

Newsletter #8 - September 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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Continued Capacity-Building Across the Western Balkans

The MIRCO project continues to strengthen migration management capacities across the Western Balkans through a wide range of targeted training and capacity-building activities. These initiatives are helping staff

from beneficiary institutions enhance their professional knowledge and practical skills, while also promoting stronger cooperation among stakeholders working in the field of migration governance.



19 May 2026, Ministry of Security, Sarajevo, B&H, Global and Regional Migration Governance

Training sessions have been delivered across all Western Balkan partner countries, covering key topics through a combination of in-person and online learning. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, three in-person training activities were delivered in Sarajevo, focusing on legal migration pathways, the prevention and combating of migrant smuggling, and global and regional migration governance, bringing together representatives of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other relevant law enforcement and migration management institutions.

Digital learning has also played an important role in extending access to training across the region. Through the RMT eLearning platform, courses on children and youth in migration, protection of victims of human trafficking, and legal migration pathways

have been digitalised and localised, enabling participants to engage with the training at their own pace. By the mid-September, a total of 570 employees from beneficiary institutions have strengthened their capacities through the project's combination of in-person and online training activities while 331 participants have completed self-paced courses.

The in-person sessions combined theoretical knowledge with practical case studies, interactive exercises and peer exchange, helping participants apply new knowledge to real-life challenges in migration management. Together, these activities are contributing to stronger professional capacities, knowledge sharing and more effective migration management across the region.

Strengthening Migration Management Through Practical Learning

On-the-Job Training at the Swedish Migration Agency

As part of the MIRCO project two experts from Western Balkan partner institutions participated in specialised on-the-job trainings at the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) in Göteborg, Sweden.

The trainings provided an opportunity to strengthen professional capacities, exchange experiences and gain practical insight into EU migration management practices through expert mentoring, presentations, site visits and direct exchanges with Swedish practitioners.

Date: 26-28 May 2026

Location: Swedish Migration Agency, Sweden

An trainee from the Ministry of Interior of North Macedonia participated in a three-day training covering key aspects of the Swedish asylum and migration system.

The programme included presentations and practical exchanges on asylum procedures, case management, reception and accommodation, return processes, fraud prevention and interviewing vulnerable persons. A visit to the Reception and Return Centre in Göteborg provided practical insight into the identification and support of vulnerable migrants and the importance of protection-sensitive approaches.

The training also introduced participant to the Swedish Migration Agency's approaches to staff training, capacity development and continuous professional learning.

The experience strengthened the participant's professional knowledge and communication skills and provided good practices that can be shared with colleagues and applied within the Ministry of Interior.



May 2026, Swedish Migration Agency, Goetheborg, Sweden

Date: 30 June-02 July SMA

Location: Swedish Migration Agency, Sweden

A trainee from the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia took part in the second three-day on-the-job training at the Swedish Migration Agency.

The programme included mentoring on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, asylum examination procedures, extension of permits, voluntary and forced return, reception and accommodation, as well as safety and security when working with asylum seekers.

Through visits to the Reception and Return Centre and SMA offices in Göteborg, the participant gained practical insight into the identification of vulnerable groups, interviewing techniques and communication with vulnerable persons. The training also covered workplace learning, training methodologies, organisational learning and continuous professional development.

The training strengthened the participant's understanding of Swedish and EU migration management practices and provided practical approaches that can support capacity building, knowledge-sharing and improved cooperation within the institution.

Together, the two trainings strengthened professional capacities in the Western Balkans and promoted



May 2026, Swedish Migration Agency, Goetheborg, Sweden

the exchange of EU good practices in asylum, reception, return and migration management. The activities also supported professional networking and institutional cooperation between Western Balkan partners and the Swedish Migration Agency.

Regional Partners Update the MIRCO Training Plan

Date: 2 June 2026

Location: Ministry of Interior, Podgorica, Montenegro

The 6th MIRCO Regional Training Planning Workshop was held on 2 June 2026 at the premises of the Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro in Podgorica, bringing together representatives of beneficiary institutions, the Swedish Migration Agency, and associat-

ed partners from Slovenia and the Hellenic Republic.

The workshop focused on coordinating upcoming training activities and finalising the MIRCO regional training plan for July–September 2026.



2 June 2026, Ministry of Interior, Podgorica, Montenegro

Based on inputs from the participating institutions, national training plans were consolidated and the regional training plan for the third quarter of 2026 was finalised, supporting a coordinated approach to training and capacity development across the region.

The workshop also provided an opportunity to learn more about Montenegro's approach to migration management, staff development and training, as well as its cooperation with international partners, including EUAA and Frontex.

