall be respected.

(7) The unaccompanied minor children and the families with minor children are kept in the Reception Center only as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time.

(8) During the accommodation of the foreigners in the Reception Center, they will be able to participate in free and recreational activities appropriate to their age, have legal, social, medical and psychological assistance, as well as the right to education in the educational institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Article 161 states the maximum period of detention with the provision from paragraph 1: The foreigner is temporarily detained in the Reception Center until the cessation of the reasons that prevented their removal from the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, but not longer than six months.

As an exception, in paragraph (2), the detention may be extended for a maximum of another 12 months, if the foreigner: refuses to provide personal or other data and documents necessary for their removal or has provided false information, in any way prevents or prolongs the removal or if the delivery of travel or other documents required for removal requested by the competent authorities of other states is justifiably expected.

On the other hand, the Law on Foreigners introduces an alternative solution for detention of a foreigner, which is not a reception center (Article 162), which is in line with the goal no. 13 of GCM. Alternative solutions should especially be practiced when it comes to child retention, as a last resort.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs acts consistently according to the Law on Foreigners and detention is only a final measure in securing the foreign migrant.

The NGO sector is of the opinion that the police, which has an important role in detaining migrants, should use alternative measures more often.

(14) Improving consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle

Improving the consular services provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and strengthening the diplomatic and consular offices of the Republic of North Macedonia abroad is one of the priorities of the Macedonian foreign policy. In that sense, in the next period, activities will be undertaken for better informing Macedonian citizens of certain consular services, as well as shortening of the time procedure required for realization of the consular activities, with emphasis on issuing a birth certificate, passport, and a property list. In this context, a significant novelty from October 2021 is the introduction of base stations in a number of DCOs, which shortens the time required to issue a passport and reduces financial costs.

Macedonian DCOs have an important role in gathering information and acting within the N-VIS system. Progress is evident, but it needs to be developed to provide a service to a larger number of citizens from multiple countries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has an important role in reporting to foreign DCOs from countries of origin of migrants who died while passing through our country. Further expansion of the communication network and provision of regular communication channels continues to be a priority in managing migration flows.

Stakeholders note progress in the work of consular protection, assistance and cooperation in this area. However, the need remains for further strengthening and investment in the staff capacities of the diplomatic and consular offices abroad, as well as in the institutions in the country that cooperate with them.

(15) Providing access to basic services for migrants

Migrants have equal access to primary education as citizens. According to the Law on Primary Education (2019), every child has the right to "free and quality education" and discrimination on the basis of "sex, race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, social background, education, religion or belief, political belief, other beliefs, age, marital status, property status, health status, social status or on any other grounds" is prohibited. To be admitted to primary school, a person must provide proof of immunization⁴⁹ - this applies to both nationals and foreigners, regardless of their status.

The Law on International and Temporary Protection (2018) gives asylum seekers the right to attend primary and secondary education in accordance with the Law on Education, "until a final decision is made regarding their status". The Law on Social Protection stipulates that the institution in which the asylum seeker resides is responsible for providing access to education. For migrant children without refugee status or who are not under subsidiary protection, non-formal education is organized in the reception center where they are accommodated.⁵⁰

According to the Law on Secondary Education (1995), "foreign citizens and stateless persons may acquire secondary education, in the ways and under the conditions specified in this law", without additional explanations. The law prohibits discrimination based on "gender, race, skin color, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status" and states that foreigners and stateless persons have the right to "seek nostrification or recognition of the equivalence of a certificate obtained abroad".⁵¹

Related to education, for children who have not previously been a part of class such as asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, the Law on Primary Education provides for an assessment of the level of knowledge for their enrollment in an appropriate grade. This requires the development of customized curricula and instruments to test the knowledge of these students.

UNICEF supports strengthening the approach to the inclusion of migrant and refugee children in educational programs. The Law on Primary Education, with its amendments from July 2019, has an inclusive approach. During the Covid-19 crisis, asylum-seeking children at the Vizbegovo Asylum Reception Center were included in regular classes, including online classes according to the distance learning module.

