

EU4SAFEALB



Newsletter 1

THE ALBANIAN MINISTRY OF INTERIOR COUNTERS ORGANISED CRIME AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Ministry of Interior (Moi) of Albania is committed to enhancing the operational capacity of the Border and Migration Police (BMP) to counter cross-border crime, including drug trafficking. To this end, a number of steps were taken within the Moi structures over the recent years, such as improving certain procedures and increasing quality and capacity. Areas affected include the legal framework to be brought in line with EU best practices, and improved administrative and professional capacities (including training, IT and infrastructure), in order to improve the organisation and management of border agencies, which will in turn facilitate trade exchanges and increase the quality of service to citizens, while disrupting illegal activities across the state boundary and thereby enhance border security.

The strategic commitments of the government of Albania to strengthen border management capacity are also reflected in the new national Integrated Border Management Strategy (IBM Strategy) of 2021-2027, which is currently in implementation. Building upon the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020, the new IBM Strategy aims to ensure the safe movement of nationals and goods across the state border, as well as the taking of necessary measures to prevent and disrupt all forms of cross-border crime and irregular migration. The strategy also provides a framework for the national IBM agencies to advance reform and align with good EU practices, as well as formally fulfil requirements vis-à-vis EU membership aspirations.

The EU and its member states have supported Albania in this area for many years, focusing on gradual and systematic improvement of institutional capacities and the provision of

technical assistance through IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) funds. At the operational level, Albania signed the Status Agreement between the EU and Albania, which enabled the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to deploy its first joint operation on the territory of a non-EU country. Recently, a working agreement was also signed between Frontex and Albanian authorities to strengthen their cooperation in border management regarding return and to fight cross-border crime.

The project *EU Support for the effective management of green and blue borders in Albania (EU4SAFEALB)* is one of the EU funded projects enhancing the capacity of the Albanian law enforcement agencies to counter organised crime and drug trafficking, implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The beneficiary agencies have committed to providing every support to ICMPD in the implementation of the project to the benefit of both Albania and the EU member states.

EU SUPPORTS ALBANIA'S CAPACITIES IN COUNTERING ORGANISED CRIME

Through the EU4SAFEALB project, the EU is providing state of the art border surveillance equipment and specialised training to the Albanian Border and Migration Police. This support will further enhance the capacity of Albania to effectively combat organised crime along its national borders.

The value of the present project is EUR 6 million and it is the latest in the line of other EU support projects for the Albanian Police and Customs, which amounts to more than EUR 20 million in the last five years only. The work of frontline law enforcement officers is key to further advancement on the path towards EU accession. The European Union and Albania stand together in the fight against serious and organised crime.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES



In July 2020, the project conducted a needs assessment with the Border and Migration Police (BMP) regarding equipment and training, with the findings report validated in December 2020. On the basis of the assessment, the BMP will be provided with patrol boats, surveillance vehicles and a maritime radar surveillance system. The project focuses on

enhancement of the BMP logistical and equipment maintenance capacities. In addition, the project will provide tailor-made training to the BMP personnel including training for patrol vessels and radar operators, basic maintenance of patrol vessels, the maintenance of specialised IT systems and technical means. For further information, please visit the ICMPD web page.



ICMPD and attended by the Albanian Mol and the BMP, international organisations (Frontex, IOM, OSCE, PAMECA) and bilateral donors that are providing support to Albania in the area of border management and countering organised crime. The PSC members endorsed the project inception report and provided final comments to the list of equipment, which was then endorsed by the donor shortly thereafter.

GERMAN FEDERAL POLICE SUPPORT TO BMP

Ever since the Federal Police of Germany established a Liaison Office in Albania in 2015 to enhance cooperation and support towards the BMP to fight irregular migration and cross border crime, there has been good cooperation with all stakeholders in Albania, especially with the EU as the main supporter. The Federal Police of Germany, amongst others, has been one of the most supportive donors to BMP and have made considerable contributions in recent years to support effective duties at the green border by supplying patrol cars, document laboratories and surveillance equipment. Special attention was given to enhancing patrol and second line officers' capabilities by providing basic and advanced training courses in the area of document security. To avoid possible duplication or overlapping of activities, ICMPD invited the liaison officer of the Federal Police of Germany – from the very earliest draft of the project up until the final decision – to contribute with their experience and to streamline all planned activities for the professional development of the BMP. Cooperation will continue within the framework of the project, and sound synergies will be instituted for providing joint training and expertise.

FIRST PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING



EU funded project EU Support for the Effective Management of Green and Blue Borders in Albania (EU4SAFEALB)

The first Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting took place online on 12 January 2021. It looked into the progress of the project implementation and endorsed the next steps, in particular the

provision of equipment and delivery of training. It was chaired by the EU Delegation to Albania, co-chaired by

1st PROJECT TENDER

The first tender was conducted that will provide different sized patrol vessels, mobile surveillance systems, and the mobile maintenance workshop.

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UPCOMING PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Preparation and announcement of the 2nd project tender for the procurement of the coastal radar surveillance system