

Newsletter #7 - May 2026

”Strengthening the regional cooperation on migration management between Western Balkans and neighbouring EU Member States in accordance with EU Acquis and international standards – MIRCO“



The project is implemented by the Swedish Migration Agency of the Kingdom of Sweden, as a Lead Partner in close collaboration with the partner the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia. The project is co-funded by the European Union and contracted by ICMPD through the Migration Partnership Facility.



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Planning of the Capacity Building Activities in the Western Balkans

Date: 11 March 2026

Location: Ministry of Security, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

A regional training planning workshop was held on 11 March at the premises of the Ministry of Security in Sarajevo, with the aim to further plan the capacity building activities and update the MIRCO regional training plan for the period April-June 2026.

Project partners and beneficiary institutions, under the coordination of the MIRCO project team, held comprehensive discussions on the preparation and delivery of forthcoming training activities within their countries and institutions.

During the meeting, participants assessed the progress achieved so far, addressed challenges that had arisen, and agreed on appropriate measures to enhance the effectiveness of capacity-building activities throughout the Western Balkans. Furthermore, the training plan for the upcoming second quarter of 2026 was developed to ensure coordinated implementation of planned activities. Special focus was placed on the regional capacity-building efforts, including the planning of the regional training sessions at the Regional Migration Training Centre in Plandiste.



11 March 2026, Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina

MIRCO Strengthens Regional Cooperation through Continued Project Activities

Date: 12 March 2026

Location: Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina

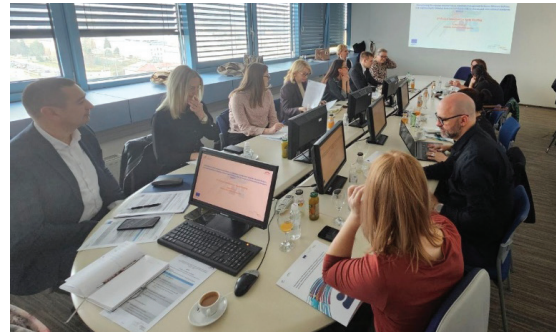
The eighth MIRCO Project Coordination Team Meeting, organised in Sarajevo, emphasised the importance of and planning for the continuation of the MIRCO project for an additional year. Taking into consideration the project savings and the importance of finalising the development of the training courses and capacity-building activities, the project partners submitted a request to the Contracting Authority for a no-cost extension of the project until 14 May 2027. In light of the forthcoming approval of the extension, the Project Coordination Team members discussed and agreed on the activities to be implemented until the end of the project.



12 March 2026, Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Project Coordination Team members also reviewed the overall progress of the project and confirmed the next steps for the upcoming implementation period during the second quarter of 2026.

As the project moves into the upcoming quarter, partners remain committed to delivering sustainable solutions, enhancing institutional capacities, and strengthening cooperation between the Western Balkans and neighbouring EU Member States. Through continuous progress and strong joint commitment, MIRCO continues to turn regional cooperation into tangible results for the benefit of the region.



12 March 2026, Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina

MIRCO Supports Practical Training in EU Migration Administrations

Date: 11-13 March 2026

Location: Ministry of the Interior of Austria, Wien

From 11 to 13 March 2026, a trainee expert from the Ministry of the Interior of North Macedonia participated in an on-the-job training programme in Vienna, hosted by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and organised in cooperation with Austrian police and migration institutions. The training provided practical insight into the Austrian police system, migration management practices, asylum procedures, and international cooperation mechanisms.

Through meetings and mentoring sessions with experts from the Austrian Police Academy, Vienna Police Directorate, Federal Ministry of the Interior, and the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, expert trainee gained first-hand experience in areas such as return and readmission procedures, Frontex operations, police training methodologies, and international deployments. Special attention was given to modern competence-based police training, including the use of virtual reality tools and scenario-based exercises.

The activity also enabled the exchange of expertise on current migration trends along the Western Balkan route, including challenges related to migrants originating from Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Sudan. Participants highlighted the value of the Austrian career development and training system as a model for strengthening institutional capacities and aligning national practices with EU standards.

