

**12th Conference of the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI)
Cross-border Cooperation in Central Asia**

27 - 28 April 2016 – Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

KEY MESSAGES and RECOMMENDATIONS

The 12th CABSI Conference gathered more than 120 participants from 15 countries as well as 15 international organisations and donor's programmes working in the field of border security, migration management and trade facilitation.

The Conference was opened by Mr. Emil Kaikiev, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ambassador Peter Burian, EU Special Representative in Central Asia, Colonel Bakyt Zhylytyrov, Deputy Chairman of the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, and Mr. Anders Lundgren, OSCE German Chairmanship representative.

The event was moderated by Mr. Johann Bezdeka, Deputy Director General of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

SESSION 1: The Role of Border Management in Countering Violent Extremism and Cross-Border Organised Crime: Challenges and Opportunities

Moderator: **Dimitrijs Trofimovs**, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Republic of Latvia

Rapporteur: **Raitis Tiliks**, BOMCA 9 Regional Manager (State Border Guard of Latvia) / Attaché of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia in the Republic of Kazakhstan and in the Kyrgyz Republic

The floor was taken by the representatives of:

- **Uzbekistan**, State Border Guard Committee under the National Security Service
- **Tajikistan**, Border Troops
- **Kyrgyzstan**, State Border Service
- **Afghanistan**, Afghanistan Border Police
- **UN Office on Drugs and Crime**, Regional Office for Central Asia
- **OSCE**, Transnational Threats Department, Border Security and Management Unit
- **Russia**, Border Guards Operational Group in Kyrgyzstan
- Adviser to the **EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator**
- **U.S.**, Customs and Border Protection

KEY MESSAGES and RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. All speakers reiterated the importance of cooperation and willingness to cooperate. All border security actors were in agreement that cooperation for border management is crucial. Therefore, in particular intra-service, inter-agency and international cooperation components need to be developed.
2. There was a general message that the concept of state sovereignty is strongly linked to enhanced border security measures. Integrated Border Management, however, has no negative impact on a state sovereignty in our highly inter-linked world. Cooperation is therefore no threat to sovereignty. Rather, isolation and border barriers may lead to new risks for border security.
3. There was a common understanding that the fight against violent extremism is not only about strengthening borders. Increased cooperation to tackle the issue of foreign terrorist fighters is of essential importance.

4. There is need for an intelligence-led approach in border management. The intelligence-led approach is about cooperation at all levels. Advance readiness and situation awareness are at the core of this approach, which includes the use of modern risk analysis methodologies and tools.
5. Trafficking in illicit drugs was mentioned by several participants as one of the key threats to the region, and examples of steps taken to counter and prevent such illicit activities were provided. Cross-border cooperation was seen as key in making progress in this respect.
6. What is the role of effective border management with regard to 'sleeping cells' of foreign terrorist fighters who return to their home countries? Speakers mentioned the need to continue investments into border infrastructure and inter-connectivity of border control IT systems as an important tool to support national security agencies in dealing with 'sleeping cells'.
7. Many participants called for a human-rights compliant approach to countering terrorism. Obviously, the interests of society as a whole have a higher value than the interests of a single person. Nevertheless, human rights are to be fully respected. Countering terrorism cannot be used as an excuse for not upholding international human-rights standards.
8. International donors who plan to support border management in Central Asia are looking for sustainable and efficient border management systems to be put in place. At the same time, too much reliability on external support is not beneficial for the development of national border management capabilities. In this regard, specific areas for strengthening border security may be identified and additional state financial resources allocated for clearly targeted purposes.
9. The 'Handbook for Implementing the Integrated Border Management (IBM) Concept in Central Asia', which was elaborated by the EU-financed Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) programme in 2010, provides worldwide best IBM practices for the Central Asian region. It is recommended that the BOMCA 9 programme in consultation with the Central Asian border security agencies create a new and upgraded version of the IBM Handbook for Central Asia by 2018.
10. The possible future of Advance Passenger Information (API) systems in Central Asian international airports remains an open issue. There is still room for improvement when it comes to providing information and support on API to decision makers in Central Asia. Regarding the implementation of API systems, the main issues in all Central Asian countries are 'How' and 'When'. OSCE – to which all Central Asian states are participating states - is currently working towards a commitment to strengthen API systems across the OSCE area.

