

NORTH MACEDONIA | PROFILE 2021

# MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INDICATORS



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With research and analysis by

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IMPACT**

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021. *Migration Governance Indicators Profile 2021 – North Macedonia*. IOM, Geneva.

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# MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INDICATORS



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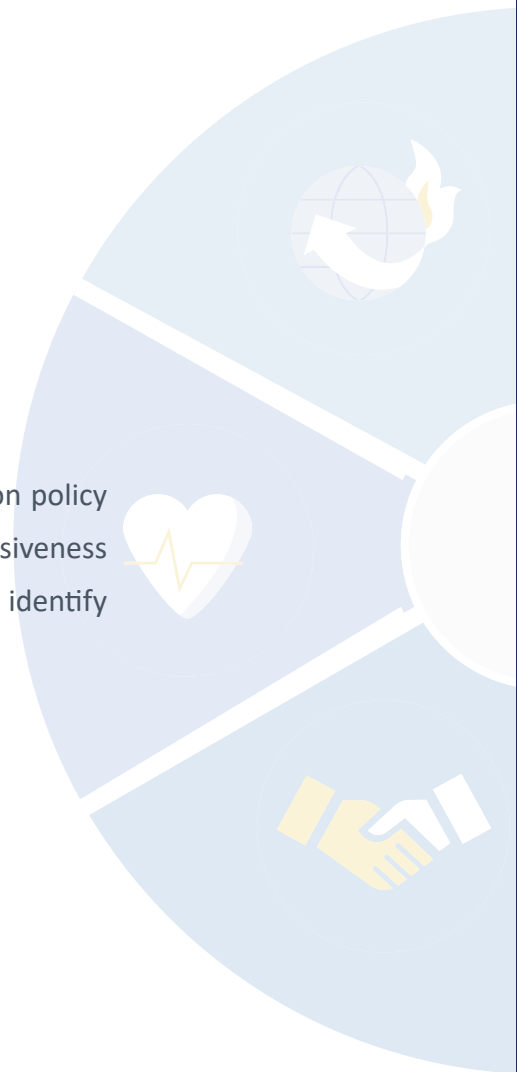
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## OBJECTIVE

The MGI aims to support well-managed migration policy by helping countries assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures and identify priorities on the way forward.



The MGI can be used to spark a discussion with governments and other relevant stakeholders in the country on existing migration policy structures. It can help assess whether these structures, which have often been in place for several years, still address the main challenges and opportunities of today's reality.

# INTRODUCTION

This is an era of unprecedented mobility, and the need to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility is becoming increasingly relevant.<sup>1</sup> The need to face the challenges and to maximize the opportunities that this mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and development. Migration is integrated in a number of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, such as ending modern slavery and addressing the vulnerability of migrant workers. However, the central reference to migration in the SDGs is Target 10.7 on facilitating “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”.<sup>2</sup>

The incorporation of Target 10.7 into the 2030 Agenda created the need to define “planned and well-managed migration policies”. This is why, in 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). This Framework offers a concise view of an ideal approach that allows a State to determine what it might need to govern migration well and in a way that suits its circumstances.<sup>3</sup> The Framework was welcomed by IOM Member States in the same year.

In an effort to operationalize the MiGOF, IOM worked with Economist Impact to develop the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI), a standard set of approximately 90 indicators to assist countries in assessing their migration policies and advance the conversation on what well-governed migration might look like in practice.

The MGI helps countries identify good practices as well as areas with potential for further development and can offer insights on the policy levers that countries can use to develop their migration governance structures. However, the MGI recognizes that all countries have different realities, challenges and opportunities that relate to migration. Therefore, the MGI does not rank countries on the design or implementation of their migration policies. Finally, the MGI does not measure migration policy outcomes or institutional effectiveness. Instead, it takes stock of the migration-related policies in place and operates as a benchmarking framework that provides insights on policy measures that countries might want to consider as they progress towards good migration governance.

This country profile presents a summary of the well-developed areas of the migration governance structures of North Macedonia, as well as the areas with potential for further development, as assessed by the MGI.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> IOM Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, seventeenth session (S/17/4 of 29 September 2015), article 2.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Council, 106th session, Migration Governance Framework (C/106/40 of 4 November 2015), page 1, footnote 1. Available at <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-40-Migration-Governance-Framework.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The MGI initiative is a policy-benchmarking programme led by IOM and implemented with the support of Economist Impact. This publication was produced with the financial support of the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Its contents are the sole responsibility of IOM and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Fund.

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## MiGOF

The IOM MiGOF sets out the essential elements to support planned and well-managed migration. It seeks to present, in a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive way, a set of three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, orderly, and benefits migrants and society.

### PRINCIPLES

1. **Adherence** to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights.
2. **Formulates** policy using evidence and "whole-of-government" approach.
3. **Engages** with partners to address migration and related issues.

### OBJECTIVES

1. **Advance** the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society.
2. **Effectively** address the mobility dimensions of crises.
3. **Ensure** that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

At the basis of

## MGI

### WHAT IT IS



A set of indicators that offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to strengthen their migration governance structures



A tool that identifies good practices and areas that could be further developed



A consultative process that advances dialogues on migration governance by clarifying what "well-governed migration" might look like in the context of SDG Target 10.7

Which supports the measurement of

### WHAT IT IS NOT



Not a ranking of countries



Not assessing impacts of policies



Not prescriptive



### TARGET 10.7

"Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and **well-managed migration policies**."



