



Short report on the visit on the National Centre of Asylum Seekers in Albania

On December 11th 2015 Members from the URAT Network attended a visit at the National centre of Asylum seekers in Babrru, Tirana. The participant members were:

Josefina Rojo Rabadan – Company of Mary Congregation

Jacqueline Labrador – Peace Corps

Ana Stakaj – MWL Foundation

Pjeter Tanushaj - MWL Foundation

During this meeting the following **information** was provided:

In the center are 130 foreign nationals accommodated in the reception center for asylum seekers which has a maximum capacity of 170 persons. The asylum seekers who are at the moment in the centre are from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Congo, Bosnia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Armenia and Kosovo. There are refugees that have escaped from their countries of origin even for political and religious reasons so the cameras exposure of asylum seekers has been almost impossible.

The key workers explained that the services which are offered in this centre are a preparation for being integrated into the life of Albania although an Albanian Language training course was not provided. The center operates according to international parameters of reception for asylum seekers. Children of citizens who have sought asylum in Albania are enrolled in kindergartens or public schools, and some even have the opportunity of part-time employment. To facilitate communication with families is an established internet center and there is also a library. The reception center has a staff of 15 people with a psychologist, translator and social workers. In service for 24 hours are 1 doctor and 2 nurses and the guards. The key workers declared that the daily cost for food for a person is 3\$. The information provided from the media is that the Albanian government spends 33.3 million in a year for asylum seekers. Only for staff costs, the National Reception of Asylum Seekers Centre has an annual cost of 10.7 million lek and services for other goods and services go up to 22.6 million.

The institution during this period has been monitored by internationally recognized organizations or local statutory systems, to deal with human rights and specifically the treatment of migrants, such as UNHCR and The People's Advocate.

Findings:

The social activities organized in the centre are quite poor. There is a sports field in the middle of the centre which is quite remote and needs restoration. For the women there is basically nothing properly organized and they just improvise. A tiny playground exists for the children which is remote and therefore not secure or functional. The centre provide cultural visits to tourist spots in cooperation with private operators, as part of a reintegration program.

The Centre does not provide any sort of information about what happens with the refugees after being out of the centre. This leads us with question marks about whether there are any integration programs provided by the Albanian government such as housing, job opportunities, and basic needs.

The key workers suggested that we could support the camp by offering everything that we can provide in means, materials and food as there is never enough for the provision needed for the refugees in the camp. The women in this camp are approximately 50, with 15 children and 55 men.

Ana Stakaj