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### BOMCA overview

Since its launch in 2003, the BOMCA Programme has implemented phases targeting capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors improving border management systems and eliminating drug trafficking across the Central Asia region. Every new phase of BOMCA was designed to gradually continue the Actions implemented during the preceding phases of the Programme. During its earlier phases, the Programme focused its resources on creating modern border management infrastructure.

Building on the success of the previous phases, this 9th phase intends to continue interventions in the area of institutional development, management of migration flows and trade facilitation. Its overall objective is to increase effectiveness and efficiency of border management in Central Asia by introducing advanced elements of the integrated Border Management (IBM), assisting governments in developing and reforming their migration governance, mobility and trade facilitation policies, strengthening capacities of Border and Migration Agencies, and, thus contributing to the security and economic development at national and regional levels. The 9th phase of BOMCA Programme was launched in June 2015 for 36 months with the total budget of 4 954 784,93 Euro.



Dear reader,

Since 2003 the BOMCA Programme has become a consistent partner for the five Central Asian countries in the field of Integrated Border Management. With the support of the European Union, the BOMCA beneficiaries receive considerable support in capacity building and infrastructure improvement, amongst other benefits.

Now it's time for the ninth phase of BOMCA to be jointly implemented. I would like to point out that, for the first time in its history, implementation of the BOMCA Programme is being entrusted to the Consortium of the European Union countries and International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

Latvia and Lithuania, and the five Central Asian countries were in a similar situation in the last century, du-

ring the early 90s. Changes in the geopolitical situation, the renewal and establishment of independent states, and border and territorial issues were only a small part of the challenges we faced about 25 years ago. Step by step we were building our integrated border management systems, which definitely are not only about the border line. We are gradually developing our strategic and institutional platforms in a modern inter-linked world with the support of our friends by adjusting advanced approved practices of other countries. I believe that the experience gained by the BOMCA 9 Consortium members and their professional nature allows us to be confident in the success of the Programme.

I would like to wish all of us endurance and perseverance.

Sincerely,

Normunds Garbars

Chief of the State Border Guard of Latvia

BOMCA 9 Coordinator

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## First Programme activities in the region take place

From late September to the beginning of November five missions to Central Asian countries took place, becoming the first activities in the region under the 9<sup>th</sup> phase of BOMCA. The team, consisting of representatives from the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Riga Technical University, the State Border Guard of Latvia, the Customs Department of Lithuania, met with representatives of border, customs and migration agencies in each of the countries visited, namely Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

The key objective of these missions was to inform national agencies - the beneficiaries in the new phase - about the start of the Programme, assess the current

situation, analyse and review data, and together with beneficiaries define gaps, needs and areas to which a greater Programme emphasis should be given.

A series of meetings were held with representatives of border, customs and migration agencies, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Agriculture. In addition, meetings were conducted with international stakeholders present in the region, including IOM, OSCE, UNHCR, and the EXBS Programme of the US Embassy.

The assessment missions were an important milestone for the inception period of the Programme. The missions were not only an opportunity to present the complex structure of the Programme to its beneficiaries but also to review and fine-tune certain activities with a view to

actual needs and current national priorities.

The results of these visits will be summarised in the report and incorporated into the work plan for the implementation period, which shall be discussed during the 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Group meeting.



## BOMCA Regional Office opens its doors to partners and international stakeholders

On 25 November, the Regional Office of BOMCA was officially opened in Bishkek in order to facilitate implementation of the programme, both at the national and regional levels.

The ribbon was cut by General N. Garbars, Chief of the State Border Guard of Latvia and Programme Coordinator, and Mr. Borut Eržen, Senior Programme Manager of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). Representatives from Riga Technical University and the State Border Guard of Latvia also attended the opening and shared the joy of this im-

portant milestone with BOMCA team.

In his opening speech, General Garbars stressed the role of the office for the programme. "We are proud to celebrate the Inauguration of the office and the start of ninth phase of BOMCA."

Set up for the implementation period of the ninth phase of the programme, the office hosts national and international staff who will facilitate implementation of the programme.

The role of the office is two-fold: the team will facilitate activities in Kyrgyzstan as well as coordinate programme activities at the regional



level, thus providing support to the country offices in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



## The Programme celebrates its official launch



On 26 November 2015 in Bishkek, the 9<sup>th</sup> phase of the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA), together with the 6<sup>th</sup> phase of the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP), held a joint conference which marked the official launch of both programmes.



For over a decade the programmes have been implemented in the region in parallel, with both targeting the main actual topics on the agenda of Central Asian countries and being flagship initiatives for the European Union.

The core objective of the conference was to present an overview of the new phases of both pro-

grammes, elaborate on their key objectives and expected results, and define priorities and joint actions at the regional level.

The event opened with a warm welcome from H.E. Cesare de Montis, Ambassador of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic. In his speech, Ambassador de Montis underlined the regional nature and role of both initiatives. “CADAP and BOMCA can play an important positive and constructive role in the region by enhancing cooperation between all five Central Asian republics in strategically important areas such as border management, trade facilitation, migration flows, and drug addiction treatment and prevention”, he said.

The Head of the Kyrgyz Delegation, Deputy Head of Defence, Law Enforcement and Emergency Department of the Prime Minister’s office Mr. Damir Sagynbaev, congratulated the audience on the new start of the programmes and highlighted that BOMCA is considered by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

one of the largest EU-funded Programmes in the security area. “The Kyrgyz Republic and European Union have ample cooperation experience, based on partnership, trust and mutual respect”, he said.

The event gathered together over a hundred participants including representatives of the key beneficiary agencies of both programmes, namely border security, customs, and migration agencies, as well as representatives of other stakeholders, such as embassies of the CA countries, EU Member States, and international organisations involved in the implementation of activities in the area of border management.

By offering opportunities to meet, discuss and exchange expertise and professional opinions, the conference was the next step towards strengthening the regional platform on border management and promoting cooperation and interaction among partners and stakeholders.



# 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Steering Group meeting discusses plans for 2016



On 27 November 2015, the First Regional Steering Group meeting gathered together delegates from the border, customs and migration agencies of the Central Asian countries and representatives of the implementing partners in order to discuss plans for the first year of the programme implementation.

The presence of the key beneficiaries of BOMCA and leaders of three thematic components, was key to constructive discussions during the meeting. Following the presentation of the detailed objectives of each component, activities

planned for the next year and expected results, the floor was opened for discussion. This was the key part of the meeting and allowed the identification of additional needs and further recommendations from the CA delegates' side. These contributions shall be taken into account during the finalisation of the work plan for the next year.

Being the first of its kind in the current phase of the programme, the meeting was important not only in terms of discussing plans for the first year of the programme implementation, but also laid a founda-

tion for further cooperation and established a forum for the presentation of achievements, evaluation of results, and feedback. It is planned that these regional meetings will take place on a yearly basis throughout implementation period.



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