KEY

FINDINGS

The MGI is composed of around 90 indicators grouped under the 6 different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:



MIGRANTS'  
RIGHTS  
PAGE 12

Indicators in this domain look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. It also looks at family reunification, access to work, and access to residency and citizenship. The international conventions signed and ratified are also included.



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT  
APPROACH  
PAGE 15

Indicators in this area assess countries' institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks related to migration policies. This area also looks at the existence of national migration strategies that are in line with development objectives and overseas development efforts, as well as institutional transparency and coherence in relation to migration management.



PARTNERSHIPS  
PAGE 17

This category focuses on countries' efforts to cooperate on migration-related issues with other States and with relevant non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector.



WELL-BEING  
OF MIGRANTS  
PAGE 19

Indicators in this area assess countries' policies on the recognition of migrants' educational and professional qualifications, provisions regulating student migration and the existence of bilateral labour agreements between countries. Aspects of diaspora engagement in the country of origin and migrant remittances are also under this domain.



MOBILITY DIMENSION  
OF CRISES  
PAGE 20

This category looks at the type and level of preparedness of countries when they are faced with mobility dimensions of crises. The questions look at the processes in place for nationals and non-nationals both during and after disasters, including if humanitarian assistance is equally available to migrants as it is to citizens.



SAFE, ORDERLY  
AND REGULAR  
MIGRATION  
PAGE 22

This area looks at countries' approach to migration management in terms of border control and enforcement policies, admission criteria for migrants, preparedness and resilience in the case of significant and unexpected migration flows, as well as the fight against trafficking in persons.



## 1

## ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND FULFILMENT OF MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

### 1.1. International conventions ratified

**Table 1.** Signature and ratification of international conventions

Convention name	Ratified (Year)
International Labour Organization (ILO) Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	Yes (1991)
United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the Refugee Convention), 1951	Yes (1994)
United Nations conventions on statelessness, 1954 and 1961	Yes (1994, 2020)
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	Yes (1991)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989	Yes (1993)
United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990	No
United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	Yes (2005)

### 1.2. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Migrants have equal access as citizens to primary education. The Primary Education Act (2019) grants every child the right to “free and high-quality education” and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “gender, race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, social origin, education, religion or belief, political belief, other beliefs, age, marital status, property status, health status, social status, or any other grounds”. Admission to primary school is conditional on the person’s ability to provide proof of immunization<sup>5</sup> – this applies equally to both nationals and foreigners, regardless of their status. The Law on International and Temporary Protection (2018) grants asylum seekers the right to primary and secondary education in accordance with the legislation on education and “up until a final decision on their asylum status has been reached”. The Law on Social Protection (2019) states that the institution where an asylum seeker resides is also responsible for the provision of access to education. For migrant children without refugee status or not under subsidiary protection, informal education is organized in Transit Reception Centres.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Immunization includes all the different types of mandatory vaccinations for newborns, children and adults as per the Government’s annual “Programme for mandatory immunization of the population in the Republic of North Macedonia” (2021).

<sup>6</sup> When migrants with an irregular status arrive in North Macedonia, they are provided with accommodation and initial information in multiple languages in Transit Reception Centres.

According to the Law on Secondary Education (1995), “foreign citizens and persons without citizenship can acquire secondary education, in ways and under conditions outlined by this Law”, with no further elaboration.<sup>7</sup> This Law prohibits discrimination on the basis of “gender, race, skin colour, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status” and states that foreigners and stateless persons have the right to “request nostrification or recognition of the equivalence of a certificate obtained abroad”.<sup>8</sup>

Migrants, irrespective of migratory status, have equal access as citizens to social protection schemes, while only migrant workers may access pensions schemes. The Law on Social Protection grants the right to social protection to the following categories of migrants: citizens not permanently residing in the country, foreigners with regulated residence, asylum seekers, persons under subsidiary protection and persons with refugee status.<sup>9</sup> Article 14 of the Law on Pension and Invalidity Insurance (2012) grants “foreign citizens and persons without citizenship”<sup>10</sup> mandatory pension and invalidity insurance, but only if they are “[self-]employed or in the service of foreign individuals and legal entities, international organizations and institutions, or foreign diplomatic and consular missions”.<sup>11</sup>

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy lists international agreements on social security entitlements and pensions between North Macedonia and 21 countries or areas/places.<sup>12</sup> The Government has also taken over the agreements established between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia<sup>13</sup> and France (1951), the United Kingdom (1958), Italy (1961), Norway (1976) and Sweden (1979), which cover mutual health insurance, social insurance, pensions, unemployment benefit, disability benefit, child support and other social security benefits.

All migrants have access to family reunification. The Law on Foreigners (2018) outlines the conditions for obtaining a residence permit, including for the purpose of family reunification, if proof of health insurance and housing or sufficient funds for housing is available. Applications should be submitted either to the Ministry of Interior (if the migrant is already in North Macedonia) or to the diplomatic and consular office of North Macedonia in the country of origin.

The Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia (1992)<sup>14</sup> allows foreign nationals to access citizenship after eight years of continuous residence. A person can acquire Macedonian citizenship if they are stateless or if they give up their previous citizenship before or shortly after acquiring Macedonian citizenship. Foreigners may also be naturalized after having been married to a citizen for at least three years and having legally resided in the country for one year continuously.

### 1.3. Areas with potential for further development

Migrants have access to health care depending on their migratory status. Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Transit Reception Centres, including migrants with irregular status, have equal access to health care as nationals, while regular migrant workers are covered by health insurance generally provided by

<sup>7</sup> The Law on Secondary Education was amended in 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Nostrification is the process of recognizing an academic qualification from a foreign university.

<sup>9</sup> Social protection, as defined in the Law on Social Protection, includes financial assistance (guaranteed minimum income, disability benefit, compensation for assistance and care for another person, compensation for shortened working time due to assistance and care for another person, housing benefit, permanent benefit and one-time financial assistance). Social protection also includes social services (information and referral services, specialized assistance and support services, counselling services, home services, community services, assistance with activities of daily living, foster care and accommodation in an institution).

<sup>10</sup> According to the legal definition, a “person without citizenship is a person that is not a citizen of any State according to its laws”. In practice, implementation of Article 14 of this Law is often not feasible due to the lack of identity documents needed to access insurance.

<sup>11</sup> The Law on Pension and Invalidity Insurance was amended in 2020.

<sup>12</sup> The agreements are with the following countries or areas/places: Croatia (1997), Austria (1998), Turkey (2000), Slovenia (2001), Switzerland (2001), Bulgaria (2003), Germany (2005), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006), Czechia (2007), the Netherlands (2007), Poland (2007), Romania (2008), Luxembourg (2009), Belgium (2009), Canada (2011), Australia (2011), Montenegro (2011), Kosovo (2013) (see footnote 21), Hungary (2015), Slovakia (2015) and Albania (2016).

<sup>13</sup> The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia no longer exists, but official sources still note agreements under “Conventions on Social Insurance, which Republic of North Macedonia has taken over from the Former SFRY”.

<sup>14</sup> The Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia was amended in 2016.

employers or based on bilateral labour agreements with the respective countries of origin. The Law on Health Insurance (2000) stipulates that persons who are not covered by the mandatory health insurance may subscribe to other voluntary health insurance policies. Moreover, the Law on Foreigners stipulates that for a foreigner to be granted a temporary residence permit, proof of health insurance is necessary.

The Law on the Employment and Work of Foreigners (2015) states that there are two types of work permits: one for an indefinite time period and another that is valid for up to one year. The temporary work permit may be issued to migrants who possess a temporary residence permit, whereas the work permit for an indefinite period of time may be issued to migrants who possess a permanent residence permit. A work permit cannot be issued to a migrant who does not possess a residence permit.<sup>15</sup> Both types of work permits are linked to specific jobs; to switch jobs, a new work permit is necessary.

Only certain categories of migrants may apply for a permanent residence permit. The Law on Foreigners states that a permanent residence permit will be issued to a foreigner holding a temporary residence permit who has been continuously residing in North Macedonia for at least five years prior to submitting their application. They should have not resided outside of North Macedonia for six consecutive months or for a period of time exceeding ten months in total. This Law further requires foreigners to show proof of a stable and regular source of income, health insurance, housing or sufficient funds for housing, and no criminal records in the five years prior to submitting the application. According to Article 129, migrants holding a temporary residence permit issued for studying, specialization or professional development, scientific research, medical treatment, humanitarian reasons or temporary protection are not allowed to apply for a permanent residence permit.

North Macedonia has policies in place to address discrimination, but there are no specific frameworks focusing on hate crimes, violence, xenophobia or discrimination against migrants. The Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination (2019) as well as the National Strategy on Equality and Non-discrimination (2016–2020) do not contain specific provisions for migrants. Furthermore, as of September 2021, one of the action points of the Draft Strategy for the Integration of Refugees and Foreigners in the Republic of Macedonia (2017–2027) is “[f]acilitating equal access to housing with the aim of promoting social integration and protection against discrimination”.

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<sup>15</sup> A temporary work permit may also be issued to the immediate family members of a migrant who possesses either a temporary work permit or a work permit for an indefinite period of time, as well as to persons with refugee status and persons under temporary or subsidiary protection.



## 2

## FORMULATES POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

### 2.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

According to the Law on Foreigners, the Ministry of Interior is responsible for monitoring the movement and stay of foreigners in North Macedonia. The Department of Border Affairs and Migration within the Ministry of Interior is responsible for immigration. Its competencies include international cooperation and inter-agency cooperation with other State institutions and agencies that are part of the Integrated Border Management System,<sup>16</sup> resolving cross-border disputes with neighbouring countries, regulating the stay and readmission of foreigners, and reception of foreigners in Transit Reception Centres.

