



**BLOCK THE HATRED AGAINST MIGRANTS. SHARE THE SOLIDARITY.**  
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## HATE AT A GLANCE



The Western Balkan region has experienced high numbers of migrants and asylum seekers transiting through the region trying to reach the EU. This resulted in migrants and asylum seekers becoming stranded in the region, leaving them particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse. Whilst a part of these groups are hosted in state facilities, others rely on shelter at local level. Integration into hosting communities is complicated due to the broader social-economic context and a lack of sustainable solutions. Migrants and asylum seekers often become the target of hate speech and stigmatisation.

## HATE IN NUMBERS



According to **Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index**, the Western Balkans fall among **the least accepting countries in the world for migrants**. This assessment of the Western Balkans is closely linked to the increased pressure experienced by Europe at its internal/external borders since 2015 and the consequent difficulties in dealing with huge numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants entering the region.

**NORTH MACEDONIA** is the top least accepting country, with:



**MONTENEGRO** performs as second least, with:



**SERBIA** is the fourth from the bottom, with:



The most accepting country in the World is **ICELAND**, with:



In the assessment, this is clearly linked with the migrant's crisis **since 2015**, affecting Europe at its borders.

**The youngest generations are those more accepting of migrants across the world.**

*"Between August and the end of November 2018, **2,554** instances of hate speech were recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most targeted group were the refugees and migrants crossing Bosnia and Herzegovina en route to Western Europe, followed by women."*

Merdijana Savovic, Western Balkans regional director at the UK-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting

*"Data about the traumatic experience of refugees in Serbia show that over **80%** of them experienced **six or more** traumatic experiences in their country of origin before they headed to Europe."*

Serbian Red Cross, Report on mental health of refugees and migrants

## CHALLENGES



*"The living conditions in Vučjak were already terrible before the cold weather and have become even more inhumane now that temperatures have dropped below freezing. Human beings, including several minors, are amassed in the mud on a former landfill next to land-mined areas. They have no running water and sanitary and hygienic conditions are dire. Many people lack adequate clothing and footwear. It is inhumane and unacceptable to keep people in such condition."*

[Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, on the situation in Vučjak Camp \(BIH\), December 2019](#)

### Hate speech is not free speech!

**ECRI recommends to the Government of the member states ensure that all irregularly present migrants – women, men and children – are fully protected by all forms of discrimination by enacting legislation to this effect in accordance with international norms and instruments, including relevant ECRI general policy recommendations.**

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, [General Policy Recommendation no. 16 on safeguarding irregularly present migrants from discrimination](#)

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



*"Perhaps one of the most important steps that we took in our response to COVID-19 has been engaging refugees and migrants inside the centres across the country."*

Aref Bandary is a doctor and cultural mediator originally from Iran working in the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) in Belgrade, Serbia. He visited and provided public health advice to refugees and migrants in view of the outbreak. (source: UNHCR)

*"I am determined to make my life here, or at least give it a try."*

Raul, a refugee originally from Cuba, working at the municipal waste collection company of Podgorica, Montenegro. (source: UNHCR)



*"The Albanians are friendly and helpful, like in Syria. Even the weather in Syria is similar to Syria. I'll stay here for now, but when the war in Syria ends, I want to go back. But I already know that I will always have two homelands, Syria and Albania."*

Husam Matwa, a Syrian refugee who settled in Tirana, Albania and opened his own restaurant there.

## GOOD PRACTICES

- The [Bosnian diaspora](#) in Germany is among the largest and includes migrants from the war times as well as economic migrants who more recently moved there. In both cases, migrants integrated into society, including by further pursuing studies and professional qualifications. Diaspora organisations in Germany are developed, and NGOs are also spread, helping integration at local level.
- Thousands of Albanians reached Italy in the 90s, during the fall of the regime. To date, there are **430,000** Albanians legally residing in the country, accounting to one of the biggest communities. Albanians contribute to employment and to economical growth, and the community is overall well integrated. From 2007 to 2016, crime rate among Albanians decreased by **65%**.

