SERBIA
INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE
FEBRUARY 2017

Highlights

- The overall number of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants counted in Serbia averaged 7,700. An average of 6,600 (86%) of them were sheltered in 17 heated government facilities. The others were staying rough in Belgrade city centre or in the North near the Hungarian border.

- Two tragic accidents again illustrated the risks of refugees and migrants trying to cross borders irregularly: on 2 February, up to 12 migrant men in Sid, trying to enter an international cargo train to Croatia, accidentally triggered an electric wire which caused a massive explosion, seriously injuring at least four men from Algeria. The men were hospitalized with internal and external burns and two remained in critical condition. The second accident took place on 3 February, when a group of 15 to 20 Afghan men and boys, led by Pakistani smugglers, were trying to cross into Hungary over the frozen Tisa River. Reportedly, the ice broke and they fell into the water. One man remains missing, feared to have drowned.

- A second tragic death by hypothermia of a refugee/migrant during this winter was confirmed. Both victims had been abandoned by smugglers in the hills/woods near the Serbian-Bulgarian border. After a woman from Iraq died close to the border with Bulgaria in mid-December, on 9 February authorities retrieved the body of a man from Pakistan near Pirot, who had gone missing at the end of January. The authorities assisted with the transfer of his remains to relatives in Western Europe.

- While closely monitoring the protection situation, UN and partners were not able to confirm or reject allegations of survival sex amongst refugee and migrant men and boys in Belgrade which appeared in the media (e.g. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-serbia-sex-idUSKBN15V1KH). Authorities dismissed the allegations.

KEY FIGURES
(FEBRUARY 2017)

- 502 Registered intentions to seek asylum in Serbia
- 43% of registered refugees and migrants were minors
- 53 Applications for asylum
- 0 Persons granted refugee status
- 0 Persons granted subsidiary protection

PRIORITIES

- Ensure that urgent humanitarian and protection needs of refugees and migrants are being met
- Assist the Government to strengthen the asylum and migration management system in line with applicable international standards
UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The number of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants counted in the country remained stable in February at 7,700. Of those accommodated in governmental facilities, most were not adult men (41%), but children (43%) or women (16%). Over 80% of them had fled the so-called “refugee-producing countries”, including Afghanistan (54%), Iraq (18%) and Syria (8%).

The number of young men and boys squatting in abandoned warehouses behind the train station in shrunk to 800, while the recently opened transit centre (TC) in Obrenovac kept filling up its capacities, with occupancy increasing from 600 to 900 during February. Authorities organised daily transport from the city centre to Obrenovac, while also accepting self-referrals, who show up in Obrenovac spontaneously. UNHCR and CRPC facilitated registration and transport of another 160 registered asylum-seekers from Belgrade city centre to other designated accommodation centres throughout the country.

Hungarian authorities continued to admit an average of 5 persons per week day at each of the “transit zones” near Kelebija and Horgoš border crossings. Many refugees and migrants across Serbia grew increasingly restless about lowered admission numbers and rising waiting periods, indicating that more may try to cross borders irregularly instead.

A total of 208 asylum-seekers were admitted regularly into Hungary in February. During the same period, over 870 asylum-seekers informed UN and partners to have been denied access to asylum procedures in Hungary and 200 stated to have been denied access to asylum procedures in Croatia, but instead been collectively expelled back into Serbia, with some alleging maltreatment.

A collective expulsion from Serbia into Bulgaria, which allegedly took place on 03 February raised serious concerns. 25 refugees from Afghanistan, mainly families with children, who wished to seek asylum in Serbia and upon request of the court in Pirot had been issued referrals by the Police to be accommodated in the government reception centre (RC) of Divljana, were reportedly expelled to Bulgaria instead. As per its global protection mandate, UNHCR brought this incident to the attention of responsible Serbian authorities, requesting investigation and follow-up.

In February, 502 intentions to seek asylum in Serbia were registered: 43% by men, 14% by women and 43% for children. Applications were filed by citizens of Afghanistan (40%), Iraq (21%), Syria (16%), Pakistan (8%), or other countries (15%). No substantive first-instance decisions were issued.
Achievements

Achievements and Impact

- On 15 February, UNHCR and partners surveyed refugee and migrant men squatting in all known locations in Belgrade city centre, and counted a total of 841, all males. With successful transfers to Obrenovac and other governmental shelters, the number of unaccompanied and separated boys amongst them had dropped to 41 (or 12%). Of the total, 40% who were willing to be surveyed, 87% claimed to be from Afghanistan and 13% from Pakistan. Among them, 12% indicated they were willing to transfer into any government shelter immediately and 17% perhaps, depending on the shelter, while 49% stated they did not want to move to any governmental shelter but prefer to stay in the city centre instead.

- Upon request of authorities, UNHCR and partners continued to support the Centre for Social Work in conducting Best Interest Assessments for unaccompanied and separated children and appointing legal guardians.

- UNHCR with its partners supported attendance of five unaccompanied and separated boys from Afghanistan, accommodated in the “Vasa Stajić” home for children, together with 11 IDP children, to attend a week long International Winter Camp for children (25 Feb – 3 March), organized by a Serbian sports association, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, at a ski resort in Kopaonik mountain.

- On 27 February, UNHCR’s Bureau for Europe released “Desperate Journeys”, a Report on Refugees and Migrants entering and crossing Europe via the Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes (link).

- UNICEF-supported child-friendly spaces (CFS) were operational in Preševo, Bujanovac, Šid, Dimitrovgrad and Krnjača with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Since the beginning of 2017, 937 children received support in the UNICEF-supported family support hubs, child-friendly spaces and mother and baby corners (MBCs).

- UNICEF continued to support the social welfare system in Preševo, Bujanovac, Belgrade, Šid and Subotica. Centres for Social Work (CSWs) continued to provide support to refugee/migrant/asylum-seeker children and to ensure the identification and protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs).

- During February, UNICEF supported CSWs and Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) to identify and support 259 UASCs (Belgrade: 71; Bujanovac: 60; Preševo: 11; Šid: 46; Subotica: 71). Social workers interviewed the identified children and made the necessary referrals to the police (to obtain intention to seek asylum documents), health services when necessary and accommodation in relevant facilities, including children’s homes.

- The Belgrade Center for Human Rights (BCHR) conducted four monitoring visits to Bogovađa AC, three monitoring visits to Banja Koviljača AC and eleven to Krnjača AC during February. Additionally, BCHR legal representative visited Sjenica AC five times and Tutin AC four times. The BCHR visited several times places of informal gatherings of migrants in Belgrade for the purpose of legal counselling. Starting from February, BCHR legal officer started conducting weekly monitoring visits to Preševo and Bujanovac RCs in order to provide free legal assistance and possibility of legal representation in the asylum procedure.

- BCHR legal teams counselled 412 persons (260 male, 152 female; 305 over 18 years of age and 107 minors). Similarly to previous months, majority of PoCs counselled were from Afghanistan (164), followed by Iraq (115), Cuba (54), Syria (28), Pakistan (17) and Iran (15). Fifteen powers of attorney were signed for the purpose of free legal representation of PoC by BCHR in the asylum procedure in Serbia.
BCHR continued providing legal assistance to refugees and migrants in the Shelter for Foreigners in Padinska Skela. BCHR legal officers paid four visits to this institution including two interviews before the Asylum Office for BCHR clients. As part of the National Preventive Mechanism, BCHR took part in five visits to refugee sights.

BCHR submitted an appeal to the Constitutional Court, based on evidence collected along the Eastern border, on a case of potential collective expulsion of PoCs from Afghanistan to Bulgaria by mixed patrols of Serbian armed forces.

