

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



Voice of the Voiceless



**WELCOME TO
OUR 2017 ANNUAL
REPORT**



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Overview of 2017

Dear friends/partners/institutions/donors/supporters,

Unlike the events of 2015/16 and their intensity, 2017 was marked by a significantly smaller flow of refugees in transit and irregular migrants. That is why the activities we had were far more different and are characterized with diversity. Part of those activities were directed at us and improvement of the quality of our work and our teams through various trainings, organised by our partners and us. Time allowed us to dedicate ourselves to numerous research and scientific conferences at home and abroad, but also to continue our everyday tasks in terms of humanitarian work that we implement in the border transit centers as well as monitoring along the northern border. We have gained great experience with significant partners, we shared knowledge and information, we influenced policies and decision-making processes, and the results of our efforts and work were not only visible here, but also abroad, so that refugees and irregular migrants can benefit from our work.

In particular, I would highlight the research, which resulted in the Public Policy Document, representing our long-term experience and the current state of human rights in Macedonia with the aim of enhancing the role of the relevant institutions in terms of human rights and protection of vulnerable people (refugees and migrants). I would like to thank our partners without which we could not realize all these projects, the institutions for their help provided in order to be able to implement the projects, the diplomatic missions that witnessed and appreciated our work, national and foreign media that followed our activities, and our citizens whose trust we managed to justify. However, I would like to thank to our teams, collaborators, all our domestic and foreign volunteers without whom we would not achieve the best of results.

Jasmin Redjepi



Where we work

2017 was a year of quite diverse activities, topics addressed, target groups reached, and locations where we implemented those activities. Thus, this year we were present in four key areas, i.e. locations in Macedonia: the HQ being in Skopje, a field team with a branch office in Lojane, in the Lipkovo region, two field teams working in the Tabanovce transit centre and Vinojug transit centre, respectively. Each location or team deals with one specific area. The HQ in Skopje was monitoring the implementation of every single endeavor and activity undertaken, whereas each of the field teams executed their own plan of activities and programs. This leads us to the following chapter that shall be discussed in further detail – programme and project activities.

Programme and project activities

This year's activities may be divided into several categories or areas.

Capacity Building and Staff Training

This year began with the implementation of a project named: Capacity Building and Staff Training of Legis funded by the European Programme for Integration and Migration. The overall period of duration was from 02.01.2017 – 31.12.2017. As the title itself suggests, the project aimed at improving and strengthening Legis' staff capacities through a series of training courses and expanding our team. That being said, Legis' staff and volunteers attended three training courses in total. The first one was on Strategic Planning and took place in Bansko, Bulgaria. Overall, this first training addressed the following points: improvement of the organisation's staff skills, vision and mission of the organisation, what to focus on and priorities in the long run, issues to address, creation of volunteers' database by skills and capacity, holding strategic planning meetings, strategies to be employed, staff training for management of HR (volunteers), starting membership procedure with PICUM, General assembly of PICUM.





The second training dealt with the organisation's structure and how to enhance it. More specifically the training sessions focused on the Assembly, how it works, President, how to choose one, managing board, how to increase fundraising, introducing membership, etc. The third training course was dedicated to networking and communication skills. The programme of the training course consisted of the following topics: what is networking, networking methods, fear of communication and how to overcome it, theories of personal development, communication processes, types of communication and active listening. To sum up this section, 15 employees and volunteers in total attended and participated in the training courses.





Mobilizing and Empowering Local and International Volunteers

As in the previous years, Legis' work relied in great part on volunteer engagement. For that purpose, we posted an open call for volunteers on Legis' website where an application form can be filled in and sent to us. As a result, we received over 180 applications and we hosted a total of 14 international volunteers coming from the UK, France, Canada, Turkey, Bulgaria, Ireland, Singapore, Germany and Iran. Two of them were volunteering in the HQ in Skopje, carrying out research and doing administrative work, whereas the remaining 12 were placed at the Tabanovce transit centre where they had the opportunity to socialize with its residents and contribute to the implementation of our programme and project tasks on the field. Moreover, there are the local volunteers to whom we turned first for any event, be it a conference, public discussion, distribution of humanitarian aid, participation in training courses, youth exchanges in order to represent Legis at both national and international levels. Their assistance was invaluable for the realization of numerous activities and tasks. Another aspect that deserves to be pointed out is the cooperation with the local youth NGO Center for Intercultural Dialogue through which 7 volunteers as part of the Erasmus+ programme had the chance to volunteer at the transit centre in Tabanovce. These volunteers come from the following countries: Poland, Turkey, Finland and Slovakia. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all the volunteers involved in this year's work, for all their efforts, ideas, patience, understanding and participation.

