

RESPONSE OF THE ARMY OF SERBIA TO NON-MILITARY THREAT - MIGRATION

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Abstract: *The issue of work indicates that with the global connection of the world or more precisely with the opening of borders, easier access, development of technologies, migrations are becoming more frequent, one could say almost an everyday occurrence. The main security risk is still the possibility of radical Islamists and returnee fighters from the Middle East infiltrating among migrants entering the Republic of Bulgaria and Macedonia. Serbia. Migrant smuggling activities remain the biggest security threat.*

The research in the work raises an issue that needs to be further analyzed, bearing in mind the fact that the migration crisis is becoming more complicated and requires new responses and forms of organization and protection of the country, and is reflected in the fact that the external factors of migration deserve special research in order to identify security risks and threats. overview and assessment of the policies of countries in the surrounding area, and above all the views of the key actors of the EU, with an emphasis on the impact and consequences for the Republic of Serbia, as well as predicting possible directions of development of the migrant crisis and preventive actions of the Republic of Serbia to protect national interests.

Key words: security, national interests, migration, laws, Republic of Serbia

1. INTRODUCTION

According to some analysts, this is not a „refugee crisis”, this is a migration of people. The scale of migration is biblical. The waves of „migrants” include, first of all, young, adult men of military age, who left the hearth, wives, children and elderly parents and left them at the mercy of life. Apparently, it makes us think that among the many migrants (refugees) there are also military deserters. So, here, among other things, we are dealing with deserters, among whom numerous security services have discovered a large number of terrorists. We see more and more that they are well organized, have maps with movement routes, are solidly dressed, have expensive and modern „smart mobile phones”, withdraw money in banks in an organized manner, etc. Social differences among migrants are recognizable. We have witnessed that, if

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the host countries do not tolerate their usual, diverse, even aggressive and demanding behavior, they become partially violent and prone to various forms of socially unacceptable behavior.

In the event that the EU completely „walls off” the Balkans, which seems to be a question of „when” rather than „if”, tens of thousands of disaffected people will find themselves stuck in a country they never wanted to stay in and in the midst of a society that does not want them, but is forced to take care of them. Looking at the scandals in Slovenia, on the border between Serbia and Hungary at Horgos, as well as indicators of the likely outcome when migrants become upset about their living conditions, they can burn down their settlements as they have been doing. It is very difficult to control large groups of people. . Whether or not migrants will socialize into the environment they came to remains a problem. Deeply dissatisfied with the fact that they are forced to live in a country they do not want to live in, not because of the people who live there, but because of the wrong expectations of most of them who assumed that they can achieve their goals and desires (Radisic, 2017).

As a result of the lack of a unified position on the migrant crisis within the European Union, which puts peripheral countries in the position of the first entry country, and the reactions of individual states that were on the migrant route (erecting fences, closing borders), there was a temporary disruption of interstate relations between: Serbia- Hungary, Serbia-Croatia, Croatia with Hungary and Slovenia, as well as Greece with Macedonia. After which, with the intensification of cooperation between the mentioned countries, relations became more relaxed on the mentioned issue. However, bearing in mind the permanent commitments of the aforementioned countries regarding the reception of migrants, the allocation of funds, their retention in their territory and the granting of asylum, in the long term we can expect the re-closing of the borders, which will have a direct impact on the security of the Republic of Serbia, through an increase in the number of migrants and the time they are detained on the territory of R. Serbia.

2. CONSEQUENCES OF THE MIGRANT CRISIS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

In the Republic of Serbia, several strategic documents concerning migration management have been adopted for the purpose of solving certain issues. The Republic of Serbia is a signatory to the Geneva Convention from 1951 and the Protocol from 1967, as well as a number of international documents that are important in the field of migration management. The highest legal act of the state, the Constitution from 2006, contains several articles that are important for the area of migration management. Article 13 of the Constitution refers to the protection of our citizens abroad. Article 17 of the Constitution deals with the position of foreigners, it stipulates that foreigners, in accordance with international agreements, have in the Republic of Serbia all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law, with the exception of the rights that according to the Constitution and the law belong exclusively to the citizens of the Republic of Serbia. In the part of the Constitution that deals with human and minority rights and freedoms, there are a number of provisions that are important for different categories of migrants. The immediate application of human and minority rights guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 18) is foreseen, as well as the prohibition of discrimination (Article 21). Before the Constitution and the law, everyone is equal and everyone has the right to equal legal protection, without discrimination (Constitution of RS).