The training contributed to enhancing professional knowledge, fostering international cooperation, and identifying practical recommendations for further development of migration and policing systems in the region. Based on the knowledge and experience gained, recommendations will be made to the North Macedonian authorities to further strengthen police career development systems, modernise competence-based training programmes, improve initial and continuous police training, and promote the wider use of innovative and practical training approaches.



11 March 2026, Ministry of the Interior of Austria, Wien



13 March 2026, Ministry of the Interior of Austria, Wien

Empowering Future WB Trainers on Migration and Human Rights

Date: 24-26 March 2026

Location: Regional Migration Training Centre, Plandiste, Serbia

A Training of Trainers on Migration and Human Rights was held from 24 to 26 March 2026 at the Regional Migration Training Centre in Plandiste, in cooperation with the Swedish Migration Agency and the Sanremo Institute.

Eight future trainers from project beneficiary institutions across the Western Balkans, such as the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministries of Interior of North Macedonia and Montenegro, and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, participated the training and gained relevant knowledge and skills.

The training aimed to strengthen institutional capacities by equipping participants with specialised knowledge on migration and human rights, alongside practical training and facilitation skills needed to deliver future training activities within their institutions.

The course materials, developed in cooperation with the Sanremo Institute and aligned with Malta Further and Higher Education Authority accreditation standards, provided participants with an interactive and practice-oriented learning experience.

The training consisted of two components: a two-day technical module on human rights in migration, delivered by an expert from the Sanremo Institute, followed by a one-day session led by the Swedish Migration Agency focusing on adult learning methodologies, group facilitation, and presentation skills.

Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the organisation, content, and delivery of the training. The sessions were implemented successfully, further contributing to the development of a regional pool of qualified trainers capable of independently delivering high-quality migration-related training activities across the Western Balkans.



24-25 March 2026, RMTC, Plandiste, Serbia,



26 March 2026, RMTC, Plandiste, Serbia,

Training Course Development Nears Completion

The MIRCO project is further reinforcing its role as a key regional platform for building professional capacities in migration management across the Western Balkans. By expanding its comprehensive training programme, the project continues to provide migration professionals with advanced knowledge and practical skills, while fostering regional cooperation and ensuring alignment with international standards and the EU acquis.

In cooperation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Sanremo Institute), the project is currently finalising training materials on “Migration and Human Rights”. Based on defined learning outcomes, duration, delivery modalities, syllabus, and agenda, the course materials have been developed and submitted to ICMPD for alignment and accred-

itation through the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). In parallel, and in consultation with experts from ICMPD and the Training Institute in Malta, the project is finalising additional training courses on “Migration and Security”, “Legal Migration”, and “Smuggling of Migrants in Mixed Migration Flows: Prevention, Protection and Combatting”, all designed to meet MFHEA accreditation requirements.

In the forthcoming period, the project will complete the remaining course materials and submit them for MFHEA accreditation. This will represent a key milestone for the project and further contribute to strengthening the capacities of migration authorities and relevant stakeholders in the field of migration and asylum across the Western Balkans.

Accreditation of MIRCO Training Courses Moves Forward

Additional training materials and detailed lesson plans required for the accreditation process have been developed for all eight courses planned for accreditation by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority. This represents an important step towards ensuring the quality, sustainability, and international recognition of the training programme and courses developed within the MIRCO project. The following four courses have already been submitted to MFHEA for accreditation:

- Migration and Development
- Migration and Gender
- Prevention of Torture in the Context of Migration
- Smuggling of Migrants in Mixed Migration Flows: Prevention, Protection and Combatting

In parallel, work is ongoing on the finalisation of the remaining course materials, with four additional training courses expected to be submitted for accreditation in the forthcoming period.

In addition, the documentation required for the licensing of the Regional Migration Training Centre has been submitted to MFHEA, and the licensing approval is expected soon. Obtaining both accreditation and institutional licensing will represent a significant milestone for the project and will further strengthen the long-term sustainability and regional relevance of the RMTC and its training programmes.

