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## **SERBIA PROPOSES TO HELP BULGARIA PROTECT BORDER WITH TURKEY**

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Novinite

Serbia has offered to help Bulgaria protect its southern border with Turkey against a flow of irregular migrants trying to reach western Europe.

The offer to send Serbian patrol to help their Bulgarian counterparts was made at a meeting between the interior ministers of the two Balkan neighbours at Kalotina checkpoint, on the Bulgarian side of the border on Sunday.

Bulgarias Interior Minister Rumyana Bachvarova told reporters that the authorities have detained 5,600 migrants who have tried to illegally cross the border with Serbia since the beginning of 2016.

A quarter of them have made a second attempt to enter into Serbia, Bachvarova added.

Serbias Interior Minister Nebojsa Stefanovic said that the country has arrested 2,000 persons for people smuggling and stressed on the need to combat trafficking.

The two ministers agreed that by ensuring the security of the Bulgarian-Serbian border the two countries protect the EUs external border. No country alone can cope with the migration tide, Bachvarova said.

Serbia's government decided last month to form joint teams of members of the military and police to patrol the countrys borders with Bulgaria and Macedonia and prevent attempts of illegal crossing by migrants.

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