A range of national legislation regulates immigration. The central strategic document on migration is the Resolution on Migration Policy, which is endorsed by the Government and adopted by the Assembly of North Macedonia every six years.<sup>17</sup> Adoption of the Resolution is an obligation established in the Law on Foreigners. The latest Resolution on Migration Policy (2015–2020) outlines “the conditions, challenges and measures to be taken in the field of migration”. In June 2021, a new Resolution on Migration Policy (2021–2025) has been developed, and as of September 2021, it has been tabled for adoption by the Parliament.

The Emigration Agency lists information on acquiring citizenship and tips on travelling abroad and has also published the *Guidebook with Useful Information for Emigrants from Macedonia*, which provides its citizens abroad with practical information on citizenship, personal documentation, rights and responsibilities, and pension and invalidity insurance in their countries of residence.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides online information on visa types, requirements and procedures for immigration to North Macedonia. Laws on immigration are available on each concerned ministry’s website. These are available only in Macedonian and Albanian, but the Ministry of Interior’s website includes an English translation of the Law on Foreigners.

North Macedonia collects and analyses migration data in addition to the census. For instance, the Ministry of Interior periodically collects and publishes data on regular and irregular entries and exits of foreigners through the country borders.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, pursuant to the Law on Foreigners, the Ministry of Interior established and operates “an integrated database on foreigners, including asylum, migration and visa data”, but these data are not accessible to the public. The State Statistical Office’s MakStat maintains a database containing the following disaggregated information on migration: number of immigrants from other countries by gender, age and region; and number of persons who have emigrated to other countries by gender, age and region. Data are publicly available for every year since 2005, except for 2020, as of September 2021.

The country has institutions tasked with coordinating efforts to engage with its diaspora population. According to the Law on the Organisation and Operation of the State Administration Bodies (2000), the Emigration Agency is responsible for maintaining and promoting cultural ties with the diaspora and diaspora organizations, facilitating the return of emigrants, and encouraging diaspora engagement and

<sup>16</sup> The Integrated Border Management System (IBM) aims to strengthen the collaboration between different government bodies and institutions with competences in IBM for efficient border control; increased flow of people, goods and capital; and reduced security risks, especially in terms of irregular migration and cross-border crimes.

<sup>17</sup> The Assembly of North Macedonia is the country’s unicameral legislature.

<sup>18</sup> Data on irregular migration are listed for the period 2010–2017, while information on regular and irregular entries of foreigners is listed for the period 2017–2018.

participation in the public and economic life of the country.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, a Minister without Portfolio<sup>20</sup> used to be in charge of the diaspora. The Minister and its cabinet developed the National Strategy of the Republic of Northern Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora (2019–2023) and a corresponding Action Plan. Since 2020, diaspora matters have been under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## 2.2. Areas with potential for further development

An Intra-ministerial Working Group on Migration Policy that includes representatives from a number of institutions and international organizations was established in 2008 and 2014 and was responsible for the development of the Resolution on Migration Policy. It drafted the first one for 2009–2014 and subsequently another for 2015–2020. In March 2020, a new Intra-ministerial Working Group on Migration Policy was established to develop the Resolution on Migration Policy for 2021–2025. A new working group is established each time a Resolution needs to be drafted, and this working group meets only with a limited role to monitor its implementation.

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<sup>19</sup> The Law on the Organisation and Operation of the State Administration Bodies was amended in 2019.

<sup>20</sup> The appointment of a Minister without Portfolio is common in North Macedonia, even though the current government structure (as of September 2021) does not include any.

## 3

ENGAGES WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS  
MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

## 3.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

North Macedonia participates in the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), a regional consultative process (RCP) with the mandate to “promote closer regional cooperation and [a] common, comprehensive and harmonized approach ... in areas of migration, asylum, border control, trafficking in human beings, visa regime, [and] integration and return of refugees”. It involves Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo.<sup>21</sup> The country also participates in the Prague Process, which aims to “strengthen cooperation in migration management, and specifically to explore and develop agreed-upon principles and elements for close migration partnerships between the participating countries” – namely, from the European Union, the Schengen Area, the Eastern Partnership, the Western Balkans, Central Asia, the Russian Federation and Turkey. North Macedonia further participates in the Budapest Process, an interregional forum on migration for the regions of Europe and Asia, envisioned as an “information sharing tool between European countries in a pre-EU enlargement setting [and a] forum for improving migration management”.

As a member State of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), North Macedonia participates in negotiations on the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications of Doctors of Medicine, Dentists, Architects and Civil Engineers. The RCC aims to promote regional labour mobility among member States of South-East Europe, including North Macedonia.

North Macedonia has memorandums of cooperation/understanding and declarations of intent to cooperate on labour and social policy with Belgium (2013), Bulgaria (2014), Estonia (2014), Croatia (2015), Czechia (2015), Montenegro (2015), the Russian Federation (2016), China (2017) and Austria (2019). It also has a memorandum of cooperation with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (2016). These agreements concern the employment of both nationals abroad and migrants in North Macedonia. North Macedonia has also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Austria, Hungary and Serbia (2015), “dedicated to the steps necessary for containment of the extraordinary pressure of mixed migration the countries are facing”. The memorandum of cooperation (MOC) with Bulgaria applies to migrants from both North Macedonia and Bulgaria and concerns the “harmonization of labour law, peaceful resolution of conflict, protection of workers’ rights, participation of workers in business governance, exchange of experiences with seasonal work and policies for preventing undeclared work, youth employment, and exchange of experiences and experts in the field of labour migration and integration of immigrants”. The MOC with Estonia concerns “labour and employment policy, tackling poverty and social exclusion, protection of children’s rights, social security system, issues related to the EU accession of [North] Macedonia, human trafficking [and] free movement of workers”. The MOC covers migrants in both countries.

