

# BOMCA 9

## Border Management Programme in Central Asia (9<sup>th</sup> phase)

Newsletter №7 (2017)

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### BOMCA overview

Since its launch in 2003, the various phases of the BOMCA Programme have focused on capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors, improving border management systems and eliminating drug trafficking across the Central Asia region. Each new phase of BOMCA was designed to gradually build upon and consolidate the results achieved during the preceding phases of the Programme. During its earlier phases, the Programme channelled its resources towards creating modern border management infrastructure in 5 Central Asian countries.

Capitalising on the success of previous phases, this 9<sup>th</sup> phase intends to continue interventions in the area of institutional development, management of migration flows and trade facilitation. Its overall objective is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of border management in Central Asia by introducing advanced elements of Integrated Border Management (IBM), assisting governments in developing and reforming their migration governance, mobility and trade facilitation policies, and strengthening capacities of Border and Migration Agencies, and thus contributing to enhanced security and economic development at the national and regional levels.

The 9<sup>th</sup> phase of the BOMCA Programme was launched in June 2015 for 36 months with a total budget of 4 954 784.93 Euro.



*It is the regional dimension that makes the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) such an exceptional EU and its two Member States-funded programme. Since 2003, BOMCA has played an important and constructive role in the region by enhancing the cooperation between all five Central Asian states in strategically important areas such as border management, trade facilitation and migration policies. Only effective regional cooperation and improved cross-border relations between neighbouring countries can ensure stability and prosperity in the region.*

*In 2017, the region experienced positive improvement in terms of border delimitation processes, regional integration, and trade and connectivity relations. We look forward to seeing whether the BOMCA 9 Programme, which has been extended to the end of 2019, can use its capacities to support these positive processes in 2018-2019 and effectively respond to the regional needs.*

*It is a fact that positive cross-border relations play an important role in guaranteeing stability in Central Asia, while better trade relations can significantly improve the citizen's quality of life. The Central Asian economies have great potential given their well-educated population, abundance of*

*natural resources and cultural and geographical diversity.*

*I would like to express my appreciation to the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia for implementing a very ambitious programme, and express my gratitude to the Kyrgyz Government for hosting the regional management of BOMCA 9.*

**Luca Carapelli, Project Manager**

**European Union Delegation  
in the Kyrgyz Republic**

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## Component 1: Institutional development of border management agencies

### 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial CABS I Conference held in Vienna

On 4 October 2017, Vienna hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> Central Asia Border Security Initiative Conference (CABS I), gathering over 100 international participants to discuss issues related to transnational organised crime, migration challenges and responses, and trade facilitation. The conference was hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and organised in cooperation with the European Commission, the BOMCA 9 Programme and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). It gathered officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and EU Member States, as well as key international actors in the field of Conference topics.

During discussions, the participants looked into good practices in the abovementioned areas that could also be applied in Central Asia in



order to further promote border management and security. Important threats and challenges were also discussed, such as foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), return migration, human rights of migrants, connectivity, and regional security. Related tools and mechanisms, strategies and approaches to enable state agencies to deal with cross-border trafficking activities, FTF identifica-

tion and profiling, migration governance, and trade facilitation were all given consideration. The CABS I was launched in 2002.. Since then, the CABS I's role has gone far beyond the framework of an information exchange platform; proving itself to be a solid mechanism for stakeholder dialogue on border management in Central Asia.

### Distance Learning System Launched in Kyrgyzstan



BOMCA 9 has introduced a distance learning tool in Kyrgyzstan to be used in the education and retraining of border guards. The system will interconnect the spots in two continents - Training Centre of the State Border Service, the Border Guard Faculty of Military Armed Forces Institute (Kyrgyzstan), the Border Guard College in Rezekne, Latvia and Riga Technical University (Latvia). Videoconferencing and lessons via vi-deo will provide students and teachers with an immer-

sive, innovative learning experience that combines high-definition video and audio tools - officers and teachers will be able to connect to students in real time, without having to physically attend the classroom.

A joint decision to set up the system at the Border Service Training Centre in Osh and Border Guard faculty of the Military Armed Forces Institute was taken in March 2017 during BOMCA 9 Technical Mission aimed at testing the internet capacities in both agencies, as well as assessing their technical needs and exploring the different technical solutions for system functioning.