Through UNFPA support, NGO Atina was present daily in the field through its mobile teams, working with women who are in transit in terms of providing psychological support, but also a comprehensive assistance package, through case management. Mobile teams had three urgent interventions in the field and identified four new cases of GBV.

Through the UNFPA-supported project, Atina had four meetings with the representatives of the City CSW (one every Monday), as well as individual meetings with the legal guardian from the CSW regarding individual cases (one every second Friday). Additionally, the issue of human trafficking and GBV in a refugee crisis was presented to Representatives of CSW of Preševo, Bujanovac, Subotica, Šid and Beograd, as well as the Centre for protection of victims of human trafficking, Institute for children and youth, representatives of international, national and local civil society organizations (Save the children, DRC, UNICEF, IOM, IRC, Praxis, PIN, Info Park, HCIT, SOS CV and Group 484).

Implementation of the grant approved by OHCHR to the civil society recipient IAN Serbia started with provision of healthcare and psychosocial support in Bosilegrad RC and provision of psychosocial support and counselling at IAN’s premises in Belgrade for the residents of Krnjača AC. Available services have been agreed upon and are being implemented under the coordination of SCRM, the local self-government and the Institute for Public Health.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)/Balkan Centre for Migration (BCM) teams provided translation assistance (Arabic and Farsi) to refugees/migrants/asylum-seekers and partner organisations (Philanthropy, Humedica, Save the Children, Atina, UNHCR, Indigo, ADRA, DRC, UNICEF, IOM, MDM and IDC) and authorities (Clinical Centre Belgrade, Clinical Centre Niš, Health Centre (HC) Šid, General Hospital Sremska Mitrovica, HC Bujanovac, HC Preševo, and General Hospital in Vranje, Šid Court, Šid police inspectors, Municipality Sremska Mitrovica, Police and SCRM in Preševo) in 2,393 instances, in Šid, Belgrade, Bujanovac and Preševo. The CRS/BCM teams provided legal assistance in the aforementioned locations in 110 instances.

Operation Mobilization (OM) tent in Adaševci TC became a community spot in the centre, where children, women and men felt safe and protected. They enjoyed, as much as possible considering their situation, the atmosphere in the tent and the presents of many volunteers from Serbia and other countries.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) was providing psychological support to refugees/migrants in Belgrade city center, with over 310 interventions in February.

Praxis continued providing information to refugees/migrants/asylum seekers in Belgrade about the current situation, available legal pathways and available services (accommodation, transportation to asylum/reception centres, legal assistance, medical care, food, NFIs, etc.). In February, Praxis provided support to a total of 628 newly arrived refugees/migrants/asylum seekers (374 adults and 254 children) in Belgrade. Out of the total number of children, 142 were potential UASC (55.9% of all children). Praxis also identified vulnerable cases (families with children, pregnant and lactating women, UASCs, the ill, the elderly, persons who have exhausted all resources and were at risk of turning to smugglers, etc.) and referred them to other organizations for targeted assistance. A total of 301 persons (170 new arrivals and 131 beneficiaries identified earlier) were referred to different organizations/institutions for targeted assistance. Praxis also provided protection by presence and escorted refugees to the Police Station for registration – of all the referrals, a total of 120 refugees/migrants/asylum seekers were referred to the Police Station in Savska Street for registration. In February, Praxis continued informing refugees and migrants sleeping rough in Belgrade about the possibility of accommodation in the Reception Centre in Obrenovac, and in particular focused on identifying the most vulnerable among them, such as those with health...
problems and UASCs, and provided them with adequate and relevant information about it. When there was no organized transportation provided, Praxis also provided transportation assistance to a total of 93 refugees/migrants/asylum seekers by covering the costs of train/bus tickets to asylum or reception centres, mainly bus tickets for Subotica and Novi Pazar and train tickets for Šid. Praxis also covered the costs of transportation by taxi to the Police station for the purpose of registration for most vulnerable beneficiaries. Praxis was also doing protection monitoring and recording the cases of violation of refugees’ rights along the route.

- 230 individuals (58% of which were children and youth) made a total of 2,240 visits to the ADRA Community Center in Borča (Belgrade). They participated in recreational and occupational activities, as well as informal education (lessons in Serbian language, digital literacy, assistance with learning) and workshops on human rights. An average of 80 refugees and migrants used the services of the centre daily. The centre was also visited by Serbian children (scouts and children from the local school in Borča accompanied by their teachers). ADRA Protection Officer talked to sixteen Serbian children about the refugee situation, and they had an opportunity to learn about the different phases of the situation/crisis through a photo exhibition arranged in the Centre by ADRA, they got to know their peers and spent a couple of hours in recreational activities. Schoolchildren from "Rade Drainac" primary school donated clothes, toys and snacks to the Centre and personally handed the donation to children present in the Centre. Local families visited the Community Centre and spent time in recreational activities with refugee children and youth. A football tournament was organized by the Refugees Foundation in Serbia, where Spanish journalists donated sport requisites to refugees and the Community Centre, provided by Spanish football clubs. All Centre’s programmes are coordinated at different levels with SCRM, the Centre for Educational Policies (CEP), public schools, CSW Palilula and other key stakeholders.

- Throughout February, Psychosocial Innovation Network’s (PIN) team was present on the territory of Belgrade and oriented towards providing psychosocial support to refugees in this area. PIN was regularly visiting the Centre for Minors “Vasa Stajic” and the Refugees Foundation, conducting various workshops (e.g. on Goal Setting, Emotion Expressing, Effective Learning, etc.) and providing support to the beneficiaries. PIN was likewise present in the premises of Miksašije and Info Park on a regular basis in order to provide psychosocial support to vulnerable individuals and collect data on relocation intentions of UASCs located in the Park area.

- PIN was working with vulnerable persons placed in Slankamen Rehabilitation Centre and Detention Centre for foreigners. Furthermore, individual counselling for individuals accommodated at Krnjača AC and those privately accommodated in Belgrade who sought continuous psychological support was carried out at PIN’s premises on a regular basis. Total number of PIN’s beneficiaries who received PFA, support and information was 69, and a total number of protection cases was 17.

- Group 484 provided six times per week psychosocial support to children and teenage migrants at CFS in Bogovada AC. In an effort to build their resilience, the support included creative, educational and recreational activities. Through play and child-friendly material, children were encouraged to learn languages, basic math and civic education. Activities were conducted in partnership with Save the Children.

- In cooperation with Caritas, Group 484 continued providing six times per week psychosocial support to children and teenage refugees/migrants/asylum-seekers accommodated in Preševo RC. The recreational, creative and educational activities were conducted with the support from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Serbia.

- CARE in partnership with NSHC continued to provide support to refugees in accommodation centres in Belgrade and Subotica. Initial assessment and referral services were provided to 657 persons in Belgrade. In addition, recreational activities through the Activity corner were organized for 253 beneficiaries.

- CARE in partnership with NEXUS organized recreational outdoor activities for 416 beneficiaries in Preševo RC.

- CARE in partnership with Impuls organized recreational activities for 549 beneficiaries in Sjenica and Tutin ACs.

- DRC/ECHO teams continued their protection activities in the areas of Preševo, Subotica, Belgrade, Šid and Eastern Serbia (Dimitrovgrad, Divljana, Bosilegrad and Pirot). In Šid TC, DRC Protection Teams assisted authorities in conducting disinfection and treatment of infected PoCs and distributed needed winterised NFIs. With the support of Women Protection Counsellor and Child Protection Officer, workshops on Prevention of Violence and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse were designed. The first round of workshops started in Šid TC. In total, information was provided for 1,823 beneficiaries and protection response for 1,536 beneficiaries.