Ninth Project Coordination Team Meeting Held in Podgorica

Date: 3 June 2026

Location: Ministry of Interior, Podgorica, Montenegro

MIRCO Project Coordination: Progress, Results and Next Steps

Project Coordination Team Reviews Progress and Priorities for the Second Half of 2026

The MIRCO Project Coordination Team (PCT) met on 3 June 2026 to review the progress achieved on the project and discuss priorities for the second half of the year. Discussions focused on progress achieved across the project, training and capacity development, the further development of the RMTC as a regional training platform, and the expansion of digital learning opportunities.



3 June 2026, Ministry of Interior, Podgorica, Montenegro

A key achievement was the licensing of the Regional Migration Training Centre (RMTC) and accreditation of six courses by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), marking an important step in strengthening the Centre's role as a regional platform for migration training. The team also discussed the continued expansion of the RMTC eLearning platform, further progress in the accreditation of MIRCO courses, and the establishment of a regional pool of 44 professional trainers, alongside the development of additional courses, including the new course on Return and Readmission.

For the period ahead, priorities included continued regional training, further accreditation and digitalisation of courses, on-the-job trainings and study visits to EU Member State administrations and international migration training centres. Preparations were also planned for EU expert on-site support to beneficiary institutions and the further development of the regional trainer pool.

The next PCT meeting is scheduled to take place in Stockholm, Sweden, on 30 September 2026, where the team will continue to coordinate activities for the final phase of the project.

MIRCO Delegation Visits International Institute for Humanitarian Law in Sanremo

Date: 7-9 July 2026

Location: International Institute of Humanitarian Law, Sanremo, Italy

From 7–9 July 2026, a delegation of representatives from Western Balkan beneficiary institutions, EU partner institutions, the Swedish Migration Agency and the MIRCO project visited the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) in Sanremo, Italy to exchange experience on migration and refugee training and explore opportunities to support the further development of the Regional Migration Training Centre (RMTC) in Serbia.

During the visit, participants gained insights into the IIHL's approach to training development, adult learning and digital education, and attended sessions of the Institute's International Refugee and Migration Law Summer Course. The sessions were specifically tailored for the MIRCO delegation with the focus on the development of the Sanremo Institute, as well as the Institute's approach to the complete training development cycle, including programme design, preparation of individual training sessions, application of adult-learning methodologies, integration of digital learning platforms and tools, and lessons learned from the Institute's longstanding experience as an international training provider.

Particular attention was given to the IIHL's online learning platform, offering practical ideas for the further development of the RMTC eLearning environment and future regional digital training activities.

To complement the dedicated study visit sessions, participants also attended selected lectures from the Institute's International Refugee and Migration Law

Summer Course. These lectures, covering topics such as climate change and forced displacement, refugee status determination interviewing techniques and contemporary challenges and opportunities related to forced displacement, were intentionally included to demonstrate the Institute's training methodologies in practice.

The visit also provided an opportunity to exchange experience on the organisation and management of an international migration training institution and discuss potential areas for future cooperation between MIRCO and IIHL, including expert involvement in training activities and continued exchange of knowledge and good practices.

As a concrete follow-up, IIHL will review the RMTC online learning platform and provide recommendations for further improvements, supporting the continued development of the RMTC as a modern and sustainable regional migration training centre.



7-9 July 2026, International Institute of Humanitarian Law, Sanremo, Italy

Work Begins on New Return and Readmission Course

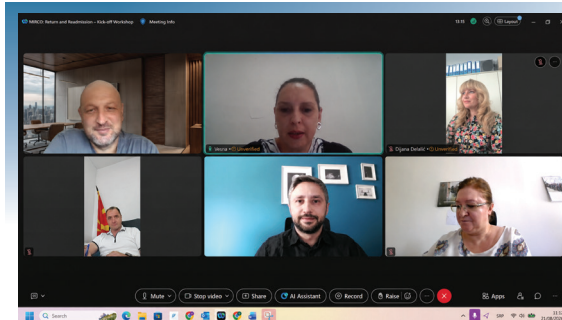
Date: 21 August 2026

Location: Online

Work has commenced on the development of a new MIRCO training course dedicated to Return and Readmission, further expanding the project's regional training offer and strengthening the capacities of migration management authorities across the Western Balkans. As part of the course development process, a Co-creation Workshop was organised online on 21 August 2026 in cooperation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) in Sanremo. The workshop brought together representatives of MIRCO beneficiary institutions from across the Western Balkans, alongside an IIHL mentor, providing an opportunity for participants to jointly discuss and shape the content, structure and practical orientation of the new course.