From April to October 2017, a group of technical experts together with the BOMCA team worked on Terms of Reference (ToR) development, equipment purchase and delivery,

and installation and testing of the system.

On 3 November 2017 the system was officially handed over and a test connection between Kyrgyzstan and Latvia made, with the first pilot lecture being conducted by the Border Guard College in Rezekne, Latvia. Based on their training needs and capacities, the Kyrgyz side is developing a plan for video lectures that will be given to Latvian students from Kyrgyzstan and also a list of expected topics for the lectures to be given by the Latvian side.



## Learning from the Latvian Experience in HR, Financial Planning and Control

The last quarter of 2017 was marked by a number of the various events within Component 1 aiming to strengthen the sustainable capacity of the border agencies in the region.

Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2017, a study visit to Latvia was organised for the Border Guard, Customs, and phytosanitary and veterinary services representatives of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It formed the final stage of the national workshops on HR and finance planning which were conducted in all five Central Asian countries during the course of 2016 and 2017. Based on the training needs revealed during the national workshops, a total of 12 national partners took part in the visit and expanded their knowledge and skills in the area of HR management and financial planning and control. The visit provided an opportunity to comprehensively evaluate the Latvian law enforcement agencies system of human resources management and financial management and control.

After splitting up into three working groups—phyto-veterinary/sanitary agencies, customs officers and border guards, study tour participants learned about EU good practices in such areas of intra-service management as personnel selection and admission processes, code of ethics and conduct, preventing and combating corruption, development of

fiscal discipline, and budget planning and control. The visit was part of BOMCA 9 activities aiming to provide information exchange on management of human resources and financial planning and control in compliance with international standards and replicating good EU models and practices.



## Strengthening Interagency Cooperation at Border Crossing Points

Workshops on interagency cooperation at border crossing points were held in Astana (2-4 October 2017) and Ashgabat (7-9 November 2017) and followed the successful implementation of a similar event in Bishkek in July 2017. The events brought together representatives from the Border Guard and Customs services of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan as well as BOMCA 9 experts from the Latvian State Border Guard. The purpose of the workshops was to promote the Integrated Border Management (IBM) concept, wherein interagency cooperation among all relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and customs is one of the three pillars within IBM. The workshops also provided a good opportunity for sharing experiences in this area and learning about solutions based on the Latvian experience. During the workshops, draft agreements for interagency cooperation and information exchange within and between the



border-related agencies were elaborated based on international practices. In the wider context, this BOMCA activity aims to strengthen the practical implementation of interagency cooperation, in particular, creating joint mobile groups, conducting joint risk analysis and

strategic planning, and joint vehicle search - i.e. practical measures that look to strengthen cooperation between the agencies which perform duties at different types of Border Crossing Points, and establish information flows.



## Component 2: Institutional framework for management of mixed migration flows at borders

### ToT on Document Security for Border Agencies of Central Asian States

Further development of the legal and procedural instruments, introduction of advanced practices of cross-border mobility and addressing the multifaceted challenges caused by mixed migration flows are the key objectives of Component 2. A series of workshops and technical missions were carried out.

Between 14-16 November 2017 in Tashkent, BOMCA conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) on advanced level document security for relevant national experts from the Border Guard agencies and training institutions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The event's intensive agenda included the use of a variety of interactive tools and exercises on topics such as types of document security; technical means for verification of documents and falsification detection; processing

of documents; ways of document production and requirements for inks. Special attention was paid to the most effective methods of detecting false documents. Thus, at the end of the training, participants were provided with detailed and visual methodological tools on personalisation techniques, containing information on modern personalisation techniques (colour personalisation of

polymer documents, stereo laser images, etc.) and the techniques used to print various different types of photographs. Furthermore, in order to support newly trained national training experts, training curricula and supporting materials were shared, so as to enable them to transfer this knowledge within their institutions.



### New Video Spectral Comparator for Uzbek Border Guards



While the main focus of the BOMCA programme is 'soft' components, strengthening professional skills and expertise in the relevant areas, technical support in the form of equipment is also provided to each Central Asian country. The handover of equipment in the region started in Uzbekistan. The State Security Committee received a new generation Regula-brand Video Spectral Comparator.

