



IOM STRATEGY FOR NORTH MACEDONIA

(2022-2025)

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons
P.O. Box 17
1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111
Fax: +41 22 798 6150
Email: hq@iom.int
Website: www.iom.int

Cover photo: Protection of vulnerable migrants in the Temporary Transit Centers in North Macedonia. © IOM North Macedonia 2017

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2022. IOM Strategy for North Macedonia 2022-2025. IOM. North Macedonia.

© IOM 2022



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/) (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO).*

For further specifications please see the [Copyright and Terms of Use](#).

This publication should not be used, published or redistributed for purposes primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation, with the exception of educational purposes, e.g. to be included in textbooks.

Permissions: Requests for commercial use or further rights and licensing should be submitted to publications@iom.int.

* <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode>



**IOM STRATEGY FOR
NORTH MACEDONIA**
(2022–2025)

FOREWORD

We are delighted to present the strategy of the IOM Office in North Macedonia to you. This strategy is a key tool in clearly articulating trends and challenges and how IOM will work with governments, migrant communities, and our many partners to achieve a positive impact over the course of the next four years. The strategy affirms IOM's mandate and core priorities as laid out in its Strategic Vision and related governance documents.

This strategy is anchored in IOM's Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, which further refines the global priorities and tailors them to the regional context. It lays out IOM's commitment to empower migrants and communities and to address drivers of migration. IOM is advancing positive, sustainable, and innovative development outcomes that are responsive to regional migration trends. In addition, IOM strengthens cooperative development and implementation of evidence-based and inclusive migration governance.

This strategy highlights the current and future migration trends in North Macedonia and sets out the context in which IOM carries out its activities. It outlines the challenges and opportunities relating to migration in North Macedonia and identifies the strategic priorities to address them in an effort to strive towards fostering safe, orderly, and regular migration.

We are very grateful to IOM staff – particularly at the regional and country level – for their diligent and insightful work in developing this strategy and in their commitment to its successful implementation. The strategy is particularly timely given the operational needs on the ground, with a particular emphasis on response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic and our collective commitment to *build back better*.

This strategy affirms IOM's commitment to support governments and stakeholders in upholding migrants' rights, regardless of their migration status and across all stages of the migration cycle. With this strategy, and in cooperation with our numerous and diverse partners, we will continue to respond to the needs and aspirations of migrants, building societies fit for a modern, mobile, and interconnected world. IOM looks forward to strengthening its partnerships in North Macedonia and joining efforts in fostering migration for the benefit of all.

Sonja Bozinovska Petrushevska
Head of Office
IOM North Macedonia

Renate Held
IOM Regional Director

ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| EU | European Union |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Persons |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ISF | Integrated Strategic Framework |
| GCM | Global Compact for Migration |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| KAS | Kosovo Agency for Statistics |
| NAATIP | National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| PSEA | Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| RDP | Regionally Displaced Persons |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SOGIESC | Sexual Orientations, Gender Expressions and Sex Characteristics |
| SERP | Socio-Economic Recovery Plan |
| UNKT | United Nations Kosovo Team |
| UNSDCF | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Foreword | ii |
| <hr/> | |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1. About IOM | 1 |
| 1.2. IOM in North Macedonia | 2 |
| <hr/> | |
| 2. Context analysis | 5 |
| 2.1. Migration and country outlook in North Macedonia - challenges and opportunities | 5 |
| <hr/> | |
| 3. Strategic priorities | 8 |
| 3.1. Humanitarian response | 9 |
| Strategic priority 1 | 9 |
| 3.2. Resilience | 9 |
| Strategic priority 2 | 9 |
| Strategic priority 3 | 10 |
| Strategic priority 4 | 11 |
| 3.3. Mobility | 11 |
| Strategic priority 5 | 11 |
| 3.4. Governance | 13 |
| Strategic priority 6 | 13 |
| 3.5. Cross-cutting themes | 14 |
| 3.6. Partnerships and coordination | 14 |
| <hr/> | |
| 4. Institutional development | 16 |
| <hr/> | |
| 5. The way forward | 17 |
| <hr/> | |
| Annex 1 – List of national strategies and policy documents | 18 |
| <hr/> | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. ABOUT IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the UN's leading agency on migration and the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, working closely with its key stakeholders - migrants and Member States - to promote humane, safe, and orderly migration. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants from an integral and holistic perspective, including links to development, in order to maximize the benefits and opportunities of migration and reduce its challenges. Established in 1951, IOM now has more than 170 Member States, offices in over 400 field locations and more than 14,000 staff - 90 percent of IOM's staff being deployed in the field. In the South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, IOM has 19 missions. In North Macedonia, IOM has two field offices and over 35 staff.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, human mobility is indivisible from sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and the commitment to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind – will not be achieved without due consideration of migration. Additionally, the Global Compact for Migration is grounded in the 2030 Agenda and promotes the principles of having a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address this intrinsic link. This Strategy will support the Member States to achieve this, ultimately leveraging the potential of migration through a whole-of-government approach to achieve sustainable development outcomes for all. It is a direct contribution to the Decade of Action to fast-track progress for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. It brings greater coherence and development impact to IOM's activities and allows for a joined-up approach to the way the Organization designs and delivers its operations, as called for in IOM's

IOM's Strategic Vision, presented to IOM Member States in 2019, spans the period of 2019 to 2023. The Vision articulates how IOM plans to meet its new and emerging responsibilities, including IOM's mandated role as Network Coordinator. It sets out the 'direction of travel' for IOM, is forward looking and encourages 'joined up thinking'. This Strategy is aligned with the Vision, its corresponding Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the IOM Strategic Results Framework, which are anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration.

