



SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BORDER MANAGEMENT



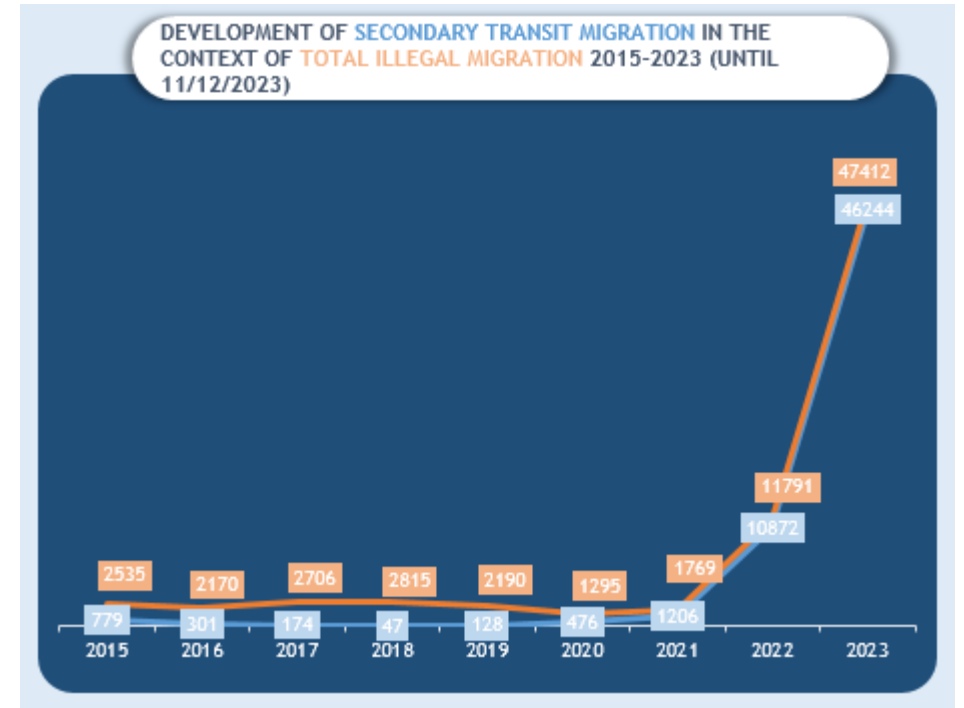
Introduction to the context of the Slovak Republic





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- Number of **valid stays** of foreigners in the Slovak Republic (as of June 30, 2023):
 - a total of 294,067, of which 238,401 are nationals of third countries (1. Ukraine, 2. Serbia, 3. Vietnam, 4. Russian Federation, 5. Georgia)
- Number of **asylum applications** (as of September 30, 2023) is 327, the number of persons granted asylum is 27, and the number of persons granted subsidiary protection is 38.





Basic Introduction (very simplified)

Main focus of the EU regarding the border control is on external borders.

Core principles:

Entry into the EU will only be allowed to those who are authorized to enter, while ensuring internal security and respecting fundamental rights at the same time.

Challenge:

- **Security**/border control vs. violation of the **fundamental rights** of people crossing the border (often illegally).
- the specific situation of **asylum seekers** (on whom I focus)

The aim is to seek a balance because of cases like:

- human suffering of victims of conflicts and humanitarian crisis on one side,
- fight against e.g. smuggling, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, weapons and drugs on the other side.



Diverse Actors at the Border

Two primary groups of people who meet at the border:

1. **Professionals**, mostly members of the Border Police, trained to handle the situation professionally, behave rationally, react matter-of-factly. They follow protocols, ask predetermined questions (“Can you show me your passport?”).

2. **People who cross the border** (legally/illegally)

People crossing illegally are in specific situation. Those in need of international protection are at a turning point in their lives, having lost basic life security and experiencing a crisis situation, to which they react differently.

- Migrants at the border are often in crisis and need help and social intervention (such as identification of possible vulnerability). Also from professionals working in the field of border management.

- Taking into account social aspects in border management of illegal migration is very important for further work with these people and for their integration.



