

# Caritas in Bosna and Herzegovina *helps migrants on the Balkan route*

## Pandemic and humanitarian crisis on the Balkan route during 2020!

The 2020 will be remembered for **the pandemic and the migrant humanitarian crisis** in the countries on the Balkan route, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of borders and the closure of many activities, have affected the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to various reports, about 30,000 people lost their jobs, and many companies worked at reduced capacity, especially those engaged in exports and/or imports.

Although the situation was difficult, **Caritas in BH** continued to care for 3,500 residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina through soup kitchens, old people's homes, homes for people with disabilities through Caritas Vrhbosna Archdiocese (Sarajevo), Caritas Diocese Mostar-Duvno and Trebinje-Mrkan (Mostar) and Caritas of the Diocese of Banja Luka (Banja Luka). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the diocesan Caritas distributed 1,726 food and hygiene packages to the most vulnerable: the elderly, the sick, families with children and people with disabilities. All events affected the **migrant population in Bosnia and Herzegovina.**



The number of migrants during the closed borders and restrictions on movement made it impossible to enter the country, but also limited movement through BH for migrants placed in camps, private accommodation or in demolished houses and buildings.

Despite the present pandemic, Caritas in BH continued to provide assistance activities, within the limits of its capabilities, not only to migrants but also to all those in need.



**According to official information, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are about 10,000 migrants and asylum seekers**

**from Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, a war-torn Syria, Palestine, Libya, Algeria and other African countries. These are young people, a small number of families with children, and they are all mostly economic migrants.**

In the difficult situation of Caritas in BH during 2020, through **three laundries** (Bihać, Tuzla and Ušivak near Sarajevo) provided 40,234 laundry and drying services, which is 321,872 kg of laundry. Eight people are employed in three laundries at three locations. The staff employed come from the local community where the laundries are located and they were previously unemployed or lost their jobs during the pandemic.

**In addition to laundry, Caritas in BH** supports them with food, hygiene items, non-food items, shoes, sleeping bags, winter jackets, underwear and socks.



**Caritas in BH supported 2,246 people with regular monthly food packages according to their tradition and culture and provided hygiene packages for 10,357 people. This division was especially frequent during autumn and winter, as the need was great at that time. A total of 14,520 non-food items were provided for 14,520 migrants.**

Assistance through social activities, which help migrants in camps and safe houses, is very important. During 2020. four **social corners / cafes** were opened in the camps: Bihać, Cazin, Tuzla and Hadžići near Sarajevo. In social corners, users can get a hot drink, participate in workshops, use available games such as chess, man don't get angry and others. During 2020. 103,900 hot drinks were distributed in them, and over 100 different workshops were organized for children, teenagers and adults.

**Donors** of Caritas activities in BH are partners from the Caritas network: Caritas Italy, Caritas USA (CRS), Caritas Spain, Caritas Slovenia, Caritas Poland, Caritas Switzerland and individual donors such as Latter Days Saints (LDS Charity) and groups of citizens from Switzerland.

**Activities**, coordinated by Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina, are carried out by Caritas Diocese Banja Luka, Caritas Vrhbosna Archdiocese and Caritas Dioceses Mostar-Duvno and Trebinje-Mrkan with the support of the BH Ministry of Security, BH Aliens Service, International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Agency, Red Cross - Bihać and Ključ, IPSIA, Humanitarian Associations Puž, Merhamet, Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) and various volunteers in Sarajevo and Tuzla.



Mehmed bega Kapetanovića Ljubušaka 6, BiH-71000 Sarajevo, ID broj: 4201278720004

Tel.: +387 33 206-441 i 206-442, faks: +387 33 206-668, e-mail: caritas@caritas.ba, web: www.caritas.ba

BAM account: UniCredit Bank d.d. Mostar, Kardinala Stepinca bb, 88000 Mostar, KM: 338690 221 206 2902

EUR account: IBAN BA39 338 690 481206 3318; SWIFT CODE: UNCRBA 22