1.2. IOM IN NORTH MACEDONIA

The IOM Office in North Macedonia provides expertise on a broad range of technical areas such as emergency and post-crisis, immigration and border management, labour migration and human development, environment and climate change, prevention of violent extremism, migration health, and migrant protection and assistance.

The IOM Mission in North Macedonia was established in 1999, and the country became an IOM Member State in 2017. With a long-standing presence and experience in North Macedonia, IOM has implemented a myriad of interventions tailored to the needs of relevant national authorities to respond to the pressing and long-term migration-related goals.

IOM supports the Government in improving systematic data collection and analysis of migration dynamics, and in enhancing institutional data exchange mechanisms and collaboration. IOM, in collaboration with institutional stakeholders, UN Agencies and other international organizations, has led the process of the development of the new comprehensive Resolution on Migration Policy (2021-2025) and its Action Plan, the new country Migration Profile 2021 that covers the period of 2009-2019, as well as the first country Migration Governance Index (MGI) by providing technical expertise and logistical support. The new Resolution on Migration Policy 2021-2025 is fully based on the evidence collected when developing the Migration Profile 2021 and MGI Matrix and Report.

Additionally, IOM collaborates with the State Statistical Office to ensure that a migration module is incorporated in the national Labour Force Survey (LFS). Introducing this module into the regular LFS will allow for statistical analyses of the factors affecting migration vs. non-migration decisions, and of the consequences for migrants and their households. In addition, in cooperation with the State Statistical Office and the Ministry of Interior, IOM supports the development of the National Road Map on Migration Statistics in North Macedonia, which outlines the challenges and solutions towards full alignment with the EU standards on migration statistics.

In the area of Integrated Border Management (IBM), IOM has extensively contributed to enhancing technical and operational capabilities of the Border Police through strengthening the knowledge and skills of border police officers/border management officials on border management, EU legislation and standards in border management, including human rights of migrants, as well as through donation of specialized equipment to the Ministry of Interior.

IOM collaborates with both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the area of Migrant Protection and Assistance, primarily in strengthening the social protection of migrants, including healthcare, education, and psychosocial support. In close cooperation with the relevant national authorities, IOM is providing assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations and refugees, particularly through medical assistance, psychosocial support, skills training, and educational support for children. Since 2020, a particular focus has been dedicated to strengthening the capacities for COVID-19 response in the areas of risk communication and infection prevention and control through the distribution of protective and hygienic materials to migrants and ensuring that reception facilities¹ are adjusted to prevent the spread of the virus. Access has been provided to innovative digital solutions that contribute to the effective referral of migrants in vulnerable situations, including a mobile translation application that allows migration officials to effectively communicate with migrants and inform the migrants on registration and protection services.

In the field of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR), IOM provides services

¹ Temporary Reception Centres in Gevgelija and Kumanovo and Centre for Asylum Seekers in Skopje

that include assistance throughout the entire process of return, including pre-departure, during travel and post-arrival, and comprehensive AVRR information sharing and outreach. A range of services is provided to migrants returning to North Macedonia, including virtual counselling in local languages, transportation arrangements and related assistance services, as well as reintegration support (housing, education, reinsertion in the form of employment facilitation and micro-business set up). In addition to capacity building for AVRR practitioners, IOM is also working to facilitate and enhance consular and diplomatic cooperation between the Western Balkan countries, as transit countries in the current migration flows, with countries of origin in the context of assisted voluntary returns, gathering government representatives responsible for return and representatives of relevant embassies.

Given its long-term presence in the country, IOM has developed a large programme portfolio on preventing and combating cross-border organized crime, including trafficking of human beings (THB) and smuggling of migrants. Programmes are founded on a rights-based approach and are fully in line with the rule of law. In addition to supporting the Government in developing a National Strategy for combating trafficking in human beings and irregular migration 2021-2025, IOM has contributed to the Government's efforts in strengthening the capacity of law enforcement authorities in investigating THB and migrant smuggling, and in strengthening cross-border collaboration and provision of assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations. As part of supporting potential and actual victims of trafficking [(P)VoT], IOM collaborated with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in establishing mobile teams for identification, assistance, and referral of (P)VoT. Moreover, IOM also assisted the establishment of a National Unit for suppression of migrant smuggling and THB, and a Direct Assistance Fund for (P)VoTs, most notably through the provision of medical and therapeutic assistance, education, food, non-food items, and other essential items.

IOM has provided expertise in migration governance, including human rights and rule of law through supporting the development of by-laws and a number of policy papers on migration governance, diaspora engagement and protection of migrants and nationals in vulnerable situations. Advice was also provided on how to align the legislative framework with EU and international standards.

IOM has also continuously offered its expertise in the area of Migration and Development. IOM has implemented capacity building activities for reinforcing the development impact of migration, as well as facilitated the return of qualified members of the Diaspora for the purpose of transferring knowledge and skills into various sectors in North Macedonia. IOM has supported the country in the establishment of Migrant Service Centres that are providing information to potential migrants from North Macedonia on legal procedures and opportunities for migration, as well as information to returnees on the opportunities available in North Macedonia. IOM has supported the Government with the development of the first National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023 and concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government, further strengthening its role in the area of migration and Diaspora engagement.

