2nd International Conference on Comprehensive Border Governance
23-24 October 2019, Yerevan, Armenia

Context

ICMPD organised the 1st International Border Management Conference last year in Lebanon, bringing together representatives of numerous countries, institutions and agencies. The Conference addressed four main topics: Integrated Border Management (IBM); Trade facilitation; Technology driven challenges; and Educational initiatives for border personnel. A year ago, these were the main thematic areas that shaped border management approaches at the global level. While all of these remain highly relevant, global border management practices must adapt to the highly dynamic political, security and economic, environment we are living in today, along with various factors that influence our space of mobility, work and daily life. The aim of a comprehensive border governance is set up a framework that may include border guards and police, customs, veterinary and phytosanitary services, as well as many others from the public and private sphere actors together in an environment where the safe and orderly movement of people and goods across borders is guaranteed.

Effective border governance plays a key role in national efforts to prevent the smuggling of counterfeit and prohibited goods, combating organised crime and corruption, and guaranteeing the safety of travellers, migrants and refugees. Interception of smuggling and trafficking networks at the borders is necessary to safeguard the rule of law, but it also contributes to ensuring legitimate businesses face a level playing field in domestic markets, and that necessary duties and taxes are collected by the state.

The promotion of trade, mobility and stability is best achieved through a comprehensive governance framework. A jointly developed approach that ensures that border agencies and other institutions that are involved in the wide variety of tasks and processes related to national borders work towards a common set of objectives and results. This means developing a framework for coordination between all border agencies in capitals, provincial offices and at border points, as well as ensuring individual agencies have the necessary capacities, resources and leadership to accomplish their mission. And it means harnessing international partnerships to bring world leading expertise and knowledge to bear on solving the many challenges posed by an increasingly interconnected world.

Border management is still going through a phase of technical modernisation and digitalisation, making all relevant processes quicker, safer and more transparent. Seamless and automatic border controls are already a reality at a number of border crossing points worldwide, whether at land, air or sea. These innovations have a tremendous impact on how border controls as well as on trade facilitation are performed and on the methodology border agencies apply nowadays and in the years to come. Progress in making border control more effective and efficient is exceeding forecasts, thereby turning it into one of the fastest developing areas in border governance. This growth is matched by the constant and rapid increase in worldwide travellers and globalised trade. Border management does not only have a significant impact from a security perspective, but also supports social and cultural exchange, rural development in remote areas, or education. It positively contributes to de-radicalisation, promotes business and plays a key role in global mobility. Despite the obvious progress and development, certain regions are still struggling to meet the basic standards and requirements to
ensure effective border management. This is mainly due to a lack of human, material and financial resources, but also due to the lack of political will, unstable and unpredictable security environments, lack of delimitated and demarcated borders and armed conflicts within the vicinity of border areas. Border officials require constant training and education, which provides them with the skills needed to cope with contemporary challenges and perform their daily duties in a highly qualified manner.

Nowadays, Integrated Border Management is a well-known concept on how to manage borders in a modern, better, effective and efficient manner at the global level. On the European side, since its endorsement by the European Commission in 2002, the concept as such, has been accepted and adapted in numerous countries within EU and beyond. The most recent document, the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management, was officially endorsed this year with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency as its guardian. IBM concept has been extended to the countries outside EU based on the Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation (2010). With the ever changing security, economic and social environment, one would argue that the Guidelines supporting EU efforts in its external cooperation needs a close look and after the course of almost 10 years it is perhaps a need (and time) to revise them. This is a process that is certainly needed and a lot of elements from the European IBM concept could be used as a basis for EU assistance beyond the EU borders.

The 2nd International Conference on Comprehensive Border Governance will address the mentioned topics from different perspectives, ranging from the academic point of view to the perception of practitioners. Given the dynamic nature of the challenges facing border management professionals, the Conference will explore how a step-change from the management of borders towards their comprehensive governance may provide the tools needed to meet these challenges. Participants will have an opportunity to present their daily practices and achievements, exchange views and discuss potential developments in border governance, as a means to address today’s threats to global security and prepare for future challenges.

The Conference will bring together experts with practical and technical professional backgrounds, including academia, policy-makers and decision-takers from various public institutions and agencies, as well as private sector representatives working in the international theatre of border governance.

Objectives of the Conference
The main objective of the Conference is to address the challenges to border governance and suggest different paths to streamline the work of border agencies in a comprehensive and methodological way. The Conference will be divided into three thematic panels as a platform for open and solution-oriented discussions.

Conference format
A total of 3 panels are envisaged in addition to the opening session as well as networking breaks (coffee, lunches, reception/dinner).
Thematically, the 3 panels will address the following topics:

1. Border management in 2025: what has changed since 2015? What impact will developments in related areas of security, trade facilitation and migration have on border management in the next years?
2. Seamless border controls and hybrid security threats: realistic future or commercial advertisement?
3. International technical assistance in border management (case studies, projects)