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Dear friends,

The European Union sees Central Asia (CA) as one of the most strategically important regions. Transregional challenges such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, organised crime and terrorism influence EU interests. As border security is one of the key elements for the stability of the whole region, in 2002, the EU developed a special programme, the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA), to enhance security, fight illegal trafficking, and facilitate trade in the region. Since inception, the programme has been specifically linked to a number of EU objectives set forth in its strategic documents.

Launched in 2003, BOMCA has implemented phases targeting capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors, improving border management systems and eliminating drug trafficking across Central Asia. Each new

phase of BOMCA has been designed to gradually continue the Actions implemented from each preceding phase of the programme.

During its earlier phases, the programme focused its resources on creating a modern border management infrastructure boasting the latest equipment. With time, the horizons of BOMCA became broader and the actions of the 9th Phase targeted not only border guards (BGs), but included other authorities working in the areas of customs, migration, drug control and agriculture. In cooperation and partnership with these different authorities, we have implemented interventions in the areas of institutional development, management of migration flows and trade facilitation.

Through the programme, we continued to promote the overall objective of integrated border management for building the capacity for the development of harmonised and coordinated border management strategies and institutions, thereby improving cross-border cooperation and facilitating the flow of persons and goods between the Central Asian countries.

Our experts worked in a number of areas; developing recommendations on a wide range of issues in the field of competences of border authorities, including anti-corruption measures, the development of a distance learning system, the optimisation of border control procedures and strengthening interagency- and regional cooperation.

In total, 226 activities were implemented by end of April 2020 in Central Asia, with the engagement of more than 3 250 state officials from beneficiary agencies, and provided equipment to 5 CA countries worth over 445 000 EUR. A significant part of BOMCA's recommendations is being applied in practice or considered as potentially applicable.

I would like to thank all the partners for their efforts, commitment and high professionalism and express my hope for the soonest opportunity to cooperate again.

Gen. Guntis Pujats

**Project Coordinator
Head of State Border Guard
of the Republic of Latvia**

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Component 1: Institutional development of border management agencies

The objective of Component 1 is to sustain the institutional development of border guard agencies. In the first quarter of 2020, a workshop and technical assistance mission were held, aimed to strengthen strategic planning capacity and to present an experience of delegating border control functions between border agencies in the region.

On 12-14 November 2019, a regional workshop on inter-agency cooperation in the area of joint strategic management was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The workshop gathered 20 representatives of border and customs agencies from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and was facilitated by experts from the State Border Guard of Latvia, State Revenue Service of Latvia and the Estonian Academy of Internal Security. The main aim of the workshop was to strengthen inter-agency cooperation by developing practical recommendations on joint strategic management in border agencies.

During the workshop, national ex-

Border agencies of Central Asia enhancing inter-agency cooperation in the area of joint strategic management

perts presented their countries' and agencies' strategic development systems and IBM-related strategies (overall structure, legal base, main directions and implementation stage). European experts, in their turn, presented best practices of EU Member States in developing inter-agency and international cooperation at the strategic level. Based on

mutual discussions, directions for further improvement will be identified, and recommendations will be developed by the expert group on strengthening the inter-agency cooperation among border agencies based on joint strategic management and IBM development at the strategic level.



Supporting the Food Security Committee of Tajikistan in drafting its development strategy



BOMCA considers supporting border management agencies in their institutional capacity building to be a priority, and takes into account that proper strategy is one of the most important preconditions for progress and sustainability within an agency. Thus, support was provided in drafting the Development Strategy of the Food

Security Committee of Tajikistan and its Department on the State Border and Transport (further – Department)

During the technical mission that took place on 19-21 January 2020, site visits and bilateral and multilateral meetings were held in the first part of the week with management and operational staff of the Food Security Committee of Tajikistan and its Department on the State Border and Transport. Next, BOMCA experts reviewed the state-of-play in the Department with special attention paid to the legislation and regulations determining the functions and

responsibilities of the Department, regulations and control procedures, the internal control system and code of ethics, the order of exchange of information and cooperation with other agencies and departments.

Following the mission, the experts drafted the Strategy on Development and its Action Plan. Both documents were presented to the management and operational staff of the Department during the second meeting in March 2020.