As part of the global efforts to prevent and mitigate conflict as a cause of displacement and human suffering, and in line with the UN Secretary-General's 'Sustaining Peace Agenda', the UN Security Council resolutions 2178 and 2396 and UN guidance, such as the Madrid Guiding Principles, IOM works to address the drivers of conflict-induced displacement and to create improved conditions for return and to assist the country on the reintegration of returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families. Orienting its work toward efforts related to the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) rather than Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), IOM has contributed the PVE perspective to the development and

implementation of the National Action Plan on CVE (2018-2022) and the National Plan on Reintegration, Resocialization and Rehabilitation supporting the institutional stakeholders to provide reintegration assistance to returning and released foreign fighters and their families. IOM's gender-sensitive PVE and Reintegration projects have integrated a range of features that include mobilizing and organizing positive influencers, engaging those at risk in meaningful community initiatives, promoting socio-economic inclusion and livelihoods, building social cohesion and resilience, strengthening individual resilience for example through developing critical thinking skills, and preparing government entities to take an integrated, non-securitized approach to constructive community engagement.

IOM supports the Government's efforts in addressing the complex challenges posed by human mobility in the context of environmental degradation and climate change, and in delivering enhanced benefits and reducing risks to migrants and their families in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration. IOM has contributed to addressing water and waste management challenges through building a water purification facility in the Temporary Reception Centre in Kumanovo for migrants, while enabling the local communities to connect to the facility. IOM is working towards increasing the access of remittance recipients, returning migrants and women staying behind to affordable renewable energy and energy-efficient solutions. Finally, IOM is working to address knowledge and policy gaps related to the complex interlinkages between human mobility, air pollution, and clean energy in North Macedonia.

2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1. MIGRATION AND COUNTRY OUTLOOK IN NORTH MACEDONIA - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

North Macedonia is characterized by long term traditional emigration. According to the data from the 2020 Atlas of Migration², the total number of Macedonian nationals living abroad has been rising constantly and significantly in the last decade: in 2020, it was estimated to have reached 693,900 persons, which is almost 30% of the population. According to the Resolution on Migration Policy 2021-2025, young people represented 30% of those emigrating in 2018 and 2019.

The most common destinations for Macedonian citizens receiving countries in Europe are Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Slovenia. As for overseas countries, there is still great interest in emigrating to Australia, the United States, and Canada. At the same time, the interest of Macedonian citizens for emigration and residence in other receiving countries (Qatar, United Arab Emirates, etc.) is also growing³.

The migration flows from North Macedonia continue to be characterized by high brain drain i.e., significant emigration of intellectual and highly skilled workers which is noted in the Resolution on Migration Policy 2021-2025 and the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023. According to the latest report on the global competitiveness of the World Economic Forum⁴, North Macedonia is ranked among the countries with highest brain drain in the world.

As noted in the country Migration Profile 2021⁵, over the last decades a significant increase in inter-municipal migration can also be noted, i.e., those migrating from one town to another and, in particular, to the city of Skopje⁶. At the same time, internal migration from rural to urban areas has continued, a trend that is bringing opportunities and challenges for cities, their populations, including migrants and governments alike.

During 2015 and 2016, North Macedonia has witnessed an unprecedented migratory flow, with an estimated 800,000 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees transiting through the country. Of the migrants registered by the Ministry of Interior in 2015 and 2016, 4% were unaccompanied minors⁷. Although the number of migrants transiting through North Macedonia in the past two years is lower compared to 2015 and 2016⁸, migratory movements are expected to continue given the country's central position on main migration routes. The Government will need continued support in protecting and assisting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with a focus on ensuring adequate conditions at temporary reception centres, medical assistance, education for children, psychosocial support etc. Migrants are also exceptionally vulnerable to COVID-19. They often travel in big groups, which exposes

² Atlas of Migration, 2020 / Migration in Europe; UN International migrant stock 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>

³ Migration Profile North Macedonia 2021

⁴ World Economic Forum, The Global Competitiveness Report 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, Geneva, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016.

⁵ Migration Profile of North Macedonia 2021, prepared by the intra-governmental body for development of migration policy in June 2021

⁶ 43% of the inter-municipal movement are to the city of Skopje

⁷ 18,349 unaccompanied minors out of the 477,856 registered migrants by Mol

⁸ According to the registration data in the two Temporary Transit Centers (TTC) "Vinojug" Gevgelija and "Tabanovce" Kumanovo over 800,000 migrants transited through the country.

them to a higher vulnerability to human-to-human COVID-19 transmission, as they cannot practice social distancing and frequently encounter other travellers from high-risk areas or unidentified locations. In this context, resource-poor migrants are more vulnerable to communicable diseases and other health-related problems. It is thus key to ensure effective and timely access to appropriate and gender responsive COVID-19 protection services. In this context, IOM has supported the Government in reducing migration-related vulnerabilities, especially given the COVID-19 pandemic, such as access to PPE, proper risk communication, as well as access to health care and mental health and psychosocial support for the migrants.

During 2018-2020, 21 VoT and 197 PVoTs have been identified in North Macedonia. More than 70% of the cases of the identified VoTs were women and girls⁹. North Macedonia is a country of origin, transit, and destination for THB. The National Strategy and a related Action Plan 2021-2025 for combating THB 2021-2025 points out to the following strategic priorities in the next years: supporting institutional framework; prevention; identification and referral; direct assistance, protection, integration, and voluntary return of the VoT/migrants; and efficient detection and prosecution of perpetrators of the crimes of THB and smuggling of migrants. Given the European Union's proximity and its attractiveness as a destination for migrants in search of opportunities, irregular migration through the country and region is bound to continue, along with increasingly sophisticated migrant smuggling networks, routes, and modus operandi.