The new is able to analyse encoded information embedded in passport documents, conduct automated verification of the document, and examine the materials used in the document's production (to determine the quality and types of printing, special paints and other protective elements used). The uniqueness of the Regula video spectral comparator lies in its integrated chip reader. The device provides a high-quality digital image and the ability to process, save and archive images. On 20 and 21 November 2017 in Tashkent, the representatives of the Regula Company conducted training on operational and functional capabilities and maintenance issues.

Provision of this piece of technical equipment is supported by strengthening of the relevant skills. Since 2015, BOMCA in Central Asia has conducted two national and two regional Trainings of Trainers on Document Security, thus strengthening the skills of the national training experts in identification of forged and falsified documents.

Procurement of technical equipment for the other four countries in the region is ongoing and should be completed in 2018, with handover ceremonies taking place at the respective agencies in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.



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## Standards of Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants Discussed in Bishkek and Ashgabat



Between 12-15 September in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and 11-13 December 2017 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, workshops on standards of assistance to vulnerable migrants were conducted. The events served as fora for governmental stakeholders and European experts to exchange experience and explore the international standards for providing basic services to vulnerable migrants, including readmission. Over the course of the three-day workshops, govern-

ment counterparts and BOMCA 9 experts from Estonia and the State Border Guard of Latvia shared findings and discussed ways to respond to the needs of victims of trafficking (VoTs) and migrants in accordance with international standards and best practices.

During the workshops, participants were introduced to the concept and mechanism of the national referral system, and discussed VoT identifi-

cation criteria and state standards on identification and referral of VoTs based on the victim-centred approach. The purpose of these two events was to provide relevant stakeholders with best practices on counter-trafficking efforts and readmission, and further promote an effective approach in identification and referral of victims of trafficking and other vulnerable groups.

The overall goal of this BOMCA activity is to further develop the region's legal and procedural instruments, introduce advanced practices to promote cross-border mobility, and address the multifaceted challenges caused by mixed migration flows from, though, and to Central Asia. This includes ensuring proper identification of, and protection for, vulnerable migrants, notably labour migrants; promoting advanced local border traffic regimes; and the use of the EU guidelines and examples from EU external borders.

## Kazakhstan's Border Guards Attend Workshop on Traveller Identification and Profiling



Between 11-13 December 2017, BOMCA conducted a national workshop for Kazakhstan's border guards and law enforcement officers on identification and profiling techniques. This initiative is intended to improve the existing legal and procedural instruments for managing both regular and irregular migration, and to help better manage the current challenges in identification of potentially dangerous persons who may pose a risk to public order and security. It aims to present

EU good practices in the area of identification and profiling of different groups of travellers and to introduce modern mechanisms for recognising different categories of persons crossing the borders.

During the workshop, the trainees went through a number of key topics in relation to the operational and criminal profiling and identification of state border perpetrators, foreign terrorist fighters (FTF), possibly wanted persons and other persons whose border crossing is in the focus of law enforcement and national security agencies. Components of identification such as face detection, assessment of danger, non-contact lie detection, analysis of traveller behaviour and countenance, and primary surveillance were learned in detail and prac-

ticed. Techniques of luggage and transportation means searches were also evaluated as an important part of the complex profiling process. The training agenda effectively combined both theoretical and practical exercises, and was accompanied by interactive tools and methods such as plenary discussions, group work, practical examples, videos and visualisation slides.

Based on the results of this activity, which is being conducted within the BOMCA 9 Programme in each Central Asian country, the EU experts developed recommendations for aligning the existing profiling and identification mechanisms at national level with international standards and good practices.



## Component 3: Adoption of trade facilitation regimes at borders

### Central Asian Countries Move closer to Revised Kyoto Convention Accession



**The 3rd Component of BOMCA 9 aims to introduce measures improving flow of goods efficiency at the borders, and thus facilitating regional and international trade. Workshops and working meetings are being held with national counterparts to reviews national legislation and its compatibility with international standards and agreements.**

Between 13-15 September 2017, a regional workshop on the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) was conducted in Almaty, Kazakhstan, gath-

ering together key national partners from the customs agencies of Central Asian countries. The workshop ended a series of working meetings conducted in each country, where discussions on the RKC and its implementation aspects were conducted and the compatibility of the countries' national legislation assessed and reviewed.