- DRC/UNICEF teams in Preševo continued providing assistance in the CFS (to 120 children and 25 mothers/caregivers on average per day) and MBC (to 46 children on average per day) in Preševo RC. 71 workshops were conducted as part of CFS program.
Starting from 6 February, structured non-formal education activities commenced and are implemented by all NGOs working with children, as per request from Preševo RC management. DRC was assigned to undertake activities with children aged 7-8 years (in total 51 children). In Preševo, DRC team facilitated 44 classes/workshops (9 Art, 10 English Language, 12 Math and 12 Serbian Language). On average, 47 children per day attended the non-formal educational activities. Preševo RC management also requested that NGOs working with children organize a “Service Fair” where beneficiaries would have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the different projects that NGOs are implementing in Preševo and Bujanovac. The “Service Fair” was organized on 6 February, where DRC/UNICEF team presented CFS and MBC activities.

DRC/UNICEF teams in Bujanovac continued providing assistance in the CFS (to 80 children and 15 mothers/caregivers on average per day) and MBC (to 37 children on average per day). During February, 25 workshops were conducted as part of CFS program. Structured non-formal education activities started in Bujanovac on 13 February, one week following the commencement of non-formal education activities in Preševo RC. DRC was assigned to implement activities with two age groups (7-8 years and 9-10 years); however, due to the fact that Bujanovac is a relatively small camp, both groups have only 20 children. In Bujanovac, 25 classes/workshops were facilitated (5 Art, 5 English Language, 7 Math and 7 Serbian Language workshops/classes). On average, 19 children attended the non-formal educational activities per workshop. DRC/UNICEF team referred 2 UASCs to CSW.

DRC/UNICEF teams in Šid continued providing assistance in the CFS (to 108 children and 13 mothers/caregivers on average per day) and in the MBC (to 28 children on average per day) in Šid. DRC/UNICEF team referred 17 UASCs to CSW. During February, 132 workshops were conducted as part of CFS program.

DRC/UNICEF Child Protection Officer in Krnjača continued providing assistance in the CFS (54 children and 12 mothers/caregivers were on average provided with assistance per day). During February, 29 workshops were conducted as part of CFS program. During February, the Child Protection Officer in cooperation with the City CSW was engaged to support the UASCs accommodated in Krnjača AC who are attending formal education in different schools in the City of Belgrade to increase their class attendance by visiting them every morning and motivating them to attend classes.

DRC/UNICEF teams in Dimitrovgrad established service provision by implementing the CFS programme. DRC/UNICEF team provided assistance to, on average, 42 children per day and 20 mothers/caregivers on average per day. DRC/UNICEF team referred on average 1 child per day and 1 mother/caregiver to medical services. DRC/UNICEF team organized 38 workshops for children and caregivers in Dimitrovgrad TC.

Over the past month, Save the Children (SC), along with partner organizations in Serbia, reached a total of 708 new beneficiaries, of which 268 were children. Since the beginning of the refugee response, SC in Serbia reached 78,289 beneficiaries, of which 32,211 children.

SC/CIM operated Child Protection teams in Preševo, providing psychosocial support and educational activities, as well as 24/7 support at the drop-in centre in Miksalište in Belgrade, running a CFS and a Youth Corner. In Bogovada AC, SC/Group 484 ran child protection and educational programmes for children and youth, workshops for parents and provided legal counselling.

In order to create a common approach by all agencies working on case management, SC/CIM rolled out a case management training for actors involved in CP in Preševo and Bujanovac RCs, as well as a follow-up training, offering guidelines that all actors should follow.

SC/Praxis ran outreach teams providing protection, monitoring and legal assistance in parks and public places in Belgrade. The teams also assisted in voluntary relocation of people sleeping rough in Belgrade, focusing on protection of UASCs.
SC cooperated with the Centre for Foster Care and Adoption (CFCA), in order to strengthen specialized fostering for UASCs. CFCA piloted a training on specialized fostering of UASCs in Serbia in view of further adapting the programme and submitting for its accreditation in the Republic of Serbia. SC also commissioned a study on the implementation of UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children.

Within the project supported by Swiss Development Cooperation, SC conducted the following trainings: “Characteristics and specific experiences of UASCs” and “Recognizing and prevention of SGBV against UASCs”. As the final event of the project, a consultative meeting /round table was organized to map the experiences and challenges in providing support to UASCs. All events were attended by professionals from state institutions providing support to UASCs, as well as experts and field workers from both local and international NGOs.

Supported by Catholic Relief Services, Philanthropy distributed 1,671 cash cards worth 5,000 RSD for families and 1,384 cash cards worth 3,000 RSD for vulnerable individuals in 9 Transit/Reception and 4 Asylum Centres, to a total of for 5,192 vulnerable refugees and migrants.

NGO Atina was providing direct support for the most vulnerable PoCs in the territory of Belgrade, Preševo and Bujanovac. Atina’s mobile teams provided support through outreach activities to 216 people in the field, and long-term support for 78 persons.

NGO Atina was operating 24/7 in Belgrade and other sites for the survivors of GBV and human trafficking. Mobile teams had 25 urgent interventions in the field – 19 cases of GBV cases were identified - 14 women, 2 girls and 4 boys who survived physical, psychological, sexual violence, and forced marriage – who had been referred to Atina by NGOs (12), UN agencies (3), public institutions (4), and Atina’s team members (6).

In Belgrade, IRC’s partner Info Park continued to run an information hub in Gavrila Principa Street. Refugees could attend German and English lessons and empowerment sessions for women and girls, charge their phones and use the Internet. Info Park’s mobile teams, including Farsi and Arabic interpreters, supported the refugees in the city centre through information-provision and referrals.

IRC supported NSHC to deploy mobile teams trained in protection monitoring in Belgrade city center and Subotica, reaching out to refugees dwelling in urban spaces and providing them with information, referrals and basic aid such as snacks and NFIs. IRC also co-supported the NSHC’s MBC in Miksalište, as well as a series of occupational workshops for women at Adaševci TC.

Supported by the IRC, BCHR’s mobile team was present in Dimitrovgrad at Serbia-Bulgaria border to survey if access to territory and asylum procedure were respected, monitored the treatment of refugees once they have crossed into Serbia and provided humanitarian aid. In cooperation with SCRM, BCHR was regularly providing aid to refugees sheltered in Dimitrovgrad RC.

Divac Foundation and IRC ran a Social café in Krnjača AC in Belgrade. While provided with tea and coffee, refugees were able to join occupational activities such as art workshops, board games, sewing lessons, sport activities etc.

IRC and Mercy Corps continued providing refugees with accurate information online via the Refugee.Info project.

The IRC, together with Atina, PIN, BCHR and Ideas, continued its programme of support to UASCs. Main activities in February were:

- BCHR mobile team continued providing legal assistance in identification and registration of UASCs, legal information, legal referrals and representation to newly arrived UASCs, children in centres, and asylum-seeking UASCs in Belgrade, Subotica, Pirot, Dimitrovgrad, and Divljana.
- Atina’s mobile team continued outreach and support activities in asylum and reception centres in Belgrade, Preševo and Bujanovac. Atina was finalizing work on service mapping for UASCs and the referral roadmap, as well as work on guidelines for case management and cultural mediation.
- PIN continued with individual and group psychosocial counselling for UASCs in Belgrade and the English language café for UASCs in Belgrade.