The country is working towards enhancing the integrated border management (IBM) system by strengthening the capacities of institutions with IBM competencies, enhancing regional and international cooperation, harmonizing the national IBM legislation with the Schengen Code and EU standards, and further strengthening operational and technical capacities of the border police, among other activities. Since October 2021, the Government is in the process of preparation of a new Strategy on Integrated Border Management that will be defining the priorities and strategic directions for the period 2021-2025.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is an indispensable part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants (both nationals and foreigners) who are unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. From 2013-2020 the biggest number of Macedonian returnees (almost 20,000) were coming from EU countries such as Germany, Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands. 53% of them were men while 47% were women. Out of the total number of returnees, about one third (32.6%) were children¹⁰. It is expected that the same trend will continue during the period covered by this IOM Strategy 2022-2025.

Different forms of migration are shaped by climate impacts and environmental degradation. People can be displaced as a result of the loss of their place of residence or economic disruption due to natural hazards. However, there is limited data on disaster displacement in North Macedonia. Migrants in transit centres are vulnerable to climate change impacts. When enabling conditions are present, migration can also support climate change adaptation. It is estimated that around 693,900 nationals are living abroad¹¹. In 2020, North Macedonia received around USD 413 million in the form of remittances (World Bank 2021). In other countries, migration for work has shown to have considerable positive impacts on climate change adaptation at the household level. At the same time, migrants in the destination

⁹ Annual Reports of the "National Commission for combating human trafficking and irregular migration"

¹⁰ Migration Profile 2021 of Republic of North Macedonia

¹¹ Atlas on Migration 2020, <https://www.europeansources.info/record/atlas-of-migration-2020/>

communities could be exposed to new climatic and non-climatic risks (e.g., air-pollution). Due to financial regulations in North Macedonia, women staying behind are unable to access green loans from commercial banks if they do not have a proof of income. A transition to a low-carbon economy as envisaged in the European Commission's Green Agenda for the Western Balkans¹² can create new livelihood opportunities associated with clean energy, sustainable mobility, sustainable renovation, sustainable food systems and circular economy. Without enabling conditions (e.g. awareness, incentives, inclusive planning, supportive policies, communication, capacity development, etc.), migrants and their families are not likely to contribute to or benefit from climate change adaptation. Moreover, those with the fewest resources are least able to move away from the adverse impacts of environmental shocks and stressors while being simultaneously the most vulnerable to such impacts.

The collection of data on migration is essential for adequate migration governance, policymaking, and planning. Unfortunately, in North Macedonia, the lack of data for evidence-based policy making is one of the main challenges. Despite efforts to change this such as the Migration Profile 2021 and the Migration Governance Index, reliable data on the exact extent of the aforementioned migration movements is lacking, in part due to absence of regular census data¹³, limited and outdated inter- and intra- institutional information exchange, and insufficient collection of data on emigration and returnees. Furthermore, lack of sufficiently disaggregated data on migration and of relevant data on remittances hamper the possibility to determine the particularities of these migratory movements.

Moreover, the country is challenged by the existence of radicalization and violent extremism and violent extremist groups are actively attempting to recruit new members in the Western Balkan countries. The most pertinent risk in North Macedonia concerning radicalization is that young people may be drawn to join extremist groups as foreign fighters, ostensibly on a religiously ideological basis, but often driven – at least in part – by political, social, and economic marginalization and a sense of injustice resulting from this. There is not a single pathway that drives young people to become radicalized. Individual and collective grievances, such as lack of a sense of belonging, isolation from mainstream society, loneliness, disconnection, low self-esteem, or the need for approval and/or attention, social dynamics, and structural issues (intolerance, government failure, and political, economic, and social marginalization) are the main drivers for violent extremism in North Macedonia. More specifically, a modus operandi that facilitate the process of radicalization in the country was identified it includes the presence of intermediaries, social networks, the internet, social media, and other communal factors. According to governmental statistics, 143 citizens of North Macedonia (133 men and 10 women) left the country to conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. Most of them were facing socio-economic challenges such as low-paying jobs, low education, poor health, etc. More than 90 of them have since returned to North Macedonia, and IOM is continuously supporting institutional stakeholders in the reintegration of vetted returnees and members of their families.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-10/green_agenda_for_the_western_balkans_en.pdf

¹³ After the last Census in 2002, the new Census was conducted in September 2021. Data analysis was still ongoing in December 2021.

3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The strategic priorities for North Macedonia focus on addressing national migration trends and challenges and are in line with broader regional development priorities. They are based on the IOM Strategic Vision¹⁴, IOM Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia¹⁵ and related IOM governance documents, such as the Migration Governance Framework¹⁶ (MiGOF) and the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF).