The wider inclusion of the issue of population migration in national strategies and laws was due to the necessity of transformation and adaptation to European documents, all because of accession negotiations on membership in the European Union. The Asylum Law adopted in 2007 was the first law of its kind in the country's legal system. With its adoption, Serbia undertook to help and protect all asylum seekers on its territory. However, it was necessary to

supplement the law and introduce the necessary changes in accordance with the large influx of migrants since 2015. Thus, in March 2018, the new Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection was adopted, whereby the state harmonizes its legislation with the legal acquires of the European Union and strives to make the asylum procedure more efficient. At the same time, the Law on Foreigners was adopted, which better defines the rights and obligations of foreigners in the Republic of Serbia (Law on Foreigners of the Republic of Serbia).

The national framework for migration management is represented by existing legal and institutional frameworks. After assessing the situation and expected trends, priority activities are determined, which are reflected in the adoption of the appropriate legal framework and the implementation of relevant strategies. In Serbia, they refer to: Law on Travel Documents (2007), Law on State Border Protection (2008), Strategy (2009), and then the Law on Migration Management (2012), Strategy for Combating Illegal Migration in the Republic of Serbia in the period from 2009 to 2014, Strategy for combating irregular migration in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2018 to 2020 (2018), Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in the Republic of Serbia (2006), Strategy for Integrated Border Management and others. The establishment of the Coordinating Body for Monitoring and Management of Migration in 2009 is also significant. These legal frameworks were further operationalized through strategic documents and rules related to migration management and the system of reception and accommodation of asylum seekers.

In addition to the existence of a legislative framework, it was very important in the conditions of the influx of a large number of migrants on the territory of Serbia to establish a working body that would deal with specific issues and problems on the ground. Thus, already in June 2015, the Government of the Republic of Serbia established the "Working Group for Solving the Problem of Mixed Migration Flows", consisting of five ministries: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of European integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and the Delegation of the European Union in Serbia are also members. The task of the Working Group is to monitor, analyze and discuss the issues of mixed migration flows in the Republic of Serbia with special reference to the problems in this area, provide analyzes of the situation and proposals for measures to solve the observed problems and harmonize the views of the competent state authorities and other organizations and institutions that deal with the issue of mixed migration flows (Working Group Decision).

Also, the members of this group are responsible for the coordination and cooperation of various organizations that deal with this issue in establishing adequate reception and transit conditions, strengthening the system for registering migrants, and in providing key services, which include reception, accommodation, health care, food and other products, water and sanitary conditions. (www.kirs.gov.rs) In accordance with the provisions on the functioning of the Working Group and its primary tasks, a large number of international organizations, primarily the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but also numerous civil society organizations, are involved in helping migrants, but in consultation with the Working Group. In addition to their presence in reception centers, depending on the current situation on the route, these organizations also provided assistance to migrants at border crossings, in informal camps, that is, where certain persons found themselves in larger numbers. Their task was to provide migrants with information about the possibilities of obtaining asylum in the Republic of Serbia, to inform them about medical assistance, translators, as well as to provide them with psycho-social support. Also, they work with children including them in various activities in the centers and help them with their schoolwork, work with individuals with special needs, with unaccompanied minors, assist in voluntary return and provide them with transportation, food, water and other necessary things.

Government R. Serbia, in coordination with international and non-governmental organizations, organized the provision of humanitarian aid at the border entry and exit points of the migrant route as an emergency measure to the growing problem of the influx of migrants. The method of work of state authorities on registration and issuing documents to migrants for free movement through the territory of the Republic of Croatia has been established. Serbia. The process of registering migrants was carried out based on the provisions of the Asylum Act. (Act on Azir) In addition to the already existing asylum centers in Banja Koviljaca, Bogovodja, Obrenovac, Tutin, Sjenica, Krnjaca (until the former military facility in Mladenovac was put into operation), new Reception and Transit Centers were opened with functions of accommodation and acceptance of migrants in Presevo, Subotica, Sida, Dimitrovgrad and Bujanovac (<http://www.kirs.gov.rs>). Potential locations for opening additional centers in case of an increase in the number of migrants and refugees, which exceeds the available accommodation.