Recommended Actions for Border Management

- Reducing tensions in border management actions through specific trainings for professionals/police focused on social aspects (what to focus on regarding the appearance of migrants, behavior of migrants, how to identify their vulnerability, cultural differences...).
- If indicators of vulnerability are identified (such as a potential victim of human trafficking, a victim of torture, a migrant with PTSD, psychological problems, disabled...), there should be a reference system for what to do about it. For example call „the coordinator“, who will further refer the vulnerable person to specialists.
- It is important to recognize that migrants at the border are often in crisis and need help and social intervention.



Case study: Ukrainian crisis

- As of the end of October 2023, there are 111,617 persons from Ukraine registered in the Slovak Republic (who have a tolerated stay under temporary protection).
- From February 24, 2022, the Slovak Republic has been for people from Ukraine:
 - a) an emergency solution (directly as a buffer country),
 - b) transit country (on the way to Western Europe),
 - c) destination country (proximity to the country of conflict, social network...).



Situation at the borders after the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, 2022

- Management of the border crossings (change of type, number and opening hours).
- Actors involved – Police, Firemen, Doctors, Covid-testing, NGOs, Municipalities, Migration Authorities, Social Protection (children without parents or assigned guardians), Agencies, Volunteers, Vet,...
- Proclamation of extraordinary situation by the State in order to initiate emergency processes,...
- Services provided directly at the borders – UNAMs, THB screening, hotspots (first aid – physical and mental health and humanitarian aid, cooperation with the Police).
- Information helplines, as well as email/phone contact for the accommodation offers/other help.
- Organisation of transport (officially provided).



Necessary steps to deal with the situation

Registration – Departments of Foreign and Border Police, Large Capacity Centres (5 – flexible adjustment according to influx)

Two types of registration of those eligible for temporary protection:

1. If they have identity documents – immediately (Foreign and Border Police)
2. If not – after procedure – app.30 days

Services provided at the Large Capacity Centres (registration, information on rights and obligations, psychological, legal and social counselling)



Necessary steps to deal with the situation

Different types of accommodation – emergency accommodation, high capacity accommodation, hotels, private accommodation (with minimum need to use existing capacity of asylum facilities)



Necessary steps to deal with the situation

Social Aid

Employment

Education

Evidence / Monitoring of the system /



Necessary steps to deal with the situation

Identification of vulnerabilities and special needs

- ongoing process („Social Work“ approach)

1. At the borders (what and why, what kind of impact it can have)
2. While providing accommodation (accessible information in different places on who does what, how to reach them, why is the early response important)
3. When assessing the situation for the social aid purposes (according to the law), screening by the international organisations (with the local partners)
4. Others (schools, health professionals, NGOs, municipalities,...)

- Need for cooperation of various actors, exchange of information, functioning referral system



Summary:

Impact of migration experience to concrete persons

- Experience from „the border“ can have an impact on behaviour and memory of migrant (we can observe acute physical and also psychological symptoms).
- The first positive/negative experience of a country affects further and long-term positive/negative perception of that country.
- Influence on further life (psychological symptoms often after 3-4 months).
- PTSD



Lessons learned

- Long-term experience with asylum seekers in different EU countries shows that the social experience of the migrant upon entering the country is also part of border management. This experience has a significant impact on their further life.
- Some migrants at the border have difficulty or cannot cope with such crisis situations and would need immediate basic assistance and social support.
- Crisis assistance should be provided by anyone who finds themselves in a situation requiring such intervention.
- The aim is to stabilize the person and, if necessary, hand them over to professionals.
- The person in crisis needs to be provided with basic psychosocial help, or even crisis intervention. This means that it is necessary to strengthen the feeling of security, to calm down, to encourage the expression of fears or to offer practical help, information.



Lessons learned

- Training and supervision (experience from cooperation with the Comenius University) – establishment of the training centre.
- Memorandum of Understanding with Bosnia and Herzegovina – SlovakAid – fundings for 2 national Social Workers working with migrants (reducing tensions..), connecting the academic sector with professionals in the field of migration.



Thank you

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