



From the Budapest Process Ministerial Conference  
(1993)  
to the Istanbul Commitments  
(2019)

A catalogue of the dialogue's activities  
over more than 25 years of cooperation

Budapest Process Secretariat  
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)  
Vienna, Austria



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# Introduction

The Budapest Process provides an informal and flexible framework for states and other stakeholders to meet on equal footing and address issues of common concern and to maintain open channels of communication between each other. Over the years, the dialogue has been a platform for knowledge transfer and policy coordination as well as a springboard for concrete projects or other processes.

In 1991 in Berlin, 27 countries gathered at Minister-level to discuss and take action on irregular migration in the region. Two years later, in February 1993, the Budapest Process obtained its name after the successful launch with a Ministerial Conference in Budapest, which led to the establishment of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials. Three subsequent Ministerial conferences - 1997 in Prague, 2003 in Rhodes and 2013 in Istanbul - have provided new impetus to the dialogue and reflected the evolving migration picture in the region by offering new cooperation possibilities. The Budapest Process, now involving more than 50 states and 10 organisations, has developed from an information sharing tool between European countries in a pre-EU enlargement setting to a far reaching Eurasia platform for improving migration management.

*The present catalogue lists the activities undertaken in the last 25+ years ranging from Ministerial level to Senior Official level and to expert level thematic and geographically focused meetings. A few sentences summarise each meeting held. In the last 25 years, many shifts have occurred, including that the Chairmanship of the Process was handed over to Turkey in 2006, and new countries were included in the dialogue successively, notably the Central Asian countries in 2003 and the Silk Routes countries in 2010. Efficient formats for collaboration on important issues have been developed, including three regional working groups.*

# Glossary



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## **Ministerial Conference**

Ministerial Conferences gives the backbone to the dialogue, through providing political guidance and direction for the work. They gather Ministers to agree on political declarations to shape the coming years of dialogue (in the BP usually held at five years interval).

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## **Senior Officials Meeting**

The Budapest Group of Senior Officials (also known as Senior Officials Meeting) meets annually, gathering senior officials from all participating states and organisations to discuss developments, to determine the main policy directions for the next year and meetings and to ensure support (financial and political ) to the Process. They are the main decision-making body to steer the dialogue in governance and strategy related matters in line with Ministerial declarations. Ministerial preparatory meetings are also Senior Officials Meetings

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## **Regional Working Group/Working Group Meeting**

These meetings gather expert officials from national administrations to examine, discuss and share information and best practices on concrete migration challenges. The Working Groups were established because of expressed interest from participating states and reflect the main issues discussed in the Process (Immigration and Admission Policies, Irregular Movements and Asylum, Return and Reintegration, Development of Migration Systems, etc.). Following the revision of the management of the Budapest Process in 2009, the following working group structure was adopted in 2010: WG on South Eastern Europe, WG on the Black Sea Region and WG on the Silk Routes Region. They are now known as the Regional Working Groups. All countries are invited to all meetings. The regional element is ensuring that the dialogue can highlight issues of special importance to the region in question and also engage countries belonging to these regions closer in the preparations of said meeting.

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## **Friends of the Chair**

The meeting of the Friends of the Chair serves as the advisory board to the Chair in all matters related to the strategic orientation of the Process. It brings together the main donor states of the Budapest Process, the leading/ hosting countries for the Working Groups and the European Commission. In addition, other participating states are invited upon request.



**Disclaimer**

Due to the nature of the dialogue, many different types of meetings with different names and purposes have happened ad hoc over the last 25 years. Please find a non-exhaustive list of other types of meetings held by the Budapest Process which you will find more explanation on in the catalogue itself: Implementation Working Group, Consultation Meeting, Examination Meeting, Business Dialogue, Technical Meeting, Thematic Meeting, Special Session.

**Side note**

*Please note that the terminology used in each section has been kept in line with the original conclusions. For example, in the 1990s the terminology 'illegal' was used as opposed to 'irregular', and the term 'alien' as opposed to 'migrant'.*





# I.

## The 1991 Berlin Ministerial Conference

### 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Conference

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#### 27 participating countries

**Albania . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Czechoslovakia . Denmark . Estonia . France  
Germany . Greece . Hungary . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . Luxembourg . the Netherlands  
Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Soviet Union . Spain . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom  
Yugoslavia**

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The Budapest Process was originally launched by way of a Ministerial Conference, which was convened in Berlin on 30-31 October 1991 by Mr. Schäuble, the German Federal Minister of Interior at the time. The German Minister invited all Ministers of Interior of the Member States of the European Community, of Switzerland as well as of 13 States of Central and Eastern Europe to discuss measures for checking illegal immigration from and through Central and Eastern Europe. The final document adopted at the meeting recognised the common responsibility of all participating States to take decisive action against illegal migratory movements.

Among others, the participating States decided to:

- reinforce the fight against clandestine immigration networks with a common tactical concept, and tackle the problem of unauthorised employment of illegal immigrants by exchanging relevant information, especially on trafficking routes and the forging of documents, and to create the legal conditions for the transfer of personal data;
- introduce thorough controls at road and rail borders, and at air and seaports and develop effective procedures to identify and prevent illegal entries and obtain assurances concerning the traveller's destination and conditions of stay;
- intensify frontier surveillance between border crossing points by deploying mobile forces;
- fulfil the obligation arising from the international principle of good neighbourly relations to readmit persons who have left their country and illegally entered another country;

- conclude bilateral or multilateral readmission agreements and arrangements on the transit of persons obliged to leave a given country without delay;
- provide mutual support in developing border-securing infrastructure, in particular as regards the equipment and training of border guard forces;
- explore possibilities to define arrangements and criteria for the compensation of financial disequilibria arising from deportation and repatriation measures.

Furthermore, the Ministers decided to request the competent national agencies to harmonise visa policies in order to effectively reduce the pressure of immigration.

The participating States agreed that social and economic progress in the home countries could represent, in the long term, the most important precondition to give the people in these countries a new professional and social perspective, which in the end could encourage them to remain in their home countries.

A Working Group under the chairmanship of Austria and including Hungary and Italy was created to be responsible for further action in the framework of what was named the Berlin-process. About ten follow-up meetings were held in different countries in Europe from the beginning of 1992 to the beginning of 1993, under the leadership of the Austrian Schengen Coordinator at the time, Mr. Pahr.

## II.

# The 1993 Budapest Ministerial Conference

### 41 participating countries and Observer Delegations

Albania . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia  
Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . Luxembourg  
Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovak  
Republic . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Canada  
the United States of America . European Commission . Council of Europe . IGC . IOM . UNHCR

Based on agreements reached during the follow-up process to the Berlin meeting, Mr. Boross, the Minister of Interior of Hungary at the time, organised a further Ministerial Conference, held on 15-16 February 1993 in Budapest.

The Ministers adopted a document aiming at reinforcing the cooperation between participating States with regards to the combat of illegal migration and trafficking in aliens. While reiterating the importance of freedom of movement throughout Europe and the respect for human rights and the international refugee instruments, the Ministers noted that illegal migration constitutes a threat to public security, which is promoting criminality and clandestine activities. They identified certain basic areas for the further necessary cooperation and issued a total of 32 specific Recommendations, relating to:

- legal harmonisation (notably the criminalisation of the offence of trafficking in national law and mutual assistance between States in related criminal matters);
- the exchange of information within and between States on illegal migration;
- the establishment of specialised national police units;
- the improvement of related border control operations;
- the concluding of readmission agreements between States.

The importance of the introduction of carrier sanctions and/or assuring their effectiveness was emphasised, i.e. by assisting airlines in preparing and implementing appropriate measures to prevent the transportation of undocumented passengers.

The participants noted that the conclusions of the Berlin Conference had not been pursued in terms of exploring the possibilities to define arrangements and criteria for the partial compensation of financial disequilibria arising from deportation and repatriation measures. They considered that this issue should be examined in an appropriate forum.



— from —  
1993  
— to —  
1997





### III.

## Meetings Held from 1993 to 1997 After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Conference

### 1993

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

22 participating countries, International Organisations and Observer Delegations:

**Austria . Belgium . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Germany . Greece . Hungary  
the Netherlands . Poland . the Russian Federation . Spain . Switzerland . Turkey . CIS . European Union  
Presidency . EFTA Presidency . Council of Europe . ICMPD . Schengen Group Presidency . UNHCR**

The Budapest Group of Senior Officials was established at a statutory meeting held in Budapest on 2-3 December 1993, as an informal consultative body to monitor the implementation of the Recommendations of the Budapest Ministerial Conference. Three main tasks in the field of combating uncontrolled migration were recognised in the report of the meeting. It was decided:

- to pursue the implementation of the Recommendations of the Budapest Ministerial Conference, while taking into account changing situations and elaborate concrete projects for this purpose;
- to promote, by priority, the conclusion of new multilateral or bilateral readmission agreements among the participating countries or improve the existing ones;
- to explore the possibility of providing financial and/or technical assistance to countries having difficulties in the implementation of certain Recommendations, which may be the case for some of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe.

Participants agreed that, as a first step, it should focus on the following Recommendations of the Budapest Ministerial Conference: Recommendation 1, concerning the criminalisation of smuggling of illegal migrants; Recommendation 4, concerning exchange of information on illegal migration; Recommendation 6, concerning readmission agreements; and Recommendation 8, concerning the obligation of transport operators to prevent illegal migration.

# 1994



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 40 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France  
Germany . Greece . Hungary . Italy . Latvia . Luxembourg . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway Poland  
Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine  
the United Kingdom . the United States of America . CEI . Council of Europe . European Commission  
European Union Presidency . ICMPD . IGC . Interpol . IOM . Schengen Group Presidency . UNHCR**



The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group was held in Prague on 1-2 September 1994. In the course of the meeting preparation, the Hungarian Chair had carried out a survey, requiring participating States to indicate measures taken to implement the Recommendations of the Ministerial Conference. At the meeting, the EU States recognised the need for reinforced cooperation on related matters with Central and Eastern European States and that the Budapest Process would continue its activities. However, as the further tasks had not been clearly identified, an Expert Group was established with the task of elaborating further joint measures as well as to make proposals for future cooperation. As members of the Expert Group, Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary (Chair), Switzerland, EU Presidency, Schengen Presidency, and three technical support bodies, namely the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) and ICMPD were appointed. The Expert Group was mandated to analyse certain problem areas. The Budapest Group selected five themes for special examination by the Expert Group with a view to speeding up their implementation:

- the international criminalisation of trafficking in persons in order to harmonise the penalisation of employers of illegal migrants in the participating countries;
- the exchange of information and the concluding of readmission agreements and instruments of similar purpose;
- the exchange of information in the field of illegal migration and trafficking in persons;
- relevant financial and technical assistance for the crime prevention activities of countries in Central and Eastern Europe;
- international cooperation in returning illegal migrants.

## Expert Group meeting

### 12 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Croatia . Czech Republic . France . Germany . Hungary . Switzerland . Turkey  
ICMPD . IGC . IOM**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Expert Group meeting took place in Vienna, on 8-9 December 1994. Views were exchanged on the status and role of the Budapest Process with respect to activities carried out by other fora. The participants generally noted that the Budapest Process should play an important role in terms of facilitating and enhancing the cooperation on matters relating to uncontrolled migration between the members of EU and other States participating in the process. During the meeting, the results of a questionnaire on the issue of the criminalisation of smuggling and trafficking in persons were discussed. It was concluded that the combat of migrant smuggling, which was increasingly taking place in an organised manner and was related to other criminal activities, must be one of the central tasks of the Budapest Process. An efficient and well-functioning border control system, the introduction of carrier sanctions and visa obligations for countries of origin were among some of the measures considered to play an important role in the fight against illegal migration. Continued international cooperation was needed because of the obvious international nature of the phenomenon.

The tasks of drafting reports on the five mentioned themes were divided among lead countries and international support bodies and further discussed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Group meeting.

# 1995

## Expert Group meeting

### 10 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belgium . Croatia . Czech Republic . France . Hungary . Switzerland . Turkey . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**


The 2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Group meeting took place in Berne on 2-3 March 1995. The purpose was to discuss the five reports prepared by the lead countries and IGC, IOM and ICMPD, and to adjust their content before presentation.

The first report, on the harmonisation of legislation to combat trafficking/smuggling, elaborated under the responsibility of Belgium and Poland with the support of IGC, underlined the necessity to take forceful initiatives at the political level to counteract the increasingly serious problem of trafficking in human beings. The need for international cooperation in the field of extradition and the confiscation of earnings and transport vehicles was reiterated.

A report on readmission agreements, prepared by the Czech Republic and IGC, gave an inventory of principles for the establishment of bilateral readmission agreements, which could be considered a common denominator for the States participating in the Budapest Process. IGC also presented an analysis of the differences between the principles in the paper and the EU specimen bilateral agreement.

Standardised forms and various systems for information exchange were discussed in the third paper on the exchange of information with regard to illegal migration, presented by France and IGC. This sensitive issue, taking into account the need for data protection, later formed one of the major elements in the Recommendations of the Budapest Ministerial Conference.

Following the presentation of the fourth report, on technical cooperation and assistance to combat illegal migration, prepared by Hungary with the assistance of ICMPD, the discussion between the delegates focussed on problems relating to the gathering of information, of existing bilateral assistance programmes and on the possibilities to provide a better picture of the amount and type of assistance provided. The possibilities were discussed to build up multi-national support programmes through existing financial institutions such as PHARE, the World Bank and EBRD.



The delegations welcomed the fifth report on the return of irregular migrants, since it focused on the principle of direct return to the country of origin of illegal migrants and rejected asylum seekers. A substantial part of the discussion concentrated on the problems relating to the refusal of certain countries of origin to take back their citizens. Turkey prepared the report, with the assistance of IOM.

## Expert Group meeting

### 11 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Croatia . Czech Republic . France . Hungary . Turkey . CEI . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**

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During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Group meeting, which took place in Dobogókő near Budapest on 15-16 June 1995, the changes made to the five reports were discussed, and comments were given on the Recommendations within each report. The final versions of the reports were then submitted to the Zürich meeting of the Budapest Group.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 42 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania, . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . Council of Europe . CEI, European Commission . Interpol . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

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The five thematic reports of the Expert Group were discussed during a 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials, which was held in Zürich on 14-15 September 1995. Discussions on the need for another Ministerial Conference were brought forward by Central and Eastern European States.

However, at the meeting, the unique role of the Budapest Process in terms of informally gathering all States concerned in Europe in a goal-oriented effort to ensure orderly migration movements was recognised. Furthermore, participants decided to pursue the analysis of further measures to be taken in the five above-mentioned areas. In addition, the final document of the meeting stated that the Budapest Group should initiate action to seek to achieve the gradual harmonisation of visa requirements among all participating States, hereby following the provisions adopted by the European Union and the Schengen Group.

Special consultations should also be held between the Chairmanship of the Budapest Group and the EU and Schengen Presidencies with regard to a more effective exchange of information concerning illegal migration. In this regard, a paper, prepared by the Secretariat (ICMPD), was released entitled *Modalities for allowing for the participation of non-EU States in various EU or Schengen information exchange mechanisms relating to illegal migration or possible alternative arrangements*. Two basic issues had to be resolved in this regard: first, the establishment of pan-European systems for the exchange of personal data on those involved in smuggling in migrants, and second, the establishment of pan-European systems for the exchange of non-personal data relating to illegal migration/trafficking, for example on routes, methods, nationalities, trends and forgeries.

The new issue of harmonisation of visa policies was introduced into the Budapest Process at the Zürich meeting. In the final document of the meeting, states were invited to harmonise their visa requirements and their border control as far as possible.

## Expert Group meeting

### 18 participating countries and International Organisations:


**Austria . Belgium . Croatia . Czech Republic . France . Hungary . Italy . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Slovakia . Spain . Switzerland . Turkey . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**

In Bratislava on 6-7 December 1995, the delegations of the Expert Group discussed the implementation of the decisions taken in Zürich and the preparation of the forthcoming Prague Ministerial Conference. Four basic items were identified to be pursued in the preparatory work:

- evaluation of the implementation of earlier decisions;
- harmonisation of laws against smuggling and trafficking in migrants;
- schemes for the exchange of information;
- technical and financial assistance to relevant activities in Central and Eastern European countries.

With regard to harmonisation of laws against smuggling and trafficking, it was agreed that the purpose should not be to draft a binding text to be adopted by the Ministers, but to compile a set of alternative minimum standards. Existing international law and instruments, as well as their status of ratification by European States should be taken into account.

Concerning the cooperation between the EU and the Central and Eastern European countries on the exchange of information, this task had since the Budapest Ministerial Conference not been brought forward. It was therefore agreed that attention should also be paid to an adequate exchange of information and coordination within states, as well as to pursue the already initiated discussions on cooperation within the EU, especially in the CIREFI context, and to further practical cooperation between EU and non-EU States.



With regards to technical and financial assistance, the participants welcomed the idea that the Group would be provided with information on the contents of the Langdon report, but recognised also that the work to be carried out for the Prague Ministerial Conference would have to have an independent character and also be broader in geographic scope.

The Langdon report, prepared on the basis of visits of a special consultant acting for the European Commission to each of the capitals of the EU applicant States, sought to identify the major challenges for the associated countries in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs and their need for assistance. In its conclusions, the report mentions the Budapest Group and acknowledges that “...it does have a particular importance as the only migration forum that routinely brings together most of the Member States and Associated Countries, as well as some of the Newly Independent States, along with other players. I [Mr. Langdon] believe it is important that its role should be understood and full weight attached to its views...”

## 1996



### Working Group on Model Legislation

#### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belgium . Czech Republic . Norway . Poland . Switzerland . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**



The Working Group met in Warsaw on 17 January 1996 with the purpose of drafting a model law or principles on anti-trafficking legislation. After IGC presented a draft note on possible minimum standards for anti-trafficking, participants decided to let Belgium collect available information on assistance to the victims of trafficking, to let IOM conduct a survey on existing provisions on carriers' liability and their implementation and to send a questionnaire on anti-trafficking legislations. A follow-up meeting would be held in April to discuss the findings.

## Implementation Working Group of the Budapest Group

### 9 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Hungary . the Netherlands . Norway . Turkey  
European Commission . ICMPD**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Implementation Working Group of the Budapest Group met in Prague on 14 February 1996. The participants discussed the methodology for measuring the degree of implementation of each of the Recommendations of the Ministerial Conference held in 1993. Since the Ministerial Conference, two new themes were introduced into the work of the Budapest Group. The first theme pertained to harmonising visa policies of the participating countries. The second theme focused on possible ways for rendering technical and financial assistance to governments of Central and Eastern Europe to enable them to more effectively combat illegal migration. It was agreed that countries will compile reports on the status of implementation, to be shared at the next meeting of the group.