The Law on Social Protection (2019) guarantees the right to social protection to the following categories of migrants: persons without permanent residence in the country, foreigners with regulated residence, asylum seekers, persons under subsidiary protection and persons with refugee status.⁵²

All migrants have the right to family reunification. The Law on Foreigners (2018) sets out the conditions for obtaining a residence permit, including for family reunification, if the person has proof of health insurance and housing or sufficient means of accommodation. The applications should be submitted either to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (if the migrant is already in North Macedonia) or to the diplomatic-consular office of North Macedonia in the country of origin.

⁴⁹ Immunization includes all types of mandatory vaccinations for newborns, children and adults according to the annual government program for mandatory immunization of the population in the Republic of North Macedonia (2021).

⁵⁰ When migrants with illegal status arrive in the Republic of North Macedonia, they are provided with accommodation in reception centers and given initial information in several languages.

⁵¹ Nostrification is the process of recognizing an academic qualification obtained at a foreign university.

⁵² Social protection, as defined in the Law on Social Protection (2019), provides for financial assistance (guaranteed minimum assistance, disability allowance, allowance for assistance and care for another person, part-time salary allowance, housing allowance, permanent compensation and one-time financial assistance). Social protection also includes social services (information and referral services, vocational assistance and support services, counseling services, home services, community services, supportive living, family care services and in-house accommodation).

The Law on Citizenship (1992)⁵³ stipulates that foreign nationals be granted the right to citizenship after eight years of continuous residence in the country. A person can acquire Macedonian citizenship if they are stateless or renounce their previous citizenship before or shortly after acquiring Macedonian citizenship. Foreigners can also be naturalized after having been married to a citizen for at least three years and legally staying in the country continuously for one year.

The expertise and support of international organizations is useful and accelerates efforts to improve services for migrants. IOM developed a web application for screening and identification of vulnerable categories of foreigners. The application enables screening, identification and referral of the vulnerable category of foreigners through the process and institutions that will provide appropriate individual fulfillment of the special needs of the person identified as a vulnerable group. The application provides a basis for which the person is referred to that institution, i.e., to a specific official responsible for a specific area.

Access to social services for persons registered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the two reception transit centers in Vinjug and Tabanovce is provided within the reception center by persons engaged within the project - social workers, educators, cultural mediators.

Persons with acquired status and regulated residence have full access to the rights and services guaranteed by law - social protection, health care, education, employment, housing, integration, etc.

Migrants' access to health care depends on their migrant status. According to Article 2 of the Law on Health Insurance (adopted in 2000, as amended in 2016), compulsory health insurance is provided for all citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia. Under the same article, it is provided that persons who are not covered by compulsory health insurance can subscribe to another voluntary health insurance. In addition, the Law on Foreigners stipulates that in order for a foreigner to obtain a temporary residence permit, proof of health insurance is required.

The Ministry of Health provides health care to vulnerable categories of migrants, including referrals and treatments at the secondary and tertiary levels.

The Law on Employment and Work of Foreigners (2015) stipulates that there are two types of work permits: one for an indefinite period and another with a validity of up to one year. A temporary work permit can be issued to migrants holding a temporary residence permit, while a permanent work permit can be issued to a migrant holding a permanent residence permit. A work permit cannot be issued to a migrant who does not have a residence permit.⁵⁴ Both types of work permits are related to a specific job; if the job is changed, a new work permit is required.

Only a certain category of migrants can apply for a permanent residence permit. The Law on Foreigners stipulates that a permanent residence permit will be issued to a foreigner who holds a temporary residence permit, who resides continuously in the Republic of North Macedonia for at least five years before submitting the application for permanent residence. The condition is that they have not stayed outside the Republic of North Macedonia for six consecutive months or a total of more than ten months. The law further requires foreigners to provide evidence that they have a stable and regular source of income, health insurance, a home or sufficient housing and that they do not have a criminal record in the five years prior to filing. Under Article 129, migrants holding temporary residence permits issued for study, specialization or professional development, scientific research, treatment, humanitarian reasons or temporary protection do not have the right to acquire a permanent residence permit.