The IOM country strategy draws on international instruments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), in particular the Target 10.7 to “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Reference documents include the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, as well a number of national strategic and policy documents detailed in Annex 1. IOM in North Macedonia will work toward achieving the following **six key strategic priorities** in the country, in line with the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and Strategic objectives of the regional strategy, as detailed in the below Table 1:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Humanitarian response | <i>Strategic priority: 1. Respond to the needs of crisis-affected populations through the provision of humanitarian assistance and quality services.</i> |
| Resilience | <i>Strategic Priority 2. Improve migrants’ resilience in situations of vulnerability, through supporting institutional capacities, knowledge, skills, and resources to protect the rights of vulnerable migrants, including migrant children, and actual and potential victims of trafficking.</i> <i>Strategic Priority 3. Strengthen community resilience against violent extremism to prevent, recognize, manage, and alleviate violent extremist occurrences.</i> <i>Strategic Priority 4. Support the resilience and socio-economic stabilization of those compelled to migrate due to poverty, exploitation, lack of opportunities, climate change and environmental challenges.</i> |
| Mobility | <i>Strategic Priority 5. Support efficient and sustainable channels for regular migration, and well managed migration flows and cross-border mobility with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security, and safety throughout the mobility continuum.</i> |
| Governance | <i>Strategic Priority 6. Enhance national capacities in migration-data collection, analysis, and dissemination, identify the key migration trends with the whole-of-Government approach, develop and implement relevant migration management policies, as well as conduct efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of the policies’ implementation.</i> |

The IOM mission strategy is intended for a four-year period (2022–2025) is flexible and subject to periodic reviews, allowing for adjustments to new realities and emerging issues. IOM will strive to implement the strategy in close cooperation and partnership with the government, donors, migrants, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

¹⁴ IOM, IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023: Setting a Course for IOM (Geneva, 2019). Available at <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/110/C-110-INF-1%20-%20IOM%20Strategic%20Vision.pdf>.

¹⁵ IOM Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEEECA), 2020-2024

¹⁶ IOM, “Migration Governance Framework”, brochure (Geneva, n.d.), available at www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/migof_brochure_a4_en.pdf; IOM Council resolution 1310 on the Migration Governance Framework (C/106/RES/1310) of 4 December 2015, available at <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-RES-1310%20MIGOF.pdf>.

3.1. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE:

Strategic priority 1. Respond to the needs of crisis-affected populations through the provision of humanitarian assistance and quality services

IOM in North Macedonia will continue to support the Government in meeting basic standards and providing improved living conditions for crisis-affected populations. This will be done through supporting the provision of basic services in Temporary Reception Centers (TRC) such as ensuring adequate reception conditions, WASH, health care, including mental health and psychosocial support, education, protection assistance, and other services. IOM also mainstreams protection-sensitive procedures into Temporary Reception Centres and identification mechanisms of the most vulnerable groups in line with international standards. Populations affected by crises, including the most vulnerable groups, will be provided with access to knowledge and awareness of the available protection services they are entitled to.

In addition and in accordance with the upcoming Strategy on Integrated Border Management 2021-2025, IOM will continue to support the building of the capacities of the immigration and border authorities in protection-sensitive and humanitarian border management, migration crisis management, including maintenance of adequate conditions and availability of protection services in the Temporary Reception Centres, as well as provision of protection-related assistance including throughout assisted voluntary return and reintegration.

Specifically in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, IOM will continue to support the Government in preventing transmission of COVID-19 among migrants in TRCs through WASH renovation, spatial reorganization, provision non-food items, distribution of PPE, intensive risk communication and community engagement (RCCE), etc. The authorities' efforts to respond to the pandemic will be supported with providing emergency, quick-impact training for border officials on detection, screening, registration, isolation, and referral of suspected and sick travelers, as well as occupational health and safety. Given the difficulties in holding face-to-face events due to the pandemic and limited live online trainings given the shortage of IT equipment at Points of Entry (PoEs), IOM in coordination with the Border Police agencies' management adapted the IOM training package on COVID-19 at PoEs into a self-paced online course, available on the IOM E-Campus e-learning platform. The course in English language has been finalized as well as the translated into Albanian, Macedonian and Serbian/Bosnian/Montenegrin and will be available for use by the law enforcement officers in the near future.

3.2. RESILIENCE:

Strategic Priority 2. Improve migrants' resilience in situations of vulnerability, through supporting the institutional capacities, knowledge, skills, and resources to protect the rights of migrants in vulnerable situations, including migrant children and actual and potential victims of trafficking

IOM in North Macedonia will support the Government in development and implementation of comprehensive policies, development strategies and other documents that address inequalities such as the uneven access to natural resources and other adverse socio-economic or community factors by providing the government policy makers with up-to-date migration research, analysis, and information on socioeconomic needs of population at risk of irregular migration.

IOM in North Macedonia supports the implementation of the National Strategy for combating trafficking in human beings and irregular migration 2021-2025 and provides

protection assistance for those identified as being vulnerable to violence, exploitation, or abuse, including trafficking, within a migration context as per the determinants of migrant vulnerability model.¹⁷ This includes facilitating their access to services and supporting the capacities of relevant institutions.

IOM in North Macedonia will continue to support the government in the development of gender- and child-sensitive strategies for protection and assistance for those who are marginalized and/or vulnerable. Moreover, IOM will continue to build the capacity of institutional stakeholders to improve knowledge, skills, and resources to protect the rights of migrants in vulnerable situations, including migrant children as well as potential and actual VoTs, and assist stakeholders in applying a survivor-centred, gender-sensitive, human-rights based approach. IOM will also continue to support the capacity of stakeholders in identifying migrants' vulnerabilities and ensuring access to relevant support, including access to protection assistance and services in the COVID-19 response. Special emphasis will be placed on child protection, especially unaccompanied migrant children, in line with the IOM mandate to protect migrant children¹⁸ and respond to their needs on the ground. In particular, IOM will provide services to migrant children and work with institutions to further mainstream child migrants into national child protection systems.

Strategic Priority 3. Strengthen community resilience against violent extremism to prevent, recognize, manage, and alleviate violent extremist occurrences.