## Working Groups on Information Exchange and Technical Assistance

### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Croatia . Czech Republic . France . Hungary . Italy . the Netherlands . Switzerland . European Council  
ICMPD . IGC**

The back-to-back meetings of the Working Group on Information Exchange and the Working Group on Technical Assistance took place in Budapest on 21-22 March 1996.


## Expert Group meeting

### 18 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Croatia . Czech Republic . France . Italy . Hungary . the Netherlands . Norway  
Poland . Slovakia . Spain . Switzerland . Turkey . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**

The Expert Group meeting took place in Ljubljana on 13-14 June 1996 and discussed a draft document ahead of the Senior Officials' meeting. ICMPD's report on "*The need for reinforced coop-*





eration between all European States to tackle illegal migration”, based on discussions and drafts from previous working groups, was the basis for discussions and was amended by the participants. Participants recommended that the report (after further revisions) would be submitted to the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group in Oslo, as a reference document. While recommending this action, mainly the EU Government representatives of the Expert Group did not as such endorse the proposals contained in the report, but considered them as valuable elements for further discussion.

Finally, it was decided to elaborate a special document indicating the progress of the activities of the Budapest Group and identifying the Recommendations, which may be considered for a next Ministerial Conference. The special document was the subject of discussions at a meeting in Prague at the end of August 1996 between the Chairmanship Group (Hungary, Czech Republic and Norway) and representatives of the EU (Ireland) and Schengen (Netherlands) Presidencies.

## Meeting between the Chairmanship of the Budapest Group, the EU and Schengen Presidencies and the European Commission

### 7 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Czech Republic . Hungary . Ireland . the Netherlands . Norway . European Commission . ICMPD**

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The Meeting between the Chairmanship of the Budapest Group, the EU and Schengen Presidencies and the European Commission took place in Prague on 30 August 1996. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the preparation and objectives of the Oslo Senior Officials Meeting and the forthcoming Ministerial Conference. Discussions on how to include non-EU States in various EU or Schengen information exchange mechanisms relating to illegal migration or other alternative arrangements was mentioned.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 42 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia  
Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iceland . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Liechtenstein  
Lithuania . Luxembourg . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian  
Federation . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom  
the United States of America . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . Interpol  
IOM . UNHCR**

The Oslo meeting of Senior Officials took place on 3-4 October 1996. The main document of the meeting known as the “Oslo Document” was the aforementioned paper considered in Prague. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of participating States towards the Budapest Process as a major and dynamic vehicle for pan-European cooperation on migration control matters and urged participating States to strengthen their implementation efforts.

The cooperation, bilaterally as well as regionally and sub-regionally, between Western European States on the one hand and Central and Eastern European States on the other, had expanded considerably, as was evident for instance due to the establishment of bilateral border police cooperation, the number of readmission agreements which had been concluded, as well as the development of technical cooperation projects. The strengthened cooperation in these areas undoubtedly contributed to a better control over irregular migration and trafficking activities and to a process of harmonisation of relevant legislation at the European level.

The Budapest Group noted at the Oslo meeting that although the 1993 Recommendations had largely been implemented, there were several recommendations which still did not receive the necessary attention. Moreover, there were newly emerging areas of relevance to the joint tackling of illegal migration and the establishment of harmonised entry policies, which had to be addressed carefully by participating States in the coming years. Against this background, the Budapest Group recommended the convening of the Prague Ministerial Conference. It was agreed that the Prague Ministerial Conference would not take formal decisions but politically move the agenda forward in the joint interest of tackling illegal migration, as there was no other appropriate pan-European forum.

## Friends of the Chair

### 15 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belgium . Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Germany . Hungary . Ireland . the Netherlands . Norway  
Poland . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . European Commission . ICMPD**

The meeting of the Friends of the Chair took place in Prague on 5 December 1996. A draft set of Recommendations, to be later adopted at the Ministerial Conference and based on the Oslo Document, was elaborated during this meeting.

# 1997

## Friends of the Chair

### 49 participating countries and International Organisations:

Albania . Australia . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic  
Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iceland . Ireland . Italy . Latvia  
Liechtenstein . Lithuania . Luxembourg . Moldavia . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal  
Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey  
Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . CEI . Council of Europe . European  
Commission . ICMPD . ICAO . ICMPD . Interpol . OSCE . UNODC . UNHCR

The draft set of Recommendations was edited at a major meeting of the Friends of the Chair, which was held on 9-10 June 1997 in Opatija (Croatia). After that, renewed consultations took place at a meeting in Prague during the summer between the Chairmanship Group and the EU and Schengen Presidencies.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 43 participating countries and International Organisations:

Albania . Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark  
Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania  
Luxembourg . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia  
Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of  
America . CEI . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . Interpol . IOM . UNHCR . UNOV

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group, held in Vienna on 4-5 September 1997, negotiated and adopted the final wording of the set of draft Recommendations edited at the Opatija meeting, which then became the main document for the Prague Ministerial Conference. Several smaller meetings were subsequently held to logistically prepare the Prague Conference.



# IV.

## The 1997 Prague Ministerial Conference

### 42 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . Luxembourg . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovak Republic . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . CEI . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . Interpol . UNHCR . UNCCP**

The aim of the Conference held in Prague on 14-15 October 1997 was to address the new challenges, which had emerged in terms of migration control in Europe since 1993. Delegations of many Central and Eastern European States had underlined the necessity of a forthcoming Ministerial Conference as a vehicle for injecting a new political impetus towards the full implementation of the 1993 Recommendations and the initiation of new cooperation ventures.

One major factor in this regard was the enlargement of the EU from 12 to 15 members and the conclusion of cooperation agreements with ten Central and Eastern European States. Another factor was that since 1995, the provisions of the Schengen Agreement had become applicable to seven of its members and that in 1996, observer status was granted to two Nordic States. There were also new forms of sub-regional cooperation on migration issues between Central and Eastern European States. Additional factors since 1993 included the growing volume of relevant technical and financial assistance, which was directed to Central and Eastern European States, both by way of training, assistance and advice provided on the bilateral level, and by way of emerging multilateral funding, notably through the EU.

The statements at the Prague Ministerial Conference evidenced the strong support given to the Budapest Process by participating States (major EU States included) already during the preparation phase of the Conference. Thus, a number of Ministers stated that the value of the Budapest Process derives from its geographical scope, involving all States in the region, its equity in terms of allowing all participating States to act at the same level, its complementarity to the EU ef-

forts, its flexibility and non-institutional character and its practical and pragmatic orientation. Ministers underlined that the informal and flexible working methods of the process had largely contributed to the constructive results, and they officially recognised the role in this regard of the Vienna-based Secretariat.

The document, which the Ministers adopted, included 55 Recommendations in the following areas:

- harmonisation of legislation to combat trafficking in aliens;
- pre-entry and entry control, in particular the approximation of visa regimes;
- return to country of origin and readmission agreements;
- information exchange on illegal migration;
- technical and financial assistance to Central and Eastern European States;
- linkages between smuggling/trafficking in aliens and other forms of organised crime.

The Budapest Group was requested to follow-up and to present a timetable for the implementation of the above recommendations with deadlines.



— from —  
1998  
— to —  
2003







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## The Meetings Held from 1998 to 2003 After the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Conference

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### 1998

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#### Friends of the Chair

**12 participating countries and International Organisations:**

**Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Germany . Norway . Poland . Slovenia . Switzerland . Ukraine  
the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD**

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It was decided in Prague that Hungary would continue to chair the Process. A meeting of the group of Friends of the Chair was held in Budapest on 4-5 March 1998, to outline the follow-up action. The Group recommended that the informal and flexible working methods, which had been utilised to prepare the Prague Conference, should be applied also for the follow-up process, implying that the Chair and the Secretariat may call upon various participating States and organisations to assist in different tasks and meetings. Concerning the evaluation of the implementation, it was agreed that Norway would take the responsibility for a Working Group assigned with the task of monitoring implementation and suggesting benchmarks and timing deadlines.

## Implementation Working Group

### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Denmark . Germany . Hungary . Norway . Slovenia . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD**

Following consultations between Norway, Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary, a meeting of the Implementation Working Group was convened in Vienna on 7 May 1998. The Working Group agreed upon a questionnaire elaborated by Norway and on a model for timing categorisation of the Prague Recommendations elaborated by Germany, as well as on a list indicating the distribution of responsibilities among lead countries and organisations for the follow-up action.

## Working Meeting on Legal Harmonisation

### 5 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belgium . Czech Republic . Denmark . Hungary . ICMPD**


The Friends of the Chair agreed that Denmark should take a particular lead of the follow-up of the section of the Prague Recommendations, which dealt with legal harmonisation. To this end, a Working Meeting on Legal Harmonisation was held in Copenhagen on 29 May 1998. A special and more elaborated grid drafted by Denmark to measure the degree of implementation with regards to legal harmonisation was attached to the general questionnaire prepared by Norway.

## Special Meeting on Illegal Migration through South East Europe

### 38 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . Interpol . IOM . UNHCR**

Even though not originally foreseen in the 1998 work plan, a Special Meeting on Illegal Migration through South East Europe was organised in Budapest on 29-30 June 1998. The meeting fol-



lowed the adoption of an Action Plan by the EU Member States on 26 January 1998 with regards to the influx of migrants from Iraq and the neighbouring region, aimed at counteracting illegal movements over the Adriatic to Italy and further North. Following this Action Plan, an increase of irregular flows from a great number of countries over the land-borders of South East Europe was registered. Against this background, the German Government took the initiative to invite the Chair of the Budapest Group to arrange the above-mentioned meeting. With financial assistance from the EU Odysseus programme, and with the Secretariat working closely with Germany and Hungary, the Special Meeting was carried out. 80 delegates participated. The meeting adopted an elaborate set of conclusions, which foresaw special implementation actions, in combination with and in parallel to the implementation of the Prague Recommendations.

## Working Meeting on Visa Policy Approximation

### 34 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland  
France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of  
Macedonia . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation  
Slovakia . Slovenia . Sweden . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America  
European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

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A Working Meeting on Visa Policy Approximation was held in Portoroz (Slovenia) on 17-18 September 1998. The conclusions of the meeting emphasised the need to harmonise visa policies and procedures according to the standards established by the EU and Schengen systems and to assist participating states to overcome problems that prevent further harmonisation. Participants agreed on the need for states to establish a Plan of Action in cooperation with the European Commission for training and technical assistance to introduce and apply an appropriate procedure for issuance of visas, while preventing the illegal visas. This Plan of Action would have to take into consideration assistance already received in the past, in addition to the specific situation in each of the states concerned. ICMPD would assist the states in preparing such a Plan of Action.

## Working Meeting on Organised Crime

### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Germany . Norway . Poland . CICP . Europol . IOM . ICMPD**

Regarding the linkages between illegal migration, trafficking and organised crime, the Secretariat initiated work on a major study, which was requested in Recommendation number 53 of the Prague Conference. A Working Meeting on Organised Crime was held in Vienna on 23 October 1998.

## Working Meeting on Information Exchange

### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Canada . Germany . Hungary . Norway . Poland . Slovenia . European Commission . ICMPD**

The Friends of the Chair entrusted the Chair and the Secretariat to work further on information exchange on illegal migration. In this regard, close contact was held with the European Commission in Brussels, the EU/CIREFI Presidencies and the IGC-Secretariat in Vienna. Moreover, as the Hungarian Border Guards had developed a scheme for such a system, technical cooperation evolved between the Secretariat (ICMPD) and the Border Guards in Hungary and various other Central and Eastern European States. A Working Meeting on Information Exchange was then organised by the Hungarian Chair and the Secretariat in Budapest on 28 October 1998.

## Working Meeting on Readmission

### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:


**Belgium . France . Germany . Poland . European Commission . IGC . IOM . ICMPD**

It was agreed by the Friends of the Chair that France should take a lead for the evaluation of the implementation of the return and readmission issues in the Prague Recommendations. A Working Meeting on Readmission was held in Paris on 5 November 1998.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 41 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Council of Europe . European Commission . Europol . ICMPD . IGC . Interpol . IOM . UNHCR**



All the 1998 follow-up activities were evaluated at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group, which was held in Warsaw on 7-8 December 1998. A substantial evaluation report had been prepared by Norway and ICMPD as Secretariat. The meeting resulted in the establishment of a number of Working Groups to cover the following areas:

- overall monitoring (lead by Norway);
- visa policy approximation (lead by Slovenia);
- illegal migration through South East Europe (lead by Hungary);
- readmission arrangements between the Baltic States/Russian Federation/Belarus (lead by Denmark);
- readmission and return (lead by Poland, France);
- information exchange systems on illegal migration (lead by Hungary, EU Presidency);
- study on the linkage between organised crime and illegal migration (lead by the Secretariat).

## 1999



### Friends of the Chair

#### 16 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Finland . Germany . Hungary . Norway . Slovakia  
Slovenia . Switzerland . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**



The intention to further the implementation of the Prague Recommendations by way of promoting a vast array of sector-oriented and concrete activities successfully materialised in 1999. The meeting of the Friends of the Chair in Budapest on 20 January 1999 suggested that the Secretariat should concentrate on several tasks including arranging meetings and activities to harmonise visa obligations and procedures. Further tasks included evaluating the effects of the existing readmission regime and ensuring readmission arrangements between the Baltic States/the Russian Federation/Belarus. Promoting cooperative ventures for return to countries of origin, finalising the examination on the linkage between organised crime and illegal migration as well as furthering

the pan-European information exchange on illegal migration and developing a work programme to combat illegal migration in the South Eastern European region were also assigned as tasks to the Secretariat.

## Working Group on Illegal Migration through South East Europe

### 23 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Estonia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Poland . Romania . Slovakia . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Illegal Migration through South East Europe was held in Vienna on 4-5 February 1999. The meeting was convened based on the conclusions of the Special Meeting in Budapest on 29-30 June 1998 and the Budapest Group meeting in Warsaw on 7-8 December 1998. The delegations agreed that the work to be performed should be structured to manage five specific problems according to the following categorisation:


- an airport: the transit control at Bucharest airport;
- a set of sea-borders: the Black Sea;
- a land-border: between Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- a reception system to deter irregular movements: for Kosovars in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- a common cooperation venture: the establishment of a joint information-exchange system on illegal migration for all countries in the sub-region.

Consequently, examination teams were established, under the leadership of Portugal (Bucharest airport), Sweden (the Black Sea) and Austria (the Croatian/Bosnian border). Hungary and the Secretariat took the lead for the establishment of a sub-regional system for information exchange, through the ICMPD Liaison Office at the Hungarian Border Guards, established by way of a special agreement between ICMPD and the Government of Hungary in January 1999.

## Meeting on the Linkage Between Organised Crime and Trafficking in Aliens

### 13 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belgium . Croatia . Germany . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Turkey . Europol . Interpol . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR . the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention**



The report on the relationship between organised crime and trafficking in aliens, prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with Recommendation 53 of the Prague Ministerial Conference, was revised and submitted to a working meeting in Bratislava on 16 March 1999. After further revision, the report was sent to all States participating in the Budapest Process, and in June 1999, it was distributed to delegations at the meeting in Vienna of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Comprehensive International Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. The report undoubtedly helped to clarify definitional problems discussed in connection with the relevant Protocols to the Convention, relating to the distinction between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The main conclusion of the report was that the relationship between organised crime and trafficking in and smuggling of persons is already strong and that both trafficking in and smuggling of persons are organised and executed by clandestine criminal groups. The report concluded that only by equalising the law enforcement risk in different countries, and thereby minimising the profit edge of crime syndicates, can organised crime be prevented from using the loopholes and safe havens for their activities.

## Working Group on Readmission and Return

### 5 participating countries and International Organisations:

**France . Poland . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**

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The Working Group on Readmission and Return met in Vienna on 4 May 1999 in order to discuss the priorities of the group focusing on Readmission and Return.

## Working Group on Illegal Migration through and from the South East European region to examine the illegal migration situation over the Black Sea

### 9 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Bulgaria . Georgia . Germany . Romania . the Russian Federation . Sweden . Turkey . ICMPD . UNHCR**

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The Working Group on Illegal Migration through and from the South East European region to examine the illegal migration situation over the Black Sea met in Varna (Bulgaria) on 10-11 June 1999. The delegates took note of the fact that necessary legislation regulating the situation of aliens, refugees and border control had been adopted in many states around the Black Sea, and that in other states, the passing of this relevant legislation was in process. The Working Group agreed that the examination of the situation of illegal migration on the Black Sea should not be limited to the surface of the sea, but the examination should be extended to the area immediately adjacent, i.e. harbour cities, airport and railway stations.

## Working Group to find durable solutions for readmission problems in the Baltic region

### 7 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belarus . Estonia . Latvia . Lithuania . the Russian Federation . ICMPD . IOM**

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group to find durable solutions for readmission problems in the Baltic region was held in Copenhagen on 16 June 1999. The issue of readmission between the relevant countries was discussed. The delegations of the Russian Federation and Belarus expressed their willingness to readmit both own citizens and third country nationals with permanent residence in the respective readmitting country. However, problems persisted with regard to other third country (transit) nationals. Formal readmission agreements could not be concluded with the Baltic States until there would be functioning readmission agreements with China and Kazakhstan, for example.

## Examination meetings in Bucharest, Varna, Sarajevo and Zagreb


### 9 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Bulgaria . Georgia . Germany . Romania . Russia . Sweden . Turkey . ICMPD . UNHCR**

In June 1999, 20 Government experts from 12 countries were actively involved in four examination meetings held in Bucharest, Varna (Bulgaria), Sarajevo and Zagreb, organised by the Secretariat. The reports were examined at the Black Sea meeting (held on 10-11 June 1999). The main conclusion of the examination was that illegal movements over the Black Sea were insignificant, but that illegal migration over land-borders around the sea was growing. The Romania exercise (on 21-24 June 1999), in which Portugal, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, UNHCR and ICMPD participated, indicated that transit problems at Bucharest airport did not occur as a result of organisational/technical deficiencies but of low wages of staff. The need for a general modernisation of the Romanian entry control, admission and asylum system was also highlighted.

The examination of the border control between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, carried out by Austria and ICMPD 29 June – 1 July 1999, resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting ever held in Sarajevo on the issue, gathering all responsible Ministers (central, entity and cantonal) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It became clear that all international support was necessary to assist OHR (the High Representative for Dayton implementation) in pushing forward the issue of a joint border service to stop exponentially growing illegal migration through Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ensuing meeting in





Zagreb indicated that the otherwise well-functioning border system of Croatia was compromised as long as there was no corresponding system on the Bosnian side of the border.