North Macedonia has policies⁵⁵ to prevent discrimination, but there are no specific frameworks focused on hate crimes, violence, xenophobia or discrimination against migrants. The Law on Prevention

⁵³ The Law on Citizenship of the Republic of North Macedonia was amended in 2016.

⁵⁴ A temporary work permit may also be issued to members of the immediate family of a migrant holding either a temporary work permit or a permanent work permit, as well as to persons with refugee status and persons under temporary or subsidiary protection.

and Protection against Discrimination (2019), as well as the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (2016), do not contain specific provisions for migrants. Furthermore, from July 2021, one of the activities in the Draft Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners 2017 - 2027 is "Providing equal access to housing in order to encourage social integration and protection against discrimination."

(16) Enabling migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion

Significant progress has been made in the past period in creating better conditions for greater inclusion of migrants. The changes in the regulation mean continuous integration of the UN and EU policies, adapted to the situation in the Republic of North Macedonia and creation of conditions for better social cohesion.

The Resolution on Migration Policy in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025 in Strategic Area 3: Managing Legal Migration - Strategic Objectives⁵⁵ dedicates a significant part to the immigration policy for foreigners and the creation of an appropriate visa policy to facilitate the admission of deficient labor force in the Republic of North Macedonia; Improving the policies for residence and readmission of foreigners, visa regime and visa policy, as well as opportunities for inclusion and social cohesion of foreigners; Improving the established asylum system and increasing its efficiency and effectiveness.

Although the rights of social protection of foreigners are guaranteed by law, there are still some difficulties in their implementation. Hence, the lack of information services for foreigners - migrants that would enable them to obtain the necessary useful information upon arrival in the country is evident.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has prepared a draft version of the new Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners and a draft action plan 2017 to 2027⁵⁶, which has not yet been adopted.

This strategy, which should be adopted, will contribute to further sustainable integration of refugees and foreigners, by providing sustainable institutional solutions for integration measures holders, optimizing resources in implementing measures, formalizing the implementation system, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of integration measures and introduction of policies and models that will allow local self-government units to take ownership of the local integration process.

Proactive policies are suggested; integration programs, including early integration to include activities with the local community.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and other stakeholders are committed to a comprehensive analysis that will improve priorities for full inclusion and create better social cohesion.

(17) Elimination of all forms of discrimination and promotion of evidence-based public discourse on migration perceptions

Quality legal solutions and an effective criminal justice system have an impact on strengthening general prevention, but also effective handling of a case of discrimination related to a case of migration.

Encouraging dialogue between immigrants and the local population is a desirable concept for overcoming the problems of xenophobia and discrimination. The initiative of the MLSP, which cooperates with domestic and foreign organizations, including UN organizations, is important for the development of campaigns and strategies in combating the negative experience of refugee issues and participation in events aimed at preventing discrimination. UNICEF emphasizes that every child is important and every child has rights, no matter where they come from.

⁵⁵ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p.69

⁵⁶ <https://akademik.mk/javna-rasprava-za-predlog-natsrt-na-strategija-za-integratsija-na-begaltsi-i-strantsi-i-natsionalen-aktsiski-plan-za-integratsija-na-begaltsi/>

Some media when talking about migration do not use the terms as stipulated in the regulation, so consciously or unconsciously, they encourage wrong conclusions.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a positive experience of participating in campaigns organized by the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (annual report for 2019 and 2020). As part of a joint United Nations project "Migration Discourse, Policy and Evidence-Based Planning" funded by the Migration Multiparty Trust Fund, IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA and the Office of the Permanent Coordinator of the United Nations successfully implemented the information campaign "Here I am at home" which aimed to create positive narratives and perceptions of migrants and refugees, focusing on their contribution to society. The produced informative videos on social media and other digital channels reached 449,492 people.

Priorities: Stakeholders suggest research and analysis on the perception of migrants in the environments where they are present. Campaigns with the local community are also needed.

(18) Investing in skills development and facilitating the recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies

The promotion of policies for residence and readmission of foreigners, visa regime and visa policy, as well as opportunities for inclusion and social cohesion of foreigners is an important part of the Resolution on Migration Policy in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025. Improving the established asylum system and increasing its efficiency and effectiveness is an assumption and investment for better skills development and facilitating the recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies⁵⁷ as part of the strategic goal 3.