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Component 1: Institutional development of border management agencies

Principles of delegation of functions in border and customs control discussed in Almaty

A regional workshop on enhancing inter-agency cooperation in the area of the delegation of functions in border and customs control took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 11 February 2020. The event gathered 20 representatives from Border and Customs Services from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

In 2013, the European Commission developed guidelines for cooperation between border guards and customs agencies. One of the recommended areas of cooperation is synchronising border checks, the delegation of which is one of the most advanced levels of complexity.

Recently, in EU countries such as Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, a method of delegating functions between customs and border services at the first border control line is being actively developed. This method enables the acceleration of the movement of passengers and goods across the border and the more effective use of resources at

border agencies. Within this workshop, EU experts presented their experiences in delegating border control functions at checkpoints, thereby providing participants with an opportunity to become acquainted with this innovation and to discuss its benefits and risks.

Inter-agency cooperation is given particular attention, with its main

objectives and legal framework of synchronised control and the delegation of functions/tasks of border and customs controls at the checkpoint, cooperation in the field of information exchange and risk analysis. Based on best practices from Finland, Estonia and Lithuania, practical examples of implementing this method, including the analysis of the results, were presented to participants.



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

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.

On the 14 November 2019, a transfer ceremony of video/photo editing equipment purchased by BOMCA Programme for a total

Transfer of the equipment to Cynology Training Center and State Border Institute of Turkmenistan

amount of 58,000 Euros was held. PC computer with two monitors, photo camera with lens, action cameras, trap cameras, notebook, drone with camera, mobile video streaming studio and other components were provided for the Training Unit of Cynology Department of the State Border Service.

Above mentioned equipment will be used for preparation of video training materials and enhance the use of innovative educational approaches at the Cynology Training Center and State Border Institute.



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

Regional workshop on border demarcation principles

From 3-5 December 2019, BOMCA organised a three-day regional workshop on border demarcation principles for representatives of relevant state agencies of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The activity held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, brought together delegates representing Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Border Services, Governmental and Presidential Offices and National Commissions on demarcation issues.

The goal of this BOMCA activity was to highlight the experience, challenges and practical examples of demarcation on Latvian borders with neighbouring countries, which would give the possibility to participating officials to adapt certain useful aspects into their own countries' local context.

The agenda offered an opportunity to study the Latvian experience on

demarcation processes of the state border. The participants received a detailed overview of the steps, challenges and solutions identified by the Latvian colleagues while going through demarcation processes. Particular attention was given to international and national legal bases, decision-making mechanisms,

functioning of the border delegate system and practical aspects of the work of the demarcation commission. Both guests and hosting experts shared national experiences and best practices of bilateral cooperation on border demarcation, as well as the challenges encountered in the process.



Discussing risk analysis at road checkpoints



On February 18-20, 2020 Tashkent was hosting national seminar on risk analysis at road checkpoints.

BOMCA experts together with representatives of the Border Troops of the State Security Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan reviewed the basic principles of risk analysis in relation to road checkpoints. Participants got acquainted with the principles of risk analysis developed by the FRONTEX Agency and implemented in the EU countries - methods for preparing the analysis, investigating signs of border violation, as well as the tasks and functions

of the employees involved. Based on the presented European experience, a comparative analysis of risk analysis systems in the Border Troops of the State Security Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union was carried out, as well as standard guidelines for risk analysis at the local level (for road checkpoints) were developed.



Synergies and cooperation

In addition to the work done under the main thematic components, in the first quarter of 2020, BOMCA held several events related to strengthening cooperation with the beneficiaries and international partners and promoting the EU and BOMCA goals in wider society.



International donor coordination meeting

With the purpose of enhancing international donor coordination and cooperation and of strengthening stakeholder networking, BOMCA supported the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic in hosting the International Donors Coordination Meeting on Border Management Issues, which was held on 11 February 2019.

The meeting gathered international organisations and agencies involved in border management and associated areas (OSCE, RCC, UNODC, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF).

By offering an opportunity to discuss and exchange views on currently ongoing initiatives, the meeting was the next step towards strengthening the donor coordination platform on border management and promoting cooperation and interaction among partners and stakeholders.