North Macedonia signed bilateral cooperation agreements with Bulgaria and Slovenia in 2003 regarding labour markets, pensions and disability insurance, and social dialogue and inclusion. An agreement with Turkey signed in 2013 covers employment rights, eradication of child labour, health and safety at the workplace, labour inspection, employment policies and monitoring of labour market development. Other bilateral labour agreements are in place with Germany (2003), Canada (2010) and Qatar (2011) which address posting of workers in a range of sectors.

<sup>21</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

### 3.2. Areas with potential for further development

North Macedonia only partially engages with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the development and implementation of migration policy. The Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia is invited by the Cabinet of the Prime Minister to attend the meetings of the Intra-ministerial Working Group for the development of the new Migration Policy (2021–2025). However, no CSOs are official members. In addition, the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in the Republic of Macedonia (2017–2020) states as one of its guiding principles the “participation of the civil society sector”. The Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and Open Gate – La Strada International are members of the mobile teams for the identification, referral, and assistance of survivors and potential victims of trafficking.

North Macedonia has been a candidate member of the European Union since 2005,<sup>22</sup> and while accession negotiations were formally approved in 2020, they have not begun as of September 2021. In 2009, the European Union Justice and Home Affairs Council abolished the visa requirements for North Macedonia.

North Macedonia engages with its diaspora only on an ad hoc basis. However, the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora and its corresponding Action Plan highlight the need for strengthening cooperation with the diaspora and include four main pillars: (a) political, legal and consular issues; (b) the diaspora and economic development; (c) education, science and youth; and (d) cultural ties, identity and heritage. Representatives from diaspora organizations such as the United Macedonian Diaspora (based in the United States) and the Forum for Democratic Macedonia and others participated in the working group for the development of the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora.

There is no evidence that North Macedonia formally engages the private sector in discussions on migration issues. Neither representatives of the Union of Chambers of Commerce nor other representatives from the private sector are part of the Intra-ministerial Working Group on Migration Policy, even though the Resolution on Migration Policy (2015–2020) states that its successful implementation is contingent on “[p]artnership with the countries of origin and destination, regional and international organizations, non-governmental and other civil society organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders”.

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<sup>22</sup> A candidate member is a State with which the European Union holds negotiations in order to determine its ability to apply European Union legislation.



## 4

## ADVANCES THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

### 4.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

While labour legislation establishes no specific provisions promoting the ethical recruitment of migrant workers, related provisions are present under more specific legislation and bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) to which North Macedonia is a party. In accordance with the Law on Private Employment Agencies (2018), employers wishing to recruit migrant workers or nationals for work within the country or abroad, including seasonal work, have an obligation to provide the same level of protection of health and safety to migrant workers as to nationals.<sup>23</sup> This Law also requires employers sending nationals for work abroad to include protection measures in the employment contract in case the work agreement is terminated. Such conditions are further included in specific BLAs between North Macedonia and other countries, such as the BLA with Bulgaria (2003).

Furthermore, the Labour Relations Law (2005) states that the provisions of relevant laws governing working hours, daily and annual leave, night shifts, minimum annual leave, minimum wage, protection at work and special protection for workers also apply to temporary migrant workers in North Macedonia.<sup>24</sup> In line with this, the Law on the Employment and Work of Foreigners (2015) states that “the employer is obliged to provide the foreigner whom they have employed minimum rights for working hours, breaks and periods of rest, night work, minimum annual leave, salaries, health and safety at work”.

North Macedonia participates in international schemes with common qualification frameworks – namely, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The EQF serves as a translation tool between different national frameworks and covers all types and levels of qualifications.

### 4.2. Areas with potential for further development

According to the Law on the Employment and Work of Foreigners, the Government sets an annual quota of work permits to limit the number of foreigners in the labour market. This quota may not exceed 5 per cent of the number of lawfully employed citizens of North Macedonia. This Law states that priority in issuing work permits shall be given to foreigners with education and expertise in fields where there is a shortage of workers locally. Quotas have been set for specific levels of knowledge and skills. Under the Decree for Determining the Quota of Work Permits for Foreigners Who Can Be Employed on the Territory of the Republic of Macedonia (2017), 300 work permits have been allocated to persons with “fifth or higher level of education”, and 450 permits to persons with “second through fourth level of education”.

Even though data on the labour market and labour migration are collected, there is no evidence of conducted studies on the demand for migrant workers or on the effects of emigration on the labour market. The Employment Agency<sup>25</sup> conducts an annual Labour Market Skills Survey in North Macedonia and publishes the results; the most recent survey and results pertain to 2020. The published results indicate the demand for workers per region and per level of education. They include a list of areas in demand but do not mention migrant workers specifically.