The Republic of North Macedonia continuously nurtures bilateral and international cooperation in the field of migration, and remains committed to building new partnerships. As a signatory to the Global Agreement on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Republic of North Macedonia strives to intensify international cooperation for mutual assistance and support in the process of realization of this agreement. Building these partnerships is very important in terms of providing accurate and timely information at all stages of the migration process.

(19) Creating conditions for migrants and the diaspora to contribute to sustainable development in all countries

The increase in the emigration of highly qualified staff, which according to all parameters can be treated as brain drain, has an impact on the further reduction of highly educated staff in the country, but also on the volume and profile of the available workforce with a higher level of education, reduction of the level of human capital, which implies negative effects in the field of socio-economic development of the country, in many areas.

Return migration flows mainly bring increased inflow of foreign currency, investment growth, technology transfer and knowledge. Contemporary emigration from Macedonia has a development potential for the Macedonian emigration and if it is motivated and market assumptions are created, it can have a positive impact on the development of the country. Successful Macedonian businessmen and well-established highly educated staff can significantly contribute to the implementation of projects with sustainable development in the homeland.

⁵⁷ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, part of the strategic goal 3, p.69

In 2019, the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora⁵⁸, which contains concrete measures for its better connection and engagement. The specific goals of the Strategy are: mapping the diaspora; systematic determination of diaspora priorities; providing a mechanism of cooperation that will be mutually beneficial for the country and the diaspora; determining the rights and obligations in the political context of the diaspora; deepening the cultural cooperation between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Diaspora; establishing business cooperation between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Diaspora; establishing cooperation in terms of educational measures and youth policies between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Diaspora⁵⁹.

The Emigration Agency publishes information on acquiring citizenship and travel advice abroad, and also publishes a Handbook with useful information for emigrants from Macedonia, in which it provides its citizens abroad with practical information on citizenship, personal documentation, rights and responsibilities, as well as pension and disability insurance rights in the countries in which they reside.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides online information on the visa regime, conditions and immigration procedures in North Macedonia. Immigration laws are available on the website of each relevant ministry. They are available only in Macedonian and Albanian, but the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs contains an English translation of the Law on Foreigners.

The Republic of North Macedonia, in addition to the census, collects and analyzes additional data on migration. For example, the Ministry of Internal Affairs periodically collects and publishes data on regular and illegal entry and exit of foreigners across the border⁶⁰. MACSTAT of the State Statistical Office maintains a database containing the following disaggregated information on migration: number of immigrants from other countries by gender, age and region and number of persons who emigrated to other countries by gender, age and region. The data, starting from 2005, are publicly available for each year.

According to the Law on Organization and Operation of State Administration Bodies (2000), the Emigration Agency is responsible for maintaining and improving cultural ties with the diaspora and diaspora organizations, facilitating the return of emigrants, and encouraging diaspora involvement and participation in the public and economic life of the country.⁶¹

The Republic of North Macedonia has facilitated the procedures for donation from the diaspora to assist in the implementation of measures against covid-19, and calls for donations are made in accordance with the Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities, which is applied for the duration of the state of emergency (2020).⁶²

Challenges for the Republic of North Macedonia contained in Strategic Area 3: Managing Legal Migration is to reduce the intensity of permanent emigration abroad, with a special focus on people with a high level of education, by continuously addressing the reasons for emigration; increased intensity of return of our citizens from abroad⁶³.

⁵⁸ <https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/strategii/strategijaiom.pdf>

⁵⁹ National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023, p.7

⁶⁰ The data on illegal migration are published for the period 2010-2017, while the information on regular and illegal entry of foreigners is listed for the period 2017-2018.

⁶¹ The Law on Organization and Work of the State Administration Bodies was amended in 2019.

