



# EU AND SERBIA AT WORK

## FACT SHEET

### LOGBOOK\_SERBISTAN

“Logbook\_Serbistan”, the 94-minutes-long docu-drama and a TV reportage written and directed by the renowned filmmaker and author **Zelimir Zilnik** and produced by **Playground production company** seeks to address the important issues of human rights, migration and assimilation, and cross-border management in the complex context of present-day Serbia. The documentary focuses on an undiscovered minority – asylum seekers in Serbia, virtually unknown to the Serbian general public, as their adversities are seldom captured by media - and aims to improve their difficult situation by shedding some media light on this topic.

TV documentary follows the lives of illegal migrants and asylum-seekers who are housed in refugee centers in Serbia following dramatic flights from the war and destitution gripping areas in North Africa and the Middle East. These people must pass through a complex period of adaptation to life in Serbia, though in most cases their aim is to arrive to EU countries. The protagonists tell their stories and in the process become people with faces with whom viewers can identify, whose struggles through adversity and whose fates they can understand.

**The film was premiered at International festival of documentary films in Zagreb, at the end of February 2015; in Serbia, it was broadcasted on March 2 at RTV Vojvodina and it will be screened in towns throughout Serbia.**

The renowned filmmaker Zelimir Zilnik, well-known as a highly critical filmmaker and regarded as the most systematically subversive member of the generation of the famous Yugoslav Black Wave, is famous for his socially engaging style. He usually focuses on everyday life occurrences in the life of various groups at risk (the unemployed, the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers) and contrast their experiences to publicly made proclamations, often revealing and exposing the vacuity of politics. By critically examining life stories of individual asylum seekers and the services provided to them by the Serbian state, the director and his team attempt to raise the public awareness of the problems this group faces and ways to improve their position; they will also give policy makers the chance to assess the implementation of current policies and possibly seek improvement.

According to data of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, in 2012 there were almost 35,000 illegal border-crossings reported by Western Balkan countries and their neighbouring Member States. This was 33% higher compared to 2011. Serbia was by far the top reporting country in the region with a 40% share, followed by Croatia (18%). The project focuses on the issue of cross-border management as the issue of increasing importance in Europe.

The project activities were aimed to improve the situation of asylum seekers by stressing the point that the rule of law is not something abstract, but an important and much needed concept on an individual and personal level. The project offered an opportunity to asylum seekers to present their stories in non-adverse context to local audiences. Additionally it included and facilitated often first-time contacts between the local population and asylum seekers.

Beneficiaries of the project are general public in Serbia and the region. The docu-drama was filmed during 2014 at different locations in Serbia (Subotica, Sjenica, Tutin, Novi Pazar, Bogovađa, Banja Koviljača, Beograd and Novi Sad).





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The Logbook\_Serbistan project was supported through EU grant scheme “Strengthening Media Freedom”, with **€79,125.28**, while Playground contribution amounted to **€11,562.72**.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the freedom of expression and improve investigative reporting by production of quality media content in the area of rule of law focusing on migration and cross-border management. **The production and broadcasting of a docudrama “Logbook\_Serbistan” addresses important matters of human rights, migration and assimilation in the complex context of present-day Serbia.**

## CONTACT

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