

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003043/24
to the Commission**

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(18 December 2024)

Subject: Undermining EU interests: the Lipa reception centre on the Balkan migration route

Given how migration on the Balkan route is being managed — particularly as regards the Lipa reception centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina — clarification is needed on whether the activities carried out at the centre are consistent with the provisions laid down by the regulation governing IPA III funds.

Financed to the tune of EUR 1.7 million as part of the ‘EU Support to Border and Migration Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ project, this multi-purpose centre is supposed to ensure that ID checks are carried out on those entering and leaving the EU. Instead, the Lipa centre is effectively facilitating the illegal crossing of the EU’s borders

by migrants who, often working together with criminal networks, use the facility as a logistical base. This state of affairs appears to be at odds with the core principle underpinning the IPA III regulation, which aims to strengthen border checks and tackle illegal immigration.

In view of the above:

1. How exactly does the Commission consider the Lipa reception centre to be operating in line with the rules on EU funding?
2. Will the Commission review the use of the above funds with a view to strengthening security and improving checks at the EU’s external borders?

Submitted: 18.12.2024

Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(25 March 2025)

Bosnia and Herzegovina has significantly strengthened its migration management, border management and asylum, with EU support of more than EUR 140 million since 2018.

Bosnia and Herzegovina also benefits from regional EU programmes supporting border management and anti-smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings.

Thanks to EU support, four temporary reception centres provide shelter for approximately 4 500 persons across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

They play a key role for the identification and assessment of the status of migrants, including access to asylum for persons in need, and possible return of persons not in need of international protection, as well as for statistical data collection.

EU support has helped the country avoid a repetition of the tragic events witnessed in the winter of 2020-21, following the fire at the former centre in Lipa.

At the current multi-purpose reception and identification centre in Lipa, which is operational since 2021, migrants are registered, their status is assessed to establish if they intend to seek asylum in the country and their identity is checked when entering and leaving the centre.

The centre is built in accordance with EU standards ⁽¹⁾ and is managed by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities with EU support. The EU-funded operation of the Lipa centre is subject to regular monitoring visits, detailed reporting and independent audits as per usual practice.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the individual measure to strengthen the response capacity to manage migration flows in favour of the Western Balkans for 2022, C(2022) 2561 final.