European experts presented comparative analysis reports, which have been developed based on country assessments showing the compatibility of national customs legislations with the provisions of the RKC based on country-specific examples, and which describe related measures planned or already implemented by the Central Asian countries. The main objectives of the workshop were to jointly review the national customs legislations and their com-

patibility with the RKC standards, promote the Convention's advantages, and provide final recommendations related to accession.

Particular issues of customs procedures such as customs control and declaration processing, procedures of temporary storage of goods, check of goods and customs clearance, and use of IT technologies in Central Asian countries were discussed, and the relevant legislative documents were evaluated and compared with the General Annex Standards.

The general goal of this BOMCA activity is awareness raising on accession to and/or implementation of the RKC, which is important for the introduction of advanced, effective and trade-friendly customs controls.

### Promoting the one-stop concept at Central Asian borders

A regional workshop on advancing cross-border procedures through one-stop customs inspection was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan between 10-12 October 2017, gathering customs, border guard agencies and phytosanitary agencies from the Central Asian countries with the main goal of increasing their awareness of the potential of one-stop shops to create new possibilities for economic growth and people mobility across borders. BOMCA experts presented the European experience of introducing one-stop border posts that help to avoid duplication of clearance procedures at borders for people and goods whilst maximising the efficiency of control by avoiding unnecessary duplication of clearance procedures, increasing cooperation, shar-

ing information and trade data, and enabling better resource utilisation.

Participants were unanimous in their agreement that development of one-stop shops will bring measurable benefits to governments, economic

operators and communities. However, in order to make the one-stop concept fully operational, there is a need to create a corresponding legal basis and the related legal procedures.



## Component 3: Adoption of trade facilitation regimes at borders

### Modern Import Risk Analysis Systems Discussed in Tashkent



al Plant Protection Convention, participants discussed the possible advancement of a legislative framework that would promote a more harmonised approach to import control and create a more transparent, up-to-date and effective system of import and export controls, allowing more coherence in and integration of the different control mechanisms and different approaches currently in place.

European experts gave an overview of the main principles for trade facilitation measures at border checkpoints and presented good practices. Aspects such as legislation, control programmes and procedures, decision criteria and action, appropriate facilities, equipment, transportation and communication tools for risk-based import controls, trained personnel, and accredited laboratory capacities were emphasised as the main conditions for trade facilitation improvement.

Between 12-14 December 2017, a BOMCA expert team met with key national partners from the State Committee of Uzbekistan to jointly assess the existing practices and procedures of import risk analysis and control. This BOMCA activity aims to sustain institutional development of the State Veterinary Committee in the areas covered by international trade facilitation conventions. In particular, it intends to

extend awareness on the veterinary border check and effective application of risk analysis.

By reviewing and consolidating existing national and international regulations, such as the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the International Standards of Phytosanitary Measures of Internation-

### International Practice on Criminal Investigation in Risk Management Introduced to Kyrgyz Customs Officers

Effective risk management systems in customs are a powerful tool that allow authorities to focus on the most risky areas of border control, to differentiate those involved in trade and, consequently, to keep a proper balance between facilitation of legitimate trade and prevention of illegal activities in the international trade chain. Thus, it is important to ensure that such a system is in place and being implemented properly by customs/border guard officers. To this end, between 12-14 December 2017, a BOMCA expert team met with national partners from the Kyrgyz Customs to jointly assess the exist-

ing national practices and procedures for risk analysis and criminal investigation in customs clearance and control. This BOMCA activity provided technical assistance in the development and improvement of the risk management systems currently in place in the Central Asian countries.

By reviewing and consolidating various existing national and international regulations, national and European experts exchanged experience and practices on criminal investigation and its principles, and the interconnectivity between e-intelligence with risk management.

The integration of criminal investigation into risk analysis systems will promote a more harmonised approach to customs control and create a more transparent, up-to-date and effective system of import controls, allowing more coherence in and integration of the different control mechanisms in place.



