

**A beneficiary of social housing** in Bosnia and Herzegovina proudly displays a picture taken during Angelina Jolie's visit to the collective centre.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Croatia**

**Montenegro**

**Serbia (and Kosovo: Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999))**

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

# South-Eastern Europe

## | Working environment |

Some 300,000 people displaced by the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s are still in exile. Ending the protracted refugee and internal-displacement situations that followed the break-up of the former Yugoslavia is thus a key humanitarian and political imperative in South-Eastern Europe. As they strive towards this goal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia have the strong backing of the international community, as demonstrated at the donor conference held in Sarajevo in April 2012. The pledges announced, amounting to 260 million euros, will be channelled through a multi-donor trust fund to provide housing in the region for 74,000 vulnerable refugees from the 1991-1995 conflicts.

More than 218,500 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region, including some 80,000 members of the Roma, Askhali and Egyptian (RAE) minority groups, remain in need of durable solutions.







Finding decent housing for the most vulnerable IDPs, including those living in collective centres and substandard private accommodation, is one of the biggest challenges confronting the Governments concerned and UNHCR. Another is the lack of civil registration and documentation for refugees, returnees and IDPs which places them at risk of statelessness, a problem that is endemic across the sub-region but which affects minority groups most severely. UNHCR will support the Government of Croatia with planned initiatives to address the rights-based integration of minorities in the western Balkans in its current capacity as Chair of the Roma Decade Conference and in following up the conclusions of the Zagreb Conference.

With Croatia due to become a member of the European Union in 2013, and other countries in the region preparing for membership, South-Eastern Europe is becoming a pathway for mixed flows of migrants and asylum-seekers in transit towards Western Europe. Within the broader challenge of mixed migration movements, UNHCR is supporting States in the subregion to develop asylum systems that will help them comply with EU regulations on the management of mixed migration.

## Strategy

UNHCR will promote a rights-based approach and an inter-agency response to ensure that people seeking international protection are identified within mixed-migration flows; have their protection needs assessed fully and fairly; and can integrate locally. The Office will play a strong protection role in monitoring the Regional Housing Programme to ensure that it is correctly implemented (including for IDPs), that beneficiaries are chosen in a transparent and fair manner and that projects meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

UNHCR intends to recommend the application of the Cessation clauses for Croatian and Bosnian refugees. Meanwhile, the Office will monitor both voluntary and forced returns to ensure that returnees have unhindered access to basic rights and assistance. Raising awareness of sexual and

gender-based violence (SGBV) among refugees and IDPs, state authorities and civil society will be another protection priority.

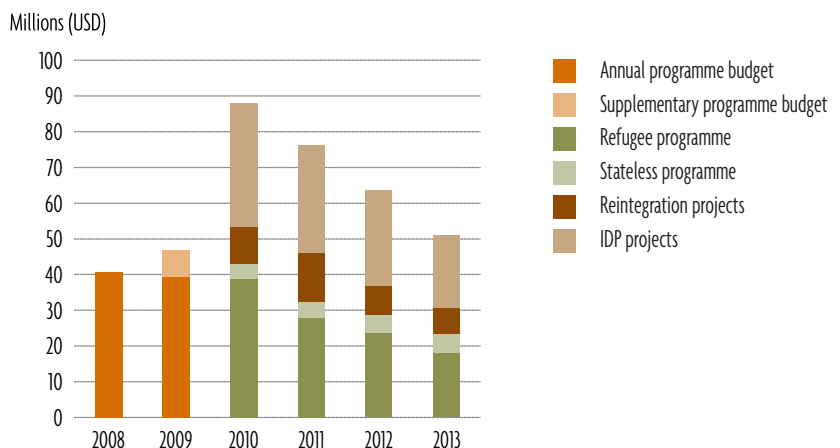
To reduce statelessness in the region, UNHCR will support those who need to obtain civil-status documentation and late birth registration certificates. At the same time, it will promote accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by the countries still not party to it.

These endeavours will require UNHCR to work closely with Governments, civil society and local and international NGOs. The European Union will remain a key partner, as will the OSCE and other UN agencies in the Balkans.

## Constraints

Stability and political will are crucial if Governments in the subregion are to end the protracted refugee and IDP situations they face. The authorities must also improve asylum systems and speed up the rate of civil registration among those at risk of statelessness. The dearth of housing, low living standards, unemployment, lack of birth-registration and civil-status

## UNHCR's budget in South-Eastern Europe 2008 – 2013



documentation and restrictions on access to education and health care hinder local integration, return and reintegration. Inter-ethnic relations also pose challenges in most of the countries.

## Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Serbia (and Kosovo S/RES/1244 (1999))**, are presented in separate chapters.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** hosts 113,000 IDPs, of whom 8,600 live in substandard conditions in collective centres. Some 47,000 minority returnees have not been able to find sustainable solutions, and 7,000 refugees from Croatia need help to integrate locally or repatriate voluntarily.

The Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement adopted by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010 gives priority to the provision of improved social housing and participation in the regional housing programme to collective-centre residents. UNHCR will help select beneficiaries and ensure that the most vulnerable are provided with sustainable solutions.

UNHCR will strengthen asylum reception services and legal counselling. It will emphasize full implementation of the law and the inclusion of reception services in State budget allocations in preparation for EU accession. The Office will continue to provide food and basic services to recognized refugees and support their local integration.

The programme providing key documents to Roma at risk of statelessness will be expanded to reach all 4,500 people in need of it.

**Croatia** will host almost 800 refugees and receive some 1,000 asylum-seekers in 2013. Ensuring access to fair and efficient asylum systems, including promotion of protection-sensitive border management, will remain a priority. A significant change in Croatia's asylum system in 2012 was the assumption by the Administrative Court of responsibility for second-instance decisions in asylum claims. UNHCR will help the authorities to ensure reception capacity keeps pace with the growth in the number of asylum-seekers and the quality of the asylum system.

Other areas of focus include vulnerable groups and the development of integration policies.

Nearly 21,500 minority returnees have outstanding housing, reconstruction and civil-status issues to resolve, and most returnee families need legal counselling to help them gain access to their basic rights. UNHCR will help the Government to develop a multi-year strategy to address these issues, while promoting peace-building activities in war-affected communities and monitoring the implementation of the regional housing programme.

UNHCR has followed up on Croatia's accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by assisting an estimated 500 stateless people and 1,000 others at risk of statelessness, predominantly Roma, to obtain civil-registration documentation.

## UNHCR's budget in South-Eastern Europe (USD)

OPERATION	2012 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2012)	2013				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	15,029,004	3,401,137	1,635,388	0	4,117,965	9,154,490
Croatia	5,002,999	1,622,263	408,355	2,969,382	0	5,000,000
Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999))	12,005,007	3,127,063	1,371,308	4,251,861	216,667	8,966,898
Montenegro	4,550,882	4,298,063	247,815	0	0	4,545,879
Serbia	23,008,300	2,132,422	1,202,358	0	15,915,221	19,250,000
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,985,647	3,597,817	385,829	0	0	3,983,646
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,581,840</b>	<b>18,178,765</b>	<b>5,251,053</b>	<b>7,221,243</b>	<b>20,249,852</b>	<b>50,900,913</b>

As **Montenegro** makes progress towards the local integration of 16,000 persons displaced by regional conflicts, UNHCR will assist those in need of documentation to facilitate their access to a new legal status. It will also advocate for the harmonization of laws to ensure that those with the new status are able to enjoy all their rights.

UNHCR will support Montenegro's implementation of the regional housing programme, with the aim of providing housing solutions for 1,200 vulnerable families, and focusing in particular on 2,000 Roma and Egyptian individuals from Kosovo. UNHCR will also facilitate voluntary returns to Kosovo, though lack of land and reintegration support for landless RAE returnees is an obstacle.

In order to prevent statelessness, UNHCR will advocate for Montenegro's accession to the 1961 Convention on Reduction of Statelessness. Specifically, it will promote the re-acquisition of citizenship by over 4,300 people declared to be stateless.

Although the number of asylum-seekers in the country has increased significantly since 2011, Montenegro is mainly a transit country. As the country moves towards integration with Europe, UNHCR will assist the Government to strengthen the new national asylum system.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** hosts nearly 1,700 refugees, mostly Roma who fled their homes as a result of the 1999 conflict in Kosovo, and receives some 750 asylum-seekers a year. UNHCR will advocate for improvements in refugee status determination and access to social and economic rights for refugees that are compatible with the international standards. Capacity-building activities remain key priorities. UNHCR's engagement with the judicial review process was strengthened by the signing of a memorandum of cooperation with the Academy for Judges in 2012.

UNHCR is looking for partnerships to address the housing needs of some 190 vulnerable families opting for local integration. It will also implement vocational-training and small-scale income-generation projects to improve refugees' self-reliance. Advocating for the prevention of statelessness, including accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, will remain a priority. Finally, UNHCR will provide support in obtaining identity documents to the nearly 1,100 members of minority communities who lack birth registration.

## Financial information

The budget for the South-Eastern Europe region in 2013 is USD 50.9 million, of which 36 per cent is allocated for refugees, 40 per cent for IDPs, 14 per cent for reintegration and 10 per cent for stateless people.

The reduction in the budget reflects the progressive downsizing of UNHCR's operations as the countries of South-Eastern Europe take on the task of ending the long-standing displacement chapter in the region.