Humanitarian Aid

According to its work principles and values, Legis continued throughout 2017 to distribute humanitarian aid to refugees/migrants and people in need in four locations: the transit centres in Tabanovce and Gevgelija respectively, the branch office in Lojane and in the HQ in Skopje. This year started with LEGIS launching a new humanitarian initiative called “Macedonia with Love for Aleppo”. This campaign aimed through various activities to raise awareness in the society on the harsh and heartbreaking condition of the refugees evacuated from Aleppo, to back the safe evacuation of the ones that still await refuge and to support thousands of innocent human lives by donations from selfless citizens.





The aid provided consisted generally of clothes, footwear, food and basic hygiene products. A donor that gave us a unique opportunity to reach people in irregular transit was Médecins Sans Frontières Serbia, which donated large quantities of winter clothes (hats, scarves, gloves, jackets, boots, etc) and equipment such as tents, lamps, torches, blankets in order to provide protection to vulnerable categories of people while transiting

through the country. Furthermore, Legis on 1 May started the implementation of the project “Humanitarian and Legal Assistance to Refugees and Migrants in Irregular Transit” funded by the Open Society Foundation Initiative for Europe. The project is taking place in the branch office in Lojane and is set to finish on 31 May 2018. Thus, our mobile team has been distributing food and non-food items to people crossing the country irregularly. Other than that, it is worth highlighting that humanitarian aid was also distributed in both border transit centres depending on the weather season and needs of the residents. Additional humanitarian aid was donated in the end of January 2017 by Open Society Foundation Macedonia. Furthermore, particular emphasis was put on the local community with which we work closely and therefore efforts were made to donate food and non-food items to the most vulnerable categories of people such as elderly, single parents, disabled people, and unemployed depending on social welfare.

On the occasion of Eid-al-Adha or Qurban Bayram, Legis realized a five-day project financed by Muslim Aid whose aim was to distribute meat to refugees/migrants residing at the border transit centres, as well as to socially vulnerable people from the local Muslim community.

Psychosocial support

Psychosocial support through handicraft workshops, sports and recreational activities compose a significant part of our programme activities in both border transit centres. The frequency of carrying out psychosocial support activities depended in great part to the number of residents in the transit centres and their willingness to participate in them. Accordingly, the range of activities conducted by our field officers was the following: playing chess, cards, football, volleyball, ping-pong, accessories and jewelry workshop, painting and colouring workshops, decoration and ornaments, education support workshops.





Monitoring



Monitoring is a crucial aspect of our work with refugees/migrants/asylum seekers. This year was marked by two key projects on monitoring of access to human rights. The first one “Access to Rights and Protection of Vulnerable Groups among Refugee and Migrant Population” began on 1 March and was funded by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The end date of the project was 31.10.2017. It was an eight-month policy research project carried out in partnership with the National Preventive Mechanism within the Ombudsman’s Office of the Republic of Macedonia. For that purpose, Legis organised a promotional event, i.e. a public discussion to announce the start of the research on institutional treatment of refugees and migrants as part of the project “Access to Rights and Protection of People and Vulnerable Categories Recognized as Refugees and Migrants”. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Ombudsman’s Office and the National Preventive Mechanism and the Department for the Rights of the Child. Legis and the Ombudsman’s research is focused on analysis of the conditions under which the abovementioned people of interest are able to access human rights and protection in Macedonia. The focus of the research was on vulnerable groups such as women and children. The public policy document was presented in a final conference in Skopje on 4 December where relevant local and international NGOs and state institutions could comment on it and give their contribution to the last draft before being published. The other project dedicated to human rights monitoring is named “Help on the Route – Fostering Protection of Human Rights of Refugees and Migrants Passing through Macedonia and Serbia”. The project is funded by the European Commission in partnership with Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation and Arbeiter Samariter Bund Deutschland. The coordinating organisation in Serbia is the Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre, whereas in Macedonia it is the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia. The project started on 1 June and will last until 30 November 2018. It aims at detecting and human rights violations in the border transit centres performed by institutions and then referring those violations to the competent organs in order to take legal action. Consequently, Legis managed to refer two separate cases to the Ombudsman’s Office of the Republic of Macedonia.