In accordance with the increase in the number of migrants in 2015, temporary centers were opened in the north and west of the country, and after the closure of the route and the significantly longer detention of migrants in Serbia (up to two years), new ones were opened. In addition to these activities in providing the basic conditions for the reception of migrants on the Balkan route, the Working Group had a series of bilateral meetings with representatives of international organizations, ambassadors, donors, in order to improve the conditions in the centers for the reception of migrants, and to expand the capacities in accordance with the needs.

An important body for advisory work related to migration management on the territory of the autonomous province, as well as local self-governments, is the provincial or local Council for Migration. Its work is defined in the Migration Management Strategy from 2009. The Council is obliged to monitor and report to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration on migration in the province, that is, on the territory of a certain local self-government. It is necessary to propose measures and plans of activities that should be undertaken in order to effectively manage migration in a certain territory. The work of the council at local levels also deals with the problem of irregular migration in the municipalities where the reception centers are located, as well as the border municipalities, through which migrants move in attempts to reach the territory of the European Union.

Another significant response of the institutions to the so-called the migrant crisis is also the state's decision to include migrant children in the education system. By ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Republic of Serbia undertook to ensure the realization of all children's rights. Through the cooperation program of UNICEF and the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the field of education in the period 2016-2017. In 2008, the Joint Concept of Supporting the Education of Migrant Children and the Project Supporting the Education of Migrant Students in the Republic of Serbia were implemented.

The Republic of Serbia, due to its position, suffers one of the greatest pressures of irregular migration, because some of the key transit routes lead through our territory. The largest number of migrants to Serbia still comes from the direction of North Macedonia and the Republic of Bulgaria. According to the latest data from the Republic's Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, 16 reception and asylum centers for refugees and migrants, which is four less than in the state of emergency, because the number of migrants in the country is also lower, and 4,882 people are accommodated in those centers. According to the national structure, the most migrants are from Afghanistan, 39 percent, followed by Syria 19, Bangladesh 12, Pakistan seven percent and Iran five percent. Also, according to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, since the beginning of the corona virus epidemic, there have been no positive cases

among refugees and migrants. During the state of emergency, 27 people suspected of the corona virus were tested and all were negative.

In connection with the current situation with the corona virus pandemic, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration states that since the beginning of July 2020 and the latest data indicating an increase in the number of people suffering from COVID-19 in Serbia, the enhanced hygiene regime has started to return to the centers again and other recommended epidemiological protection measures. This means that migrants are also involved in increased cleaning, airing of rooms, disinfection, that protective masks and disinfectants are provided, and that they are informed about the situation with the pandemic every day, through a daily bulletin in their languages, which is sent to them, printed and distributed. In the world and in Serbia, as well as with all measures taken by the state to suppress the infection.

Since the beginning of 2020, 1,277 persons have expressed their intention to request asylum, while only 50 of them have actually submitted a request and they are in our asylum centers. This information tells us that they do not want to stay in the Republic of Serbia, but use it only as an administrative mechanism to continue their journey to Western Europe. Serbia continues to be a constructive partner in the complex migrant problem, but we certainly need to continue insisting that we cannot be a country that will only become a country waiting for asylum applications to be processed, nor a country for the return of migrants who used the route through the Western Balkans. As for the smuggling of migrants, the fight of the Serbian police in that area is still very intense. In the first half of 2020 alone, 90 criminal charges were filed against 104 people on suspicion of having committed this crime and also 5 criminal charges against organized criminal groups consisting of 25 members. These figures compared to data from 2018 and 2019 show a certain increase in this incriminating activity, but also success in detecting and prosecuting perpetrators.