The co-creation approach enables the course to reflect the specific needs, priorities and operational realities of migration authorities in the region, while drawing on relevant European and international standards and practices in the field of return and readmission. Participants contributed their experience and expertise, helping to identify key thematic areas and practical aspects that should be addressed through the training.

The new course will address key issues related to return and readmission procedures, relevant legal and policy frameworks, cooperation between competent authorities, and practical challenges encountered in the implementation of return-related measures.



**21 August 2026, Online, Co-creation Workshop
Return and Readmission**

Particular attention will be given to ensuring that the training is relevant and applicable to the professional context of MIRCO beneficiary institutions.

The course is expected to be finalised by the end of November 2026 including organisation of a Training of Trainers for prospective trainers from across the Western Balkans. The development of the Return and Readmission course represents another important step in strengthening the regional training capacity and practical cooperation of migration management authorities under the MIRCO project, while contributing to the broader objective of promoting migration management practices aligned with EU acquis and international standards.

Accreditation of MIRCO Training Courses Approaches Finalisation

The accreditation process for the MIRCO training programme is approaching its final stage, marking an important milestone in the project's efforts to establish a high-quality, sustainable and regionally recognised training offer for migration and asylum professionals across the Western Balkans.

Within the project seven MIRCO courses have been accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), out of which six received accreditation in past couple of months. The accreditation supports the quality, sustainability and wider recognition of the regional training programme developed through MIRCO.

The accreditation process includes a comprehensive review of course curricula, learning outcomes, training materials, assessment methods and delivery arrangements. This ensures that the courses provide a consistent learning experience while remaining relevant to the professional needs of migration and asylum authorities in the region.

The following courses have been accredited so far:

- Global and Regional Migration Governance
- Migration and Development
- Migration and Gender
- Legal Migration Pathways
- The Migration and Security Nexus
- Prevention of Torture in the Context of Migration
- Smuggling of Migrants in Mixed Migration Flows: Prevention, Protection and Combatting

One additional course, Migration and Human Rights, currently undergoing the accreditation process and it is expected to be accredited in the coming period, further expanding the range of accredited MIRCO courses.

Once the accreditation process is completed, the MIRCO training portfolio will comprise a set of professionally developed and quality-assured courses covering a broad range of migration-related topics.

MIRCO Expands Digital Training Offer Through Three Newly Digitalised Courses

Three MIRCO training courses have recently been digitalised in English and made available through the Regional Migration Training Centre eLearning platform, further expanding the project's digital training offer:

- Children and Youth in Migration
- Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking
- Legal Migration Pathways

Following their digitalisation, the courses were also localised into Serbian and Macedonian, making all three courses available in the three languages and significantly improving accessibility for migration professionals across the Western Balkans.

The digitalisation and localisation of the courses provide learners with greater flexibility in accessing training materials and completing learning activities at their own pace. The online format also facilitates continuous professional development, knowledge sharing and wider dissemination of expertise among migration and asylum professionals across the region.

The courses are not limited to professionals from MIRCO beneficiary institutions. They are also accessible to professionals from EU Member States, asso-

ciated institutions and partner training organisations and centres cooperating with the project, creating opportunities for broader regional and international exchange of knowledge and experience.

The availability of these courses through the RMTC eLearning platform represents an important step towards establishing a sustainable digital learning environment that can continue to support migration professionals beyond individual face-to-face training activities and the lifetime of the project.

MIRCO will continue to digitalise and localise its training portfolio, with the aim of making all MIRCO courses available through the RMTC eLearning platform. To date, six MIRCO training courses have been fully digitalised and localised, making them available through the RMTC eLearning platform in the relevant languages.

Work is currently underway on a seventh course, further expanding the project's digital training portfolio. This ongoing process will further strengthen access to quality-assured training and provide migration professionals across the Western Balkans with flexible, accessible and sustainable learning opportunity.

New Round of English Language Classes Begins

A new round of English language classes is underway across all four Western Balkan countries participating in the MIRCO project, providing beneficiaries with practical language skills tailored to their professional responsibilities and everyday working environments.

The new cycle of classes began in June in North Macedonia, followed by July in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and September in Montenegro and Serbia. The training is specifically designed around the professional needs of participants, with a strong focus

on practical, job-related English. Classes support participants in developing their professional vocabulary, improving written and verbal communication skills, and building greater confidence in using English in their daily work.

Particular attention is given to language relevant to the migration and asylum field, enabling participants to communicate more effectively with international counterparts, participate in regional and international meetings and training activities, and work with professional documentation and resources in English.



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