International Cooperation and Representation

2017 was definitely a year of building partnerships with numerous local, regional and international organisations with the aim of sharing our work, raising awareness on the plight of our target and their rights, exchanging on the ground experience and stories. Such cooperation was established through myriad memoranda of cooperation and understanding, agreements, projects, conferences, fundraising, training courses etc. Those that enhanced and impacted our work positively were the Agreements for Cooperation with SOS Children's Village, the Crisis Management Centre, First Children's Embassy Megjashi, Memorandum for Understanding with UNHCR, Memorandum with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and last but not least, Memorandum with the Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Macedonia. Thus, Legis had its representatives/participants at the following events:





- Conference on “Optimizing Volunteer Services in Times of Refugee Crisis” in Osijek, Croatia as part of a project with Udruga „Mi” Croatia, as a coordinating organisation in partnership with Legis, Novosadski humanitarni centar Serbia, European Volunteer Centre Belgium, Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres, Voluntary Action Sheffield England, Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány Hungary. The project’s main aim was enhancing the volunteer’s role in the refugee crisis, whereas the specific aim was to create recommendations based on evidence so as to upgrade volunteer services in Europe ;
- Conference on “Welcoming Refugees – Local European Experiences” in Norrköping, Sweden organised by the Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society at Linköping University, Sweden;
- Third Meeting of the European Migration Forum in Brussels, Belgium, organised by the European Economic and Social Committee. The purpose of this year’s meeting is to allow for a reflection on the issues and challenges that have emerged across the multi-level migration governance and that go beyond the need to address the emergency, in order to move from a crisis management into a long-term comprehensive strategy of migration management;



- Conference: “What Holds the Future for Europe’s Migration and Asylum? Making the Case for Solidarity and Integration.” organised by the Asylum Protection Centre of Belgrade, Serbia. The main subject and focus was on both solidarity and the current situation for refugees in Europe.
- “Small Room Project” - As part of the promotion of the project “Small Room Project” of the famous Greek advocate for the rights of the refugees, journalist Vasilis Tsartsanis, in Thessaloniki a display of the film and a public debate were organized, attended by volunteers and citizens who have helped the refugees in northern Greece, respectively in the region of Polykastro and Eidomeni;
- Participation in a Symposium on “One Year after the Closure of the Borders and the Signing of the Joint EU-Turkey Statement”;
- The 2nd International Conference within the project “Optimizing Volunteer Services in Times of Refugee Crisis” was held in Novi Sad, Serbia on 23 March 2017, supported by the European Union - Europe for Citizens Programme;

- Conference as part of the project Balkan Refugee Trail “Challenges on the Western Balkan Route as part of the Balkan Refugee Trail” coordinated by Interkulturelles Zentrum (Intercultural Center) Vienna, Austria. The conference aims to provide answer on the main theme: Past, present and future: What kind of challenges people face on the Western Balkan migration route?; through four sub-panels looking on the Legal challenges, Human Rights challenges, the challenges of cooperation between CSOs and the challenges in Integration and Adaptation of refugees in the Western Balkan countries;
- Participation in the International Human Rights Film Festival Albania where Legis contributed with an exhibition of paintings by Shergo, a Kurdish Syrian refugee;



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- PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants) held its annual assembly as well as workshops on different topics from the field of protection of the rights of the undocumented migrants and refugees. At this year's assembly, the members of this network of international organizations had the opportunity to learn about Legis' hitherto work and to vote for the acceptance of Legis as a fully-fledged member of the network;
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Skopje (UNHCR) presented the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. Legis, as an NGO that works with refugees and migrants had its representatives there to learn more about the Global Compacts and what can be done to improve the current situation of these two vulnerable groups;
- A capacity-building/networking event organized within the framework of the EPIM Sub-Fund on "Addressing the Humanitarian Emergency in the Mediterranean and Western Balkans" which took place in Athens, Greece;
- Meeting and discussion with volunteers and several local CSOs on the topic of "Optimizing Volunteer Services in Times of Refugee Crises" organised within the project of the same title. The objective of the discussion was to generate an overview of the way the refugee and mixed migration flows were managed by groups of volunteers and CSOs on the ground and create recommendations and suggestions for improving refugees/migrants' stay in Macedonia and access to rights and services;