Limited measures protecting the rights of citizens of North Macedonia abroad are in place. Pursuant to the Law on Posting of Workers from the Republic of Macedonia to Other Countries for Construction Work through Project Contracts and for Performing Other Seasonal Work (2012), employment of nationals abroad takes place under conditions determined in agreements with other countries. In order to employ Macedonian workers, a construction company needs to meet certain conditions relating to its size, financial track record and technical preparedness.

<sup>23</sup> The Law on Private Employment Agencies was amended in 2020.

<sup>24</sup> The Labour Relations Law was amended in 2020.

<sup>25</sup> The Employment Agency is a public institution and does not fall under the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.



## 5

EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSES THE  
MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

## 5.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Crisis Management Centre (CMC), created under the Law on Crisis Management (2005), is tasked with “providing continuity of the inter-departmental and international cooperation, consultations and coordination of the crisis management; preparation and updating of a unified assessment of the risks and dangers to the security of the Republic; proposing measures and activities for resolving a crisis situation; and executing other activities laid down by law”.

Moreover, the Directorate for Protection and Rescue, established under the Ministry of Defence, implements “activities for protection and rescue from natural and other disasters”. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) is tasked with multiple responsibilities related to dealing with a massive influx of migrants, such as the reception, accommodation, and provision of basic needs (food, clothing and hygienic items) and support to migrants. Through social workers, MLSP conducts field interviews with migrants and provides particular assistance to unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable categories, including educational and psychosocial support.

In 2019, the CMC released the most recent National Platform of North Macedonia for Disaster Risk Reduction, which acknowledges the needs and vulnerability of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. The platform calls for the establishment of an institutional framework to protect migrants but does not contain any specific measures for their assistance.

A contingency plan for the management of large population movements is in place. The Standard Operating Procedures for Communication, Coordination and Cooperation between the Subjects of the Control System during a Crisis Situation (2016), developed by the CMC, contains procedural guidance for the exchange of information between competent institutions, as well as measures for strengthening border control. Section 16 of the Standard Operating Procedures addresses the provision of assistance to migrants in the context of a massive influx of migrants and refugees. Under this section, it is outlined that during a massive influx of migrants, the subjects of the Control System – primarily MLSP and the Directorate for Protection and Rescue – are required to provide migrants and refugees with shelter, food and other products; maintain all essential infrastructural conditions in Transit Reception Centres and other designated spaces for migrants; provide information to migrants; and facilitate the transit of migrants through North Macedonia, with special attention to vulnerable groups.

North Macedonia has communication systems in place for the public to receive information on the evolving nature of crises. The CMC, created to prepare for and respond to disasters under the Law on Crisis Management, has established communication channels with the public – such as an emergency telephone number; a Twitter profile containing alerts on domestic and regional emergencies, categorized per level of urgency; and a website with the aforementioned alerts, alongside other relevant information. The Standard Operating Procedures for Communication, Coordination and Cooperation between the Subjects of the Control System during a Crisis Situation tasks the CMC with the role of coordinating activities between all participants in crisis management, providing information to the population through the media, and organizing and activating a system for alerting the population.

## 5.2. Areas with potential for further development

There are no formal mechanisms in place for assisting nationals living abroad during crises, but the country implements related programmes on an ad hoc basis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs mobilizes the Crisis Staff during situations of crisis, and they then coordinate support and assistance for nationals abroad.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs installed four crisis hotlines for nationals living abroad, which are operated by the Crisis Staff.

There is no evidence that crisis-related communication channels consider the language needs of migrants. The CMC issues alerts only in Macedonian.

Measures to make exceptions to standard immigration procedures for migrants whose countries of origin are in crisis are in place only for refugees and asylum seekers, as established in the Law on International and Temporary Protection (2018).

North Macedonia's national development strategy does not contain specific provisions on the reintegration of residents (both nationals and foreigners) after a crisis. The Strategy for the Integration of Refugees and Foreigners in the Republic of Macedonia (2008–2015)<sup>26</sup> does not make any reference to returning foreigner residents after a crisis. This is also linked to North Macedonia's lack of agreements on return and reintegration with countries of origin.

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<sup>26</sup> The Draft Strategy for the Integration of Refugees and Foreigners in the Republic of Macedonia (2017–2027) has not been approved as of September 2021.



## 6

## ENSURES THAT MIGRATION TAKES PLACE IN A SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MANNER

## 6.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Pursuant to the Law on Border Control (2010), the Ministry of Interior is responsible for border control.<sup>27</sup> The Department of Border Affairs and Migration within the Ministry operates in collaboration with the border police. The border police are tasked with border checks; surveillance and control of irregular migration, irregular crossing of the State border, and stay in the territory; and detection and prevention of cross-border crimes. The National Integrated Border Management Coordination Centre is responsible for “coordinating the activities and facilitating the exchange of data and information between the State bodies that have competencies in border management and integrating border control”.