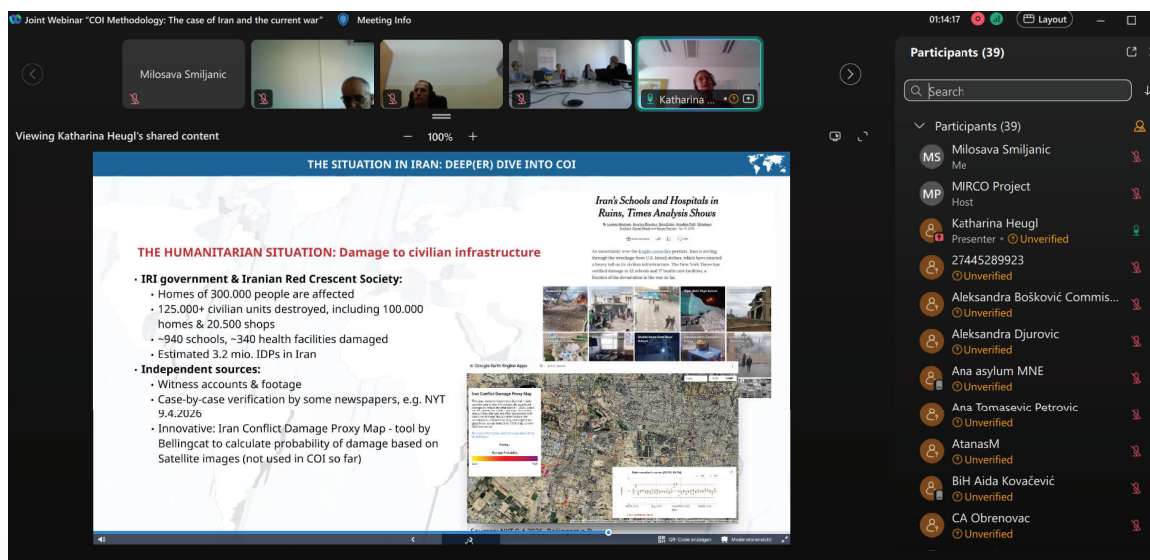
Common Training Sessions Strengthen Regional Cooperation

Date: 5 May 2026

Location: Online Webinar

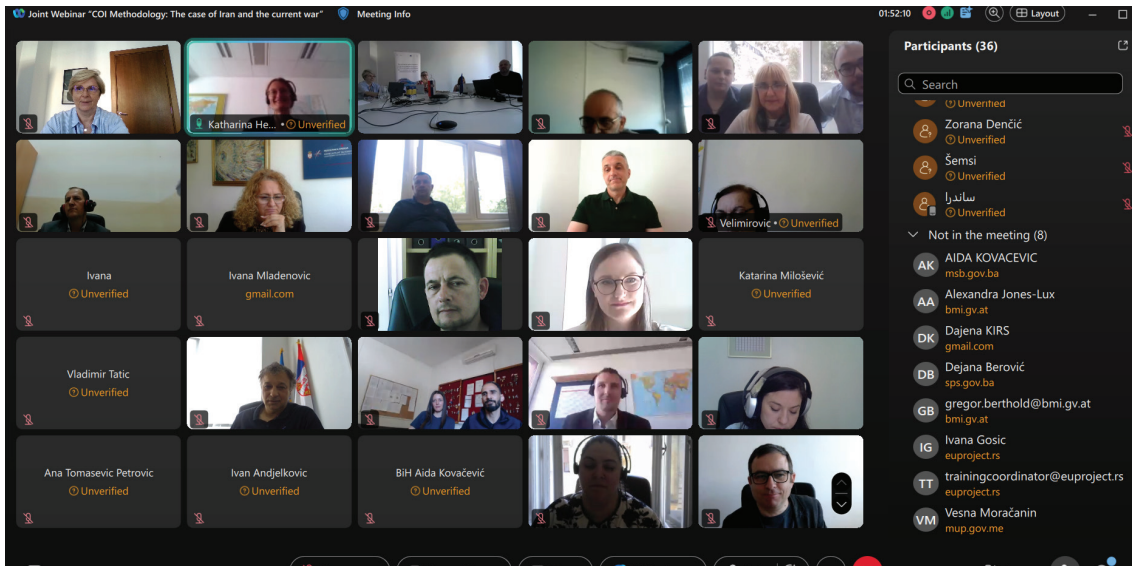
In cooperation with the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum MIRCO team organised a joint webinar titled “COI Methodology: The Case of Iran and the Current War” with an aim to strengthen

cooperation and knowledge exchange between the Regional Migration Training Centre and regional and international partners in the field of migration and asylum.