- Jasmin Redjepi, the president of Legis upon the invitation of the Italian MPs of the EU Parliament Daniele Viotti and Cecile Kyenge, addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg in an event organised by the aforementioned. Moreover, Legis' president also gave a speech in an event organised by the Mayor of Condove, Jacopo Suppo;
- Exhibition of photographs of the refugee crisis in Torino, taken by Robert Atanasovski;
- Balkan Refugee Trail project - Legis' representatives took part in the final international conference discussing the overall impact of the humanitarian crisis on people on the move seeking protection in Europe. Legis is a partner organization to the Intercultural Center of Vienna, along with selected CSOs from the so-called Western Balkan route including Greece and Hungary. The final report of the Balkan Refugee Trail was also presented at the conference;
- Participation in a Training on Standard Operational Procedures for Dealing with Refugee/Migrant Children and Unaccompanied Minors organised by the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association;
- Legis participated in a round table in Belgrade with the Macedonian and Serbian Grantees as part of the Help on the Route project. The network of CSOs working with refugees/migrants discussed so far results and challenges;





- Participation in Thematic Working Groups in Brussels organised by PICUM:
 - Working Group on Access to Healthcare and
 - Working Group on Borders & Detention with a joint meeting on child detention together with the working group on children;
- Participation in the Round table “The Refugee Crisis in Macedonia, current situation, challenges and future steps”, hosted by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia;
- “Small Room Project” exhibition of paintings, sketches, drawings, texts and poems done by refugees who transited through Macedonia in 2015/16. This project was carried out in partnership with Vasilis Tsartsanis, an activist and free-lance journalist reporting on the refugee crisis at the Greek-Macedonian border. The exhibition took place at the “Mala Stanica” National Gallery of Skopje.
- Participation in a training course on Standard Operational Procedures for Dealing with Refugees/Migrants Victims of Human Trafficking, organised by the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association.
- Three employees of Legis participated in a seven-day Erasmus+ project, which took place in Izmir, Turkey. The project focused on social inclusion of migrants, refugees and IDPs.

Visibility and Communication

Legis has been sharing detailed results of its work and activities ever since. This year was no exception. Both our website and fb page contain countless articles, videos, photos, reports on our project results and every single programme activity. Moreover, Legis collaborated with several media producing press releases in order to disseminate our work. One of our core principles to which we adhere in our humanitarian work is accountability: to our partners, target groups, the public and anyone interested in what we do. To sum up, since 1 January up until this present moment, over 350 posts can be found on Legis' FB page. These posts include articles, videos, reports, testimonials, open calls, invitations for events, photos of activities, participation in events, all with the aim of sharing results of our work, speaking on behalf of our refugees/migrants/asylum seekers for their rights and protection, thus raising awareness of their everyday hardships they are faced with and justifying the attribute we were given Voice of the Voiceless.


























Financial report

	MKD	EUR
Income for donation from the country	994551	16172
Income for donation from foreign	5517002	89707
Income transfers from the last year	3404007	55350

	MKD	EUR
Charges for the supply of humanitarian aid	1775529	28870
Salaries and other costs for employed persons	3414538	55521
Other costs for supplies	1006260	16362
Administrative costs	304138	4945

Our Partners

 Crisis Management Center	 Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	 Ombudsman of Republic of Macedonia	 Municipality of Chair	 Fondation Open Society Macedonia	 Caritas Austria
 Secours Islamique France	 Solidarites International	 Medecins Sans Frontieres	 Fons Català	 European Programme for Integration and Migration	 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
 People in need	 Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund	 Human Appeal	 Al-Khair Fondation	 Muslim Aid	 First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi
 Asylum Protection Center	 SOS Children's Villages Macedonia	 Helsinki Committee Of The Republic Of Macedonia	 Help Refugees	 Center for Intercultural Dialogue	



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