Border police receive regular training from both government departments as well as international organizations. The Training Centre of the Ministry of Interior trains new personnel, mainly on border checks, border crimes and the forgery of documents. Beyond this, there are periodic “trainings of trainers” on the same topics, performed by external contractors – the most recent of which was undertaken by trainers from Slovenia in February 2020. Additionally, since 2018, the European Union’s border agency Frontex has provided regular trainings and courses to North Macedonian border staff, while IOM has trained 300 border officers on combating human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, as established by the Action Plan corresponding to the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (2017–2020), labour inspectors from the State Labour Inspectorate were trained, mostly with the support of the Council of Europe, in detecting, preventing and combating human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

The new National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in the Republic of Macedonia (2021–2025) was endorsed by the Government in April 2021. The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration is responsible for both the development and the implementation of the Strategy. The position of the National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration was established in 2015. The National Rapporteur is responsible for overseeing overall anti-trafficking activities and collecting and analysing data. It publishes annual reports which contain statistics on human trafficking, including the number of human trafficking survivors disaggregated by nationality and age, the number of persons accommodated in the Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the number of criminal charges and convictions against perpetrators as well as information on the provision of legal and other types of assistance to survivors.

North Macedonia has formal cooperation agreements with other countries regarding migrant smuggling. There is a regular exchange of information and cooperation between task force units at the Ministry of Interior and other countries to implement effective measures combating smuggling and organized crime. North Macedonia is a founding member of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), alongside Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo.<sup>21</sup> Since July 2019, MARRI, in partnership with the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, GIZ), has been implementing the regional project on “Preventing human trafficking in the Western Balkans and supporting victims”. The Project will run for a period of 3.5 years, until December 2022. Its objective is to “[improve t]he underlying conditions enabling government and civil society to prevent human trafficking and support its victims”. Additionally, in 2019, North Macedonia and Serbia signed an agreement on “Cooperation in the field of combating smuggling of migrants”.

<sup>27</sup> The Law on Border Control was amended in 2018.

<sup>28</sup> These IOM trainings on combating human trafficking and smuggling of migrants were conducted between January 2018 and December 2019.

Procedures for the identification, assistance and referral of at-risk migrants are in place. The concerned institutions follow the guidelines set in the Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2015) and the Standard Operating Procedures for Processing Vulnerable Categories of Foreign Nationals (2016).

The Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Unaccompanied and Separated Children contains procedural guidance for relevant institutions on the identification and referral of unaccompanied migrant children.<sup>29</sup> Identification in this context includes steps to be undertaken if an institution or organization comes into contact with an unaccompanied migrant child, as well as steps to be undertaken after initial contact, aimed at identifying the nationality, country of origin, language comprehension, familial status and other characteristics of the child. Beyond this, the document contains comprehensive guidance on the provision of legal, medical, psychological and other support; the appointment of a legal guardian; and the appropriate accommodation of the child.

Similarly, the Standard Operating Procedures for Processing Vulnerable Categories of Foreign Nationals contains procedural guidance for relevant institutions on dealing with at-risk categories of migrants.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, the document contains guidance on identification (first contact and active identification) and referral of at-risk migrants; initial support and assistance (including initial accommodation); provision of legal support (including assistance with regulating their stay in the country and filing an asylum request); integration and long-term support (including the provision of long-term accommodation, health care and education); and procedures for voluntary repatriation.

## 6.2. Areas with potential for further development

A new four-year strategy for integrated border management with an action plan is being developed by the Ministry of Interior as of September 2021. The strategy will implement the new Schengen standards and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2021.

Pursuant to the Law on Foreigners (2018), migrants may be detained by the Ministry of Interior for a maximum of 24 hours for a “removal procedure” to be carried out. Afterwards, they are transferred to a designated reception centre for no longer than 6 months under normal circumstances and 12 months under exceptional circumstances. A minor may be transferred to a reception centre “as a last resort”, and the length of detention should be kept as short as possible.

There is no evidence of programmes to facilitate the reintegration of nationals living abroad. Based on the Law on the Organisation and Operation of the State Administration Bodies (2000), the Emigration Agency is tasked with the reintegration of nationals.<sup>31</sup> However, programmes have been implemented only on an ad hoc basis with the support of international organizations. For example, IOM has been implementing programmes for assisted voluntary return and reintegration of migrants in close cooperation with the Government since 2000.

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<sup>29</sup> These institutions include the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, and civil society organizations (CSOs), among others.

<sup>30</sup> These institutions include the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, and CSOs.

<sup>31</sup> The Law on the Organisation and Operation of the State Administration Bodies was amended in 2019.



## PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

This page summarizes key national COVID-19 policy responses in North Macedonia from a migration governance perspective. It is based on 12 questions that were added to the standard Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) assessment in North Macedonia in order to effectively assess national migration governance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



North Macedonia publishes data on the number of migrants who have tested positive for COVID-19, on a weekly basis. The Institute for Public Health's weekly reports include the number of foreign citizens who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; this information is not disaggregated by any parameters. The number is given as a note to the general total in each region, and this information is available only in Macedonian.<sup>1</sup>



North Macedonia has ensured that migrant visas would not expire during the COVID-19 crisis<sup>2</sup> through the Decree with Force of Law on the Application of the Law on Foreigners during a State of Emergency (2020). The Decree stipulates that “a foreigner residing short term in the Republic of North Macedonia with or without a visa, may remain on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia following the end of his or her short-term stay, i.e. following the expiry of the validity of the short-term visa for the entire duration of the emergency situation”.<sup>3</sup>



The Government extended the work permits of migrants performing certain essential services. The Decree with Force of Law on the Application of the Law on the Employment and Work of Foreigners during a State of Emergency (2020) states that “the deadline for realization of the services provided by foreign workers that are related to procurement of goods and assembly, maintenance and servicing of machines and equipment<sup>4</sup> is extended for the duration of the state of emergency, as well as 60 days from the day of entry into force of this decree with force of law”.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Public Health of the Republic of Northern Macedonia, Weekly report on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Republic of North Macedonia. 22 September 2020. Available at [www.iph.mk/weekly-20-09-2020/](http://www.iph.mk/weekly-20-09-2020/).