SESSION 2: Central Asia and Management of Mixed Migration Flows: Protecting State Security and Migrants' Rights

Moderator: Borut Eržen, Senior Programme Manager, Border Management and Visa Competence Centre, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Rapporteur: Yan Matusevich, Directorate Assistant, Eastern Dimension, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

The floor was taken by the representatives of:

- **Kyrgyzstan**, State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
- **Kazakhstan**, Ministry of Interior / Border Guard Service
- **Afghanistan**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Counter Organized Crime / UN Sanctions Disarmament Affairs
- **IOM**, Sub-regional Coordination Office for Central Asia
- **UNHCR**, Regional Representative and Regional Coordinator for Central Asia
- **FRONTEX**, External Relations Unit official

KEY MESSAGES and RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Participants recognized the pivotal role migration can play in economic development and stability. The region would benefit greatly from clear rules and procedures for legal migration, which requires closer cooperation among agencies responsible for legal migration both regionally as well as with external partners. One practical example was about how (within and outside of the region) migration could boost tourism, transportation and other closely related private business sectors, having positive effects on the economy (e.g. reducing costs for travels).
2. Gaining a better understanding of mixed migration flows to and from Central Asia is of utmost importance for assessing any potential security concerns, including those related to foreign terrorist fighters (FTF), addressing the needs of individual migrants and refugees and evaluating the root causes of migration flows. Implementing effective processes of identification and categorization of different types of mobility at the border was singled out as being of particular importance. It is essential for the resulting information and data to be shared with relevant partners and stakeholders on a regional level.
3. There is a pronounced need for more regional cooperation and dialogue built on trust and open channels of communication. Developing regional partnerships does not, however, mean applying a one-size-fits-all approach to all countries in the region. In this respect there is clearly room for introducing the Integrated Border Management concept, specifically tailored to the realities and capabilities of agencies and institutions in Central Asia.
4. While recognizing the legitimate security concerns of individual states, participants highlighted that there need not be a tradeoff between security and human rights. On the contrary, the protection of human rights is an important factor in strengthening security also in the long term. Furthermore, the promotion of regional interconnectivity remains one of the key mechanisms for ensuring long-term security across national borders.
5. There is a number of international conventions to regulate migration and the status and protection of refugees. Therefore, there is a need to adopt relevant international conventions as the proper and adequate legal and institutional framework.
6. For the purpose of ensuring a harmonized regional approach, the development of regional guidelines would help to better manage mixed migration flows. In particular circumstances – such as a sudden increase of migration and refugee flows – countries need to be well prepared in advance, hence it was proposed to develop effective contingency planning.
7. Improved regional cooperation and an increased knowledge base on migration flows should be applied in order to anticipate future trends, developments and potential threats as well as to raise the preparedness of the region to respond to emergency situations that may arise in the years to come.
8. In this respect, the role of FRONTEX was mentioned. FRONTEX is not only an EU player that supports Member States in managing mixed migration flows, but it also cooperates with third states and international and regional organizations. Equally important is the role played by NGOs, IOs and other relevant institutions such as ICMPD, IOM, and UNHCR.

SESSION 3: Trade Facilitation and Envisaged Benefits for Central Asian People

Moderator: Rimutis Klevečka, Ambassador-at-Large and Special Envoy for Border Management, Republic of Lithuania

Rapporteur: William Lawrence, EU – BOMNAF and JICA-BMP Project Manager

The floor was taken by the representatives of:

- **Uzbekistan**, Anti-Smuggling Main Department, State Customs Committee
- **Kazakhstan**, State Revenue Committee



European Union

- **OSCE**, Transnational Threats Department
- **Kyrgyzstan**, Deputy Minister of Economy
- **UNRCCA** (the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia)
- **EU-BOMNAF and JICA-BMP programmes**, Project Manager

KEY MESSAGES and RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Many comprehensive programmes to improve Trade Facilitation and the business environment go far beyond the Central Asian region and benefit commercial border crossings.
2. Cross-border organised crime creates challenges for border security and the promotion of trade. In line with expanding transport corridors and the establishment of new trade routes it is necessary to keep in focus cooperation initiatives to counteract cross-border organised crime in all its forms.
3. There is need for a specific and comprehensive approach to security and trade. The issue of developing trade promotion between Central Asian countries was raised to support the 'Single Window' approach and information exchange.
4. While trans-continental transport connections, trade corridors and bilateral structures are being continually improved, promoting regional cooperation and sustainable development, the intra-regional corridors also support implementation of e-customs regimes, improvement of BCPs and customs services.
5. Several participants drew attention to the fact that delimitation and demarcation of borders should be completed before trade facilitation can be seriously considered or fully addressed.
6. The apparent reluctance of some delegates to discuss trade facilitation or cooperation in business and commerce issues may be symptomatic of the general situation in Central Asia. Also, in some cases, current visa regimes do not encourage regional trade facilitation. Despite assertions that business and trade is high on the Central Asian agenda, statistics show that more work needs to be done in the future.
7. Lobbying and active advocacy is needed to improve and increase the use of Cross Border Markets (CBMs). People living in border areas invariably ask for more trading opportunities. It is observed that most CBMs along the border between Afghanistan and Central Asia have remained closed since July 2014 or earlier. It was recommended that Ishkashim and Tem CBMs both be re-opened as soon as possible and stay open on both sides of the border on fixed days as well as at reliable, fixed hours.
8. National security does not only include border security and counter-terrorism activities; it also implies economic security, food, water and electricity security, as well as personal security in health, human-rights protection and physical safety.

Bishkek, 28 April 2016



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State Border Guard
Republic of Latvia



ICMPD

International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