⁶² Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities during the State of Emergency, 2020. < <https://dejure.mk/zakon/uredba-so-zakonska-sila-za-primena-na-zakonot-zadonacii-i-za-sponzorstva-vo-javnite-dejnosti-za-vreme-na-vonredna-sostojba.> >

⁶³ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 20 2 1-202 5 , p. 13

(20) Promoting faster, safer and cheaper remittances and encouraging the financial inclusion of migrants

The Republic of North Macedonia has a large emigration. There are more than 700,000 Macedonian citizens abroad or about 38% compared to the total population living in the country⁶⁴. The inflow of these emigrants provides part of the national economy (about 2 percent of GDP, according to the latest estimates⁶⁵).

Among the development effects of emigration, according to their meaning, remittances and foreign exchange inflow on the basis of transfers from Macedonian citizens abroad stand out. Remittances and foreign exchange inflow are transferred through the banking system, but there are indicators that part of the foreign exchange assets is transferred through informal channels. The most common reasons why citizens transfer remittances informally, consciously accepting risk and breaking the law, are distrust in financial institutions, expensive service provided by the service provider, restraint from leaking information to state bodies and the local community about the funds available to the owner etc.

The development effects of remittances are determined by the way they are used. All research for the use of remittances and foreign exchange inflows from the diaspora show that most of these funds are used for personal consumption.⁶⁶ Hence, they have a positive impact on the consumption and living standards of migrant households, but this does not have long-term development effects at the macro level through increased consumption, especially in conditions of increased consumption of imported goods. USAID research shows that 15% of remittances can be directed to productive investment activities.⁶⁷ The Republic of North Macedonia has a solid regulatory framework and infrastructure for remittances. In addition, the country is characterized by stable macroeconomic conditions, favorable exchange rates and low inflation. In the Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora, 2019-2023, several measures and activities were foreseen for directing the remittances towards productive investment activities⁶⁸.

Challenges: In the area of remittances from emigrants and persons temporarily working abroad, significant challenges are: creating prerequisites for increased inflow of remittances from the diaspora through official channels and reducing the cost of transferring remittances from abroad; increased awareness of the possibilities for fast and safe transfer of foreign currency remittances through official channels; recording remittances in the source (stating the purpose of the remittance when sending funds); creating an effective policy and measures to direct remittances towards their more productive use⁶⁹.

(21) Cooperation in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration

⁶⁴ National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023, Ministry in charge of Diaspora, March 2019, available at <https://north-macedonia.iom.int/publications> Accessed on 18.10.2020

⁶⁵ Regular Economic Report for the Western Balkans, Country Notes, no. 17, spring 2020, economic and social impact of Covid-19, World Bank Group, available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curat/en/457181588085856454/pdf/The-Ekonomik-and-Social-Impact-of-KOVID-19-Country-Notes.pdf>

⁶⁶ Global Development Network (GDN) (2009): Development on the Move: Measuring and Optimizing the Economic and Social Impacts of Migration in the Republic of Macedonia. Country Report, Skopje.

Petreski, M. and Jovanovic, B. eds. (2013) [Remittances and Development in the Western Balkans: The cases of Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina](#). Scholars ' Press.

⁶⁷ United States Agency for International Development: Enabling the Diaspora to Invest Back Home (<https://www.usaid.gov/>, Accessed March 18, 2018).

⁶⁸ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p.55

⁶⁹ Resolution on migration policy in the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025, p.56

The Republic of North Macedonia has an Agreement with the European Community on the resettlement of persons with illegal residence. The agreement is running smoothly, and statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs show that in 2019 1,300 people were returned to the country, in 2016 - 3,500, and in 2015 - 9,000. The authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia, in accordance with international organizations, make an effort to give to returnees the rights they lost when they left the country, so that they can integrate more quickly into the system and have access to social protection, health services, education, employment benefits, i.e., registration with the Employment Agency.

The Republic of North Macedonia has readmission agreements with almost all European countries. The challenge remains to conclude further readmission agreements with the countries of origin of the migrants.

Stakeholders agree that progress has been made in implementing readmission and return mechanisms for illegal migrants. The MLSP is part of the readmission mechanism, especially active in the area of return of vulnerable persons and minors. The MLSP is also implementing a program for reintegration of returnees from readmission.