IOM's PVE programme focuses on identifying and proactively addressing context-specific drivers, risk factors and individual incentives for joining violent extremist groups. This is complemented by efforts to support the disengagement, rehabilitation, resocialization, and ultimately the reintegration of violent extremist offenders. The programmes are based on a whole-of-society approach, whereby activities are implemented at all levels – including institutional, community and individual levels – in order to understand and address underlying vulnerabilities, while building community and individual resilience, especially among youth.

IOM will continue implementing community-based approaches aimed at reducing young peoples' susceptibility to radicalization and violent extremist influences, increasing youth community engagement, and strengthening resilience and the capacity of communities to respond to negative phenomena. IOM aims to increase the capacity of local actors and foster a proactive approach to recognizing and responding to signs of violent extremism in their communities, particularly in communities where exposure or proximity to violent extremist influences is greater.

IOM in North Macedonia will continue to support the Government in the implementation of the National Action Plan on CVE (2018-2022) and the National Plan on Reintegration, Resocialization and Rehabilitation. In particular, IOM's gender sensitive PVE and reintegration interventions incorporate a range of features such as mobilizing and organizing positive influencers, engaging those at risk in meaningful community initiatives, promoting socio-economic inclusion and livelihoods, developing critical thinking skills, and preparing government entities to take a non-securitized approach to constructive community engagement. In addition, IOM will include prevention efforts in its comprehensive support to governments to rehabilitate and reintegrate returning fighters from foreign armies and their families once due process is ensured.

¹⁷ For more information on the model see: <https://www.iom.int/iom-handbook-migrant-protection-and-assistance>.

¹⁸ <https://eea.iom.int/protection-children-migration>

Strategic Priority 4. Support the resilience and socio-economic stabilization of those compelled to migrate due to instability, poverty, exploitation, lack of opportunities, climate change and environmental challenges

IOM designs and implements evidence-based and human-centred programs and policies on resilience building, including responses to climate change impacts, and community stabilization.

IOM will boost the preparedness capacity of the institutions, in partnership with other relevant actors, to respond to large scale displacement in efficient manner ensuring protection and humanitarian support of the affected populations, including risk analysis and monitoring, building scenarios, and testing those through simulation exercises. IOM will work towards increasing the capacities of the communities to address, adapt and/or become more resilient to crises, health emergencies, climate-related disasters, and multi-hazard risks.

IOM will use its expertise to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave the country through systematic gathering of data on emigration trends and potential future development, supporting the institutions in creating data-based policy measures, as well as through implementation of direct measures to enhance socio-economic and development prospects in the country. Efforts will be made to support the country in addressing the brain drain through research initiatives, policy recommendations and piloting of solutions addressing the brain drain and reversing it into brain gain.

IOM will be assisting relevant stakeholders and partners to strengthen efforts towards decent work for young people by focusing on evidence-based, scalable, participatory, and innovative solutions and alliances.

The strategical approach of IOM is also oriented towards supporting the implementation of the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023 as noted in the MoU signed with the Government through enhancing the cooperation with Diaspora through transfer on knowledge and skills, promoting of transfer of remittances through regular channels, decreasing the cost for transfer of remittances and productive usage of remittances. Additionally, IOM will be cooperating with the institutional stakeholders and Diaspora organizations to obtain more data on the profile of the Diaspora, their cooperation interest, including promotion of investments and trade cooperation.

Finally, IOM will support the measures adopted by the Government to avert, minimise, and address disaster displacement, and address the needs of trapped populations. IOM will engage in partnerships to develop and implement joint approaches that analyse and address environmental drivers that compel people to move, enable migrants and their families to participate in and benefit from climate action.

3.3. MOBILITY:

Strategic Priority 5. Support efficient and sustainable channels for regular migration, and well managed migration flows and cross-border mobility with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security, and safety throughout the mobility continuum

IOM will continue supporting the Government in taking actions for a comprehensive and efficient management of migration through sustainable and efficient channels for regular migration that are innovative and responsive to current and emerging trends. IOM will be supporting the Government stakeholders at all levels to pilot the Resolution on Migration policy 2021-2025 measures that reinforce the development impact of migration, including strengthening data collection and analyses, informing potential migrants on the legal

pathways of migration and risks of irregular migration, facilitating skills matching programs and strengthening of the inter-state collaboration on labour migration. IOM will work towards assuring that migrants of all genders, ages, abilities, and other diversities benefit from appropriate and gender-sensitive pre-departure, post-arrival or return assistance and counselling.

IOM will work closely with partners and national stakeholders to promote a whole-of-government approach to return and reintegration and continue to work with them to strengthen their operational capacities to provide essential services to returnees. IOM will continue to provide variety of services to: Macedonian nationals returning to the country aimed at facilitating sustainable reintegration and to provide pre-departure or post-arrival assistance to migrants who are not in need of international protection and who wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. IOM will further provide support to the government in strengthening capacities for effective and protection-sensitive readmission and return management, including through supporting efforts aimed at improving bi-lateral and regional readmission cooperation with countries of origin.

IOM will support the Government in developing innovative, flexible, and inclusive cross-border mobility solutions to address current and future skills needs through high-quality labour market research, bilateral and regional mobility arrangements, and protocols.

IOM will be working to strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the area of combating trafficking in persons through regional exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices between governments, the international community and civil society. Support will be provided to the national referral mechanism in the area of identification and protection of trafficked persons, as well as to the law enforcement authorities in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers. IOM will be striving to support the institutional capacities in the area of further alignment with the EU and international standards in the area of trafficking in human beings. The institutional stakeholders will be supported through availability of assessments on the traffickers modus operandi and profile of the victims of trafficking contributing to the prevention and investigation efforts. The prevention activities will be supported through raising awareness on the risks of trafficking in human beings and socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable categories.