At the time of the declaration of a state of emergency on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, due to the epidemic of COVID-19, about 5,900 migrants were accommodated in centers for the accommodation of asylum seekers and reception centers. With the declaration of a state of emergency, accommodation facilities became too small to provide accommodation for all who needed it. That is why new facilities were opened, namely temporary centers in Miratovac and Morovic. At the beginning of May 2020, after the end of the state of emergency, there were slightly more than 9,500 migrants in reception centers throughout the Republic of Serbia. It can be said that the migrants patiently and responsibly shared the fate of the citizens of Serbia. Thanks to the great efforts of all actors and institutions involved in migration management, no cases of infection with the new virus were recorded among the migrant population during that period.

In the migration management process, Serbia continues to act in a responsible, organized and humane manner, making maximum efforts to, as much as possible in the conditions of the pandemic and the greater influx of migrants to the centers, meet the standards in the area of acceptance, care, accommodation, legal, social and health protection of migrants which are located in its territory.

3. THE RESPONSE OF THE SERBIAN ARMED FORCES TO NON-MILITARY THREATS - MIGRATION

Due to its social importance and the role it plays in the defense system, the army is traditionally an integral part of the constitutional matter. Many states already regulate its position and basic competence in the national defense system in the constitutional provisions. In this way, the highest legal act defines the social reason for the existence of the army, which can be seen from those constitutional norms that determine the social values that it must protect. In the

most general sense, these are the social values for which the defense system is established and which also determine its basic social function (Markovic, 2010).

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia regulates the basic function of the armed forces. According to this act, their main task is to defend the state against armed threats from the outside and to carry out other missions and tasks in accordance with the Constitution, the law and the principles of international law that regulate the use of force. It is not clear from this provision what values it defends, but it can be seen from the provision that places the regulation and provision of sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the state under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia (Constitution of RS).

The primary function of the armed forces is to defend the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the state. This is their traditional function, which determines their existence. In constitutional practice, some other social values are mentioned, the defense of which is the responsibility of the armed forces, but even so, the function of the armed forces is primarily conditioned by an external factor that threatens the security of the state. In other words, the armed forces exist to protect the stated values when they are threatened by armed means from the outside, that is, by aggression. In addition, their existence aims to deter aggression, which also defines their function.

Similar provisions on the armed forces found in the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia can be found in the constitutional provisions of other countries. For example, the Constitution of Austria states that the federal army protects constitutional institutions and democratic freedoms, internal order and security of the state, provides assistance to civil structures in cases of natural disasters and large-scale accidents. (Constitution of Austria) According to the provisions of the Polish Constitution, the function of the armed forces is defense of independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of state borders. (Constitution of Poland) The Armed Forces of Romania are exclusively in the interest of the people of guaranteeing the sovereignty, independence and unity of the state, territorial integrity and constitutional democracy. Larger scale or acts of terrorism in circumstances where the security authorities are unable to act independently.

In addition to the above, we must not forget the cases of technical-technological and natural disasters, when the armed forces provide assistance to the institutions of civil authority. Generally speaking, these are situations that, in accordance with the regulations on defense, are considered a reason for declaring a state of emergency, i.e. an emergency situation. Many countries regulate this function of the armed forces with constitutional or legal regulations that regulate the field of defense. The function in question is not primary but secondary because it is realized only when other competent state bodies are not able to independently oppose such phenomena. The armed forces of Hungary can also be used in the event of an armed action directed against the constitutional order, the seizure of power or in the event of critical acts of armed violence that seriously endanger the lives and property of citizens on a mass scale if the use of the police proves to be insufficient as in the case of natural and industrial disasters (Constitution of Hungary). In addition, the armed forces of Germany can be engaged to support the police forces if a natural disaster or accident threatens more than the territory of one federal state. In addition, and in order to defend against a threat to the survival of the state or to defend the free democratic basic order of the federal state or a country, the federal government can use the armed forces in support of the police and federal border protection and in order to protect civilian objects and in the fight against organized and armed uprising (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany).