Of particular benefit in terms of the obstacles the country faces in the context of return and readmission is the "Functional Analysis of the Capacities and Legal Frameworks for Return and Readmission of the Western Balkans" prepared by IOM and should be presented during 2022. IOM, in cooperation with the competent institutions, implements programs for assisted voluntary return of migrants who do not need international protection in their countries of origin.

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia.
Migration profile of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021), p. 51

Table 1. Voluntarily returned citizens in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2013-2020.

Countries/ year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	2553	2368	3145	5077	3330	1494	1296	336
Germany	2202	2104	2904	4666	3100	1287	1012	220
Austria	138	88	142	154	115	84	91	24
Belgium	102	80	56		42	61		
Netherlands				145			124	61

Source: IOM, Skopje
Migration profile of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021), p.54

(22) Establishment of mechanisms for transferability of social security rights and acquired benefits

Migrants, regardless of migrant status, have equal access to the social protection system as citizens, while only migrants with full-time employment can access the pension insurance system. The Law on Social Protection (2019) guarantees the right to social protection to the following categories of migrants: persons without permanent residence in the country, foreigners with regulated residence, asylum seekers, persons under subsidiary protection and persons with refugee status.⁷⁰ Article 14 of the Law on Pension and Disability.

Insurance (2012) provides for "foreign nationals and stateless persons"⁷¹ compulsory pension and disability insurance, but only if they are "(self) employed or in the service of foreign individuals and legal entities, international organizations and institutions, or foreign diplomatic and consular offices".⁷²

The website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy lists international social security agreements.

So far, the Republic of North Macedonia has concluded bilateral social security agreements with 21 countries⁷³, and through a succession from the former SFRY, has taken over and implemented the Social Security Conventions concluded with the SFRY, which provide for mutual health insurance, social

Table 4. Number of returned Macedonian citizens by readmission and countries from which they are most often returned, 2009-2020

Countries / Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	587	711	1255	1069	1328	1213	1832	3427	2398	1396	1147	638
Germany	169	210	496	426	657	745	1346	2870	1890	1020	674	446
Switzerland	113	156	173	183	165	119	125	168	129	102	78	43
Sweden	11	27	70	130	122	120	80	80	67	37	50	35
Austria	28	30	44	35	16	17	43	59	66	80	74	41
France	13	/	201	26	50	16	16	27	24	25	109	12
Belgium	19	24	74	53	83	57	36	50	49	27	32	13
Greece	106	44	48	73	43	50	88	13	16	3	10	2
Norway	/	100	30	23	22	20	41	68	33	24	26	4
Denmark	11	21	23	18	53	28	17	31	44	26	39	10
Italy	30	26	23	26	24	10	8	26	8	17	19	3
Netherlands	14	19	9	30	7	5	/	12	35	22	18	16

⁷⁰ Social protection, as defined in the Law on Social Protection (2019), provides for financial assistance (guaranteed minimum assistance, disability allowance, allowance for assistance and care for another person, part-time salary allowance, housing allowance, permanent compensation and one-time financial assistance). Social protection also includes social services (information and referral services, vocational assistance and support services, counseling services, home services, community services, supportive living, family care services and in-house accommodation).

⁷¹"A stateless person is a person who is not a citizen of any state under its laws." In practice, Article 14 of the Law can often not be enforced because persons do not have the identification documents required to access insurance.

⁷²The Law on Pension and Disability Insurance was amended in 2020.

⁷³: **Republic of Croatia** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Croatia on social insurance, effective from 01.11.1997); **Austria** - (Macedonian - Austrian Convention on Social Security, effective from 01.4.1998); **Republic of Turkey** - (Agreement on social insurance between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Turkey, effective from 01.07.2000); **Republic of Slovenia** - (Agreement on social security between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Slovenia, effective from 01.04.2001); **Swiss Confederation** - (Convention on Social Security between the Republic of Macedonia and the Swiss Confederation, effective from 01.01.2001); **Republic of Serbia** - (Agreement

insurance, pensions, compensation for unemployment, disability benefits, child benefits and other social benefits until a new bilateral social security agreement is concluded, with 5 countries.⁷⁴

Thorough, inter-institutional elaboration of this goal by GCM is needed, with the involvement of the MLSP. Involvement of relevant state institutions, civil society and international organizations can ensure progress.