Ideas announced guidelines in the area of child protection at the Child Protection Sub-working Group meeting. Guidelines for case management and Guidelines for legal guardians have been finalized and presented. What remains to be released are the Guidelines for local-level support, Guidelines for legal guardianship, Guidelines for best interest determination, Guidelines for case management and Guidelines for residential care.

Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) was providing the following services in Belgrade: information dissemination (in Pashto, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, English, French and Spanish), interpretation, cultural mediation and orientation, psychosocial aid, identification and referrals of EVIs, advocacy and referral to legal, medical and other aid, free Wi-Fi and phone charging access, escort and transport to different facilities, NFI distribution etc.). Services
were provided both independently and in cooperation with other actors. CRPC team provided different services for a total of 5,946 beneficiaries/visits (of which Afghanistan 61%, Iraq 10%, Pakistan 10% and Iran 8%; 68% men, 9% women, 23% children). Of the total number of children, CRPC identified 5% (68) possible UASC cases.

- With the help of UNHCR, CRPC provided assistance in logistics, transport and escort for 169 beneficiaries to Pirot, Bujanovac, Divljan, Principovac, Adasevci and Banja Koviljača centres.
- CRPC also assisted UNHCR in visits to Obrenovac TC daily from Monday to Friday.
- On 3 February, UNHCR/CRPC conducted a profiling exercise of the population in makeshift shelters behind the train station, in order to assess the structure and the needs of beneficiaries.
- CRPC continued assisting CSW in providing escort for UASCs from Krnjača AC to schools “Branko Pešić” in Zemun and “Rade Drainac” in Borča.
- CRPC cooperated with UNHCR/DRC and other on-site medical teams, Krnjača AC staff etc. and assisted with interpretation/cultural mediation, escort, advocacy and transportation to secondary medical and other facilities in 348 cases.

- UNHCR’s partner Humanitarian Center for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT) was present 7 days a week in the North and in the West of the country and continued counseling/informing and referring persons likely in need of international protection to relevant organizations/institutions. HCIT protection teams provided practical and service information in 1,853 instances in February and 827 foreign nationals received legal advice/were counseled on the right to seek asylum in Serbia, the procedure to follow, their rights and obligations, etc. More than 50 asylum seekers were assisted in registering and transportation to Belgrade where registration was possible. HCIT supported PoCs in accessing local institutions, such is Health Care Centres, the Municipal Registrar (for registration of newly born babies) and transportation to institutions in all these cases, especially for EVIs. HCIT interpreters were regularly used, free of charge, by the doctors in hospitals, the Health Care Centres, the Police stations and Misdemeanour Courts.

- HCIT documented and noted an increased number of expulsion cases during February as well as presence of a large number of asylum-seekers sleeping rough in several locations in the North (of which around 60% were nationals of Pakistan, around 20% of Afghanistan and another 20% of various nationalities including Syrians, Iraqis, Algerians, etc.). The population sleeping rough outside the official governmental facilities was in poor condition, and many reported having been expelled over ten times from Hungary. HCIT documented collective expulsion cases and counselled the persons concerned on their options in Serbia. HCIT noted that, apart from single males, entire families with small children were expelled without access to asylum procedures in Hungary in February. Those who were expelled (including UASCs) continued sleeping rough outdoors, which made them even more vulnerable.

- HCIT team participated in the monthly meetings in Centres for social work in Subotica, highlighting possible gaps and problems in the field.

- Praxis continued providing information to refugees/migrants/asylum-seekers in Belgrade about the current situation, available legal pathways and available services (accommodation, transportation to asylum/reception centres, legal assistance, medical care, food, NFIs, etc.). In February, Praxis provided support to a total of 628 new arrivals (374 adults and 254 children) in Belgrade. Out of the total number of children, 142 were potential UASCs (56% of all children). Praxis also identified vulnerable cases (families with children, pregnant and lactating women, UASCs, the ill, the elderly, persons who have exhausted all resources and are at risk of turning to smugglers, etc.) and referred them to other organizations for targeted assistance. A total of 301 persons (170 new arrivals and 131 previously identified) were referred to different organizations/institutions for targeted assistance. Praxis also provided protection by presence and escorted refugees to the Police Station for registration – of all the referrals, a total of 120 asylum-seekers were referred to the Police Station in Savska Street for registration. Praxis continued informing refugees and migrants sleeping rough in Belgrade about the possibility of accommodation in Obrenovac RC, and focused on identifying the most vulnerable among them, such as those with health problems and UASCs, and provided them with adequate and relevant information. When there was no organized transportation provided, Praxis provided transportation assistance to a total of 93 refugees/migrants/asylum-seekers by covering the costs of train/bus tickets to asylum/reception centres, mainly bus tickets for Subotica and Novi Pazar and train tickets for Šid. Praxis also covered the costs of transportation by taxi to the Police station for the purpose of registration for most vulnerable beneficiaries. Praxis was engaged in protection monitoring and recording of cases of violation of refugees’ rights along the route.
Caritas teams for psychosocial support were providing assistance to refugees in Preševo, Bogovađa and Belgrade (Krnjača) on a daily basis, from Monday to Friday. The teams were providing services of psychosocial counselling, animation activities for children from the centres and accompaniment to different services. The work of these teams was funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Caritas improved conditions for psychosocial support in Preševo, by equipping the facilities for children, creating a women’s corner for socializing, listening and advising, providing sewing machines and computers for occupational workshops and basic musical instruments for children’s workshops. Caritas’ psychosocial support team members were also active in the educational activities in Preševo.

In Krnjača AC, Caritas organized sports activities guided by an animator, mostly for men and boys in the camp, in order to decrease tensions among them. This activity is funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Šid and Principovac TCs, Caritas organized animation activities for children. This activity is funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Within the Family Room in Preševo RC, SOS CV provided 1,129 services to children and 255 parents within 267 different activities, and in the Youth Corner 989 services to youth within 168 activities.

SOS CV Super Bus mobile team organized outdoor educational, recreational and creative activities for refugee children and young people (51 activities and 469 services for children and 157 adults).

SOS CV Serbia continued to provide access to computers and Internet on several locations, together with ICT workshops, on locations Adaševci, Preševo, Principovac and Bujanovac together with UNICEF (ICT spot Adaševci: Wi-Fi: 2,950 connections and Charging station: 2,677 users and 1,643 visits (865 children); ICT spot Šid train station Wi-Fi: 2,000 connections; ICT spot Preševo: Wi-Fi: 3,100 connections and Charging station: 1,104 users. ICT Corner Preševo had, out of 1,450 total visits, 743 visits made by children, which included basic IT workshops; ICT spot Bujanovac: 1,080 connections and Charging station: 145 users and 1728 visits (1,294 children); ICT spot in Belgrade-Miksalište Wi-Fi: 2,600 connections; ICT spot Principovac: Wi-Fi 1,420, Charging station: 1,825 users. ICT Corner Principovac had in total 1,329 visits by adults and 410 by children, which included use of computer and Internet; ICT spot Krnjača had 2,570 Wi-Fi connections and 132 charging station while ICT Corner in Krnjača had 1,321 visits by adults and 426 by children, which included use of computer and Internet).

IOM mobile teams were present in all reception/transit centres - Subotica area, Šid area, Dimitrovgrad and Pirot, and Preševo and Bujanovac, providing transportation assistance, information provision and counselling on assisted voluntary return (AVR), as well as raising awareness on risks of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. All necessary technical and logistic support was provided to migrants who expressed their willingness to return to the country of origin - contacts with relevant embassies of the countries of origin, transfer of migrants to the embassies, assistance provided for the issuance of travel documents, travel arrangements, assistance for the movement, including the transit airport assistance and assistance upon arrival to the country of origin.