In accordance with the aforementioned practice, units of the Serbian Armed Forces can be engaged in providing assistance to the population, in the event of natural and other large-scale

disasters in which the lives and health of people and animals and their material goods are threatened in a certain territory, and based on the request of the competent authorities for the protection and rescue of people and material goods. In such circumstances, the Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, i.e. the head of the competent command, and in order to protect and save people, material and cultural assets from natural disasters, technical-technological accidents and disasters, the consequences of terrorism and other major accidents, can order measures to implement preparedness and use parts of the Serbian Armed Forces in order to eliminate the harmful consequences that may arise from non-military threats to security (RS Defense Law).

As an armed force, the Serbian Armed Forces play a very important role in the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, because with its organization, equipment, operational and other capabilities, it represents a deterrent against all forms of threats to the security of the Republic of Serbia. The missions and tasks of the Army are determined by the Defense Strategy in accordance with the Constitution and based on the inalienable right of the Republic of Serbia to individual and collective defense, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and the basic principles of international law (Defense Strategy of the RS).

In conditions of increasing challenges, risks and threats to security, as well as possible military and non-military threats to the security of the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian Armed Forces can engage in a wide range of operations, which requires it to build operational capabilities that can respond to its missions. From the aspect of preventing illegal migration, the tasks from the third mission are particularly significant, and the main focus is the participation of units of the Serbian Army in securing the state border, in order to prevent illegal crossings of migrants and control the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

In addition to the above, the Law on Defense as a general systemic legal act also stipulates the obligation of cooperation between the Army and the Police in cases where the border zone, the border, and the lives of people and material goods in that area are threatened. In these circumstances, the Government, at the joint proposal of the Minister of Interior and Defense and with the consent of the President of the Republic, forms a joint military-police force. (Law on the Defense of the RS)

Due to the migration crisis at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Border Police Directorate additionally strengthened the capacities for securing the state border. However, the engaged capacities were not able to adequately respond to the newly created situation. The new situation on the ground and the increasing influx of migrants required a quick response and engagement of the capacities of the Serbian Armed Forces. When it comes to the engagement of members of the Serbian Armed Forces, they became involved in solving the problem of the increased influx of migrants in the second half of June 2015. In the initial period, they participated in the organization of the reception of migrants at the border with the Republic of Macedonia on the tasks of arranging reception centers, health care, water supply, hygienic bathing and temporary accommodation of migrants. However, further complicating the situation (at the beginning of 2016), Military Police units were also included in the implementation of the tasks, with the basic mission of securing the state border in the regular security system, with the aim of preventing illegal crossings of migrants and controlling the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

During that time, it was registered that around 9,700 migrants were prevented from crossing, and 145 smugglers were detained and prosecuted. When the state borders with Macedonia and Bulgaria were closed, a new direction through the Raska-Polim area was also registered, so their operation was extended to another sector, which includes part of the administrative line and part of the state border with Montenegro (Miljic, 2017).

In accordance with a specific mission, Joint Forces were formed from units of the Serbian Armed Forces and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. From the beginning, the engagement of joint forces was set up as joint and mixed, from the level of the command of the Joint Forces, all the way to the authorities in space. The commander of each body in the area is a military officer, and in the body, depending on its purpose, whether it is for line or depth security. In addition to members of the Army, members of the border police, police intervention units, traffic police and gendarmerie were also engaged, i.e. the holders of authorizations for migrants or smugglers, while the military part of the engaged bodies had the task of assisting the holders of authorizations. After receiving the task of forming the Joint Forces, drawing up Plans and deploying units, the Joint Forces Command was formed in the second half of July 2016. In addition to members of the Serbian Armed Forces and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Joint Forces Command also includes members of the security services (BIA, VBA and VOA), the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. In the initial period, the primary task was to observe and assess the situation with regard to the movement of migrants in order to determine the adequate distribution of units along the border line (Simovic, 2017).

The task was carried out by a combination of line and depth security in regular mode. Line security was carried out from the former checkpoints through control of the border line through patrolling, observation, deployment of regional guards, observation posts and ambushes. For in-depth security, forces are deployed in the depth of the territory, where traffic control points, patrols, observation posts and ambushes are organized, along with constant control of road and rail traffic. . Plans have been drawn up for measures to be taken in the event of attempts at mass illegal crossings of the state border. The engagement of helicopter units of the Army and the Police was carried out very restrictively, mainly for reconnaissance of certain regions and directions in order to collect the necessary data. The zone of engagement included the area along the border with Bulgaria and Macedonia, and from mid-December 2016, a part of the area within the scope of the border with Montenegro, so that the total length was 560 kilometers.