## Meeting on Return and Readmission

### 30 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Croatia . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Hungary . Ireland . Latvia . Lithuania . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM**

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The Meeting on Return and Readmission, held in Paris on 23-24 September 1999, was preceded by two preparatory meetings in Vienna on 4 May 1999 and on 7 July 1999. The Paris meeting as such constituted a first thorough review of the functioning of the European readmission regime, which had evolved over the previous ten years. The EU Odysseus programme supported the meeting and the preparatory work of the Secretariat. The analytical report prepared for the meeting by ICMPD (*“Return of illegal migrants – The effectiveness of readmission agreements”*) indicated that as many as 220 bilateral readmission agreements had been concluded during the 1990’s, of which half were concluded between Western and Central/Eastern European States and only some 20 with non-European countries of origin. Central and Eastern European States had readmitted at least 150,000 third country nationals under existing agreements during the last decade.

The meeting concluded that the existing European readmission regime had indeed been instrumental for the returns which had taken place, and that it has had a significant preventive effect on illegal migration. However, the present system was considered to be in need of direction, and EU developments may contribute to multilateral solutions. However, most delegations preferred the “multi-bi” solution suggested in the Secretariat report, implying that multilateral framework negotiations with problematic countries of origin may be followed by a bilateral approach.

## Working Group on Illegal Migration through South East Europe

### 23 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Croatia . Estonia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Lithuania . Norway . Macedonia . Poland . Portugal . Romania . Sweden . Turkey . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

The full report on the findings of the examination teams, prepared by the Secretariat, was presented at a 2<sup>nd</sup> Working Group meeting held in Istanbul on 21-22 October 1999. Delegations agreed that the working methodology adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group had been very useful. This innovative approach had generated new insights, ideas and constructive contacts. Given the current challenges in the region, participants recommended to continue the activities of the Working Group for at least another year and to embark upon new initiatives and examinations based on the experiences of those already carried out.

It was agreed to keep the issue of the Bosnia/Croatia border on the agenda under the leadership of Austria, including monitoring of the international efforts to establish the new border control system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Working Group expected the EU to provide funds to ICMPD to vigorously pursue this exercise together with OHR and UNMIBH. Moreover, the participants considered it to be in the joint interest of the Group to carry out a special examination of the Moldovan-Romanian border control, under the leadership of Portugal. Taking into account the crucial role of Turkey, a team led by Germany should, together with Turkey, deal with further measures suggested by the Black Sea examination group. A special initiative would also be taken to monitor ongoing cooperation to stem alien smuggling over the Adriatic, notably between Albania and Italy, under the leadership of Norway. It was furthermore agreed to carry out a new airport examination in Albania, under the responsibility of Poland.


Concerning the already initiated cross-country activity to establish a special regional mechanism for the exchange of information on illegal migration, the coordination efforts pursued by the Hungarian Border Guards and the ICMPD Liaison Office in Budapest were much appreciated. Finally, at the initiative of Sweden, it was decided to hold a meeting in 2000, aiming at contrasting the Baltic-Balkan experiences in order to establish comprehensive programmes for the management of migration and refugee affairs. This meeting would also be a contribution by the Budapest Group to the Stability Pact.

## Working Group on Information Exchange on Illegal Migration

### 11 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Australia . Finland . Germany . Hungary . Poland . Portugal . Ukraine . Turkey . ICMPD . IGC**

The Working Group on Information Exchange on Illegal Migration held its meeting in Budapest on 4 November 1999. The Chair, the CIREFI-chairman of the then Finnish EU Presidency, described the ongoing efforts of CIREFI to fully include the EU Associated States in the CIREFI-system as of the year 2000, as well as the development of an early warning system within CIREFI and ongoing cooperation with Europol. Reports were also provided on the status of the TIES system of IGC, the Baltic Sea information exchange, current plans of Interpol and the system of the International Bor-



der Police Conference of the Hungarian Border Guards. The meeting concluded that positive efforts to harmonise concepts in all the existing systems according to CIREFI definitions were progressing.

As the Associated States in Central and Eastern Europe would soon be fully included in the CIREFI system, there was firstly an increasing need for parallel efforts concentrating on Central, Eastern and South Eastern European States, which would not be covered by EU efforts. Secondly, there was an increased need for analytical capacities, which were proportionate to those under development in the EU context. The Budapest Process with the ICMPD Liaison Office at the Hungarian Border Guards could play an important bridging role, by allowing the development of information exchange systems for States which are not to be covered by EU efforts. As the various systems worked with comparable definitions, but with varying configurations of countries, they were complementary to each other. These developments were therefore in the true spirit of the Prague Recommendations 41 and 42 in terms of promoting a pan-European comprehensive approach to the issue.

## Working Group on the Approximation of Visa Policies

### 13 participating countries:

**Austria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Germany . Hungary . Italy . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom**

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A meeting of the Working Group on the Approximation of Visa Policies was held in Portorož (Slovenia) on 26 November 1999. The meeting took stock of developments in 1999 regarding the approximation of visa policies and practices among the countries participating in the Budapest Process. It noted the two technical meetings on visa procedures and standards, which had been held under the German EU Presidency with the EU Associated States, and underlined the need for parallel measures with non-EU Associated States. Participants also acknowledged that the EU candidate countries had achieved a high degree of harmonisation with the EU negative list of March 1999. Bulgaria took a great step in introducing visa requirements to 18 countries in the spring of 1999. However, concerted efforts were still needed to seek to align visa policies and practices of non-EU Central, Eastern and South Eastern European States with those of the EU, as stipulated in Recommendation 19 of the Prague Conference. Slovenia therefore stated the intention to take appropriate initiatives. In connection with the visa meeting, a preparatory session for the forthcoming Rome meeting of the Budapest Group was held in Portorož on 25 November 1999.

The meeting and examination activities carried out in 1999 considerably contributed to the promotion of the implementation of the Prague Recommendations, and increasingly so among countries which were not involved in a structured cooperation to counteract illegal migration which had already been initiated by the EU.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 46 participating countries and International Organisations:

Albania . Australia . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Italy . Latvia . Lithuania . Malta . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tunisia . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . CIGP . European Commission . Europol . Council of Europe . ICMPD . IGC . Interpol . IOM . UNHCR

The emphasis on South East Europe during 1999 and the growing awareness that in the future, South-North irregular flows may supersede East-West flows in magnitude provided the framework for the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Budapest Group. The meeting was held on 14-15 December 1999 in Rome. An evaluation report was submitted by Norway and the Secretariat. Georgia participated for the first time at the Budapest Group meeting and Tunisia had been invited as Observer. It was reiterated that the Budapest Process was a very efficient vehicle to ensure that cooperation principles established by EU and other relevant fora were being transferred to all States in the pan-European region. Decisions were taken including to embark upon further activities in South East Europe (seven undertakings) and to continue the return/readmission exercise initiated in 1999 as well as the visa harmonisation exercise initiated in 1998. Two major issues were raised: the possibility of holding a new Ministerial Conference and the eventual enlargement of the process to cover further States around the Mediterranean basin. These topics were deferred to an extraordinary meeting of the Budapest Group to be held in Lisbon during the spring of 2000 during the Portuguese EU Presidency to be further reviewed.



# 2000



## Friends of the Chair

### 15 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Croatia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation  
Slovenia . Switzerland . Turkey . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**



With a view to prepare the follow-up of the Rome Conclusions (7<sup>th</sup> Budapest Group Meeting in December 1999), the Hungarian Ministry of Interior as Chair of the Budapest Group convened a meeting with the Friends of the Chair in Budapest on 4 February 2000. In a working paper prepared by the Secretariat, the 20 meetings/evaluation exercises, which were to be carried out in 2000, were enumerated:

- four were to be major meetings (including the extraordinary meeting of the Budapest Group in Lisbon in April);
- ten were follow-up meetings by Working Groups. These included already established Working Groups on readmission/return, on readmission Baltics/Belarus/Russia, on visa harmonisation and on the monitoring of the implementation of the 1997 Prague Recommendations. It also included new undertakings following from the 7<sup>th</sup> Budapest Group meeting in Rome such as the new Austria-led Working Group on a code of conduct for forced returns and the Group which UK will lead on mass information to deter irregular arrivals;
- six of the meetings were to be launched in the framework of the Working Group for South East Europe.

The meeting of the Friends of the Chair discussed in detail the timing, composition and focus of these 20 undertakings for 2000.

## Special Meeting on how to cope with non-cooperative countries of origin

### 11 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Czech Republic . France . Germany . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . the United States of America  
ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

Concerning the Working Group on Return and Readmission, Poland had actively pursued the activities decided upon at the meeting held in Paris in September 1999. Thus, the Special Meeting on how to cope with non-cooperative countries of origin was held in Warsaw on 16-17 March 2000, co-chaired by Poland and France. At a special session, a representative of Vietnam was also present. A questionnaire for all Budapest Process participating countries asked to indicate five countries of origin, which were less cooperative in issuing travel documents to allow for repatriation. Another meeting, dealing with the practical cooperation between the border authorities for a smaller group of countries focusing on deportation and readmission was held near Gdansk (Poland) on 10-11 May 2000.

Many of the follow-up activities in the first quarter of 2000 referred to the Working Group on South-East Europe. Thus, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the Secretariat met with the Turkish authorities in Ankara on 21 March 2000, to plan further activities under the leadership of Turkey. Moreover, the Austria-led exercise on the new border control system of Bosnia and Herzegovina was carried out further in the framework of an EU Odysseus project implemented by ICMPD with a financial contribution from Austria. Thanks to this project, the newly appointed leaders of the new State Border Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina were able to meet colleagues from EU and Associated States to ensure the efficiency of the new system. Meetings were held in Sarajevo in December 1999, in Vienna in January 2000 and a final meeting in Banja Luka in April 2000. A Secretariat mission to Moldova to prepare the evaluation of the border control cooperation between Moldova-Romania took place on 3-4 April 2000.

Finally, the relationship between the Siófok Process of the Border Guards of mainly Central and Eastern Europe as an operational forum and the Budapest Process as a strategic forum was further reinforced thanks to the Siófok meeting held on 10-12 April 2000, which gathered representatives of the Border Guards of about 35 countries. As a result, the Secretariat, through the ICMPD Liaison Office in Budapest, was to also serve the Siófok Process.



## 8<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 39 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IMP . IOM . UNHCR**

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An extraordinary meeting of the Budapest Group was held on 13-14 April 2000 in Lisbon. This was the first time a meeting of the Budapest Group was held in a country holding the EU Presidency. A detailed working paper on the four specific issues, which had been deferred to the Lisbon meeting, had been prepared by Portugal, Hungary and the Secretariat. These issues were:

- the holding of a new Ministerial Conference;
- the possible inclusion of further Mediterranean countries in the activities of the Budapest Process;
- the Italian proposal relating to development assistance and conflict resolution in source countries and;
- how to deal in a limited manner with the issue of corruption in the context of illegal migration.

There was full support to the idea of convening a new Ministerial Conference in 2001 or 2002 and all other unresolved issues were tackled.

## Working Meeting on border services in realisation of readmission agreements and legal standards in the scope of expulsion of aliens

### 15 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belarus . Estonia . Finland . France . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Romania . ICMPD . IGC**

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A Working Meeting on border services in realisation of readmission agreements and legal standards in the scope of expulsion of aliens was held in Koszalin (Poland) on 10-11 May 2000. Participants discussed the development of cooperation of the Budapest Group states in matters of readmission and returns and exchanged experiences achieved by border services.

## Meeting on the recent increase of irregular transit movements through Bosnia and Herzegovina and the need for a reform of its visa system

### 17 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croatia . Germany . Italy . Slovenia . Switzerland . Turkey the United Kingdom . the United States of America . CAFAO . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM UNHCR . UNMIBH**



Due to the increase of irregular transit movements through Bosnia and Herzegovina, a meeting was organised in Sarajevo on 28-29 August 2000. The primary aim of the meeting was to gather the three immediately affected countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia) together with some other key countries and organisations to discuss possible cooperative ventures to curb inflows, notably through a tightening up of visa policies and procedures.

A focus on South East Europe, taking into account the steep rise of illegal trans-frontier flows in the region (about 40% as compared to 1999) was noted. As decided at the 1999 Istanbul meeting of the Working Group on South East Europe, two examinations were carried out in Albania in 2000: one of Tirana airport in May, led by Poland, as well as a major evaluation of the Albanian-Italian cooperation to stem illegal migration in July, led by Norway. Experts from nine countries participated in these two examinations. On 28-29 August, Slovenia organised a meeting in Sarajevo attended by 11 Government representatives, to encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to amend its visa list with a view to better controlling the rapidly growing irregular movements, bound for Croatia and Slovenia. The conclusions of the meeting had a considerable impact in the region and in the EU context. Bosnia and Herzegovina later introduced visa obligations for Iranian citizens. Finally, a land-border examination, namely relating to Moldova, was carried out in November 2000 under the leadership of Portugal, with Germany, Poland and ICMPD participating.

## Working Group on Illegal Migration through South East Europe


### 22 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Bulgaria . Croatia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Macedonia . Norway Poland . Romania . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM the Office of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact . SECI . UNHCR**



These above mentioned activities were evaluated at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on South East Europe, held in Skopje on 27-28 November 2000. The Working Table III of the Stability Pact “*The further integration*





of the Budapest Process in the work of the Stability Pact” had been welcomed at the Sofia meeting. Therefore, this meeting in Skopje was organised in conjunction with the Stability Pact of South East Europe. A substantial report for the meeting on how to develop this cooperation had been prepared by the Secretariat (“How to halt illegal migration to, from, and through South East Europe”). The meeting outlined the modalities for this cooperation, as well as recommended the Budapest Process to take the lead for a number of activities in the region. Thus, ICMPD was to gather the border guard services and assist them in preparing a joint funding approach vis-à-vis the European Commission. Additionally, new examinations would take place primarily concentrating on Yugoslavia and the Albania-report of Norway would be an input to the EU High Level Working Group.

## 2001



### Friends of the Chair

#### 20 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Czech Republic . France . Germany . Hungary . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**



On 25-26 January 2001, the Friends of the Chair of the Budapest Group met in Budapest to discuss the mandate of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference, and to prepare the Sofia meeting of the Budapest Group. France confirmed its preparedness to host the Ministerial Conference in Paris in the early autumn of 2002. A first discussion on the goals, mandate and modalities of the Conference took place. It was agreed that the focus should continue to be on the further harmonisation of policies and procedures to control irregular migration, and through this contribute to a higher level of regularised migration. Furthermore, a number of new issues previously unmentioned in the Budapest Process were brought to the table, such as the topic of contributing to orderly migration. Finally, increased emphasis should be given to countries neighbouring the EU Candidate States in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. The Friends of the Chair further agreed to devise a formula to allow for the possible association of major non-European source countries to the Conference and to its preparations.

## Working Group Meeting on Information Exchange on Illegal Migration

### 10 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Germany . Hungary . Poland . Slovenia . European Commission . Europol . ICMPD . Interpol . IOM**

The meeting of the Working Group on Information Exchange on Illegal Migration in Budapest on 19 March 2001, under the presidency of the EU/CIREFI Chairman (Sweden), aimed at furthering the implementation of Recommendations 41-42 of the Prague document among international institutions involved in the production of data on illegal migration.

This meeting followed the concentrated efforts of the Secretariat in February 2001 on following-up on the decisions taken at the Skopje meeting (in November 2000) of the Working Group on illegal migration through South East Europe and its cooperation with the Stability Pact, in order to enhance efficiency and to avoid duplication of efforts. Namely, the Working Table III of the Stability Pact had suggested a close cooperation with the Budapest Process Working Group. Thus, in the spring of 2001, the Secretariat was closely involved in transposing the experiences of the Budapest Process examination teams to the new framework set up within the Stability Pact (the Migration and Asylum Initiative, the Support Unit and the establishment of country teams).


## 9<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 34 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . IMP . IOM . Stability Pact . UNHCR**

On 22-23 March 2001, the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group was held in Sofia. The Secretariat had prepared four substance papers for the meeting:

- a paper on the goals of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference;
- a report on progress in the 2000 implementation of the Prague Recommendations;
- a review of the results achieved by the Working Group on South Eastern Europe;
- a note on the upcoming asylum crisis in Central and Eastern Europe.



The latter led to the initiation of a new activity in the Budapest Process, namely a Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum, to be chaired by the Czech Republic. For the rest, the Budapest Group endorsed the scope and direction of a first set of goals for the Ministerial Conference, and indicated that it could take place at the end of 2002.

## Business Dialogue on Border Control

### 55 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iceland . Ireland . Italy . Kazakhstan . Kyrgyzstan . Latvia . Liechtenstein . Lithuania . Luxembourg . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Tajikistan . Turkmenistan . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . European Commission . Europol . Interpol . Stability Pact . UNCICP . WCO**

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The Bavarian Industrial Association, together with ICMPD and the Munich-based Association Pro Europe, organised on 7-9 May 2001 in Munich a Business Dialogue on long-term action to ensure a properly functioning border control regime in the wider Europe, as well as on the related investment needs and cooperation on infrastructural issues.

## Working Group on South East Europe – Sub-Group on the Cooperation of Border Guard Authorities of the Region

### 18 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Federal Republic of Yugoslavia . Germany . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Norway . Romania . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . the United Kingdom . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . NATO . Stability Pact . UNMIBH**

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On 21-22 May 2001, a new venture under the joint Budapest Process/Stability Pact umbrella was organised: the meeting in Sarajevo aimed at reinforcing border guard cooperation between the SAP-countries (the five countries involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Yugoslavia). The meeting, chaired by Hungary, led to the establishment of a Border Guard Task Force of the Stability Pact, to be served by the Budapest Group Secretariat. The meeting was financed by the European Commission (Odysseus) and with funds from Norway. Papers on border guarding standards and national structures had been prepared by the Secretariat.

The final evaluation mission of the Working Group on South East Europe took place on 11-12 July 2001, namely on the capacity of the Yugoslav authorities to combat illegal migration, in particular via Belgrade airport. Experts from seven Governments and three International Organisations participated. This meeting also served as a handover of the Budapest Process Yugoslavia examination team to the Swiss- and French-led country team of the Stability Pact Migration and Asylum Initiative (MAI)-process for Yugoslavia.

## Working Group on Return and Readmission

### 22 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croatia . Estonia . Federal Republic of Yugoslavia . France . Germany . Hungary . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

On 18-19 September 2001, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Return and Readmission was held in Chisinau, concentrating on joint measures to exert pressure on non-cooperative countries of origin. As decided, a report on the issue was prepared by the Secretariat. In the conclusions of the meeting, the Eastern European States indicated an increased willingness to readmit both own and third country nationals.

## Joint meeting Budapest Process/Stability Pact Border Guard Task Force

### 21 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croatia . Federal Republic of Yugoslavia . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Romania . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . ICMPD . IOM . Stability Pact . UNHCR . UNMIBH**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the joint Budapest Process/Stability Pact Border Guard Task Force was held in Budapest on 1-2 October 2001, under Hungarian Chairmanship. For the meeting, the Secretariat had prepared a set of preliminary gap analyses with regards to the border guarding systems of the five SAP-countries and preliminary assessments of investment needs. The results of the meeting were summarised in a special document prepared by the Secretariat for the Bucharest Regional Conference of the Stability Pact.



## Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

### 19 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Federal Republic of Yugoslavia . Finland . Hungary . Latvia  
Lithuania . Liechtenstein . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Poland . Sweden . Turkey  
the United Kingdom . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR.**

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Taking into account the rising number of asylum applicants in the EU Candidate States, a Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum was established under the leadership of the Czech Republic. It had its inaugural meeting in Prague on 10 December 2001. A set of working documents prepared by the Secretariat were examined and discussed. There was a broad consensus that this Working Group in itself would lay the basis for a special asylum-g geared process under the auspices of the Budapest Group. A 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, to be held in February 2002, would concentrate on country-of-origin-information (meeting to be EU/Odysseus-funded).

## 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference

### 11 participating countries and International Organisations:

**France . Hungary . the Netherlands . Poland . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom  
Council of Europe . ICMPD . UNHCR**

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The impetus of the Budapest Process as such and the problems with its financing as well as the goals of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference were discussed at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference, which was held in Bucharest on 13-14 December 2001. There was agreement that the Ministerial Conference should take place in early 2003, and the general directions for the drafting of the recommendations were discussed, based on the Sofia conclusions of 2001. However, taking into account policy developments over the year, many amendments were made to the Sofia conclusions. The Preparatory Group thus advised as a principle not to involve other States in the Ministerial Conference than those now participating in the Budapest Process and not to create links to countries of origin and transit in Asia and Africa as earlier discussed.

In terms of the geographical scope of the process, the Bucharest meeting did not agree with the notion that there was less to do for the process in the EU Candidate countries. On the contrary, it was stated that it would be a long process before Schengen will be operational in the new EU Member countries. As to the financing issue, France and the UK pledged regular contributions. The Netherlands proposed a more subtle burden-sharing approach in the form of a work plan to be submitted to the Friends of the Chair, followed by pledges to ensure the full and equitable financing of the process.

# 2002



## Special Session at Senior Officials level on the role of immigration and border control in the combat of terrorism

### 25 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Bosnia and Herzegovina . Belarus . Bulgaria . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Italy . Latvia . the Netherlands . Norway . Portugal . Romania . Slovakia . Spain . Turkey . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . European Commission . Europol . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR . UNMIBH**



At the invitation of Hungary, a Special Session at Senior Officials level on the role of immigration and border control in the combat of terrorism was held in Budapest on 21-22 February 2002. A senior representative of the European Commission, who underlined the European Commission's strong support for the Budapest Process, opened the meeting. It was concluded that there is no inherent link between terrorism and immigration; however, measures properly taken in the context of entry screening and border control may, to a certain extent, contribute to the fight against terrorism.


## Friends of the Chair and 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference

### 17 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Germany . Hungary . the Netherlands . Norway . Portugal . Slovakia . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . UNHCR.**



A combined meeting of the Friends of the Chair and the Preparatory Group took place in Brussels hosted by the European Commission on 7-8 March 2002. It was suggested that keywords for the activities of the process would be “focus” (i.e. concentration on a few items vital in the combat of irregular migration) and “flexibility” (i.e. capability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances and new problems). Concerning the geographical scope of the process, participants agreed with the opinion expressed in Bucharest in December 2001 to increasingly involve countries like Russia,



Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Turkey and certain Caucasus countries. Moreover, the meeting plan for 2002 was adopted (implying a totality of 13 meetings, of which 5 relate to the preparation of the Ministerial Conference and 2 to the irregular migration/asylum group). It was suggested that the annual planning meeting should take place in May/June each year and be geared towards the next year, to allow the national authorities to take budgetary decisions in time. With a view to preparing the Ministerial Conference, a first rough scheme for the drafting of the future set of recommendations was presented and accepted.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference

#### 11 participating countries and International Organisations:

**France . Germany . Hungary . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . Switzerland . the United Kingdom  
European Commission . ICMPD . UNHCR**

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A 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Preparatory Group was hosted by Switzerland at Zürich airport on 17 April 2002. A first full set of draft recommendations to be submitted to the subsequent meeting in Athens was examined and amended. Regarding the financing issue, a draft note on the principles for the financing of the Budapest Process was examined and amended; it was to be submitted to the Athens meeting of the Budapest Group.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

#### 38 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Denmark  
Estonia . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Latvia . the former Yugoslav  
Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the  
Russian Federation . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . Ukraine  
Yugoslavia . European Commission . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . Stability Pact . UNHCR**

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The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group took place in Athens on 13-14 May 2002. Delegates adopted the activity and meeting plan for 2002, implying a total of about 12 meetings and related activities, including

- two meetings of the new Working Group on irregular movements and asylum led by the Czech Republic;
- one meeting of the French/Polish-led Working Group on readmission;

- two meetings of the Border Guard Task Force (to be held in conjunction with the Stability Pact) and
- four meetings of the Preparatory Group for the Ministerial Conference.

A first revised draft of the set of recommendations for the 2003 Ministerial Conference was examined and a decision to form a new Working Group on Moldova was adopted.

## Meeting of the Border Guard Task Force

### 19 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croatia . Federal Republic of Yugoslavia . Finland . Germany . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . the Netherlands . Romania . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . Interforza . IOM . Stability Pact . UNMIK**

A meeting of the Border Guard Task Force took place in Tirana on 24-26 June 2002. It was organised together with the kick-off meeting for the HLWG Project, executed by ICMPD on upgrading the border control system of Albania along European standards. The participants were introduced to new developments in the field on the concept of Integrated Border Management and the modalities of the new CARDS programming.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference

### 27 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Europol . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Preparatory Group of the Ministerial Conference was held in Funchal (Madeira) on 11-13 July 2002. It was organised as a back-to-back meeting for Switzerland to introduce the Berne Initiative as a global migration order to representatives from Central and Eastern European governments. A detailed examination on the draft recommendations for the upcoming Ministerial Conference and a discussion on the further preparatory work in view of the 2003 Ministerial Conference were carried out.





## Working Group on Return and Readmission

### 27 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Germany . Greece . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Europol . ICMPD . IGC . IOM . UNHCR**

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The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Return and Readmission was held in Tbilisi on 27-28 September 2002. The meeting was intended to

- update the countries of Central and Eastern Europe on EU trends with regard to return and readmission issues, which have evolved since the major Paris meeting in 1999;
- to concentrate on return and readmission problems which in particular relate to CIS countries;
- to explore the avenues for cooperative ventures in the spirit of a new policy aiming at joint management of migration flows.

A working paper, prepared by the Secretariat and entitled “Return and Readmission of Illegal Migrants in the context of Joint Management of Migration Flows” was presented, providing an insight into the developing concept of migration cooperation. Ukraine held a special exercise on return to Sri Lanka and Vietnam, which would provide for examination of possible further activities with target countries.

## Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

### 19 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Finland . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . the United Kingdom . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

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A 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum was held in Cervena nad Vlatvou (Czech Republic) on 22-23 October 2002. The meeting concentrated on safe third countries, safe countries of origin and accelerated asylum procedures. Apart from discussions on these topics, the future work of this particular Working Group was discussed.

## Working Group on Moldova

### 16 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Belgium . Czech Republic . Germany . Moldova . Portugal . Romania . Sweden . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Yugoslavia . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

As decided in Athens at the Budapest Group meeting in May 2002, a special Working Group on Moldova was established with the aim to assist the authorities in the development of the country's migration system. The Group held its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Chisinau on 7-8 November 2002 under the co-chairmanship of Portugal and the Czech Republic. Following the request of the Moldovan Government and a proposal by the Portuguese Chair, it was decided to elaborate a National Action Plan (NAP), with the aim to identify the remaining gaps with regards to management of migration and asylum in Moldova. The NAP would address in a comprehensive manner all aspects of migration management and asylum relating to Moldova, such as visa policies, border control, management of regular and irregular economic migration, return and readmission, asylum procedures, integration of recognised refugees and return of rejected asylum seekers. ICMPD as Secretariat, in close consultations with the Moldovan authorities, was entrusted with the preparation and drafting of the NAP. A next meeting of the Working Group would be held in the first half of 2003.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference

### 23 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Bulgaria . Canada . Czech Republic . Denmark . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . the United Kingdom . European Commission . Council of Europe . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Preparatory Group was held in Geneva, 5-6 December 2003. The main purpose of the meeting was for delegates to work in detail on the draft set of recommendations and agree on a final draft version to be presented to the Budapest Group for approval and then to the Ministers for adoption at the Athens Ministerial Conference in March 2003. However, the magnitude of the comments made to the proposed draft recommendations rendered a new meeting of the Working Group necessary.

The 2002 activities were dominated by the preparations for the 2003 Ministerial Conference, based on the thorough discussions at the meeting in Bucharest on 13-14 December 2001 on the future of the Budapest Process as such. Moreover, the successful development of the new Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum, the border service cooperation among the countries in South East Europe, the readmission/return activities and the special session on terrorism also marked the successful development and the new orientation of the Budapest Group in 2002.

# 2003

## 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Preparatory Group for the next Ministerial Conference

### 24 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Denmark . France . Germany . Greece . the Netherlands  
Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey  
the United Kingdom . Council of Europe . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Preparatory Group for the Ministerial Conference was held on 23 January 2003 in Vienna. The main task was the examination of the new set of draft recommendations, which was to be submitted for endorsement to the Senior Officials at the annual Budapest Group meeting. The Preparatory Group agreed on the draft agenda for the Budapest Group meeting and on the draft meeting documents.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 38 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Finland . France  
Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway  
Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey  
the United Kingdom . Council of Europe . European Commission . Europol . ICMPD . IGC . IMP-UNITAR  
IOM . SECI Centre . UNHCR**

The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Senior Officials of the Budapest Group took place on 30 January 2003 in Budapest, hosted by Hungary. The purpose of this meeting, which was chaired by the new Chair of the Budapest Group, former Minister of Interior Dr. Zoltán Gál, was to scrutinise and adopt the draft recommendations for submission to the Ministers. Delegates agreed both to the form and content of the draft recommendations, recognising the extensive work done by the Secretariat throughout the drafting process. The meeting also celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Budapest Process.

## Conference of Ministers on the Prevention of Illegal Migration

### 59 participating countries and International Organisations:

Albania . Azerbaijan . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina  
 Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Georgia  
 Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iceland . Ireland . Italy . Latvia . Liechtenstein . Lithuania . Luxembourg  
 the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Malta . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland  
 Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia and Montenegro . Slovakia . Slovenia . Spain  
 Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . Council of  
 Europe . European Union . Europol . ICMPD . IGC . IMP . IOM . Interpol . SECI . Stability Pact . UNCICP  
 UNHCR . WCO

The Conference of Ministers on the Prevention of Illegal Migration took place on 10-11 March 2003 in Athens. Delegates recommended that participating states intensify their activities to substantially reduce irregular migration through the adoption of national plans for the effective and efficient implementation of the Budapest and Prague Recommendations. It was also recommended that participating states extend their full cooperation to each other to intensify their joint combat of irregular migration, in particular regarding exchange of information and experiences, early warning, common training of staff as well as programmes for the exchange of personnel. Participants stressed that the informal pan-European cooperation between border management services ensured through Hungary should continue to be used as a forum for the development of further cooperation and of training between the services of Members of the CIS, of states involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process in South Eastern Europe, and the European Union Member, Accession and Candidate states.

# VI.

## The 2003 Rhodes Ministerial Conference

### 48 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria  
Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Denmark . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece  
Hungary . Italy . Liechtenstein . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal  
Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine  
the United Kingdom . the United States of America . Council of Europe . European Commission . Europol  
ICMPD . IGC . IOM . OSCE . SECI Centre . Stability Pact . UNHCR**

The Budapest Process Ministerial Conference was hosted by Greece, in the framework of its EU Presidency, on the island of Rhodes on 25-26 June 2003. Delegates unanimously greeted the new directions of the Budapest Process: concentrating on problems relating to irregular migration affecting the neighbouring countries and regions of the enlarged European Union (bearing in mind that the Budapest Process in 1993-2000 had primarily paid attention to the problems of the Central European Accession States). 45 statements were made, reflecting the truly pan-European dimension of the process, but also its trans-Atlantic dimensions (with Australia, Canada and USA being present as observers) and its linkages to inter-governmental processes dealing with irregular migration in other parts of the world (cf. the Australian statement). Strong statements were made by Russia in underlining the commitments of the St. Petersburg Summit on visa liberalisation versus growing trends of irregular migration in the CIS-region, as well as by Turkey on the new trends of illegal migration in the Middle East and around the Mediterranean as a result of stricter Turkish policies. Finally, the representatives of the countries involved in the Stability Act Process (notably Serbia) referred to the commitments of the Thessaloniki Summit on visa liberalisation.

The Recommendations put forward were adopted by the Conference without any alterations, and delegations urged the Hungarian Chair to start the implementation process by way of conveying a meeting of the Friends of the Chair in the early autumn.

The main new directions adopted relate to:

- a change in the geographical focus from Central Europe to CIS and Turkey and their neighbouring countries, while maintaining focus on South East Europe (notably the 5 SAP-countries);
- a change in working methodology with countries of origin of irregular movements, implying more of dialogue and partnership;
- a certain link-up to regional processes in other parts of the world dealing with irregular migration.

Previous activities and Working Groups on visa policies (recommendation 8), return/readmission (recommendation 18-23), asylum/irregular movements (recommendation 15-17), South East Europe (recommendation 11) and Moldova (recommendation 10) were agreed to be maintained. There would however be adapted to the new general directions of the Budapest Process. New activities and Working Groups were to be formed for Russia/CIS (recommendation 7), for harmonisation of penalty scales (recommendation 3) and for admission policies (recommendation 12).



— from —  
2003  
— to —  
2009





## VII.

# The Meetings Held from 2003 to 2009 After the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference

## 2003

### Friends of the Chair

#### 21 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Germany . Hungary . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . European Commission ICMPD . IGC . IOM . Stability Pact . UNHCR**

On 25 September 2003 in Budapest, the meeting of the Friends of the Chair took place. The Chair opened the meeting by way of underlining the importance of the Rhodes Conference and the political commitment undertaken by participating States with the adoption of the Rhodes Recommendations. Delegations discussed the results of the Rhodes Ministerial Conference. The representatives of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Turkey, UNHCR and IOM highlighted the new comprehensive approach of the Process as reflected in the Rhodes Recommendations and many underlined the necessity that all CIS states be covered by the implementation activities. Work proceeded within the Secretariat on ensuring the closer cooperation with Russia and the widening of the Process to include all the CIS States. In this regard, ICMPD submitted a project application to the European Commission B7-667 budget line on “*The Re-direction of the Budapest Process to the CIS region*”. The project aimed to use the broad informal network of the Budapest Process to further a structured informal dialogue on the related migration control challenges, which the CIS and the European governments face together. It sought to provide an overview and analysis of the current situation in the field of irregular migration and border control, to develop a network of

Senior Officials from all the CIS countries and to establish an informal forum for addressing issues related to irregular movements, border control, trafficking and smuggling. Through the established forum, the project would aim at furthering the implementation of the relevant Prague and Rhodes Recommendations in the countries of the region, with a view to develop a harmonised approach for dealing with challenges stemming from irregular movements of people from, through and within the CIS region. The necessary co-financing was to come from interested states and the regular Budapest Process budget.

Consequently, in October, ICMPD submitted a project application to the European Commission which was politically and financially supported by Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Georgia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Russia. The project on the re-direction of the Budapest Process to the CIS region was approved by the European Commission. At the meeting, the Secretariat presented the activity plan for the coming year 2004, which was accepted. Pledges towards the financing of the regular budget of the Process were made. To reflect the broadening geographical scope of the Process, Turkey was nominated as co-Chair of the Budapest Process. Participants welcomed this decision.

## Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

### 19 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Australia . Belgium . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . the Netherlands . Poland . Slovak Republic . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum was held in Prague on 13-14 November 2003. It dealt with the phenomenon of secondary movements of asylum seekers in, from and between European countries and the application of the Dublin II/Eurodac regimes in this context. The issue of secondary movements was debated from various angles, from the perspective of receiving countries, as well as of transit countries, both within the enlarged EU and outside. In the geographical context of Central, Eastern and South East Europe, the topic of secondary movements of asylum seekers and the closely connected issue of ‘asylum shopping’ had only recently received greater attention. In the various discussions and presentations, it was acknowledged that reliable data was not always readily available, which would allow assessing the exact dimension of the phenomenon in a regional, as well as international perspective. Among others, causes and effects, composition, sizes and directions of such flows of secondary movements couldn’t always be precisely described.



## Technical Meeting of the Working Group on South East Europe

### 8 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Bulgaria . Greece . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Serbia . ICMPD . OSCE . UNMIK**

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On 17-18 November 2003 a technical meeting, within the framework of the Working Group on South East Europe and upon the request of the Ministry of Interior of Macedonia took place in Ohrid (Macedonia FYR). The meeting aimed at examining the possibilities for the development of a system for exchange of information and trust-building among the border guarding services of Macedonia (FYR) and its neighbouring countries and regions. As a follow-up, all participating parties agreed to submit a project for funding through the CARDS National Programme for Macedonia (FYR), aimed at establishing a system for exchange of information among the border-guard services.

## 2004

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### Working Group on Moldova

### 16 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Czech Republic . Estonia . Hungary . Latvia . Moldova . Portugal . Romania . Switzerland  
Sweden . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . UNHCR . ICMPD . IOM**

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Moldova was held in Chisinau on 24-25 March 2004. The Chair opened the meeting by giving an overview of the developments in the area of asylum, migration and anti-trafficking in Moldova. The delegates discussed their activities in these fields and confirmed the decision from the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on further development of the National Action Plan on migration and asylum. It was emphasised that Moldova should follow closely and take into account the relevant developments in the EU in the area of migration, in

particular in the Western Balkans and in the CIS as a whole. Furthermore, the Working Group recommended that the country pursue a progressive adaptation of its migration policies to European standards. The aim should be to develop a migration strategy with clear benchmarks, which should indicate an appropriate time frame and the funding sources. The implementation of the NAP to combat trafficking in human beings should be regarded as a priority issue and it was recommended that Moldova ratify as soon as possible the Palermo Protocols on Trafficking and Smuggling.

## Working Group on Penalty Scales

### 7 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Belgium . Estonia . Latvia . Lithuania . Portugal . ICMPD . IOM**

On the 26 April 2004 the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Penalty Scales was held in Tallinn. The meeting was arranged based on Recommendation 3 adopted at the Rhodes Ministerial Conference recommending the harmonisation of penalty scales for trafficking and smuggling in line with relevant EU instruments. The delegates introduced the situation in their respective countries with regard to the levels of penalties for the crimes of trafficking and smuggling as well as recent and expected legislative changes. To efficiently continue the activities of the Working Group and to be able to identify the areas in which it was possible to continue work on harmonisation, it was agreed that a questionnaire would be sent out by the Secretariat, which would map the actual and planned legal, criminal and administrative procedures in place with regard to the punishment of trafficking in human beings and smuggling.