The Assisted Voluntary Return framework has been coordinated between the IOM and SCRM, with a detailed outreach plan for information and individual counselling in all asylum centres, as well as in reception/transit centres. In February, twelve migrants returned to their countries of origin (to Iraq, Pakistan, Algeria and Iran) with AVR, while 6 migrants are scheduled to travel in the first week of March.

IOM provided assistance with transportation of vulnerable individuals and families to local institutions/local service providers like the local health centre, centre for social work etc. During February, over 900 migrants/refugees were provided with transportation assistance, with altogether 300 lifts given to the beneficiaries. Over 150 migrants/refugees were assisted in Šid and some 110 migrants/refugees were assisted with transportation from border locations (Horgoš and Kelebija) to Subotica TC, as well as from the Centre in Subotica to health facilities. IOM staff was present throughout the week with 2/3 staff members at each location.

In Preševo, IOM team continued to provide transportation assistance for vulnerable groups to local institutions/local service providers like local health centre, CSW, etc. Over 250 migrants/refugees were assisted in Preševo and around 150 migrants/refugees in Bujanovac in February.

IOM team was present daily in Divljana RC and Obrenovac TC, providing information, counselling on AVR and transport. In Divljana RC, IOM was also assisting the local HC in Bela Palanka by providing transport for the local doctors. Over 150 migrants/refugees were assisted in Dimitrovgrad, Pirot and Divljana and some 50 migrants/refugees in Obrenovac in February.

In February, two workshops on “Indicators for the Identification of Potential Human Trafficking Victims among Migrants”, were held for 50 employees/field staff of SCRM. Another two workshops are taking place in March for
employees/field staff of the Commissariat, as well as the employees of centres for social work. The workshops are jointly organized by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoL) and the IOM. Workshops are aimed at professionals of CSWs in Subotica, Sombor, Kikinda and all others taking part in the response to the current migration crisis in the Republic of Serbia.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Prolonged stay in improvised shelters (barracks) in Belgrade results in elevated protection risks - substance abuse, SGBV, health risks, fire and smoke hazard, frostbites.
- Decreased number of persons being legally admitted to Hungary remained a significant factor of distress for the beneficiaries which resulted in more frequent attempts of continuing their journey using irregular methods, considering return to the country of origin or to one of the countries which refugees passed through before arriving to Serbia.
- Lack of legal status for some categories of persons of concern (incl. those previously issued with cancelation of stay and/or inability to re-enter the asylum system for those previously registered with asylum intentions, who have meanwhile attempted to re-enter the EU irregularly) exacerbates protection risks.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- As of 06 February, authorities and humanitarian organizations opened informal education classes for some 160 school age refugee/migrant children (age 7 to 15) in Preševo Reception Centre. The classes were divided into four age groups and are teaching Serbian and other languages, mathematics, and art. These developments are seen also as a positive step to encouraging international financial support to ensure that all refugee and migrant children in Serbia can enjoy accessing their right to formal education.
- UNICEF-supported Toy Libraries for children from 3 to 6 years of age were operational in Bujanovac RC (in cooperation with DRC) and in Principovac TC (in cooperation with SOS CV).
- Programmes for the development of digital competencies for youth were being implemented in Šid TC (in cooperation with DRC) and in Principovac, Adaševci, Bujanovac and Preševo (in cooperation with SOS CV).
- Through cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD), Centre for Education Policies (CEP), the Palilula CSW, the Residential Centre for UASCs “Vasa Stajić”, and UNICEF, 49 UASCs aged 8 to 17 years started attending school.
- The number of public schools assisted by ADRA’s interpreters/cultural mediators increased to six: primary schools "Branko Pešić" in Zemun, "Jovan Ristić" and "Rade Drainac" in Borča near the Community Centre, "Filip Filipović" and "Vožd Karadorde" in Voždovac, as well as PKB Secondary School in Krnjača. This activity was conducted in close collaboration with CEP. The number of refugee children who attend these schools is 50.
- Refugee Aid Serbia continued with the classes within the project "English Survival" in the afternoons Monday to Friday at Info Park premises.
- NGO Atina conducted educational activities in four locations –Krnjača AC, Reintegration Centre Atina, Preševo and Bujanovac. Each week in Belgrade, at the Reintegration Centre, NGO Atina’s beneficiaries attended English language and literacy classes, as well as empowerment workshops on topics such as: gender roles, recognition of gender-
based violence, human rights, etc. Education was adjusted to gender, age, culture and different experiences of beneficiaries. During February, NGO Atina started life-skills education activities in Preševo and Bujanovac RC for youth. Twice a week, natural and social sciences classes were taking place, where beneficiaries had the chance to learn about major historical events and personages and about the natural phenomena. Ten women, four girls and five boys attended the workshops in Bujanovac and Preševo.

In addition, each week NGO Atina organized empowerment workshops for women and girls, asylum-seekers in Krnjača AC. Five workshops were carried out in February in AC Krnjača for 37 women (21 from Afghanistan, 11 from Syria and 5 from Iraq) and 22 girls (13 from Afghanistan, 6 from Iran, 2 from Ghana, 1 from Cameroon). Each topic was suggested by the beneficiaries who attended the workshops. One part of these educational activities were creative workshops carried out at the Reintegration Center and the asylum centre in Krnjača, during which beneficiaries had the opportunity to create jewellery out of clay and to paint. In February, three workshops were carried out in Preševo RC for 18 women (10 from Afghanistan, 3 from Syria and 5 from Iraq) and 7 girls (4 from Afghanistan, 3 from Iraq).

SOS CV Serbia started with organized informal educational activities in Preševo RC, together with other organizations present on site. SOS CV was responsible for organization of activities for children aged 9-10. Within SOS CV premises, lessons in maths, English, Serbian, art, geography, etc. were organized. 26 children were attending these activities.

SOS CV’s pilot E-learning project, implemented together with UNICEF, was expanded to two new locations - Bujanovac and Preševo – and continued in Principovac and Adaševci TCs.

Within CFS in Adaševci TC, SOS CV Serbia delivered 2,082 services to children within 257 different activities, which included recreational, creative and educational activities and distributed NFI: 42; FI N/A. Within MBC, SOS CV Serbia delivered 3,457 services to mothers and babies and distributed NFI: 15,071, FI: 831.

Within CFS in Principovac TC, SOS CV provided 2,226 services to children within 327 various activities, which included recreational, creative and educational activities and distributed NFI: 476; FI N/A. Within MBC, SOS CV Serbia delivered 1,242 services to mothers and babies and distributed NFI: 3,082, FI: 733.

SOS CV child protection team in Belgrade provided 1,103 different kinds of services, including interpretation, practical information, psychosocial support and referrals to other institutions/organizations. SOS CV Serbia Belgrade mobile team continued its work on child protection, which included 24 SOP cases that were referred to Belgrade CSW.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Sustainable access to formal education is yet to be ensured for refugee/migrant/asylum-seeking children.