The webinar gathered more than 40 participants from the project beneficiary institutions across the Western Balkans, including representatives of ministries of interior, migration authorities, the Swedish Migration Agency, and the Austrian Federal Ministry

of the Interior. The session was delivered by a representative from the Austrian Country of Origin Information (COI) Unit and focused on the geopolitical, humanitarian, and migration-related developments in Iran amid ongoing regional tensions and conflict.



Particular attention was given to the importance of reliable and up-to-date Country of Origin Information in asylum and migration procedures, especially in rapidly changing conflict situations. The discussion also addressed migration trends, regional security developments, the humanitarian situation in Iran, and potential implications for European asylum systems.

Participants highly appreciated the relevance and timeliness of the topic, as well as the practical insights into COI methodology and migration analysis. The webinar further contributed to strengthening regional cooperation and professional exchange among migration and asylum experts from the Western Balkans and EU Member States.

Strengthening Migration Capacities Across the Western Balkans

A broad range of capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening migration management systems across the Western Balkans has been successfully implemented within the project beneficiary institutions. These activities have enhanced the profes-

sional knowledge, practical skills and institutional capacities of staff from partner institutions, while also fostering stronger cooperation among stakeholders involved in migration governance.



23-24 February 2026, Ministry of Security, Sarajevo, B&H

Training sessions have been organised across all Western Balkan partner countries, ensuring wide regional outreach and inclusive participation of various migration stakeholders. The activities covered key topics developed within the project, including Global

and Regional Migration Governance, Migration and Development, Migration and Gender, Prevention of Torture in the Context of Migration, and Smuggling of Migrants in Mixed Migration Flows: Prevention, Protection and Combatting.

To date, 459 employees from beneficiary institutions across the Western Balkans have strengthened their professional capacities through both in-person trainings and courses delivered via the project's eLearning platform. Combining theoretical frameworks with practical case studies, peer exchange and interactive exercises, the trainings enabled participants to apply newly acquired knowledge to concrete policy and operational challenges in the field of migration management.

With the purpose to further enhance regional capacity building, MIRCO team gathered representatives of migration and asylum institutions from across the Western Balkans in Plandiste, Serbia, on 13–14 May 2026 for a regional training on Global and Regional Migration Governance organised.



14 May 2026, Border Police, Sarajevo, B&H

Through interactive lectures, practical exercises and discussions, participants explored key topics such as the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), EU migration and asylum frameworks, regional cooperation initiatives, and the link between migration and development policies.

The training received highly positive feedback from participants, with evaluations confirming both strong engagement and notable knowledge improvement. All participants successfully completed the final assessment, underlining the effectiveness of the training approach.

As the first of six regional trainings planned under the MIRCO project, the activity marked an important milestone in strengthening regional cooperation and professional capacities in migration and asylum governance across the Western Balkans.

By encouraging alignment with international and regional migration frameworks, these activities are strengthening institutional cooperation, improving coordination among relevant actors, and supporting a more coherent approach to migration governance across the Western Balkans. In the long term, they contribute to building more effective, sustainable and people-centred migration management systems throughout the region.

In addition to the training sessions organized through the in-person modality, a significant number of participants also attended self-paced training sessions through the RMTC's eLearning platform. With the Global and Regional Migration Governance, Migration and Development, and Migration and Gender courses now digitalized and localized, a total of 261 participants completed courses on the platform, further strengthening their knowledge and understanding of these key migration-related topics.



13 May 2026, Regional Training, RMTC, Plandiste, Serbia



14 May 2026, Regional Training, RMTC, Plandiste, Serbia

Hosted at the Regional Migration Training Centre, the training brought together participants from Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, creating a platform for regional dialogue, exchange of experiences and stronger interinstitutional cooperation in the field of migration management.

What made the training particularly significant was that it was jointly delivered by trainers from beneficiary institutions who had previously completed the MIRCO Training of Trainers programme. Their involvement highlighted the growing regional expertise and the sustainability of peer-to-peer learning mechanisms developed through the project.



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