<sup>2</sup> The Decree was implemented from 22 June to 31 August 2020. More information is available at <https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/izmena-Zakon-za-stranci.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Interior, Decree with Force of Law on the Application of the Law on Foreigners during a State of Emergency (2020). Available at <https://mvr.gov.mk/zakon/73>.

<sup>4</sup> This is for a period not longer than 60 days in one calendar year, when the realization deadline has expired – that is, when it has expired during the duration of the state of emergency.

<sup>5</sup> Government of North Macedonia, Decree with Force of Law on the Application of the Law on the Employment and Work of Foreigners during a State of Emergency (2020). Available at <https://myla.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/vrabotuvanje-i-rabota-na-stranci.pdf>.



## PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



COVID-19 preventive and protective measures have been undertaken in the country's two Transit Reception Centres and the Centre for Asylum Seekers. In 2021, the Vinojug Temporary Transit Centre was adapted in line with COVID-19 infection-prevention protocols, with support from the European Union. The water, hygiene and sanitation blocks were renovated, with handwashing stations installed in front of the individual accommodation units.<sup>6</sup> In 2020, IOM installed disinfection gates in the registration area of the Vinojug and Tabanovce Centres to enhance COVID-19 prevention.<sup>7</sup>



North Macedonia has eased the procedures for the diaspora to make donations to aid the COVID-19 response, and calls for donations have been made in accordance with the Decree with Force of Law for the Application of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities during a State of Emergency (2020).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> IOM North Macedonia, Temporary transit center "Vinojug" in Gevgelija adapted to COVID-19 infection prevention protocols with EU support. 12 January 2021. Available at <https://north-macedonia.iom.int/news/temporary-transit-center-vinojug-gevgelija-adapted-covid-19-infection-prevention-protocols-eu>.

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# ANNEXES

## MiGOF: Migration Governance Framework<sup>32</sup>

In an attempt to define the concept of “well-managed migration policies”, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) devised a Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which was welcomed by the IOM Council in November 2015. For the purposes of the Migration Governance Framework, IOM defines governance as “the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country is exercised, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas”.

The Framework sets out the essential elements of “good migration governance” – 3 principles and 3 objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, safe and orderly, and that it provides benefits for migrants and societies.<sup>33</sup> IOM’s view is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:

- (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants’ rights;
- (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a “whole-of-government” approach;
- (iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues.

As it seeks to:

- (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
- (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
- (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

The MiGOF does NOT create new standards or norms. In drafting the Framework, IOM relied on its expertise and analytical work, as well as on existing commitments, non-binding declarations and statements. It does NOT address global migration governance that is the international architecture for dealing with issues related to migration and human mobility. Instead, the focus is on the governance and management of migration from the point of view of the State as the primary actor. It does NOT propose one model for all States. The Framework presents a “high road” or ideal version of migration governance, to which States can aspire.

The MiGOF is based on the understanding that, as the primary actor in migration, mobility and nationality affairs, a State retains the sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in its territory and under what conditions, within the framework of international law. Other actors – citizens, migrants, international organizations, the private sector, unions, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations and academia – contribute to migration governance through their interaction with States and each other.

<sup>32</sup> IOM Council, Migration Governance Framework, 106th session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015). Available at <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-40-Migration-Governance-Framework.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Migration Governance Framework infosheet (2016). Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-governance-framework>.

## The MGI process



# 1

### Launch of the MGI process

The first step of the process is to explain what the MGI entails to key government officials, in order to ensure full understanding of the project and complete buy-in.



# 2

### Data collection

The second step of the process is to start the collection and analysis of data, based on about 90 indicators grounded in the 6 dimensions of the MiGOF. A migration governance profile based on the analysis of the findings is then drafted and shared with the government counterparts.



# 3

### Interministerial consultation

The third step of the process is to convene an interministerial consultation where all relevant ministries and other stakeholders discuss the good practices and main areas that could be developed further as identified in the draft migration governance profile, as well as priorities on the way forward. It is also an opportunity for them to comment and provide suggestions on the draft profile.



# 4

### Publication of the report on the Global Migration Data Portal

After the migration governance profiles are finalized and vetted by government counterparts, they are published on the Global Migration Data Portal<sup>34</sup> and uploaded on the IOM Publications Platform.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> You can find the profiles at <https://migrationdataportal.org/overviews/mgi#0>.

<sup>35</sup> Please see <https://publications.iom.int/>.





[www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi](http://www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi)

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