**Health**

**Achievements and Impact**

- Medical teams of the Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC)/Arbeiter Samariter Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB) were engaged on a daily basis in covering one shift in accommodation centres in Šid, Principovac, Subotica, Sombor and Dimitrovgrad. Five medical teams of IDC/ASB had 2,359 medical interventions during February.
- Specialized IDC volunteer teams continued with daily engagement as support to medical teams. One IDC volunteer team was engaged on a daily basis on activities of preparing large quantities of NFIs for distribution, in cooperation with Divac Foundation.
- UNHCR/DRC medical teams continued their regular activities in the following centres: Preševo, Divljana, Pirot, Banja Koviljača, Bogovađa and Krnjača. Apart from regular medical checkups, medical teams conducted referrals and follow-up of individual cases. Apart from the above-mentioned centres, medicines were also provided by UNHCR/DRC in Tutin and Sjenica Asylum Centres.
- Médecins du Monde (MDM) were providing Primary Heath Care in the Transit Centres of Šid (1,556 consultations - 377 to minors) and Adaševci (1,150 consultations - 583 minors). A Primary Health Care mobile unit was also covering
the Northern Border area (642 consultations - 94 minors) in coordination with the network of stakeholders working in the border zone. MDM team provided medical care on the frontline including for violence cases (since December 2016, 124 cases of violence use against refugees/migrants have been documented by MDM team). In 2017 only, 63 cases of use of violence by Hungarian Forces have been reported (incl. beating, use of pepper-spray, psychological abuse, etc.).

- MDM psychologists provide individual sessions in Belgrade Centre in Miksalište, in Šid and Adaševci. MDM is reshaping its psychosocial support intervention in Community approach.

- The CRS/BCM medical teams provided medical assistance in Šid, Belgrade, Bujanovac and Preševo in 5,734 instances and psychological assistance in 251 instances.

- UNFPA and WHO representatives had 2 days visit of the reception centers in Pirot, Bosilegrad and Bela Palanka (Divljana) to get familiarized with the current situation with regards to health and overall situation, as well as to identify gaps in health assistance which need to be addressed.

- UNFPA/DRC started implementation of activities within the project “Strengthening access and quality to family planning and reproductive health services for all”. In Preševo, in the period 23 February - 1 March, a total of 40 interventions were realizied in UNFPA mobile clinics operated through DRC, of which 18 were gynecological and 22 were pregnancy-related interventions.

- A total of 1,080 condoms have been distributed so far with UNFPA support (in Principovac, Šid and Adaševci), in the medical areas within these transit centers. Remaining 4,920 condoms will be distributed in other reception/transit/asylum centers through DRC.

- Refugee Aid Serbia donated to IDC ten wheelchairs and 12 pairs of crutches to have in the accommodation centres where they are present.

- IRC was supporting HCIT to provide orthopaedic devices (wheelchairs/crutches) to refugees that needed them.

- HCIT teams assisted PoCs in the General Hospital in Subotica and at the dentist, and provided many PoCs with necessary medications after doctors’ examinations, etc.

- Upon the request from the doctors, HCIT purchased 25 different medications for PoCs staying in TCs in the West, an insulin pump for an asylum-seeker in Šid, and donated 240 boxes of medical EKOPED shampoo for body lice, to be used in the facilities in the West.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Body lice infestation remained a challenge, especially in Belgrade and Šid.

- CRPC noted lack of sufficient primary medical care access, sufficient dental care access and access to water and sanitation for those men and boys squatting in Belgrade.

- Many asylum-seekers who had attempted crossing into neighbouring Croatia and Hungary (including repeatedly) irregularly sustained serious injuries inflicted by border guards in the month of February.

### Food Security and Nutrition

#### Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF-supported Mother and Baby Corners (MBCs) were operational in Belgrade, Dimitrovgrad, Preševo, Bujanovac and Šid.

- In Reception Centres where only a few children were present, support to the development of different modalities of infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IYCF-E) support, through medical teams providing health service for...
the whole population, was on-going. Since the beginning of 2017, 341 infants (under 2) accessed UNICEF-supported mother and baby care centre services, including health and nutrition services. Since the beginning of 2017, 118 mothers benefited from UNICEF-supported IYCF-E counselling at family support hubs, CFSs and MBCs.

- In centres where UNICEF is present, the screening of all children aged 6-59 months with Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) for undernutrition is part of routine work.
- UNICEF continued to have consultations with partners on reviewing currently distributed food, in order to have more age-appropriate food for children.
- In Adaševci, OM was providing hot drinks for the refugees every day from 9:30 am to 9 pm. Between 700 and 800 liters of tea were distributed each day.
- UNHCR and partners CRPC and HCIT distributed 685 kg of high-energy biscuits and 1,584 litres of water, mainly in the north and in Belgrade.
- CARE/ECHO in partnership with NSHC provided 179,790 meals distributed during February (3 meals per day) at three transit centres in Šid municipality – 87,390 meals in Adaševci, 58,800 meals in Šid and 33,600 meals in Principovac.

As part of DRC/UNICEF MBC program, 40 children per day were receiving complementary food, 33 received supplementary food, while 15 mothers per day received IYCF counselling in Preševo RC. 23 children per day received complementary food, 12 received supplementary food, while 5 mothers per day received IYCF counselling at Šid TC and 18 children per day received complementary food, 20 received supplementary food, while 8 mothers per day received IYCF counselling at Bujanovac RC.

- Philanthropy provided 6,300 hot meals in Bujanovac RC and 23,660 hot meals in Preševo RC. Philanthropy continued with everyday distribution of fresh fruit in these centres.
- In Preševo RC, Caritas provided 29,610 portions of cooked lunch, 29,610 fresh breakfast pastries and 29,620 bottles of yoghurt. Caritas also provided 6,000 cups of tea hot tea in its container at Preševo RC.
- In Krnjača AC, Caritas provided 12,000 fresh breakfast pastries and 12,000 portions of warm soup, 2,160 bottles of water and 2,050 cups of tea, with the support from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In Subotica TC, Caritas provided 1,125 food packs and 1,296 bottles of yoghurt.
- In Preševo and Bujanovac RCs, SOS CV distributed 19,842 FIs, including 21,700 warm meals, water, juice and biscuits. Breakfast and lunch were provided by SOS CV for Bosilegrad RC for the entire month.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- Reconstruction of the sewage pumping station in Adaševci was finalized by CARE. Due to abundance of large pieces of waste in the sewer (bottles, clothes, cans, etc.), the existing pump was often shut down. Reconstruction included instalment of a second pump, which will now operate as an auxiliary one.
- CARE supports the reconstruction of another accommodation building in Sjenica. Reconstruction of a women’s toilet, men’s toilet, women’s showers and an activity room (TV room, PC room, activity corners, etc.) was finalized.
CARE is ready to go on with the reconstruction of the Centre, and has started the reconstruction of laundry rooms and with replacing of doors to the dormitories.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR

Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- ASB finalized the construction of a new dormitory block for 20 persons and one toilet for people with disabilities in Subotica TC, which was adapted and constructed by ASB back in 2015.
- Parallel to infrastructural works in Subotica centre, ASB completed works on the new Regional Infirmary for refugees and migrants, next to the bus station in Subotica. This facility is adjacent to the local Health Care Center. IDC/ASB medical team will deliver urgent assistance in Our Community Infirmary firstly to children - refugees from the Middle East and Africa - as well as children from the local community of City of Subotica, in order to make a contribution to the community highly affected by the influx of refugees and migrants, as agreed with the City of Subotica and relevant authorities.
- In Dimitrovgrad RC, constructed and equipped by ASB back in 2016, ASB installed eight containers on the plot next to the centre: three containers for accommodation, three sanitary containers and two containers for storage.
- JRS Integration House for Vulnerable Groups of Refugees was finished in Belgrade and it was agreed upon with authorities that it would become a shelter for unaccompanied minors up to 14 years of age. This project will be implemented in the following three years and will be able to provide for, besides accommodation, educational support as well, especially for asylum seekers. JRS are to agree with the authorities on the criteria for referring individual cases to the Integration House.
- UNHCR and partners SCRM, CRPC, HCIT and Amity/Sigma plus distributed 414 blankets, 615 plastic bags, 947 hygiene kits, 1,249 pairs of socks, 522 adult T-shirts, 344 children’s T-shirts, 670 pair of footwear, 145 pairs of rubber slippers, 106 pieces of winter clothing for adults (donated by Zara), 14 children’s jackets and another 80 items of children’s clothing (Zara), 27 baby kits, 94 raincoats, 774 winter jackets, 543 tracksuits, 114 knitted hats, 394 pairs of gloves, 165 scarves, 1,019 pairs of underwear, 141 items of women’s clothing and 291 items of men’s clothing (Zara), 667 sets of bed linen, 41 backpacks and 36 rechargeable torches.
- Since the beginning of 2017, 1,647 children were reached by UNICEF, through its partners DRC (in Preševo, Bujanovac and Šid), HCIT (in Kelebija and Horgoš), and NSHC (in Belgrade) and through direct distribution, with basic supplies (including winter clothing) and health and hygiene items.
- In Adaševci, OM was providing a heated tent for 120 people at a time to relax, play, talk, etc. The tent was open every day from 8 am to 9 pm.
- CARE in partnership with NSHC delivered 4129 winter NFI items (Socks, Underwear, Hats, Gloves, Scarfs, T-shirts, Jackets, Shoes, Sweatshirts, Sweatpants) distributed in Subotica (out of RC) and Belgrade.
- In partnership with NEXUS, CARE delivered 1,998 NFI items (jumpers, sweatpants, underwear, undershirts, long underwear, socks, scarves and bras) to Preševo RC and 2,979 hygiene items (razors, sanitary pads, cream, shaving
foam, toothbrushes, soap and shampoo), as well as 500 litres of antiseptic gel and 1,000 kg of washing powder to the Preševo and Bujanovac RCs.

- In partnership with Impuls, CARE delivered 814 NFI items (T-shirts, vests and underwear) and 3,068 hygiene items (soap, diapers, and wet wipes and lice shampoo) to Sjenica and Tutin ACs.

- CARE reconstructed the windows on the second barrack at the multicultural centre of Miksalište in Belgrade and purchased furniture for the CARE activity corner: three tables, 15 chairs and one locker.

- CARE finished the construction of 200 meters of concrete footpaths around Adaševci TC.

- Refugee Aid Serbia distributed 2 tons of NFIs to Preševo RC through SOS Remar organization.

- Thanks to funding from ECHO, DRC completed the rehabilitation works in RC Divljana (Bela Palanka), enabling adequate accommodation conditions for PoCs. Two sleeping pavilions were fully rehabilitated and equipped with necessary bed supplies and furniture, allowing for accommodation of 220 persons in need. Furthermore, DRC completed rehabilitation works on the kitchen, dining, social and sanitary premises, followed by provision of necessary laundry and kitchen equipment and furniture.

- Accommodation capacities in TC Sombor were increased for additional 68 persons, through the construction of two prefabricated units, performed by DRC’s implementing partner – Housing Center - and thanks to ECHO funds. Apart from the sleeping pavilion, the sanitary block, the kitchen and the dining area were fully equipped, improving the overall accommodation conditions in the TC.

- Upon obtaining the necessary documents for entry into the facilities (Motel Vranje), allocated for a reception centre located in Vranje, the DRC and the contracted construction company commenced the works of space clearing. DRC technical team introduced the contracted company (present 14 workers) and the supervisory organ into main works phases and expected challenges.

- Rehabilitation works in the Pavilion 12 in Obrenovac RC were finalised as planned within the project “Support to Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Serbia” led by UNHCR and DRC technical staff. The handover of premises took place on 14 February 2017, and the works included the dismantling of interior joinery and installation of new ones, setting up and levelling laminate layers, renovations of toilet doors, installation of locks, sanitation of all walls in the building, placement of mirrors, soap dozers and towel holders in the sanitary blocks and installation of fire wall hydrants. Through ECHO funds, 485 bunk beds and basic furniture were delivered to Obrenovac RC and set up for reception of 970 persons.

- During February 2017, DRC provided adequate winterised NFIs for 357 persons in Preševo RC, within the ECHO-funded project.

- DRC continued providing winterised NFIs in Šid, within the ECHO-funded project, with particular support provided during two disinfection rounds. 957 beneficiaries were assisted.

- DRC provided adequate winterised NFIs for 285 persons in Pirot, Dimitrovgrad and Divljana RCs, within the ECHO-funded project.

- SC delivered a large quantity of baby blankets, winter jackets, boots, scarves, hats, gloves, etc. for adults and children, in all 17 accommodation centres in Serbia.

- Supported by Diakonie Austria, Philanthropy provided 1,000 hygiene kits, 725 underwear kits for adults and 240 underwear kits for children in Preševo RC. With support from Diakonie Germany, Philanthropy provided in Preševo RC 450 pairs of gloves for adults and 210 pairs of gloves for children, as well as 860 pairs of socks for adults and 450 pairs of socks for children.

- NGO Atina ran three shelters for persons from the refugee population who had been identified as survivors of GBV or human trafficking or were particularly vulnerable. In February, NGO Atina provided shelter for 8 persons from the refugee population. The Shelter programme does not merely include accommodation, but is a part of a comprehensive program of social inclusion of all long-term beneficiaries who are provided with counseling, resolution for primary problems, PSS, PT, individual planning of services, assessments and monitoring. Given that NGO Atina was operational on the territory of Belgrade 24/7, in case of need, urgent accommodation was provided.
Throughout day and night. Atina’s mobile team was able, in case of GBV, SGBV and HT, to visit the site in Serbia in question within 24 hours and respond to the referrals.

- Divac Foundation, supported by the IRC, distributed winter clothes at Kelebia border crossing.
- IRC’s partners BCHR, Atina and NSHC distributed winter clothes to refugees/migrants across the areas they operated in.
- IRC provided direct support to SCRM through the procurement and donation of supplies and equipment for the accommodation centres: heating system for the future accommodation centre in Kikinda and beds for Obrenovac RC.
- CRPC distributed items donated by UNHCR, blankets donated by MSF and other items donated by citizens of Belgrade through Miksaliste aid point.
- HCIT distributed NFIs donated by UNHCR and UNICEF in the West and in the North of the country.
- In Krnjača AC, Caritas provided 581 sweat suits for adults, 580 sweat suits for children, 240 pair of socks for children, 680 pair of socks for women, 120 pair of socks for men, 227 sweatshirts, 180 shirts for men, 150 shirts for women, 140 shirts for children, 1,759 pairs of underwear for children, 650 pairs of underwear for women, 1,000 pairs of underwear for men, 660 long sleeve shirts for children, 600 long sleeve shirts for women and 330 long sleeve shirts for men. Provision of these items was funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In Bogovađa AC, Caritas provided 500 pairs of underwear for children, 350 pairs of underwear for women and 400 pairs of underwear for men.
- In Principovac TC, Caritas provided 450 sweat suits for adults, 360 pairs of socks for adults, 450 pairs of underwear for adults and 450 long-sleeve shirts for adults. Provision of these items was funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In Preševo and Bujanovac RCs, SOS CV distributed in total 16,357 NFIs, including hygiene items for women and children.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Adequate accommodation for longer-term shelter and services, in and outside camps, for at least 8,000 refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers is needed, as well as more temporary accommodation/voucher schemes needed for contingency.
- Overcrowded reception facilities in some locations caused protection gaps/concerns, resulting in increased risk of SGBV and unsanitary conditions.
- CRPC noted the need for more distributions of winter shoes to refugees/migrants in Belgrade.