In the initial period of engagement of joint forces, the greatest pressure to enter Serbia came from Macedonia, and later the number of illegal crossings of the state border from Bulgaria increased considerably. The largest number of migrants was from Afghanistan. Most of the migrants from Pakistan were Afghan refugees of Pashtun nationality. Migrants from Syria and Iraq were with their families, which is not the case with Afghans who are very young and mostly male. Migrants from Syria and Iraq mostly came from the direction of Macedonia, and migrants from Afghanistan from the direction of Bulgaria. From the other countries, Cuba, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Rwanda and Eritrea, there were very few illegal crossings compared to the ones listed.

In addition to the engaged forces of the Republic of Serbia, 220 international police officers were also engaged, as a form of additional forces from the European Union (from Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) (Simovic, 2017). These EU forces were engaged in areas where the risk analysis determined that is the most threatened border, that is, where the pressure and influx of migrants is greatest. On that occasion, the members of the international forces were familiarized with our legislation and the competences and powers of the border police and the Joint Forces, and at the same time with their rights and obligations. The effects of such measures are a reduced number of migrants since the beginning of 2017, a change in the routes of movement and smuggling of migrants, which was confirmed during the exchange of information between all security services, both in the Republic of Serbia and in the region.

Certainly, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in accordance with its capacities, made a great contribution to the current migrant crisis, however, with the involvement of the Serbian Army in the implementation of this task, that effect was significantly increased. Even more significant is the joint engagement of the Serbian Army and the Ministry of Interior in response to security challenges, risks and security threats.

The action of the Joint Forces towards the Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria had extraordinary effects. About 20,000 illegal migrants were discovered, of which about 19,000 were prevented from crossing the territory of the Republic of Serbia. In addition to the above, about 2,000 smuggled persons were discovered and placed in reception centers. The engagement of joint forces contributed to the fact that several tens of thousands of migrants changed their decision to go through the Republic of Serbia, that is, they chose other routes to transfer to Western Europe, which is particularly important in the readmission process.

Effective engagement of the Joint Forces towards the Republic of Bulgaria and Macedonia significantly reduced the number of illegal border crossings. This led to the opening of a new alternative route through Montenegro, so from December 2016, the engagement of the Joint Forces also began on part of the border with this neighboring country. (Milic, 2017) Based on the data so far, the conclusion is that a small number of migrants choose that route, however, the possibility that the number will increase on that route is not excluded, especially if the situation in Turkey becomes more complicated. . When considering the number of challenges that members of the engaged forces face on the ground, the biggest challenge, besides migrants, is the fight against smugglers. This phenomenon is very widespread and brings great material profit.

In addition to the above, until the disbandment in April 2018, the examples of the successful work of the Command of the Joint Forces of the Army and the Police speak of their professional and professional work, among other things, the successful action against the smuggling of migrants. Out of 172 smugglers, 134 are Serbian citizens, and 38 are foreign citizens. (Bulgaria 17, Pakistan 6, Iraq 6, Afghanistan 5, Moldova 1, Netherlands 1, BiH 1, and Austria 1). Over 80 passenger vehicles and over 50 vans were used in attempts to smuggle migrants. During the reforms and reduction in the number of members, the Army handed over the security of the state border to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and kept the only security of the administrative line towards Kosovo and Metohija, so it adapted the training of its members for this task. However, at the moment when it received the task of securing the border with Macedonia and Bulgaria, there were a sufficient number of senior officers in the Serbian Army who had experience in carrying out this task, and the military police units could immediately join the joint work with the forces of the MUP. What was a difficulty was the strain on the manpower, as well as the need to prepare certain accommodation capacities, since the Army abandoned the facilities it previously used for the tasks of securing the state border.

