

Enhancing Migration and Asylum Management in North Macedonia

As North Macedonia continues to develop practices to align with EU border management standards, the project “Strengthening of the Migration and Asylum Management System in the Republic of North Macedonia (MANOMA)” offered an **opportunity for stakeholders to observe how EU Member States implement migration and asylum procedures in practice**. Through workshops in North Macedonia, study visits to Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, and specialised return-escort training in Poland, participants were able to validate existing approaches, clarify how EU regulations and norms are applied operationally, and identify areas for improvement to be reflected in forthcoming legislation revisions. They also learned techniques to provide more culturally and gender-sensitive support, both in reception and detention centres and in their individual work as border control officers, while improving intelligence-gathering practices and respect for human rights.

Culturally-aware and responsive to individual needs



Feedback reported meaningful shifts in how officials interact with migrants, with **greater awareness of different migrant categories, especially vulnerable groups, and a more sensitive, responsive approach to their needs**. 91% of the 118 participants in the seven activities strongly agreed that they had gained new knowledge. Enhanced understanding of cultural differences, combined with more thorough preparation before each individual interview in reception and detention centres, is helping reduce tensions and strengthen communication and trust between officials and migrants/asylum seekers.

"The knowledge my department gained thanks to the project is very important. We got to see how EU Member States handle larger numbers of migrants and asylum seekers. Something that stood out was the support they provide for vulnerable groups." (Participant).

MANOMA helped identify concrete ways to better support vulnerable groups, such as the need for dedicated spaces for unaccompanied minors, improved facilities for women and families, and stronger staff capacities for handling sensitive cases.

Peer exchanges, improved systems

MANOMA moved beyond a traditional training format, offering a two-way dialogue space in which officials from North Macedonia could test ideas, ask detailed questions, and explore how EU norms and best practices translate into their own systems. EU Member State experts shared practical experience with clarity and openness, while study-visit hosts adapted programmes to participants' needs. This **flexibility, combined with highly participatory workshops, created a dynamic peer exchange environment** that strengthened systems and deepened practical understanding.



Where progress becomes practice

"We are already applying new knowledge in our daily work." (Participant)

Participants are already putting their new skills into practice, sharing insights from workshops and study visits with colleagues and submitting recommendations to managers, some of whom joined the activities themselves. This exchange has helped integrate fresh knowledge into existing training systems, strengthening day-to-day work with migrants and asylum seekers. A deepened practical understanding is expected as these ideas continue being shared across teams. Furthermore, ideas generated for the adaptation of systems and approaches are expected to be incorporated into the Law on International and Temporary Protection in 2026 or early 2027, and the Law on Internal Affairs and the Law on Police.



Human-centred operational responses

The improvements in migrant treatment, service provision and interviewing practices generated by MANOMA are well-placed to endure, supported by strengthened skills and updated training systems. The project also **reinforced ongoing cooperation** between North Macedonia and EU Member States, providing an avenue for continued exchange, shared learning and alignment.

About the MPF

This grant project is part of the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to support the external dimension of the EU's migration policy. Through the MPF, the EU funds projects that promote dialogue and cooperation on migration and mobility between EU Member States and partner countries outside the EU.

About the project

The Strengthening of the Migration and Asylum Management System in the Republic of North Macedonia' (MANOMA) project provided targeted capacity-development activities aligned with EU standards and operational practices. Project activities included workshops, expert missions and study visits. It was implemented by the European Project Implementation Centre of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration of the Republic of Poland (EPIC MoIA), in collaboration with other institutions.

About the evaluation

Testimonies and evidence used in this document were gathered as part of a final evaluation of the MANOMA project, conducted in 2025-2026. The evaluation was led by Blomeyer & Sanz, who leads a consortium comprising six consultancies and NGOs, namely Blomeyer & Sanz, Diversity Development Group, Migration Policy Group, Policy Impact Lab, Samuel Hall and Tandans.



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