## Bali-Budapest Workshop on Return and Unlawful Migrants

### 36 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Bangladesh . Brunei Darussalam . Canada . Cambodia . People's Republic of China . Czech Republic . Fiji . Indonesia . Japan . Jordan . Republic of Korea . Lao PDR . Lithuania . Malaysia . Mongolia . Nepal . New Zealand . Palau . Philippines . Samoa . Solomon Islands . Sri Lanka . Thailand . Timor Leste . Turkey . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . the Socialist Republic of Vietnam . Vanuatu . APC . Budapest Process . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

The Bali-Budapest Workshop on Return of Unlawful Migrants was convened in Perth (Australia) on 13-14 May 2004. The Workshop was a joint activity of the Bali Process and the Budapest Process, and was organised and hosted by the Government of Australia. The Workshop adopted the following objectives in accordance with the Co-Chairs' Statement from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bali Regional Min-



Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime and the Action Plan of AHEG1:

- highlight the importance of returns in maintaining the integrity of migration and protection systems;
- share information on practical experiences in undertaking returns;
- develop working documents, to be posted on the Bali Process website, that will assist governments to develop and implement return arrangements and, if necessary, draft return agreements and
- facilitate inter-regional dialogue.

## Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies

### 12 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Norway . Poland . Romania . Slovakia  
ICMPD . IOM**

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On 17-18 June 2004 the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies was held in Budapest. The meeting sought to initiate a dialogue between Central and Eastern European States on a process of harmonisation of rules of admission and immigration policies for various categories of third country nationals on the basis of EU discussions on this issue. It also provided a forum for discussion on the notion of an active labour immigration policy based on common standards among States. The Secretariat introduced the meeting based on the adopted Recommendations at the Rhodes Ministerial Conference. It was recognised that there was a need to further explore the link between orderly and irregular movements and the Working Group recommended the initiation of a dialogue on harmonisation of rules for admission of various categories of third country nationals.

The Recommendations underlined that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are increasingly turning from countries of origin and transit into countries of destination for both legal and illegal migrants. All participating States, recognising the open character of the Budapest Process, expressed their interest in involving the countries of wider Europe, especially those further East, in the discussions on harmonisation of admission rules and immigration policies. It was suggested that the Working Group would continue its work by examining in particular the rules of admission in non-EU countries in Eastern and South East Europe for various categories of third country nationals, namely students, scientists, high and low skilled workers, self-employed persons and family members.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 36 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Australia . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Canada . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Kazakhstan . Kyrgyzstan . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia and Montenegro . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Thailand . Turkey . Ukraine . Europol . CIS . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**


The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of Senior Officials was held in St. Petersburg on 11-12 October 2004. The meeting was hosted and chaired by Russia, with Turkey as co-chair of the Budapest Process. The aim of the meeting was to take stock of the developments since the Rhodes Ministerial Conference and agree on priorities for future work. The meeting was also held in conjunction with the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the project on the “Re-direction of the Budapest Process towards the CIS region”, concentrating on the countries of the Western CIS (Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine). The project was elaborated and implemented by the Secretariat as a follow-up to the directions set with the Rhodes Recommendations. The European Commission and some States participating in the Budapest Process financially and politically supported the project. Participants agreed on the future work in response to the identified main migration challenges, expressed in the statements made at the meeting by the participating CIS States, particularly through using existing platforms in relevant Working Groups within the Budapest Process.

## Meeting of the CIS Project

### 24 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Azerbaijan . Belgium . Czech Republic . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Kazakhstan . Kyrgyzstan . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Romania . Serbia and Montenegro . Tajikistan . Turkey . Uzbekistan . CIS . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . OSCE . UNDP . UNHCR**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the CIS project concentrating on South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) was held in Tbilisi on 29-30 November 2004, hosted and chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, following the Budapest Group meeting in St. Petersburg, which took place in conjunction with the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the project Re-direction of the Budapest Process to the CIS region. The meeting concentrated on the migration challenges faced by each of the three target countries, their identification and further elaboration of it based on introduced results of the fact-finding missions to the three countries (held in autumn 2004). The priorities agreed upon in



St. Petersburg were taken into account during the meeting. It also served to continue the dialogue and promote the exchange of information, policies and practices with other Budapest Process participating States.

The meeting showed the interest of the three Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) in furthering close cooperation and exchange of experience with the European Union and its Member States in relation to their inclusion to the European New Neighbourhood Policy in June 2004. Despite unresolved inter-regional issues, the individual countries were ready to cooperate on bilateral and multilateral level with the European Union, with possible utilisation of Georgia as the neutral country in the region.

## 2005



### Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum took place on 17 March 2005 in Prague within the framework of the Budapest Process and the ARGO project “Irregular Migration and Asylum and Information and Data Exchange in Europe” (IMA-IDEE). As a follow-up to the 4<sup>th</sup> Working Group meeting, it dealt with the gathering, usage and sharing of asylum and migration related data. At this meeting, a limited-access website was presented which allowed participating authorities rapid access to the collected asylum and migration related information, and provided a user-friendly platform for fast exchange of data among the participating states.

### Friends of the Chair

#### 17 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Belgium . Croatia . Czech republic . Hungary . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . Slovakia  
Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . ICMPD . IOM . MARRI**



The Friends of the Chair met on 4 May 2005 in Budapest in order to discuss the next steps for further involvement of the CIS countries. It was agreed that the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus should continue to be actively involved in the activities of the Budapest Process. Furthermore, contacts to the Central Asian CIS countries should continue to be strengthened and specific activities could be developed on request of participating states.

## Meeting on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Project

### 25 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Belgium . Canada . Czech Republic . Georgia . Kazakhstan . Kyrgyzstan  
Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Tajikistan . Ukraine  
Uzbekistan . European Commission . EURASEC . BOMCA . ICMPD . IOM . the Shanghai Cooperation  
Organisation Regional/Anti-Terrorist Structure . UNHCR . UNODC**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the project on the “Re-direction of the Budapest Process towards the CIS region”, concentrating on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, took place in Almaty (Kazakhstan) on 19-20 May 2005. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Kazakhstan and chaired by ICMPD. Apart from the three above-mentioned regional meetings (St. Petersburg, Tbilisi, Almaty), a set of Introductory Missions of the project, as well as Expert Fact-finding Missions to the CIS region were held within the project. Introductory Missions in 2004 were held to all countries involved in the project. During these missions, the activities of the Budapest Process and the planned activities within the project were presented, and the commitment and readiness to cooperate of all the countries was obtained. The missions took place as follows: the Russian Federation (March 2004), Moldova (March 2004), Ukraine (March 2004) Belarus (June 2004), Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (June 2004) and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (August – September 2004).

As foreseen in the project, the next stage consisted of fact-finding missions with the aim to gather information on the situation regarding the existing legal framework and administrative structures in the field of migration. Experts from Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland took part in these missions, which took place as follows: Western CIS (September - October 2004), Caucasus (November 2004), Central Asia (February - April 2005). The results of the missions were summarised during an expert meeting held in Vienna, 10-11 May 2005, where draft recommendations for measures to be taken were elaborated.





## 13<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 42 participating countries and International Organisations:

Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria  
Canada . Czech Republic . Denmark . Finland . Georgia . Hungary . Kazakhstan . Kyrgyzstan . Latvia . Lithuania  
Malta . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation  
Serbia and Montenegro . Slovakia . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Turkmenistan . Ukraine  
the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . CIS . EURASEC . ICMPD . IOM . OSCE . UNHCR

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The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials was held in conjunction with the final meeting of the project *“Re-direction of the Budapest Process towards the CIS region”* and took place on 29-30 of June 2005 in Vienna. The meeting was hosted by Austria with Turkey in its capacity as co-chair of the Budapest Process. The meeting had the overall aim of analysing the findings of the CIS project and agreeing on the ways to include and address the identified challenges in the framework of the Budapest Process, in an effort to continue the prevention and control of irregular movements through the European-CIS region. In this vein, follow-up meetings were held with the countries from the CIS region.

## Joint Meeting of the Bali and Budapest Process

### 34 participating countries and International Organisations:

Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . China . Croatia . Finland  
Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Malta . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . Romania  
Slovenia . Spain . Switzerland . Sweden . Thailand . Turkey . the United Kingdom . the United States of  
America . Uzbekistan . ICMPD . Interpol . IOM . OSCE . UNHCR . UNODC

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On 24-25 October 2005 in Vienna, a joint meeting of the Bali and the Budapest Process took place. The meeting focused on the implementation of anti-trafficking legislation and policies in the larger context of irregular migration. The meeting served as a platform for experience exchange among interested States on the implementation of legislation and policies in the field of trafficking in human beings. The overall aim of the meeting was to further the policy dialogue towards bridging the existing discrepancies between development and actual implementation of legislation and policies in the field of trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, it aimed at exploring the main elements of the existing links between trafficking in human beings and migration.

# 2006

## Workshop on labour migration in Central Asia

### 22 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Azerbaijan . Kazakhstan . Kyrgyzstan . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine  
Asian Development Bank . EEC . Eurasia Foundation . European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
European Commission . ICMPD . ILO . IOM . OSCE . Regional Centre for Migration Issues . UNDP . UNHCR  
USAID . World Bank**

On 31 January – 1 February 2006, a workshop on labour migration in Central Asia took place, jointly with OSCE, in Almaty. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the development of labour migration regimes and to strengthen the capacities of governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with migration issues, thereby contributing to the economic and social development as well as avoiding labour exploitation and the risks posed by irregular migration.


## Working Group on Development of Migration Systems

### 25 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Azerbaijan . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland  
Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . Poland . Slovakia . Spain . Switzerland  
Turkey . Ukraine . CIS . EC Delegation to Georgia . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

As a follow-up to the Rhodes Recommendations and the successfully completed project on the Re-direction of the Budapest Process towards the CIS region, a new Working Group was established on the Development of Migration Systems. The aim of this Working Group was to promote the transfer of knowledge and experience in building comprehensive asylum and migration systems among Budapest Process participating States.

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Development of Migration Systems, led by Bulgaria, took place in Sofia on 9-10 March 2006. Participating CIS countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mol-



dova and Ukraine) expressed their support for continuing the process of experience exchange in addressing the areas of border management, visa and return and readmission, as the three areas constituted the crucial elements of an overall strategy to effectively tackle irregular migration.

## Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

### 19 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Germany . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . Slovakia . Slovenia . Turkey . CIS . EURASEC . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

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The 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum, led by the Czech Republic, took place in Prague on 10-11 April 2006 to discuss existing models and developments in the institutional set-up of second asylum instance decisions and the links between asylum policy and judiciary independence in the context of irregular migration. Presentations from Poland, Croatia, Czech Republic and the Netherlands showed the different approaches on a national level with regard to the administrative structure of second asylum instance. Participating States were invited by the Chair to reflect on the work done in this forum in previous years and to identify new topics and issue areas to be addressed.

## Working Group on Approximation of Penalty Scales for Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants

### 18 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Australia . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Latvia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Ukraine . CIS . ICMPD . IOM-Armenia . OSCE . UNDP . UNHCR Yerevan-Armenia**

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Approximation of Penalty Scales for Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants, led by Belgium, was hosted by Armenia in Yerevan, on 15-16 May 2006. The meeting was chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and co-chaired by Belgium. The aim of the meeting was the identification of good practices in the area of administrative response in the field of trafficking in human beings. Participating states noted that an internationally coherent approach against traffickers is essential to counter criminality, that approximation of penalty scales is important to enhance effectiveness between states regarding mutual assistance and extradition, and that penalties must have a level of punishment equivalent to similar offences, especially those with a link to organised crime.

## Friends of the Chair

### 10 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Czech Republic . Finland . Germany . Hungary . the Netherlands . Poland . Switzerland . Turkey  
the United Kingdom . ICMPD**

The Senior Officials Meeting in Istanbul was immediately preceded by a meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the Budapest Process on 18 October 2006 in Istanbul. The meeting participants discussed, in a smaller setting, the possible future strategic direction of the Turkish chairmanship of the Budapest Process. A draft background paper on recent trends in irregular migration from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran to Europe was prepared for the meeting. The discussion on facilitating dialogue and cooperation with these three countries of origin was initiated at this meeting and would lead a few years later to the inclusion of the Silk Routes countries in the Budapest Process.

## 14<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 32 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland . Georgia  
Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Liechtenstein . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey  
the United Kingdom . CIS . European Commission . EC Delegation to Turkey . ICMPD . Interpol . IOM  
UNHCR**

Turkey formally took over the chairmanship of the Budapest Process at the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials, which was held in Istanbul on 19-20 October 2006. Participants welcomed the chairmanship of Turkey and the intention by the new chair to increase focus on irregular migration pressures in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean regions. It was recognised that the alleviation of such migration pressures was beyond the capacity of a single country, thus requiring common policy responses and coordinated action in the spirit of partnership and burden-sharing. Turkey as Chair reiterated the importance of the ongoing working groups and that meetings on the topics previously identified (Immigration and Admission Policies, Irregular Movements and Asylum, Development of Migration Systems, Return and Readmission, etc.) should continue to take place.



## Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies

### 28 participating countries and International Organisations:

Armenia . Austria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Latvia  
Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovakia  
Spain . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . CIS . European Commission . ICMPD . OECD . OSCE . UNHCR

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies was held in Bratislava on 18-19 December 2006 following its first meeting which highlighted the need to open the Budapest Process to wider Europe. The meeting focused on migrants' access to the labour market and social rights in the host country. The purpose was to identify examples of properly managed migration. It was agreed to hold a third working group meeting.

## 2007

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## Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

### 35 participating countries and International Organisations:

Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic .  
Finland . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovakia  
Slovenia . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . CIS . Eurasian Economic Community  
Europol . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR

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The Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum held its 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, hosted and chaired by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic on 22-23 March 2007 in Prague. It was proposed that forthcoming meetings of the Working Group should continue information and experience exchange among interested participating States on issues such as:

- time limits for return of non-admissible passengers in relation to the application of Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention, with special reference to the transit situation;
- the relation between Annex 9 of the above-mentioned Convention and readmission agreements from a legal perspective;
- effects of the implementation of carriers' liability on national migration systems of transit countries;
- time limits of retention in the international transit zone;
- systems for the exchange of information on false and falsified documents through inter-state cooperation;
- reception and detention of minors and vulnerable groups;
- current use of APIS (Advanced Passenger Information System) for immigration purposes;
- effects of pre-departure and gate checks.

## Working Group on Development of Migration Systems

### 21 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Azerbaijan . Bulgaria . Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . Poland . the Russian Federation . Ukraine . the United States of America . CIS . Danish Refugee Council . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . OSCE . UNHCR**

The Working Group on Development of Migration Systems held its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, hosted and chaired by the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, on 7-8 May 2007 in Tbilisi. The purpose of the meeting was to promote knowledge on the development of migration systems against the background of a comprehensive policy approach addressing also labour migration aspects. Participants discussed challenges faced in this area, as well as policy and institutional responses chosen. At the end, participating States agreed to continue the experience and information exchange on the development of comprehensive migration systems, as well as the development on National Action Plans on Migration and their respective implementation. The necessary starting point was the drawing up of a conceptual basis for an analysis of the migration situation, based on which the strategy was formulated. Responding to the needs and challenges of the country, both emigration and immigration perspectives should be reflected. Objectives to be addressed related to prevention of irregular immigration and trafficking in human beings and building up systems for admission and residence. In an emigration context, issues to be addressed include return and reintegration, consular protection, counselling services, maintaining contacts to diasporas, the transfer of social rights, as well as the question of remittances.



## Friends of the Chair

### 16 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Canada . Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Germany . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . the Netherlands . Poland . Slovenia . Sweden . Turkey . the United Kingdom European Commission . ICMPD**

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On 7 June 2007, the Friends of the Chair of the Budapest Process held a meeting in Vienna. It was concluded at the meeting that topics such as return and readmission, the asylum-illegal migration nexus, development of migration systems, border management as well as visa remained central topics for the Budapest Process. It was noted that the Budapest Process remained relevant and that the re-direction of the Budapest Process towards CIS countries was successful. This was illustrated by the number of participating countries at the respective Working Group meetings, as well as by the reference to the Budapest Process in the Communication of the EC from 16 May 2007 “*Applying the Global Approach for Migration to the Eastern and South East Regions Neighbouring the European Union*”. The establishment of a Working Group on the geographical area of the Black Sea was discussed at the meeting. Following earlier consultations, participants proposed to hold a pre-runner conference on trafficking in human beings in the context of irregular migration to be implemented in cooperation with UNODC and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

## Working Group on Return and Readmission

### 38 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Ireland . Latvia . Lithuania . Malta . Moldova Norway . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden Ukraine . the United Kingdom . CIS . European Commission . Eurasian Economic Community . Frontex ICMPD . IOM . OSCE/ODIHR . UNHCR**

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The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Return and Readmission was chaired by the UK Border and Immigration Agency, and co-chaired and hosted by the Ministry of Interior and Administration of Poland on 25-26 September 2007 in Warsaw. The discussions of the meeting focused on two main issues: readmission agreements and their implementation from a policy and operational perspective on the one hand, and the related issue of Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) in cooperation with International Organisations on the other. In identifying the following priority issues, the participants encouraged the continuation of the Working Group on Return and Readmission in order to:

- support and further promote cooperation between States in concluding and implementing European Commission readmission agreements, bilateral agreements in line with international legal standards, as well as Memoranda of Understanding in the area of return and readmission;
- further promote the exchange of experience and good practices in the identification and documentation of irregular migrants and returnees;
- identify practical ways and means to more effectively implement readmission agreements by improving planning capacities through the exchange of solid estimates of returns to be made following the entering into force of readmission agreements;
- foster assisted voluntary return programmes as the preferred option to enhance return and reintegration of returnees and;
- focus on the long-term effects of return by emphasising sustainability aspects in return policies, for instance through linkages to other policy areas and experience exchange on second generation readmission agreements.

## Joint Conference of UNODC and Budapest Process with BSEC

### 25 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Bulgaria . Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Lithuania . Moldova . Romania  
Slovakia . Turkey . Ukraine . the United States of America . BSEC . EurAsEC . EC Delegation to Turkey  
Europol . ICMPD . ILO . IOM . La Strada – Ukraine . OSCE/ODIHR . UNHCR . UNODC**

The Joint Conference of UNODC and Budapest Process with the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation on “Trafficking in Human Beings in the Black Sea Region” took place on 9-10 October 2007 in Istanbul and was chaired and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Participants agreed that a coordinated, multidisciplinary and multidimensional regional approach in the Black Sea Region was of utmost importance and could only be reached by the sharing of experiences, good practices and recommendations. In addition, a comprehensive policy response towards trafficking should continue to take a human rights and victim-centred approach. The design of adequate policies in the field of prevention, protection and prosecution could only be ensured and the human rights of victims and witnesses be fully protected in this way. This meeting was a pre-runner to the Black Sea Regional Working Group established within the framework of the Budapest Process.