Inadequate equipment at the disposal of the Serbian Armed Forces (optoelectronic and thermal imaging devices) for monitoring the movement of migrants at night, as well as communication with migrants, which was mostly in English, represented a difficulty to a certain extent. A special question is whether the Joint Forces of the Army and the Police were engaged in a timely manner or with a delay. We saw that the force was formed in July 2016, when a decrease in the number of migrants arriving in Europe via the Eastern Mediterranean route was already recorded. For example, Hungary and Macedonia already engaged their armed forces in 2015 on tasks related to the migrant crisis, so it could be assumed that the use of the Serbian Armed Forces would be necessary. In this sense, it can be discussed whether it was too late to engage the Security Council, as well as whether it would be more rational to form a temporary composition, a special unit for this task.

How can the migrant crisis be repeated, especially if it is taken into account that the crisis in the Middle East and the security and economic situation in certain countries of North and East Africa, as well as the divergence between the EU and Turkey in terms of respect for human rights and freedoms, which can cause their mutual distrust and friction, it is important that the Serbian Armed Forces be ready for re-engagement at the border in order to prevent the uncontrolled entry of migrants into the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

In this regard, it is important that the Serbian Armed Forces ensure that the experiences of its members engaged in the previous period in various positions within the Joint Forces of the Army and the Police are entered into the system of lessons learned, systematized, translated into rules and introduced into the training system. Systematized and put into practice in this way, those experiences would not only be significant for the potential involvement of the Army in securing the state border, but also in carrying out tasks in multinational operations and providing assistance to local authorities in combating terrorism.

4. CONCLUSION

Although the Republic of Serbia has made maximum efforts to bring the process of migration through its territory under full control, the dangers that disturb its security have not been eliminated. Considering the non-uniform attitude of the members of the European Union, the permanent determination of certain neighboring countries regarding the reception of migrants, above all Hungary, it is to be expected that this problem will be in focus in the coming period as well, and therefore have a direct impact on the security of the Republic of Serbia. Primarily in the form of an increase in the number of migrants and their longer stay, i.e. staying in the territory.

Given that the Republic of Serbia is a candidate for membership in the European Union and that the process of accession negotiations has begun with the opening and harmonization of the necessary chapters, effective migration management is one of the conditions on which Serbia's accession to the European Union depends. The area of migration is legally and institutionally organized in accordance with the necessary standards of the European Union. The Government of the Republic of Serbia first arranged the legislative framework for the development of the migration management system. The legislative framework was developed on the platform of international law, and all ratified-confirmed international treaties, as well as all laws and other general acts, are in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.

A kind of *lock down* has become the generally accepted pattern of response of most European countries to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which inevitably resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of people in the, until then, continuous migrant columns. From the moment the measures were eased (from June until the autumn months of 2020, which were marked by a new increase in the number of new cases in Europe), the EU Border Protection Agency recorded an increase in migration compared to the „closure” period. So, generally speaking, the year 2020 was significantly different from the previous ones in terms of migration as well. In case of renewal of migration flows and total closure of borders by neighbors, there is a danger of creation of refugee camps-ghettos on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. In such an environment, the consequences of the migrant crisis for the security of the Republic of Serbia would be more complex and would require considerable efforts to eliminate them. Such a scenario imposes the need to consider and assess possible future consequences for the security of the Republic of Serbia and to make decisions in accordance with national interests.

In the coming period, the security situation may be complicated by the arrival of a larger number of "economic migrants", the return of a part of migrants from Western European countries to the Republic of Moldova. Serbia, bearing in mind the readmission agreement signed by R. Serbia and the possibility of Western European countries closing their borders. Such a situation and the absence of a clear European position on the status of migrants will increase the possibility of opening new security risks in Russia. Serbia, such as the increase in criminal activity, the possibility of causing incidents between migrants and the local population, the increase in xenophobia and Islamophobia among the local population.

The comprehensiveness and intensity of threats to the security of the Republic of Serbia caused by the migrant crisis requires a planned, coordinated and extensive response by all state entities, in order to minimize the impact of external factors on the threat to the national security system. bearing in mind that it is the obligation of all state bodies to work to protect the vital interests of the Republic of Serbia, this imposes the need to successfully control the migrant crisis, which as a necessity necessarily imposes the collection and exchange of reliable information, on the basis of which possible variants of the development of the migrant crisis will be analyzed and predicted crises, and act preventively based on them.

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