

SERBIA: Migration Crisis Report

Over 500 refugees and migrants have entered Serbia on Thursday December 3rd, while the number of those crossing into the country from Macedonia has dropped, the UNHCR's Melita Sunjic said on Friday. In a statement to Tanjug, she said that 553 refugees and migrants entered Serbia on Thursday, with 150 crossing in from Bulgaria and 403 from Macedonia. The number of refugees and migrants crossing in from Macedonia has dropped, which makes it appear that the number of those coming in from Bulgaria has increased, Sunjic said. However, the inflow from Bulgaria has not changed because usually there are 100-200 people crossing into Serbia, she noted. Sunjic added that the UNHCR has stepped up its presence in Bulgaria.¹

The Minister of Labor and Social policy, Aleksandar Vulin and Deputy Prime Minister and FM of Slovakia Lajcak visited on Friday, December 4th, the center for asylum seekers in Krnjaca. Slovak Foreign Minister stressed that the EU had not acted as was expected in the refugee crisis, and that each country is forced to pick up the piece on its own, and in this context, he praised the work of the Serbian government. "The government of Serbia has done a very responsible and important job for providing humanitarian and material aid, but also for the registration of migrants and refugees coming to Serbia. He expressed the hope that the refugee crisis will be resolved across Europe, not just for the EU, pointing out that Serbia, in this context, plays a "central and important positive role." Vulin has expressed his appreciation to Slovakia for the assistance provided for Serbia and said that there were more than 4,100 refugees registered in the country amongst which there were no economic migrants, he said. "Serbia will try to be as organized and as humane as possible to the people who are coming. They are not to blame for the predicament they're in, and neither is Serbia", said Vulin. He pointed out that Serbia does not know how the movement of migrants and refugees will unfold, but it will make efforts to provide protection to all who find themselves on its territory. "They will be taken care of, and they will be safe as will our citizens," said Vulin.²

Between June and early December, the UN Country Team in Serbia has provided USD 7.45 million worth of assistance to help the country deal with the refugee and migrant crisis. At a briefing for international partners in Belgrade (December 9th), the UN Country Team announced the launch of a plan that should provide a total of nearly USD 45 million in 2016 for Serbia alone. The plan calls for assistance to Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey in addressing the needs of refugees and migrants in 2016, said Hans Schodder, head of the UN Refugee Agency in Serbia. The launch will take place in Geneva this December under the auspices of UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration. In addition to the USD 45 million requested in the Response Plan, UNHCR will receive relief items from its USD 4 million global stocks.³

During his speech at the beginning of the big OSCE summit in Belgrade, Vucic called on all "guests of Belgrade" to adopt joint conclusions and recommendations during the conference that would be aimed at solving many problems, a key among them being the migrant crisis. "For this problem we must have a common policy," Vucic said. The migrant crisis, he pointed out, has shown all the weaknesses of internal organizations of states and systems, of international organizations - "but also reminded us that there is no cooperation and support without police and security cooperation."

¹ Source: Tanjug

² Source: www.minrzs.gov.rs

³ Source: Tanjug