## Working Group on Irregular Transit Migration through the South East European Region

### 23 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Estonia . Germany . Hungary  
Latvia . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Poland  
Romania . Serbia . Slovakia . the United Kingdom . UNMIK/Kosovo . ICMPD . IOM . MARRI . UNHCR**

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The meeting of the Working Group on Irregular Transit Migration through the South East European Region was chaired and hosted by the Ministry of Interior of Croatia on 27-28 November 2007 in Zagreb. The meeting focused on minors as irregular migrants, from both the legal and practical perspective. Minors, those accompanied by parents, relatives and third persons as well as unaccompanied minors, represent a growing challenge in all South East European countries. Participants recommended that sustainable, efficient and effective solutions had to be in line with the international legal instruments and be anchored in the principle of the best interest of the minor. They further recommended that regional cooperation among relevant national institutions should be deepened and enhanced.

# 2008



## Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum

### 27 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovak Republic . Slovenia . Spain . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . Organisation for Aid of Refugees . UNHCR**



The Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum held its 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, hosted and chaired by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, on 14-15 April 2008 in Prague. The meeting focused on the regulation of detention and covered especially problematic issues such as vulnerable groups, conditions of detention, grounds for detention and its length. Participants welcomed a forum in which these sensitive issues could be discussed. The participants stressed that this forum was one of the rare occasions to tackle this issue, which was usually considered problematic. In the final remarks of the Chair, it was concluded that the meeting reached both of its goals: firstly exchanging knowledge and experience in the area discussed and secondly, providing the European Commission assistance in its attempts to harmonise the policies in the area of detention of asylum seekers within the European Union.


## 15<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 30 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . CIS . European Commission . Europol . ICMPD . IOM**



The 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials was held in Trabzon (Turkey) on 15-16 May 2008. Participants agreed that the promotion of enhanced international and inter-agency



cooperation in the fight against irregular migration and the criminal networks standing behind human smuggling operations still constituted the main priorities in this area. The meeting provided for two break-out sessions. Working Table I emphasised the need to further promote comprehensive return and readmission policies, taking into account the interests and problems of countries of origin, countries of destination and transit countries in a balanced and partnership approach. Working Table II concluded that in order to bring about its added value, the Budapest Process should particularly focus on how to concretely implement and operationalise policies and measures of legal migration. Through fostering information exchange and good practices, the Process could contribute to promoting such concepts also beyond the EU.

Furthermore, the exchange of good practices and experiences gained in other regions could support the participating EU states in practically implementing their legal migration policies. More generally, Working Table II acknowledged that international cooperation in migration management requires effective partnerships between the concerned countries of origin, transit and destination. It was concluded that the Budapest Process should continue to foster such partnerships based on equality among the countries actively engaged in its dialogue. This further creation of practical partnerships among the participating countries would therefore feature prominently in the upcoming Ministerial Conference. The topic of integration was also mentioned as key and needed to be included into the agenda of the Process in the future given its increasing relevance.

## Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies

### 22 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Azerbaijan . Bulgaria . Estonia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Latvia . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovak Republic . the United Kingdom . Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS . European Commission . ICMPD . UNHCR**

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The Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies held its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, hosted and chaired by the Ministry of Hungarian Interior of Justice and Law Enforcement and co-chaired by the Slovak Ministry of Interior, on 5-6 June 2008 in Budapest. The topics defined by the Chair and the Co-chair of the Working Group were twofold: firstly to find solutions for inflexible administrative procedures, which often do not reflect the justified needs of labour markets, and secondly to counter the danger of illegal employment, with all ensuing negative effects. In the final remarks, the Chair proposed to invite to the next meetings also representatives from Ministries of Labour and representatives from countries where surveys on the supply/demand of the labour market are done in order for them to share good practices in this regard.

## Working Group on Return and Readmission

### 32 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Canada . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland . Germany . Ghana . Hungary . Lithuania . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovenia . Spain . Switzerland . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . CIS . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

On 16-17 September 2008 the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Return and Readmission was held in Warsaw, chaired by the Polish Border Guard Service, co-chaired by the UK Border Agency and hosted by the Ministry of Interior and Administration of Poland. The specific focus of the meeting was identification of irregular migrants and returnees following the expressed priorities of participating countries in the previous Return and Readmission Working Group meeting in 2007. The following possible priority areas were identified for the next meeting of the Working Group on Return and Readmission:

- sustainable reintegration after return;
- links between return and development policies;
- advisory services on migration for migrants and migrant communities in transit countries.

## Working Group on the Black Sea Region

### 30 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bulgaria . Cyprus . Czech Republic . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Moldova . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovakia . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . the United States of America . BSEC . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . Söderköping Process Secretariat . UNODC**

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea Region was held in Sofia on 13-14 November 2008. This meeting was a direct follow-up to the discussions in the Friends of the Chair meeting on 7 June 2007. At the meeting, both FRONTEX and the littoral states of the Black Sea presented the situation regarding irregular migration. For this purpose, the Black Sea region should not be given a narrow definition. Instead, an inclusive and flexible character would be kept, welcoming the participation of interested states according to topic and relevance. The geographical scope would in this sense be defined to include all states affected by the relevant migration routes around the Black Sea. It was acknowledged that irregular migration rather takes place along land routes than over the sea itself.



# 2009



## Working Group on South East European Region

### 29 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic  
Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova  
Montenegro . the Netherlands . Norway . Romania . Serbia . Slovenia . Switzerland . Turkey . the  
United Kingdom . EC Delegation to Croatia . Frontex . ICMPD . MARRI . Regional Cooperation Council for  
South East Europe . UNHCR Croatia**



On 27-28 August 2009, the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting under Croatian Chairmanship of the Working Group on the South East European Region was held in Zagreb, chaired and hosted by the Ministry of Interior of Croatia. The meeting focused on practical implementation of readmission agreements in the South East European Region, which had been identified as a priority. It focused firstly on sharing experiences regarding practical implementation of readmission agreements in the SEE region and secondly, on identifying good practices to be shared and compiled into a report resulting from the meeting.

The following areas of practical improvement and follow-up were identified:

- to harmonise, as far as possible, different procedures of the countries in the region for dealing with illegal migrants, and to make such procedures more efficient;
- to harmonise the content of existing readmission agreements (and amendments to such agreements) to European standards;
- to take initiatives for negotiating and signing new readmission agreements between the countries in the region as well as with the most significant countries of origin of irregular migrants;
- to continue and intensify efforts to build capacity and capability to implement readmission agreements;
- to investigate new possibilities and sources for financing voluntary return;
- to strengthen and deepen cooperation in implementing readmission agreements between the countries of the region and with other countries. In doing this, the following is recommended:
  - Joint investigations and immediate on-site inspections should be used for the direct establishment of evidences for proving illegal state border crossings.
  - Non-established identity and lack of identity and travel documents can and must not per se be a reason for refusing readmission.

- Competencies and responsibilities for return and readmission should be clearly laid down and communicated both for summary (informal) procedures and formal procedures. In case competencies are divided between different state authorities (administrative bodies or border police), clear lines of reference should be in place to avoid shifts in responsibilities and hence, delays in implementation. The concept of focal points to address this was introduced.

## Friends of the Chair

### 20 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Belgium . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Estonia . Finland . Georgia  
Hungary . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Switzerland . Slovakia . Turkey . the United  
Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD**

The meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the Budapest Process was held in Vienna on 9 September 2009. The meeting brought together the main donor States of the Budapest Process, the leading and hosting countries for the Working Groups as well as the European Commission. Apart from discussing current and future priorities of the Budapest Process, the meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss suggestions from the Secretariat for advancing the administration and financial viability of the process. The following conclusions were made regarding the general operational framework of the Budapest Process:

- All participating countries attach great value to its working methods and results, and singled it out as one of the most operational and important forums for information exchange and dialogue available. For over 15 years, the Process provided a credible framework for equal level dialogue between countries of origin, transit and destination and served as a tool for communication on appropriate administrative levels between countries.
- The Budapest Process should provide implementation support to the Global Approach to Migration to the East and South East and help translate political commitments into concrete action. It could consequently take an instrumental role in bringing results from an abstract to a practical level through concretising recommendations.
- The Budapest Process could also become an important framework for follow-up through its Working Groups to some of the elements of the Joint Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Conference “Building Migration Partnerships” organised in Prague in April 2009.

It was agreed that the dialogue must remain informal, non-binding, practical, sincere and realistic, meeting informally and on equal footing. Working group meetings should give priority to yielding tangible outcomes, including training programmes or mission information campaigns. The Secretariat should encourage a problem-oriented view and should facilitate interested states gathering at the margin of meetings to discuss follow-up activities including pilot projects in focus areas, for example. Discussions were also held on the potential thematic and geographical expansion of the dialogue which led to the third expansion phase of the dialogue in the next Senior Officials’ Meeting.




# 2010



## Ad hoc Working Group on Migration flows from the Horn of Africa: Emerging Eastern Flows?

### 21 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Azerbaijan . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croatia . Czech Republic . Georgia . Hungary  
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Spain  
Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . Europol . Frontex . ICMPD . Temporary Desk on Iraq . UNHCR**



On 18-19 May 2010, the Budapest Process ad hoc Working Group Meeting on Migration flows from the Horn of Africa: Emerging Eastern Flows? was held in Utrecht (the Netherlands) chaired and hosted by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) and co-chaired by the Ministry of Justice. The meeting was organised within the framework of a project initiated and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Justice, and implemented by INS and ICMPD. The project was set up as a consequence of the high numbers of asylum seekers especially from Somalia in some European countries and its purpose was to share experience and available information on migration flows from the Horn of Africa through the Eastern Budapest Process countries.

Despite the deteriorating situation in the region, it was noted that a decrease of flows seemed likely, caused among others by the agreements between Italy and Libya. In order to draw appropriate conclusions regarding the flows through Central Eastern and South East Europe, more research would be needed. It was also noted that there was a general lack of constant and coherent monitoring of intra-EU movements of migrants. Initiatives by certain countries, for example the Netherlands, showed that a multiagency response could have worked well and that implemented policy measures resulting from such cooperation, for example to tackle misuse of asylum or family reunification procedures, could have strong results.







— from —  
2010  
— to —  
2013



## VIII.

# The Meetings Held form 2010 - 2013 Expansion of the Dialogue to the Silk Routes Countries

### 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

#### 31 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Finland . Georgia  
Greece . Hungary . Kyrgyzstan . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Romania . the Russian  
Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom  
EU Delegation to Turkey . ICMPD . Interpol . IOM . UNHCR.**

On 3 November 2010, the 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the Budapest Process was held in Istanbul, chaired and hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and decide on the future direction of the Budapest Process, following the communication from the Chair, Turkey, on 14 May 2010, announcing a third phase of the Budapest Process. This third phase expanded the geographic scope to include the Silk Route countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria). For Working Groups, a new geographical division would be applied, with three regional working groups: the Working Group on the Black Sea Region, the Working Group on the South East European Region and the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region. The thematic Working Group on Return and Readmission was originally maintained. The Chair and the Secretariat were encouraged to reflect on possible new topics for this Working Group, such as return of unaccompanied minors or identification of vulnerable groups. In addition to traditional topics of the Budapest Process, such as illegal migration, return and readmission as well as asylum, topics such as labour and legal migration and links between migration and development should be continuously included in the work. The human rights of the migrants should be respected and necessary protection provided also to migrants in an irregular situation. This meeting was the turning point into a thematic and geographical expansion of the Budapest Process which would lead to the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference.

## Working Group on the Silk Routes Region

### 37 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . China  
Croatia . Finland . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Iraq . Kyrgyzstan . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway  
Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland Syrian  
Arab Republic . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . EU Delegation to Turkey . ICMPD  
Interpol . IOM . UNHCR**

Turkey hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region in Istanbul on 4 November 2010 immediately following the Senior Officials meeting and including, for the first time, the Silk Routes countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria. The objectives of the meeting were to establish a common ground for cooperation in this new framework, explore possibilities for future work as well as look at topical priorities. The new partner countries presented the main points of their respective migration situation, including challenges and priorities for international cooperation. With this new extension of the Budapest Process, stronger engagement between countries of origin, transit and destination could be reached. During the discussion, it was agreed that prevention of irregular migration constitutes a challenge of fundamental importance for all the countries of the Eurasian region. The importance to understand, acknowledge and address the root causes of irregular migration and promote new migration management tools such as migration profiles, readmission agreements and assisted voluntary returns was acknowledged.



# 2011



## Working Group on the Black Sea Region

### 31 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Armenia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Kyrgyzstan . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Turkey . Ukraine . BSEC . EEAS . EUBAM . Europol . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . Konrad Adenauer Stiftung . MARRI . SECI Center . UNHCR**



On 9-10 February 2011, the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea Region was held in Sofia hosted by the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and co-chaired with the Bulgarian Border Guard Services, with the purpose of discussing ways to improve cooperation between the border guard services of the Black Sea Region. It was agreed that the thematic focus should be kept on the fight against irregular migration, while acknowledging and considering the link to the broader fight against organised cross-border crime. The next meetings should also discuss document security, the adoption of an inter-agency focus and take into consideration the crosscutting nature and possible implications of the topic.

## Working Group on the Silk Routes Region

### 32 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Canada . China . Czech Republic . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Kyrgyzstan . Pakistan . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Economic Cooperation Organization . EU Delegation to Turkey . ICMPD . IOM . UNDP . UNHCR**



The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with ICMPD was held on 7-8 June 2011 in Nevşehir (Turkey). The meeting focused on discussing ways to foster cooperation on migration issues between the countries of the Budapest Process and the Silk Routes. Upon the proposal of the Chair, it was decided that

an annual training programme would be developed starting from 2012, targeting the officials of all interested States, but in particular those of the Silk Routes countries. Three to four joint trainings a year were proposed. Possible areas of training were identified such as combating smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons as well as document security. In this respect, a training programme would be presented to the States by the Chair and the Secretariat before the next meeting. States interested in hosting the trainings were invited to notify the Secretariat on the possible modalities. The Chair also invited the States to express their priorities for the training programme. The project proposal on fostering cooperation in the area of migration with the Silk Routes countries was endorsed by the States. In particular, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan expressed their support to the project along with other States and International Organisations present.

## Thematic meeting on Addressing Irregular Migration through Coherent Migration and Development Strategies

### 29 participating countries and International Organisations:


**Afghanistan . Australia . Azerbaijan . Burkina Faso . Czech Republic . Egypt . El Salvador . France  
Georgia . Iran . Kenya . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Philippines . Switzerland . Tunisia  
Turkey . the United States of America . Yemen . Zimbabwe . Boğaziçi University . Koç University . Caritas  
Lebanon . GFMD . ICMC . ICMPD . ILO . IOM**

On 13-14 October 2011, Turkey and Switzerland convened an ad-hoc thematic meeting on Addressing Irregular Migration through Coherent Migration and Development Strategies in cooperation with the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD), which was held in Istanbul. The aim of the meeting was to assess conditions and mechanisms for sustained and effective partnerships between countries of origin, transit and destination in order to address development related causes of irregular migration. A special focus was placed on exploring practices and models of development cooperation that offer viable alternatives to irregular migration.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and Intergovernmental Meeting of the Silk Routes Project (1<sup>st</sup> preparatory project)

### 32 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . China  
Estonia . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Kyrgyzstan . the Netherlands . Norway . Poland . Romania  
the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom  
EurAsEC . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . SELEC . UNHCR**



On 17 November 2011, the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of Budapest Process Senior Officials was held in Ankara, chaired and hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of the third phase of the Budapest Process and to discuss the strategic outlook until 2013. In line with requests from several countries, it was agreed that Turkey would have to work together with the Secretariat on including Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran into the framework of the Silk Routes Regional Working Group.

Furthermore, discussions on a new Ministerial Declaration took place and a decision to hold three Regional Working Groups to explore a variety of topics which could be prioritised in the new declaration and the third phase of the Budapest Process. The Zagreb meeting (April 2012) therefore focused on irregular migration and asylum, the Tbilisi meeting (June 2012) focused on migration and development and the Sofia meeting (November 2012) focused on labour migration, migration and mobility and irregular migration.

On 18 November 2011 the Intergovernmental Meeting of the Silk Routes Project “Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes Region” took place. This first project started in September 2011 and was funded by the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. It sought to improve cooperation in the area of migration between the countries of the Budapest Process and the Silk Route countries, in particular with a view to ensure orderly migration, to protect the rights of migrants and to activate the links between migration and development. The meeting was held to officially launch the project, adopt its work plan and present the preliminary findings of the first two months of implementation. Participating states expressed the importance of including issues of regular migration and asylum procedures and of establishing not only bilateral but also trilateral cooperation mechanisms to look into legal migration channels and asylum. The links between development and migration were underlined. States expressed their wish that the dialogue with the Silk Routes countries resulted in actions also addressing and supporting development in the respective countries.

# 2012



## Working Group on South East European Region

### 35 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria  
Croatia . Denmark . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Estonia . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland  
Turkey . Ukraine . CNI . Croatian Red Cross . EASO . EEAS . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . OSCE . UNHCR**


On 25-26 April 2012, the Working Group on the South East European Region met in Zagreb at the invitation of the Croatian Ministry of Interior. The aim of the meeting was to achieve concrete and practical results and, if possible, to develop action points for joint follow-up on challenges related to mixed migration flows through the South East European region, mostly related to the topics of irregular migration and asylum. These topics were identified as a priority in consultations prior to the meeting, and the focus of the discussion was both on irregular flows as well as on protection needs. The meeting gave room to experience and information sharing during plenary sessions as well as breakout sessions for the identification of challenges, priorities, good practices and concrete cooperation possibilities. It was noted that a comprehensive approach was needed to address the issue of mixed migration flows. The full range of legal, administrative and cooperation tools should be considered when discussing possible actions. Cooperation was necessary on national, regional and international levels with all countries along the relevant migration routes. A regional approach was therefore needed to deal with mixed migration flows in the South East European region involving regular meetings at least annually.