The meeting was important not only in terms of setting up plans, but also for the aim of renewing the work of the forum for the presentation of achievements and evaluation of results.

BOMCA welcomes European students

On 12 February 2020, the BOMCA regional office welcomed a group of European students who came to Kyrgyzstan as part of a study tour on EU funded projects.

The Regional Manager, Maris Domins, informed the students about the implementation of BOMCA in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. The overview was supported by a practical visit—the trip was organised to a specialised customs training centre that was formed and developed by the significant contribution of BOMCA and the European Union. The centre has been recognised with the status of a WCO Regional Training Centre in 2018 on the topic of "radiation control".



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Summarising five years of partnership and cooperation

Building on the success of the previous phases, the 9th phase of BOMCA continued the interventions in the areas of institutional development, management of migration flows and trade facilitation.

The programme introduced the concept and principles of Integrated Border Management (IBM), with the goal of improving cooperation and communication channels among border agencies. The concept is not only based on best EU practices, but also aims at tackling the issue of coordination and consolidation of actions by the Central Asian border management institutions – one of the many challenges BOMCA has had to face. The latest BOMCA phase aimed particularly at strengthening institutional reform and enhancing the professional skills of staff. Additionally, the foundation was laid for establishing a consortia of training centres, whereby BG and customs training institutions established partnerships with the aim of harmonising training curricula, providing support for strengthening the capacities of neighbouring countries and partnering with EU border management training institutions.

In total, 226 activities were implemented by the end of April 2020 in Central Asia, with the engagement of more than 3 250 state officials from beneficiary agencies and the provision of equipment worth over 445 000 EUR to 5 CA countries.

Several notable programme achievements include:

- Resumed functioning of the Regional Platform of CA Border Guards and Customs Training Centres.
- Promoted the introduction of several IBM elements into the curriculum for CA Border Guard- and Customs higher education and training institutions, and facilitated the standardisation of study programmes with professional frameworks of Frontex, EC DG TAXUD and WCO PICARD.
- Launched a Distance Learning system for BG training institutions in Kyrgyzstan (Osh & Bishkek) and operationalised a Distance Learning system for the CU Higher Military Institute in Uzbekistan.
- Assisted in the mid-term review and further upgrade of the National IBM Strategies and their Action Plans for the period of 2012-2022 in Kyrgyzstan and 2010-2025 in Tajikistan, generating recommendations for priority areas of the IBM Action Plans in the respective country.
- Helped CA border management agencies to strengthen their administrative pillars and to promote the principles of law-enforcement ethics and professional standards through targeted training, covering work relations and environment, intra-service and inter-agency cooperation and anti-corruption measures.
- Assisted CA Border Guard Agencies in establishing/strengthening identification and profiling mechanisms and developing a methodology for the identification of Foreign Terrorist Fighters at BCPs.
- Developed recommendations of legal and instrumental procedures governing inter-agency and intra-service cooperation and information exchange among authorities.
- Assisted the CA Customs services in developing their risk management systems and investigation capacities, as well as new working tools for the detection of goods smuggling and fraud, and enhanced knowledge and skills in intellectual analysis for risk assessment, Customs cyber intelligence and criminal intelligence and encouraged the integration of risk management into the process of Customs controls.
- Assisted the CA Phyto-Sanitary-Veterinary services in developing risk analysis for imported animals, food and plants, as well as working procedures for risk assessments.
- Helped CA Customs to improve and align national legislation with the provisions of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and Revised Kyoto Convention by providing legal expertise on the measures to be implemented for the accession to/implementing of the international treaties and conventions.



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Summarising five years of partnership and cooperation



Vladimirs Zaguzovs, deputy Project Coordinator:

"I am fully convinced that the efforts undertaken in the frame of BOMCA 9 have made the borders of the CA region more secure and transparent. The successful implementation of the project has shown that even highly ambitious goals can be achieved through effective cooperation".



