



OGP Balkans Countries call for "Proactive Openness" in Refugee Crisis

Washington DC, September 21, 2015 - At the [Western Balkans OGP Dialogue 2015](#) conference held in Tirana, Albania earlier this month, government and civil society members of the [Open Government Partnership](#) issued a declaration calling upon "governments and civil society organizations of OGP member countries that experience immigration or transition of refugees, to act upon that humanitarian and human rights crisis in the spirit of proactive openness".

Joe Powell, the OGP Support Unit's Acting Executive Director said, "opening up opaque government processes to refugees will help stem the flow of misinformation that is making a desperate situation even worse. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are entering Europe via the Western Balkans, and it is to their credit that those governments have pledged to give those refugees the very least they deserve, which is accurate information about their options."

The OGP Western Balkans declaration recommends that, "Every country should create a special info site dedicated to this issue that will aggregate all related data that refugees, activists and state employees can benefit from. Namely, articles from the laws and regulations that deal with refugees rights, immigrant rights, unaccompanied children issue, social and health protection, trafficking prevention, alongside with the comprehensive list of contacts for governmental and civil society services that provide assistance or protection."

"Site should also include all relevant articles from international declarations, conventions and treaties, should be in English, local language and in languages of refugee population and should be appropriately promoted and advertised."

The declaration was endorsed by government representatives from Albania, Bosnia – Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Georgia and Croatia.

President Obama and other world leaders launched the Open Government Partnership, which includes 66 countries, in 2011 in order to bring greater transparency and accountability to governments around the world. OGP is considered an increasingly important initiative in the Western Balkans, especially as a support mechanism for reforms need in the EU accession process.

For further information regarding the declaration please contact: Erisa Lame, Program Manager, Institute for Democracy and Mediation elame@idmalbania.org

For further information about OGP visit: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org>