## Working Group on Silk Routes Region

### 37 participating countries and International Organisations

**Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . China . Denmark . Finland . Georgia  
Greece . Hungary . Iran . Kyrgyzstan . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . the Netherlands  
Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . Serbia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United  
Kingdom . Delegation of the EU to Georgia . ECODOCCU . EUI . ICMC . ICMPD . IFRC . Innovations and  
Reforms Center . IOM . Islamic Relief Pakistan . UNDP . UNHCR**





On 28-29 June 2012 the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region chaired by Turkey and hosted by Georgia, was held in Tbilisi. The meeting focused on migration and development in the Silk Routes Region. It constituted at the same time the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting within the framework of the project on “Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes Region”, implemented under the umbrella of the Budapest Process. The Working Group, for the first time solely focusing on migration and development, confirmed the development of the Budapest Process into a balanced migration dialogue. In line with the basic principles of the Budapest Process work, it was stressed that discussions should not be politicised but remain practical and unbiased. It was agreed that joint and continuous efforts were needed to support the efforts of the Silk Routes countries to mainstream migration into development but also to address the remaining development needs in the Silk Routes Region. Partnership and regional cooperation were identified as crucial in developing comprehensive policies to maximise development benefits and mitigate negative impacts. This in depth analysis aimed at identifying new areas of cooperation. In terms of utilising the potential of migrants for development, reintegration assistance and training for returning migrants were mentioned as well as a tailor-made approach to these needs. Further capacity building measures were also discussed.

## 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and 1<sup>st</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

### 41 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . China . Czech Republic . Denmark . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Italy . Kyrgyzstan . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . the Netherlands . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Turkmenistan . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . EASO . ECODOCCU . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

On 27-28 September 2012, the 1<sup>st</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference “A Silk Routes Partnership for Migration” was held in Izmir (Turkey). This meeting took place following the Working Group meetings (Zagreb, Tbilisi) in 2012 which looked into areas of cooperation on a series of given topics (irregular migration, labour migration, migration and development, asylum). Those two meetings were instrumental in the preparations of the Ministerial Conference as well as the Sofia meeting held in November 2012 after the Senior Officials Meeting. The discussion paper ahead of the meeting identified five pillar of activities (1-legal migration including mobility, integration as well as racism and xenophobia , 2-migration and mobility, 3-irregular migration including return and readmission as well as smuggling of migrants, 4-trafficking in human beings and 5-international protection). Participants discussed these five areas as well as the suggested action points under each area with the aim to review the priorities and the

sub-sections suggested. Some main conclusions of importance for the future preparatory process were that:

- capacity building measures were needed in the region regarding all substance pillars discussed;
- knowledge transfer should be increased between countries to share experience and good practices and training opportunities;
- there was a general call for concrete actions on all substance issues and practical follow-up;
- a package of measures should be compiled to cover the above points and different aspects of cooperation as follow-up to the Ministerial Conference.

## Working Group on the Black Sea Region

### 30 participating countries and International Organisations:


**Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Australia . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Kyrgyzstan . Moldova . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . ECO . Frontex . Hanns Seidel Foundation . ICMPD . IOM . MARRI . UNHCR**

On 12-13 November 2012, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea Region was held in Sofia. The objective of the meeting was to investigate links between regular and irregular migration in the Black Sea Region, approaching the topic from four different angles:

- irregular migration, recent trends in the Black Sea Region;
- labour migration in the Black Sea Region;
- channels for legal migration and mobility in the Black Sea Region including misuse of such channels;
- the role of administrative procedures and secure documents.

The participating countries stressed the importance of regional ownership of this working group as an essential platform for cooperation and the importance of strengthening cooperation within and with the region. In this regard, regional solidarity was also emphasised. The working group further emphasised the importance of strengthening migration management capacities in the region, to use good practice and experience from other countries in the region for this process, to share information and to work towards coordination of policies.

Delegates noted that further cooperation on labour migration in the region would be necessary, looking at existing channels and future needs. In this regard, the working group considered the exchange information on channels of legal migration, labour migration flows and stocks, the use of bilateral labour migration agreements between countries and assessing demand and supply in the labour markets to be valuable. The participating countries underlined also the relevance



of open but secure borders, that regulations for migration and mobility remain transparent and not creating unnecessary burdens, and that migrants receive understandable information at each stage of the migration process.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

### 46 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . China . Croatia . Cyprus . Czech Republic . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iraq . Italy . Kyrgyzstan . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . EASO . ECO . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . MARRI . UNHCR**

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On 10-11 December 2012, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference was held in Ankara, hosted by Turkey. Countries generally agreed that the present structure with three regional working groups (the South East European Region, the Black Sea Region and the Silk Routes Region) should be kept as the implementing framework of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration. Several advantages of this structure were identified, including strong regional ownership, strong contributions by the relevant chairs and the necessary flexibility to work on thematic issues of importance. The focus of all working groups on the Silk Routes Region should be increased. The possibility to involve further countries in the organisation of working group meetings was also raised.

This involvement could take different shapes, as co-chairs, as hosts of meetings or in the taking on of specific topics for further research or dialogue. Participants overall encouraged state ownership in carrying out this work. It was agreed that Afghanistan would enter as co-chair of the Silk Routes Region Working Group. In addition it was noted that the project “*Fostering cooperation on migration with and within the Silk Routes Region*” was entering into the consultation phase, aiming at identifying concrete cooperation possibilities between the countries. The input of civil society, academia and private sector were found to be very valuable for content discussions. Further actors and stakeholders should, for this reason, also in the future be involved on a case by case basis for expert meetings where an added value can be established for their involvement.

# 2013



## 20<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

### 67 participating countries and International Organisations:

Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Cyprus . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Finland . France . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . India . Indonesia . Iraq . Iran . Ireland . Italy . Kyrgyzstan . Latvia . Liechtenstein . Lithuania . Luxembourg . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Malta . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovenia . Slovakia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . United Kingdom . the United States of America . Black Sea Economic Organization . Council of the European Union . European Commission . EASO . Economic Cooperation Organization . Frontex . ICMPD . International Federation of Red Cross . ILO . IOM . MARRI . OSCE . UNHCR . UNODC



On 4-5 March 2013, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference was held in Budapest, hosted by Hungary. The purpose of the meeting was to agree on the final draft of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration and to advance discussions on the operational follow-up package after the Ministerial Conference. The proposed follow-up package consisted of two larger capacity-building projects and three further actions. The projects covered migration policy development and capacity building in the wider sense as well as migration and development, engagement of people living outside of their countries of origin, return and readmission and development of labour market policies. Several countries and stakeholders expressed support to, and interest in, the further development of these actions, i.e. Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the European Commission. Delegations pointed out the importance of implementing practical actions in the Silk Routes Region in follow-up of the Istanbul Ministerial Conference and Declaration and expressed satisfaction with the quality of proposed actions. At the same time, several delegations pointed out the importance of prioritising efforts and focus resources on the most important areas.



# IX.

## The 2013 Istanbul Ministerial Conference

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### 47 participating countries and International Organisations:

Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Cyprus . Denmark . Finland . France . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . India . Iraq . Ireland . Italy . Kyrgyzstan . Liechtenstein . Lithuania . Luxembourg . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Malta . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Spain . Sweden . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United States of America . Council of the European Union . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . MARRI . OSCE . UNHCR . UNODC

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Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Budapest Process, Turkey, as the Chair, hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Istanbul on 19 April 2013. Over 250 representatives gathered at the conference hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Interior and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration was adopted and widely praised by the participants as one of the most far-reaching and balanced declarations dealing with migration ever, adopted by such a diverse group of countries. It reflected the development of migration management discourse throughout the last 20 years, shifting the emphasis from control of irregular migration to also include issues such as labour migration, mobility and development.

In this sense, the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration brought some important elements to the forefront, such as a clear commitment to respect human rights in migration management. Furthermore, the signatory countries also declared to ensure the rights of the child and recognise gender specific-aspects of migration. In addition, the negative impact of discrimination, racism and xenophobia on societies and individuals, as well as the potential impact of environmental changes on migratory flows were addressed.

The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration not only represented a significant widening in content dealt with in the Budapest Process, it also consolidated the geographical refocus of the Budapest Process under the Turkish Chairmanship to the Silk Routes Region. The Secretariat was asked to ensure an appropriate geographical working group

structure, offering interested states in certain sub-regions a possible additional platform to discuss migration flows along the Silk Routes, and to initiate thematic expert meetings to facilitate in-depth discussion between the stakeholders on specific priority issues. The Secretariat should also assist, at the request of participating states, in the implementation of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration and, where appropriate, facilitate the development of dialogue cooperation.

The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration follows six priority goals:

- better organise and improve conditions for legal migration and mobility;
- support the integration of migrants and counteract phenomena of discrimination, racism and xenophobia;
- strengthen the positive impact of migration on development, both in countries of origin and of destination;
- prevent and counteract irregular migration, facilitate return and readmission of irregular migrants, and combat criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants;
- prevent and combat trafficking in persons, address its root causes and provide adequate protection and support to trafficked persons;
- promote international protection and the respect of the rights of refugees, in line with international standards.

All countries committed to concerted action and to invest in the dialogue and its projects.



— from —  
2013  
— to —  
2018





# X.

## The Meetings Held from 2013 to 2018 After the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference

### 2013

Working Group on the Silk Routes Region and final intergovernmental meeting on the Silk Routes project

41 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Greece . Hungary . Iraq . Kyrgyz Republic . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR . UNODC**

On 28-29 October 2013, the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Islamabad. The meeting constituted at the same time the final intergovernmental meeting within the framework of the project on “Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes Region”, implemented under the umbrella of the Budapest Process. Countries and the EU agreed that there was a need for further capacity building in the Silk Routes countries which led in 2014 to a second and larger project flanking the dialogue in the Silk Routes Region.

The meeting was chaired by Turkey and co-chaired Afghanistan as the Co-chair of the Silk Routes Region Working Group. At the meeting, participants agreed that the Silk Routes countries themselves were increasingly becoming countries of transit and immigration in addition to being traditional countries of emigration. It was also noted that youth in the Silk Routes countries represented a huge part of the population. In combination with slow economic growth, migration was therefore continued to be seen as a life option.

The Budapest Process had increasingly embraced all areas of migration, in particular with the adoption of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration. It moved away from the traditional migration picture with individuals making rational and informed decisions to migrate, towards a new labour migration economy where the decision to migrate is taken by the family with a view to reduce the risks of a household. It was proposed that both larger and more specific actions to implement the Silk Routes Partnership should be carefully coordinated during the implementation. It was proposed and agreed to link such actions through a Silk Routes Programme, with a coordination mechanism between key actors. Participants found the need to link the Budapest Process-Silk Routes Partnership with the neighbouring regional dialogues such as the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. Furthermore, the links to activities of other important stakeholders such as the US, Canada and Australia should be investigated considering their role as observer countries to the Budapest Process.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 45 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Croatia . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Italy . Kyrgyz Republic . Lithuania . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . European Commission . European Council . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

As specifically mandated by the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration, the 21<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials meeting (the first following the 5<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference) served the purpose to agree on priority areas for concrete actions to implement the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration. The meeting was held in Istanbul on 9-10 December 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the multiannual strategy 2014 – 2016 in more detail. In addition, the meeting served as a platform for senior level discussions on tomorrow's migration management and on implications of crises for countries of origin, transit and destination, especially following the events in Syria. Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) presented the challenges Turkey had been facing with the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey since 2011. Several initiatives for education, health care, shelter and food were running (e.g. free health care, cooking facilities instead of canteen food), but further support was needed. The international community was encouraged to continue providing support.




# 2014



## Kick-off Conference of the Project “Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process”

### 36 participating countries and International Organisations:

Afghanistan . Albania . Austria . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Denmark . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Iraq . Kyrgyz Republic . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . European Commission . EASO . ECO . Frontex . ICMPD . IFRC . IOM . UNHCR



On 2-3 June 2014 in Budapest, the Kick-off Conference of the four-year Project “*Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process*” was organised. The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the migration management capacities of the Silk Routes countries Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and in this way contribute to the concrete implementation of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on establishing A Silk Routes Partnership for Migration. Directly flanking the dialogue, it was funded by European Union, Hungary (Lead Partner), Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The project aimed at improving basic structures for migration management and competences in the Silk Routes countries through targeting the issue from three necessary angles – capacity (training), information and policy. This would together strengthen the capacity of migration authorities in the region to utilise improved access to quality information to make informed policy decisions and formulations.

The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness of and confirm support for the project among all Budapest Process participating countries. The meeting furthermore aimed at receiving input and guidance on the work plan and modules as well as on the thematic areas of the project. In a special session on the larger Silk Routes Region, participating countries were asked to give feedback on involving Iran and Bangladesh within the framework of the project and the Budapest Process. A number of countries welcomed the idea to engage Iran and Bangladesh in the future and asked the Secretariat to follow-up. The United Kingdom underlined the importance of changing the possible impression that the project is focusing only on illegal migration.

## Working Group on the South East European Region

### 34 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Albania . Azerbaijan . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croatia . Denmark . Georgia . Greece . Hungary . Iraq . Kyrgyz Republic . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Turkey . Ukraine . Uzbekistan . EASO . ECO . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . IFRC . IOM . MARRI . OSCE Regional Cooperation Council . UNHCR**


On 3-4 June 2014, the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on the South East European Region took place in Budapest. The meeting marked the 1<sup>st</sup> Working Group meeting on SEE since the adoption of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration. The Working Group on SEE benefits from the focus on the Silk Routes region and developing cooperation between the two regions. Several key comments were made regarding the Cooperation Plan. Joint activities by countries of destination in the Silk Routes region, such as setting up embassy networks, could also include all members of the Budapest Process with an interest. It was reiterated that activities of the Budapest Process should not only focus on countries of origin and destination, but must take into account countries of transit. This was noted as especially relevant for enforcement activities addressing smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Pakistan suggested that a mechanism for coordinating enforcement activities between countries of origin and destination with transit countries could be welcomed.

## Working Group on the Silk Routes Region

### 28 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Georgia . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Kyrgyz Republic . Moldova . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . European Commission . EU Delegation . ECO . ICMPD . ILO . IOM . OSCE . UNODC . UNHCR**

On 11-12 November 2014, the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Dushanbe. The meeting was chaired by Turkey and co-chaired by Hungary as the Co-chair of the Budapest Process and the host, Tajikistan. The participants agreed on the need to improve labour migration knowledge as the only way to improve policymaking. This included making labour market assessments to better understand the functioning and needs of the labour markets. Conclusions included the need of labour migration costs to be reduced, the need for more democratic recruitment practices and equal treatment principle in practice as well as in legislation.



Furthermore, better communication was needed between countries to address labour migration and opportunities and conditions of employment. Employers and trade unions and the need to be included in this communication as well as in the issues of protection of migrant workers' rights and preventing labour exploitation were mentioned. Countries of origin and destination should invest in skills development and skills recognition. While sending countries could develop vocational training programmes based on a realistic assessment of labour market needs and qualifications sought both at home and abroad, receiving countries could also invest in skills training for potential migrants coming to join their markets or invest in improving and adapting skills of migrants already in the country. Last but not least, the link between policies for labour migration and internal employment policies was mentioned. For sustainability purposes, countries reiterated the need to also invest in improving employment conditions in countries of origin. In this regard, the Budapest Process should aim at using the knowledge and experience acquired by labour migrants in order to create better livelihood opportunities at home.

## Friends of the Chair

### 13 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Australia . Bulgaria . Croatia . Finland . Hungary . the Netherlands . Norway . Sweden . Switzerland  
Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD**

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On 15 December 2014, the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the Budapest Process was held in Istanbul. The two main issues discussed at the meeting were an optimised working group structure and a viable funding framework of the Budapest Process. The Secretariat presented an optimised structure in order to better ensure that all thematic and regional priorities, as provided in the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration, were sufficiently addressed. Participants agreed on the need to streamline the working group structure and to devote more attention to discussing thematic issues in the Silk Routes region. The Silk Routes cooperation was the main priority of the Budapest Process and also its trademark. At the same time it was considered important not to lose the functioning and important working group structures in the Black Sea and South East European regions. Participants therefore agreed that a more flexible approach and planning would be useful for these two groups. For the viable funding framework, it was agreed that countries aim at committing to annual bilateral contributions to the dialogue when possible to ensure effective planning from one year to the next.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 41 participating countries and International Organisations:

Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Croatia . Denmark . France . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Iraqi Kurdistan . Italy . Luxembourg . the Netherlands . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . EU Delegation . EASO . Frontex . ICMPD . IFRC . IOM . OSCE . UNHCR

On 16 December 2014, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials was held in Istanbul. There was an agreement between delegates to optimise the structure of the Budapest Process, and to intensify the focus on thematic areas of the Ministerial Declaration in the Silk Routes Working Group. The South East European and Black Sea Region Working Groups were still considered very important assets and should be continued. It was agreed to continue focusing on the thematic areas described in the Istanbul Declaration when initiating new working group meetings. For this reason, it was decided that the Silk Routes Region Working Group, being the structure thematically covering the priorities of the Ministerial Declaration, should meet at least two times a year.




# 2015



## Working Group on the Black Sea Region on crisis management

### 34 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Albania . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Bulgaria . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Iraqi Kurdistan . Italy . Luxembourg . Moldova . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Tajikistan . Turkey . the United Kingdom . Ukraine . European Commission . EASO . ECO . Frontex . Hanns Seidel Foundation . ICMPD . IFRC . IOM . MARRI . OSCE.**



The topic of the 4<sup>th</sup> Working Group on the Black Sea Region meeting was the effects of crisis on migration management taking into account to the changes in size and structure of migration flows and the needs expressed by states to discuss preparedness and cooperation in this regard. The meeting aimed at exploring this issue from pre-crisis to post-crisis management, including prevention, protection, combating migration related crime, durable solutions and integration in light of developments in countries of origin, transit and destination on a global scale in the recent months at the onset of the so-called migration crisis. It was held in Sofia on 17-18 March 2015. For the purpose of the meeting, crisis was defined to include all events that cause significant movements of people – whether environmental, economic or security related. The meeting addressed the topic from the perspective of migration management authorities, including how they perceived crisis, how they took measures to deal with the effects of crisis, what the main challenges were that they encountered with and good practices for dealing with such situations. The meeting aimed at strengthening regional cooperation as well as sharing experiences between countries and identify good practices with regard to migration management in crisis situations.

## Working Group on the Silk Routes Region on irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking

### 29 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Georgia . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Kyrgyz Republic . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ECO . Frontex . ICMPD . ILO . IOM . UNHCR . UNODC**

On 8-9 June 2015, the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Islamabad focusing on irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking – priority area 4 and 5 of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration. The conclusions of the meeting stressed that addressing root causes of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, though very challenging, cannot be neglected and should be carried out through various means, including enhancing education and establishing skills development programmes. Establishing an adequate national legal framework and developing policy frameworks are prerequisites for addressing irregular migration. Legislative, policy and procedural reforms were needed in this regard in the Silk Routes countries. Raising awareness about these matters amongst potential migrants is an area that needs further attention and efforts in all the five Silk Routes countries. National and international cooperation, including sharing of data and joint operations as well as trainings, are considered essential in curbing irregular migration effectively. The links between migrant smuggling and human trafficking and other types of crimes were highlighted, especially concerning terrorism financing and money laundering. Improved financial investigations appeared as indispensable in order to give an adequate response to irregular migration, in particular in prosecuting organised criminal groups instead of individuals for less severe types of crimes. Conclusions included that a functioning return system is important for the credibility and acceptance of a generous asylum policy as well as visa facilitation.