## Support to cooperation and coordination mechanisms

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Steering Group Meeting Takes Place in Astana



On 29 November 2017, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Steering Group (RSG) meeting of BOMCA 9 Programme was held in Astana, Kazakhstan. Representatives from the border guard and customs services, foreign affairs ministries, of each Central Asian (CA) country together with BOMCA Consortium partners and representatives from the Delegation of the European Union jointly assessed the Programme's achievements and challenges to date, discussed the work plan for 2018 and spoke about country priorities with regard to possible BOMCA continuation beyond 2018.

In period June 2015 – November 2017, over 1,900 beneficiaries from the five CA countries have participated in 198 events of BOMCA 9

with various different scopes - from national and regional workshops to technical assistance missions, on-the-job trainings and study visits to EU Member States and other CA countries. Now in its continued 9<sup>th</sup> phase, BOMCA intends to conduct up to 30 activities in the first half of 2018.

One of the important points raised during the meetings was the intention of the European Commission to extend the current BOMCA 9 phase until 14 December 2019. For

this, the EU is allocating additional funding of ca. EUR 1.6 million. While official consultations on the CA countries' support of the extension take place at the governmental level, during the RSG meeting the Final Beneficiaries did express their priorities to be taken into consideration concerning the extension period. These proposals will be taken in account in the designing of activities for the extension period and be further shared with the national partners in spring 2018.



### International Donors Coordinate their Efforts in the Area of Border Management



Between 10-14 November 2017, International Donor Coordination meetings took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, with the main purpose being to get a better understanding of donor interventions in the border management area in these countries and align those interventions

with the countries' specific and strategic needs. The meetings presented another opportunity to exchange information between donors and government beneficiaries and initiate proposals for effective coordination mechanisms.

The meetings were focused on the activities and achievements of the BOMCA programme in 2017 and the plans for 2018. The representatives of the international and donor organisations - the EU, the OSCE, the UNDP and the UNHCR - participating at the meetings presented ongoing activities and planned projects from their side. In turn, their

governmental counterparts provided their guests with input on the national priorities in the border management sector and underlined the importance of donor support and involvement.

Both events were useful in terms of maximising the development impact of donor-supported programmes through their better alignment with country programmes and strengthened donor coordination. They also provided an opportunity for government beneficiaries to clarify their needs and promote new project ideas for donor support.



State Border Guard  
Republic of Latvia



## BOMCA's Contribution to the Fight against Corruption Recognised by Kyrgyz Government



In recent years, the intensified fight against corruption in the Kyrgyz Republic has become a central issue in the public affairs of the State. The Government of Kyrgyzstan places high on the agenda the fight against corruption and increased strengthening of the anti-corruption measures in the national context.

In order to assist the Kyrgyz Government in combating corruption within its state bodies, BOMCA 9 conducted in 2016 an advisory

mission on anti-corruption at the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic (Border Service) and the State Inspection of Veterinary and Phytosanitary Security (State Inspection). BOMCA experts together with representatives of the Defence Council, the Government Office, the Border Service, and the State Inspection jointly reviewed the organisational structure, duties and procedures of the relevant agencies, and carried out an assessment of conformity of organi-

sational tasks, competences, rights and obligations of employees. Intra-agency Action Plans were developed with short-term and medium-term objectives and priorities for the fight against corruption in the Border Service and the State Inspection. During a subsequent meeting of the Defence Council, these Action Plans were reviewed, approved and transferred to these agencies for implementation and introduction of anti-corruption measures such as structure optimisation, increased transparency and control processes, and procurement procedure reforms.

On 9 December 2017, during the Conference on the fight against corruption in the Kyrgyz Republic, BOMCA 9 received a Gratitude Letter from the President Office, with thanks for the support it has provided to the Kyrgyz Government's anti-corruption measures.

In February 2018 upon request from the Kyrgyz side the same activity was conducted for the State Customs Service - BOMCA experts together with national partners evaluated the agency, its structure, make a series of field visits and updated to the next level the existing anti-corruption Action Plan.

## For more information:

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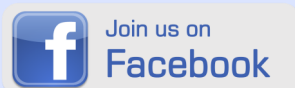
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