Normunds Rudzitis, Component 1 Leader:

"The true value of BOMCA programme is not only the training and technical assistance carried out, but also the mutual communication that strengthened people's professional relations both within the border management services and at regional and international level"



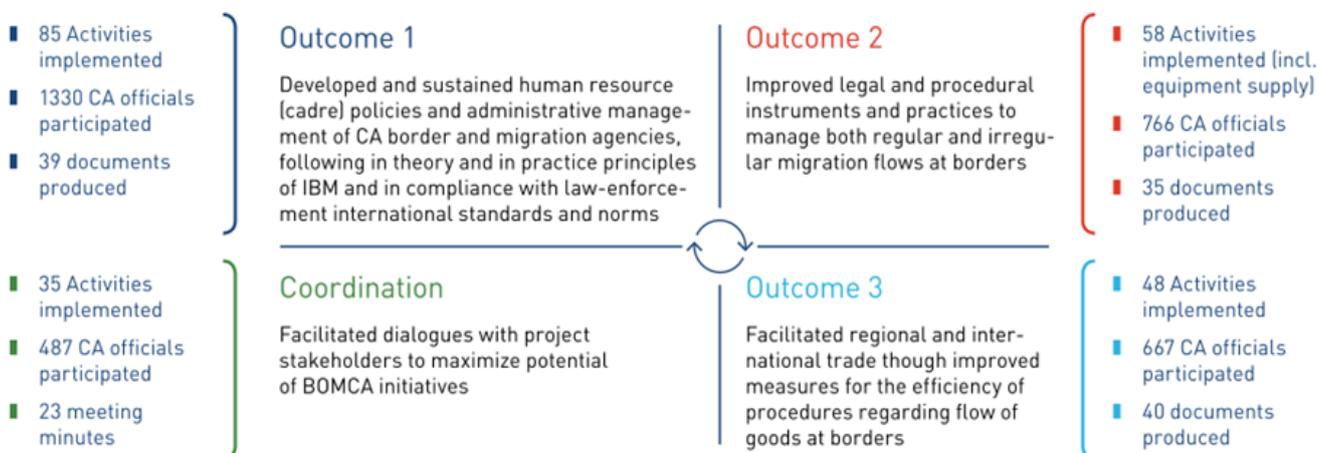
Vyngantas Paigozinas, Component 3 Leader:

"The right team, professionalism and cooperation are the key factors leading to success and positive change, in striving, among other things, for legitimate, safe, fair and smooth international trade".

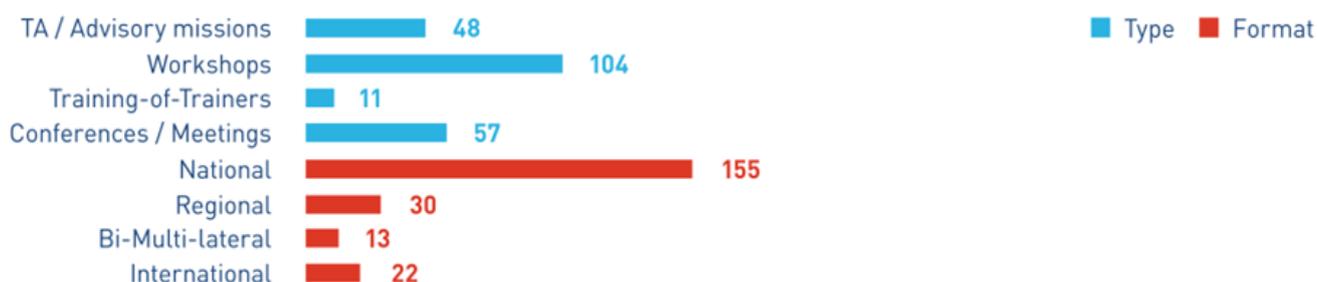


Summarising five years of partnership and cooperation

BOMCA 9: June 2015 – April 2020



Activities: June 2015 – April 2020



The BOMCA 9 Consortium would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the European Union and national partners in the Central Asian countries for their great support and exemplary cooperation throughout the project implementation.

While 9th phase of the programme comes to an end, we look forward to continuing cooperation in the next, 10th, phase of the programme, which will aim to enhance security, stability and sustainable growth in the region, as well support cross-border cooperation and improve living conditions for people living in border areas of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

For more information:



www.bomca-eu.org



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