## Working Group on the Silk Routes Region on migration and development

### 26 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Armenia . Bangladesh . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . India . Iran . Iraq . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Pakistan . Poland . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . the United Kingdom . Ukraine . European Commission . European Union Delegation EEAS . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR . Warbe**

On 9-10 November 2015, the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Dhaka looking at links between migration and development, priority goal 2 of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration. Delegates recommended trying to change the mind-set of governments so that migrants are not perceived as commodities or only as work force. Simultaneously, more research was considered necessary on the social impact of migration, including its costs and benefits, which are too often neglected in favour of the perceived economic benefits. The working group further set the following objectives to influence the work of the Budapest Process in the field of migration and development:

- improve the decision making process for potential migrants to make informed decisions, and ensure the transparency in the different processes of migration, including recruitment, arrival, post-arrival and return;
- improve the quality and scope of pre-departure orientation, enhance the skills of migrants and work on the certification of these skills;



- lift barriers to migration through more information and less costs;
- enhance protection abroad through consular services and others, including the civil society;
- create short-term opportunities for migrants to contribute to human development in their countries of origin during their stay abroad and develop opportunities for their reintegration and use of skills upon return;
- ensure better and regular inter-agency coordination in the governance of migration and mainstreaming migration into development planning and international cooperation.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 38 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Albania . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Luxembourg . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . EU Council . European Commission . EEAS . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . OSCE . UNHCR**

On 14-15 December 2015, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials was held in Budapest. The meeting was hosted by Hungary – the Co-Chair of the Budapest Process – in the premises of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior and chaired by Turkey. Participants emphasised that since 2014, the migration reality in Europe had changed and the immense migration pressure experienced by Turkey and other countries in the years before now reached Europe. It was underlined that this challenge needed to be addressed in a holistic way. In this regard, the importance of the EU-Turkey partnership was mentioned as well as the importance of close cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination – among others through the Budapest Process. In the face of expected increasing flows from and within the Silk Routes Region in the near future, return and readmission would be an increasingly important topic as well as measures for the integration of refugees staying in the countries of destination.

The meeting further focused on the role of the Budapest Process to deal with the current migration situation. ICMPD, as Secretariat of the Budapest Process, emphasised that the current situation was complex and could not be solved quickly. Integration measures have to be implemented and populations of destination countries have to be prepared to this changing environment. The potential for racism and xenophobia and the creation of links between migration and security risks needs to be addressed. Concerning future projects, the regional dimension should be kept and deepened whilst more targeted interventions at national level should be designed on the basis of the priorities and needs of beneficiary and donor countries.

Overall, participants expressed a strong interest in more ad-hoc cooperation within the Budapest Process to react to certain migration realities in a targeted manner, providing the framework for

discussing not only long-term but also short-term solutions and focus on the topic of return and readmission. A majority of participating states agreed that awareness raising campaigns should continue and be possibly broadened in 2016. In general, it was emphasised that the regional dimension of the Budapest Process and the Silk Routes project should be kept and deepened whilst more targeted interventions in certain priority areas at national level should be implemented.

## 2016



### Working Group on the Silk Routes Region on international protection

#### 31 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria  
Finland . Georgia . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Italy . Kyrgyz Republic . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway  
Pakistan . Poland . the Russian Federation . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine  
European Commission . ECO . HAMI . ICMPD . IOM**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Silk Routes Region Working Group Meeting provided the first opportunity for countries of origin, transit and destination along the Silk Routes to meet in the light of the 2015 events. The meetings were hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 18-19 May 2016 at the premises of the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) in Tehran. Participants discussed the topic on international protection, priority goal 6 of the Istanbul Declaration and more specifically, solidarity among countries in addressing protracted refugee situations as well as strengthening protection systems through international cooperation. Among the biggest challenges, participating countries identified the lack of sufficient protection space for refugees, provision of durable solutions and addressing the root causes of forced migration. Another challenge identified by participating countries was secondary movements and the issue of harmonising protection systems to avoid such developments. Overall, participants agreed that international protection needs to be addressed at the global level and that countries need to share the responsibility in offering support to those in need of protection. Several participants also underlined that a credible and generous asylum system needed to encompass a functioning return system for those who are not in need of protection and who do not have the legal right to remain in the country of destination.



## Working Group on the Silk Routes Region on integration and reintegration

### 37 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Germany . Georgia . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Italy . Kyrgyz Republic . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . Montenegro . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . BSEC . EASO . European Commission . ECO IOM . MARRI . UNDP . ICMPD**

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Finding long-term solutions for further dialogue and cooperation in the field of integration of migrants and reintegration of returnees was the goal of the working group meeting hosted in Belgrade on 18-19 October 2016. The 9<sup>th</sup> Working Group Meeting on the Silk Routes Region brought together over 80 senior experts to discuss challenges and issues related to integration and reintegration, priority goals 2 and 4 of the Istanbul Declaration. The Working Group meeting aimed at defining long-term approaches in migration management, addressing challenges, sharing good practices, as well as studying negative effects of non-existence of integration and reintegration policies. Senior experts, particularly from Silk Routes countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan – discussed the latest trends of integration and reintegration policies and addressed the need of agreeing to common Budapest Process standards in the fields of integration of migrants and reintegration of returning migrants. It was reiterated that integration helps to ensure and maintain cohesion in society and a peaceful social coexistence of different groups. It was pointed out that the real costs of non-integration are higher than investments in integration. In practice this means that societies have to make mainstream institutions fit to migration and accommodate the needs of migrants in the work of their central institutions, such as schools, health care, vocational training, sports, etc. in order to avoid social exclusion.

## 24<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting

### 27 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Czech Republic . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Serbia . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . European Commission . EEAS . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM.**

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As the monitoring and steering body of the Budapest Process, the annual Senior Officials Meeting met in Antalya on 15 December 2016 to report on the activities in 2016, including the meetings of

the Silk Routes Working Group and the Silk Routes Partnership Project and to present a five-year proposal for the 2017-2021 cooperation framework. The meeting included discussions on operational, thematic and structural priorities for the Budapest Process as of 2017. A decision to include an annual thematic focus was introduced. Considering the high importance given to the Process by its participating countries, the discussions touched upon short-term needs and long-term objectives as well as financial sustainability during the next funding period 2017 – 2021. Discussions on a Call for Action for the Silk Routes Countries was initiated. It was decided to hold a consultation with several countries to discuss the organisation of a new Ministerial Conference in light of the changed migration picture in the Silk Routes Region and along the migration routes.

## 2017




### Consultation Meeting of the Budapest Process

#### 30 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Germany . Hungary . Iraq . Italy . Kazakhstan . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Malta . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Pakistan . the Russian Federation . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . BSEC . ECO . European Commission . European External Action Service . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

On 2 March 2017, 47 participants gathered in Istanbul for the Consultation Meeting of the Budapest Process. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to have a new Ministerial Conference and the contribution of the Budapest Process to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Delegates agreed that the changed migration landscape since the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in 2013, with large movements of refugees and migrants mainly along the Silk Routes affecting countries of destination, transit and origin, motivated the organisation of a Ministerial Conference to evaluate and re-establish objectives and to give renewed political guidance to the cooperation. Many delegations however pointed out that it is crucial that such a conference focuses on relevant content and is result-oriented. The three topics proposed by Turkey – migra-



tion, development and safety – were welcomed as a basis for discussion, however, at the same time it was noted that the Budapest Process should not spread too much – the main focus should still clearly be on migration. Several delegations pointed out that the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration with its six pillars for cooperation is still a valid ground for cooperation. However, several elements of migration management needed stronger and more efficient cooperation. The proposal for A Call for Action was sent out ahead of the Drafting Group meeting and to be discussed in the drafting meeting.

## Budapest Process – Drafting Group Meeting

### 16 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Australia . Bangladesh . Bulgaria . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Switzerland . Sweden . Turkey . the United Kingdom . European Commission . ICMPD**

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On 20-21 September 2017, Turkey proposed, in preparation for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference, to work towards a Call for Action on large movements of migrants and refugees under the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration, including Flagship Actions in Ankara. The purpose of this drafting meeting was to exchange ideas on the proposed Call for Action and on preparations for the Ministerial Conference in 2018. The main objectives of the meeting were to establish participants' current priorities and needs as regards to migration issues, the Ministerial Conference as well as cooperation, and to develop ideas for priority topics and objectives for sustainable Flagship Actions to be implemented under the Budapest Process/Silk Routes Partnership for Migration.

## 25<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and the 1<sup>st</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

### 41 participating countries and International Organisations:

**Afghanistan . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Croatia . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Iraq . Italy . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Malta . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . BSEC . European Commission . EEAS . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

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The 1<sup>st</sup> preparatory meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference brought together over 75 Senior Officials to discuss the Call for Action on large movements of refugees and migrants. The meeting was held in Istanbul on 27-28 November 2017. The Call for Action proposed by Turkey intended to

strengthen the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration and make it more functional with regard to large movements of refugees and migrants and focused on a set of overarching commitments and priority goals. Following the logic of migration flows it started with priority goals furthering pathways for legal migration and improving the conditions in countries of origin, moving on to priority goals managing on-going migratory movements, with the last block focusing on the aftermath and consequences of large movements, including both return and integration. Over the course of one and a half days, countries engaged in constructive discussions on the draft text, and proposed several changes, among those to divide the text in two parts; one Ministerial Declaration and one Action Plan, and to let the actions follow the priority goals in the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration.

## Joint Meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region and Working Group on the Black Sea Region

**30 participating countries, International Organisations and Independent Organisations:**

**Afghanistan . Armenia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Georgia . Germany . Iraq . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . the Russian Federation . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . European Commission . EEAS . ERRIN . Frontex . Hanns Seidel Foundation . ICMPD . IOM . UNHCR**

The Silk Routes and Black Sea working groups gathered in Sofia on 14-15 December 2017 to discuss the topic of return and reintegration. The meeting was set to pilot the approach decided at the Senior Officials meeting in December 2016 with having annual focus areas; the first topic chosen was return and reintegration. Delegates discussed challenges of sustainable return, reintegration and readmission. During the plenary discussion, all delegations agreed that cooperation on return between countries of origin and destination should be strengthened. Additionally, options for regular migration should be created. Participants agreed that proper identification is one of the key factors for an effective readmission using, for example, online tools.



# 2018



## 26<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

### 43 participating countries and International Organisations:

Afghanistan . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Denmark . France . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Italy . Kazakhstan . Malta . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . BSEC . European Commission . EEAS . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . UNODC . UNHCR



101 participants gathered in Istanbul on 16-17 April 2018, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference. Turkey as Chair presented the updated political declaration The Istanbul Commitments and the action plan *A Call for Action*, which replaced the joint document presented at the first meeting. Delegations appreciated the new format of the two documents, and recognised and supported the commitment of the documents to strengthen cooperation policy and partnership on migration management. Several countries mentioned that the documents should take the Global Compacts into consideration and focus on practical cooperation and implementation of the related commitments. It was also suggested to express the purpose of the Budapest Process more clearly as well as to include a reference to the history of cooperation between participating countries.

Overall, countries regarded both documents as ambitious and improved versions of the earlier text. Following request to revisit the wording of the priority goals, which were kept in their original wording from the 2013 Istanbul Ministerial Declaration, the Chair announced that the priority goals' wording would remain the same in an effort to keep consistency with the 2013 Istanbul Ministerial Declaration and to build upon the existing structure.

## Joint Meeting of the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region and Working Group on the South East Europe Region

36 participating countries, International Organisations and Independent Organisations:

Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . France . Georgia . Germany . Hungary . Iraq . Italy . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . Pakistan . Poland . Romania . Serbia . Sweden . Switzerland . Turkey . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Bali Process . Caritas ICMPD . IOM . Samuel Hall . University of Koç

To further discuss the topic of return and reintegration, 60 participants gathered in Sarajevo on 7-8 May 2018. During the Joint Meeting of the Silk Routes and the South East Europe Working Groups, Iraq and Afghanistan presented the reintegration policies in their countries. Academia and independent bodies (Samuel Hall and the University of Koç) shared their perspectives and research conclusions for successful reintegration, presenting concrete examples, like the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Delegations agreed that the return process should be considered as one part of the whole migration management process, and that reintegration should include not only economic elements but also psychosocial indicators.

## 27<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference and commemoration of 25 years of the Budapest Process

45 participating countries, International Organisations and Independent Organisations:

Afghanistan . Albania . Armenia . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Czech Republic . Denmark . Finland . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iran . Iraq . Italy . the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia . Malta . Moldova . the Netherlands . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Slovenia . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Turkey . Ukraine and the United Kingdom . EASO . the European Commission, EEAS . Frontex . ICMPD . IOM . MARRI . UNHCR

On 19-20 November 2018, the Budapest Process held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Istanbul, at Senior Officials' level. This meeting was also an opportunity to commemorate 25 years of dialogue and partnership. The Secretariat had prepared infographics illustrating the many achievements of the Budapest Process in this time. Additionally, ICMPD, as the Budapest Process Secretariat, gave a presentation on the updates from the year 2018 including on the EU-funded project "Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes countries" and the progress achieved in its first year of implementation.





Delegates reviewed the political declaration “The Istanbul Commitments” and the action plan “Call for Action” to be adopted by Ministers at a Conference in 2019 and provided comments on the structure and the wording of both texts in detail. The clear improvements from the April 2018 versions were noted. A suggestion to switch the order of the priority goals was discussed, with priority goal 4 becoming priority goal 1. Furthermore, the addition of a specific mentioning of the Black Sea and South East Europe regions was added in order to keep the geographic perspective of the Budapest Process.

The Turkish Chair announced that the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference would take place on 19-20 February 2019 and that they would circulate a revised and compromised version of both the political declaration and the action plan ahead of the final preparatory meeting to be held on the eve of the Ministerial Conference.



# XI.

## The 2019 Istanbul Ministerial Conference

### 62 participating countries and International Organisations:

Afghanistan . Albania . Australia . Austria . Azerbaijan . Bangladesh . Belarus . Belgium . Bosnia and Herzegovina . Bulgaria . Croatia . Czech Republic . Denmark . Estonia . Finland . France . Georgia . Germany . Greece . Hungary . Iraq . Italy . Kyrgyzstan . Luxembourg . Malta . Moldova . Montenegro . the Netherlands . North Macedonia . Norway . Pakistan . Poland . Portugal . Romania . the Russian Federation . Serbia . Slovakia . Slovenia . Somalia . Spain . Sweden . Switzerland . Tajikistan . Ukraine . the United Kingdom . Uzbekistan . BSEC . Council of Europe . Council of the European Union . EASO . EEAS . European Commission . Frontex . ICMPD . ILO . IOM . MARRI . OSCE . UNDP . UN . UNHCR . UNODC

The Budapest Process held its 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Istanbul on 20 February 2019 (after the 28<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting and 4<sup>th</sup> Preparatory Meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> Budapest Process Ministerial Conference took place on 19 February 2019), gathering 46 participating countries, Observers countries, the European Commission, European institutions and 10 regional and international organisations. The event was hosted by Turkey and chaired by H.E. Süleyman Soylu, Turkish Minister of Interior. The official programme included a Welcome Gala Dinner at Çırağan Palace on the eve of the Ministerial Conference, hosted by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey. The meeting was preceded by the Fourth Preparatory Meeting where both the political declaration “The Istanbul Commitments on the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration” and the action plan “A Call for Action – a five year plan” were reviewed and finalised.

20 Ministers as well as the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, and 15 Deputy Ministers and States Secretaries took part in the conference. Close to 40 countries adopted the “Istanbul Commitments on the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration” and its action plan “A Call for Action – a five year plan” at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference. Also participating countries who did not adopt the text reiterated their strong support to the Budapest Process.

The political declaration and its action plan build upon the achievements of the 2013 Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration while taking into account the migration developments of the past years. It introduces five commitments to be upheld in migration management:

- Partnership
- Comprehensive migration governance
- Respect, protect and fulfil international human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Support and solidarity
- Knowledge

The Call for Action presents 41 concrete actions to be implemented within the next years under the 2013 six priority goals in which the Budapest Process will turn its focus to the implementation of the five-year action plan:

- Prevent and counteract irregular migration, facilitate return and readmission of irregular migrants and combat criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants,
- Better organise and improve conditions for legal migration and mobility,
- Support the integration of migrants and counteract discrimination, racism and xenophobia,
- Strengthen the positive impact of migration on development, both in countries of origin and of destination,
- Prevent and combat trafficking in persons, address its root causes and provide adequate protection and support to trafficked persons,
- Promote international protection and the respect of the rights of refugees, in line with international standards

It was agreed to look ahead to the implementation of the Call for Action, through the ongoing projects flanking the dialogue as well as through the development of new projects, new activities and new initiatives. The dialogue will maintain its state-led approach to activities and will continue to foster long-standing partnerships across the participating states and the regions of the Budapest Process.

# List of Acronyms

<b>BP</b>	Budapest Process
<b>BSEC</b>	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
<b>CACs</b>	Central Asian Countries (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan)
<b>CARDS programme</b>	Community assistance for reconstruction, development and stabilisation programme
<b>CEI</b>	Central European Initiative
<b>CICP</b>	Centre for International Crime Prevention
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>EASO</b>	European Asylum Support Office
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECO</b>	Economic Cooperation Organization
<b>ECODOCCU</b>	ECO – Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service
<b>EFTA</b>	European Free Trade Association
<b>EUBAM</b>	European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
<b>EUD</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>EUI</b>	European University Institute
<b>EurAsEC</b>	Eurasian Economic Community
<b>EUROPOL</b>	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
<b>Frontex</b>	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
<b>GFMD</b>	Global Forum on Migration and Development
<b>HAMI</b>	Association for Protection of Refugee Women and Children
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organization
<b>ICMC</b>	International Catholic Migration Commission
<b>ICMPD</b>	International Centre for Migration Policy Development

<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IGC</b>	Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IMP</b>	International Migration Policy Programme
<b>INTERPOL</b>	International Criminal Police Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>MARRI</b>	Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
<b>MAI</b>	Migration and Asylum Initiative (now part of MARRI)
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NATO`</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NCB</b>	National Central Bureau
<b>ODIHR</b>	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>SAP-countries</b>	The five countries involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Yugoslavia
<b>SECI</b>	Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
<b>SELEC</b>	Southeast European Law Enforcement Center
<b>SOM</b>	Senior Officials Meeting
<b>STA</b>	Short-Term Technical Assistance
<b>UNCICP</b>	United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention
<b>UNCCP</b>	United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>UNMIBH</b>	United Nations Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNOV</b>	United Nations Office in Vienna
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WCO</b>	World Customs Organization



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