**Support to local communities**

The sixth meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Local Community Support was held on February 20, 2017 at the UN House in Belgrade, with the goal to coordinate and align efforts of all the stakeholders working to safeguard local stability, social cohesion, prevent conflicts and ensure conditions for resilient and sustainable development of local communities affected by migration. Members of the WG emphasized that another winter season, second since the beginning of the migration crisis, introduced additional challenges to national and local governments coping with growing and changing needs of migrants. Local governments are facing insufficient resources and high level of frustration of both the migrants, who are unable to continue towards
their final destinations, and domicile population, pressed with their own difficulties and causing some of them to perceive refugees and migrants as a potential threat. Participants noted that citizens of Serbia were becoming more and more aware of prolonged stay of refugees and migrants and bordering countries’ restrictive mobility measures, and were influenced by more frequent incident-based media coverage. UNDP and the Government of Serbia representatives called for local community-based contingency planning, a longer-term approach to ensuring adequate water supply, waste management, provision of health, communal and social protection services for everyone living in local communities, regardless of what may happen in the future. Local governments were invited to assess the overall impact of refugees and migrants’ prolonged stay on municipal assets, and to develop preparedness systems and tools to respond fast and manage better unexpected situations as they arise, with support from UNDP, the Government and the international donor community. The WG meeting participants included: representatives of 15 municipalities, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Ms. Steliana Nedera, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG) Mr. Ivan Bošnjak, Assistant Commissioner for Refugees and Migration Mr. Ivan Gerginov, and the representatives of donor community.

- IDC produced a documentary movie “You will never walk alone”, owing to the funds of Government of Japan, within the UNDP grant scheme. Two screenings of the documentary were realized in February. The first screening took place at the American Corner in Subotica, and the second one in Mikser House in Belgrade, where the audience had a chance to see the exhibition of photos produced earlier within the same project. The film presents the fragments of human destinies of refugees and migrants, as well as the comments and the reactions of passers-by during the previously organized interactive mobile exhibition, when a total of 40 volunteers of IDC and Youth Office Subotica walked through Subotica city centre carrying photos of refugees and migrants, thus taking on their roles. The exhibition and the movie aimed at strengthening social cohesion by stimulating empathy and compassion, and at decreasing prejudices based on lack of information among the local population in host communities. Both the film and the online version of the exhibition are available at IDC Serbia YouTube channel.

- Another UNDP grantee, Centre for Youth Work, again within the Government of Japan funding and Mobile Youth Club activity, organized a widely-reported and talked-about event in Subotica, entitled “At the same table”. On 9 February 9, the youth from Subotica, Šid and Novi Sad sat down with young refugees/migrants from Subotica TC to talk and learn about the life, the different customs and cultures of one another. The meals prepared for the event were typical of the countries/regions that the refugees/migrants originate from – Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, etc. Students of the local culinary school “Bosa Milićević” prepared the food, based on the recipes of women and men from the transit centre. The event brought closer the host and the refugee community, by means of sharing food while sharing the same table.

- UNDP’s grantee, the Asylum Protection Centre (APC/CZA), organized several activities focused on social-cohesion in Subotica and Kanjiža, followed by ensuing communication campaign, both funded by the Government of Japan. Mobile exhibitions were organized in two local primary schools and included the display of materials created within previously implemented intercultural creative workshops (letters of support, maps of inclusive cities, drawings, photos, etc.). During the exhibitions, APC coordinators talked about the work with refugees/migrants and answered questions from pupils, their parents and school teachers. Another public discussion was organized in Subotica on 27 February, entitled “Migrants among us – the experiences”, sharing the experience gained in the field while working in direct contact with the displaced, to highlight the problems and obstacles that migrants face on a daily basis.
Representatives of organizations active in the field, Subotica Youth Office, local journalists and interested citizens attended the public discussion.

- The CSO “Gender Knowledge Hub” (GKH) organized on 23 February a public presentation of activities implemented within the UNDP and the publication “Personal stories of migrants – gender perspective”. The event was attended by representatives of local administration and the police, the local Red Cross and refugees/migrants from transit centres in Šid. The participants discussed how communication between the displaced and the receiving communities could be improved. The women refugees/migrants, expressed their gratitude for the book about their lives. Their testimonies stressed the major issue that they are facing in Serbia - lack of activities in which they could participate and fill their free time with quality content. They also emphasized the lack of a female gynaecologist and other female medical doctors. The GKH event participants concluded that separate content should be made available for women and for men, e.g. workshops for women and sports activities for men. Social contact and psychological support are becoming increasingly important, having in mind the fact that some of the migrants and refugees are now staying in Šid for over 6 months.

- The CSO “Centre E8”, within a UNDP grant and with the Government of Japan funding, organized mobile interactive theatre plays in four schools in Prešev, Bujanovac and Vranje Youth Cultural Centre. Over 200 participants - students, parents and teachers - attended nine theatre plays and took part in the discussions initiated by the play. Centre E8 also organized public panels in Bujanovac and Prešev, with participation from the local youth offices, CSOs and SCRM. To mark the finalization of their project, Centre E8 produced a video entitled “The view from the other side”, containing statements from and interviews with the young people who worked with refugees and migrants.

- At Miksaliste aid point in Belgrade, Belgrade’s citizens were able to meet the refugees/migrants, and CRPC acted as a mediator between the domicile population and the refugees/migrants.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Protracted stay of refugees and migrants is challenging for the quality and the extent of local public services.
- No major incidents have thus far been reported; still, there is increased need for implementation of social cohesion-inducing activities and preservation of local stability.
Working in partnership

The internal coordination mechanism of the UN system in Serbia is the **UN Refugee Theme Group (RTG)**, which meets weekly under UNHCR chairmanship. The RTG coordinates the 4 sectorial working groups (WGs): a) Refugee Protection WG (Co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Employment Veteran and Social Policy (hereinafter: MoL) & UNHCR), b) the WG on Shelter/NFI/WASH (Co-chaired by Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM), MoL & UNHCR), c) WG on Health/Food/Nutrition (Co-chaired by the Ministry of Health & WHO) and d) WG on Local Community Support (Co-chaired by the Ministry of Local Self-Government & UNDP). The RTG met on 3, 10, 17 and 24 February.

The **Refugee Protection Working Group (RPWG)**, Co-chaired by UNHCR and the MoL, met on 17 February in Belgrade. It is the key coordination mechanism for agencies/NGOs operational in the country. RPWG has over 80 members and meets on a monthly basis. Under UNHCR lead, RPWG has given rise to three sub-working groups (SWGs) on: a) Child Protection, b) Non-Food Items (NFIs) and c) Smuggling/Trafficking.

The monthly **Partners’ Briefing**, where UNHCR/UNRC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour/Chair of Government WG on Mixed Migration update the diplomatic corps/donors and NGOs on the refugee/migrant situation and the response of UN agencies and their partners in the previous period, took place on 27 February at the UN House in Belgrade.

Contacts:

Ms. Indira Beganović, Reporting Officer, E-mail: beganovi@unhcr.org, Tel: +381 (0) 63 431 886
Ms. Vera Dragović-O’Donnell, Information Management Associate, E-mail: dragovic@unhcr.org, Tel: +381 (0) 63 343 521

Links:
http://www.unhcr.rs/