IOM will continue supporting the institutional stakeholders in addressing of transnational organized crime, such as migrant smuggling, and the protection of the rights of migrants across the entire mobility continuum. IOM will strengthen cooperation and dialogue through building of national interagency capacities and regional exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices between governments, the international community and civil society, and will continue to support investigation and prosecution efforts.

IOM will work with the national stakeholders in assuring that migrants of all genders, ages, abilities, and other diversities have access to essential health care along migration routes, which includes the migrants' health protection through implementation of the electronic Personal Health Record (e-PHR) that will allow recording and follow up for each of the migrants' encounters with the health system and monitoring the health of migrants. IOM will also work with national stakeholders that the risks that population mobility may pose to individual and public health are adequately mitigated.

IOM will also work with the Government in the development and implementation of gender-sensitive, integrated, non-discriminatory border management policies, strategies and systems that ensure the human rights, dignity and safety and security of all those on the move, including children and vulnerable migrants. IOM will work with the border management officials and frontline workers in increasing their knowledge and skills to prevent family

separations and promote family reunification and will support the Government in exploring and piloting identification of alternatives to immigration detention with a focus on migrants in a vulnerable situation.

3.4. GOVERNANCE:

Strategic Priority 6. Enhance national capacities in migration-data collection, analysis, and dissemination to address the gaps, identify the key migration trends with the whole-of-Government approach, develop and implement relevant migration management policies, as well as conduct efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of the policies' implementation.

IOM is a key strategic partner of the national authorities in the development and implementation of the Resolution on Migration Policy 2021-2025 and number of policies and strategies in various areas, including combatting trafficking and irregular migration, diaspora engagement, prevention of violent extremism and other migration related areas. IOM is also contributing to strengthen the national capacities and systems for effective and comprehensive migration data collection, exchange, and analysis of the migration statistics. In this context, IOM will continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building support to migration management stakeholders in the country towards improving the standards, practices and systems for the collection and analysis of migration statistics. IOM will also continue to provide guidelines to the national stakeholders on the usage of the findings from the data management analysis and their recommendations transformation into concrete actions. The National Roadmap on the Migration Statistics which is being prepared by IOM, in close cooperation with the State Statistical Office and Ministry of Interior, will be the guiding document for capacity building activities in this area.

IOM will continue to build capacities of the Government in the area of policy development and implementation. To support evidence-based policy development relevant stakeholders and other key actors need to have sufficient access to migration data, research, and analysis. IOM initiatives will support availability, access and analysis of migration, including through IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tools that have been applied to track mobility and evolving needs of the population groups on the move since 2015

IOM will work with the Government and relevant UN entities the UN Network on Migration and the UN Development System, providing effective, coordinated, and whole-of-system support to develop and implement migration policies and mainstream migration into related public policy domains, in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and other relevant frameworks in humanitarian, environment, and related fields.

IOM will continue to develop and implement activities ensuring that the public narrative of migration is well-informed and balanced, and the human rights of migrants and their contribution to local and national development are recognized.

IOM will support the country's overall efforts to digitalize existing migration management procedures while capacitating personnel to conduct effective risk analysis and data management through the use of innovative digital tools.

IOM will focus on advocacy and lobbying with the Government to mainstream migration in related policies and strategic decision-making processes across various sectors.

IOM will also work with the national partners to foster vertical and lateral coordination as well as develop capacities for mainstreaming of the opportunities and challenges associated

with the human mobility in the context of climate change into the national planning and reporting processes associated with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and Sustainable Development Goals.

3.5. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

IOM in North Macedonia follows a people-centred approach that is gender- and child-sensitive, and disability inclusive. The Organization is committed to supporting governments and partners in upholding the human rights of migrants, regardless of their migration status and across all stages of the migration cycle. Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups, particularly in migration and forced displacements contexts. As a key contributor to the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, IOM is working to ensure that disability inclusion is integrated in all areas under its mandate, including in IOM's interventions, programming, and consultation processes.

IOM reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that gender is mainstreamed throughout its projects, policies, and activities and in all stages of its work, particularly considering migrants in vulnerable situations such as: victims of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking, pregnant women, children, and persons identifying as LGBTIQ+, who are often discriminated against, stigmatized, ostracized, and marginalized.

It is recognized that a person's gender strongly influences their migration experience which can manifest itself in reasons to migrate, country of destination, networks used; and opportunities, vulnerabilities and risks that migrant are exposed to along the way and in the country of destination. IOM's commitments towards gender equality, which provide the basis to support counterparts in advancing gender mainstreaming initiatives, are grounded in the following instruments, but not limited to: IOM Migration Governance Framework; IOM Gender Equality Policy (2015); IOM Gender Marker; UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2012); UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP).

3.6. PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

Throughout its work, IOM ensures a whole-of-society approach, strengthening partnerships with the Government, United Nations agencies, donors, international financial institutions (IFIs), international organizations, academia, non-governmental bodies, the private sector, migrant civil society, and other stakeholders. The collaboration and coordination with these partners are of key importance for the achievement of the above outlined key priorities.