(23) Strengthening international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration

The Republic of North Macedonia has achieved significant international cooperation in the field of integrated border management, combating trafficking in human beings and irregular migration with a number of partner countries, UN organizations, EU agencies and other international organizations.

A key activity in combating security challenges is international cooperation, which is based on trust, increased exchange of information and effective neutralization of threats. The exchange of information is carried out through the already established channels of Europol, Interpol, Frontex and liaison officers, and it is enabled on the basis of membership in international and regional organizations, initiatives, agreements and conventions.

A cooperation agreement has been prepared with Frontex, which should improve the cooperation, which is still highly valued. The signing and entry into force of the Status Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia for actions implemented by the Agency for European Border and Coast Guard in the Republic of North Macedonia will provide new, immediate forms of cooperation, which will greatly improve international cooperation and partnership.

The Republic of North Macedonia has established partnerships with the United Nations and other regional and international organizations in the implementation of the goals of GCM. The United Nations

between the Republic of Macedonia and the FR of Yugoslavia on social security, effective from 01.04.2002); **Republic of Bulgaria** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Bulgaria on social insurance, effective from 01.08.2003); **Federal Republic of Germany** - (Agreement between the Macedonian Government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, effective from 01.01.2005); **Bosnia and Herzegovina** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina on social security, effective from 01.04.2006); **Czech Republic** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Czech Republic, effective from 01.01.2007); **Kingdom of the Netherlands** - (Agreement between the Macedonian Government and the Kingdom of the Netherlands on social security, effective from 01.04.2007); **Republic of Poland** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Poland on social security, effective from 01.07.2007); **Romania** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Romania, effective from 01.03.2008); **The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on social security, effective from 01.04.2009); **Belgium** - (Agreement on social security between the Macedonian Government and the Belgian Government, effective from 01.06.2009); **Australia** - (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Government of Australia on social security, effective from 01.04.2011); **Montenegro** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro on social security, effective from 01.08.2011); **Canada** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Canada on social security, effective from 01.11.2011); **Slovak Republic** - (Agreement between Republic of Macedonia and the Slovak Republic for social insurance, applicable from 01.12.2015); 20. **Hungary** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Hungary on social security, effective from 01.09.2015); and 21. **Albania** - (Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Albania on social insurance, effective from 01.06.2016).

⁷⁴ **Republic of France** - (General Convention on Social Security with the Republic of France, signed on 5 January 1950, entered into force on April 1, 1951 (Official Gazette of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia- Supplement No. 4/51); **Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** - (Social Security Convention with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, concluded on 24 May 1958 and entered into force on September 1, 1958 (Official Gazette of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia - Supplement No. 7/58), **Republic of Italy** - (Social Security Convention with the Republic of Italy, concluded on November 14, 1957 and entered into force on January 12, 1961 (Official Gazette of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia - Supplement No. 1/59); **Kingdom of Sweden** - (Social Security Convention with the Kingdom of Sweden, which was concluded on March 30, 1978, and entered into force on January 1, 1979 (Official Gazette of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia- Appendix No. 12/79); **Kingdom of Norway** - (Convention on Social Security with the Kingdom of Norway, concluded on November 22, 1974, and entered into force on September 1, 1976 (Official Gazette of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia-Appendix No. 22/75);

provide state support in the implementation of the GCM through augmentation of international and regional cooperation, as well as in the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030.

The project "Regional Support for Migration Management aimed at protecting the rights of migrants in the Western Balkans and Turkey", funded by the IPA 2 program and implemented in partnership between IOM, Frontex, EASO and UNHCR, emphasizes regional cooperation in the field of achievement of safe, orderly and regular migration. The project, through the planned activities, contributes to the achievement of several goals of GCM, primarily 1, 3, 5, 11, 13, 21 and 23, and is a sustainable initiative to network the efforts of governments in the region to strengthen migration management.