IOM in North Macedonia is a member of the Inter-ministerial working group on Migration Policy that has competences over the development and implementation of the Migration Policy of North Macedonia. As a member of this group IOM contributes to the development and implementation of the Migration Policy and closely coordinates with the relevant stakeholders, such as ministries, UN partners and civil society organizations. Considering its strong experience in the area of trafficking in human beings, IOM participates in the work of the National Commission for Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings and Irregular Migration, providing expert support in the development and operational support in the implementation of the strategic approaches. Considering that IOM supports the authorities in North Macedonia to align the migration statistics with the EU and other international

standards, close coordination and cooperation is being established with the State Statistical Office and Ministry of interior on data issues.

IOM closely collaborates with the Office of the National Coordinator for Violent Extremism and is a member of the Inter-institutional working group for reintegration of returnees from foreign armies and members of their families providing advisory support in the development and implementation of the policy measures in this area.

IOM together with 17 UN agencies, funds, and programmes works together through the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator to improve the lives and livelihoods of all inhabitants by supporting the country in implementing the Sustainable Development Agenda with the latest specialised expertise and evidence-based actions. By driving the transformation towards a better, greener, and fairer society, the UNCT is supporting the country in the achievement of its strategic goals, including supporting reforms that will help the country with the European Union (EU) integration process.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda and promoted in the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development, human mobility is inextricably linked with sustainable development. IOM has a clear responsibility to support North Macedonia towards meeting the commitments in the 2030 Agenda. This strategy will guide the Organization's active engagement in the United Nations development system and hinges on building stronger partnerships within the United Nations system and beyond. Moreover, UN Network on Migration has been established in North Macedonia, which provides an opportunity for IOM and the other UN Agencies to support the country in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As the UN Agency on Migration, IOM will be working to strengthen its evidence base on migration by improving and investing in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of accurate, reliable, and comparable data, ensuring that this data guides coherent and evidence-based policymaking, as well as monitoring of the migration related initiatives. In 2021, IOM has implemented Migration Governance Index in North Macedonia, which is a framework to support North Macedonia in the assessment of the comprehensiveness of its migration policy, as well as in the identification of areas that could be strengthened. Additionally, support has been provided in the elaboration of a National Roadmap that contains tailored actions for the alignment of the migration statistics with the EU standards. IOM will be investing in the capacities of its staff to provide support to these process in most effective manner, aligning its activities with priorities set in the IOM Migration Data Strategy. Additionally, IOM will ensure that the migration management authorities will benefit from the available data and reports produced by the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), the DTM and the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) when designing and implementing policy measures.

To ensure effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability of its programming, IOM North Macedonia will continue investing in improving the staff knowledge in line with IOM policies and guidance as well as norms and standards and ethical guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. Capacity building trainings will be implemented in close cooperation with the Regional Office. At the UN level, IOM North Macedonia will continue contributing to the work of the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group established to follow up on the implementation of the UNSDCF.

IOM will be developing and implementing a multi-sectoral programming portfolio, addressing Migration Protection and Assistance; Migration, Environment and Climate Change; Migration Health; Labour Migration; Immigration and Border Management; and Migration, Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda. The program staff will continue strengthening their thematic knowledge through the trainings and thematic sessions organized by the Regional Office and Staff Development Unit ensuring up to date programming and transfer of best practices in North Macedonia. Special focus will be given to investments in capacities and implementation of innovative programs.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

Through its strategy, IOM in North Macedonia will be supporting the country in ensuring effective, efficient, and responsible migration governance, maximizing the development impacts of migration. By 2025, IOM will strive to support the country in the achievement of the following priorities:

- Strong institutional capacities in the area of protection of vulnerable migrants and combating of cross border crime, with focus on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.
- Strengthened resilience and socio-economic stabilization of those compelled to migrate due to poverty, exploitation, lack of opportunities as well as climate change and environmental challenges.
- Strengthened community resilience against violent extremism.
- Enhanced development impact of migration through the Diaspora engagement, support intra-state collaboration on labour migration and sustainable reintegration of returnees and advancement towards the 2030 Agenda.
- Enhanced institutional capacities in migration-data collection, analysis, and dissemination, as well as in the implementation of the policies in the area of migration management including the lobbying for mainstreaming of the opportunities and challenges associated with the human mobility in the context of climate change into the national planning and reporting processes.

IOM will further strengthen the cooperation with the governmental partners, UN partners, other international organizations, civil society organizations, Diaspora organizations, private sector, and others to achieve the above outlined strategical priorities that are aligned with the country's priorities. The support by donors is a key element for implementation of the strategy. Coordination and liaison with the partners from the donor community, governmental partners, CSOs, migrants, UN and other international organizations will be maintained for the implementation, adjustment and monitoring of the progress towards the strategic priorities.

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

- Resolution on Migration Policy 2015-2020¹⁹,
- National Strategy for cooperation with the Diaspora 2019 – 2023²⁰,
- National Strategy for combating trafficking in human beings and irregular migration 2021-2025
- National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism 2018 – 2022,
- National Strategy on Integrated Border Management

¹⁹ Please consult the [timeline for the ECA region](#) on the Network's website to inform your country's contributions to the GCM

²⁰ <https://north-macedonia.iom.int/sites/nomace/files/documents/Resolution-on-Migration-Policy.pdf>



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

17 route des Morillons, P.O. Box 17, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150 • Email: hq@iom.int • Website: www.iom.int

Oslo no.6, 1000, Skopje, North Macedonia
Tel: 389 2 3088 100; +389 2 3095 477 • Fax: + 389 2 3088 101
E-mail: iomskopje@iom.int
Website: <http://www.north-macedonia.iom.int>