Budapest Process Silk Routes Project
“Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes Region”
Second Consultation Meeting

The Hague, 31 January-1 February 2013

Summary

The second consultation meeting of the Silk Routes project “Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes Region” took place on 31 January-1 February 2013 in The Hague, the Netherlands, with the participation of representatives of Afghanistan, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The meeting had the main purpose of working on project proposals, which were initiated during the 1st consultation meeting in Ankara in December 2012 and subsequently further developed by ICMPD.

The Netherlands, as host, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. ICMPD, as Secretariat of the Budapest Process and the implementing agency of the Silk Routes project, made a presentation on the results of the first consultation meeting and the project proposals developed on the basis of the Ankara discussions. Following this, Afghanistan presented three project proposals related to 1) migration management information system, 2) capacity development and change management of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (to be renamed as Ministry of Migration in the near future) and 3) public awareness and counseling on migration. A presentation was also made by a member of the MIEUX team (a joint EU-ICMPD initiative that aims at enhancing the capacities of partner countries to better address all areas of migration), who invited the Silk Routes countries to make use of MIEUX opportunities for short-term technical assistance.
Following these presentations there was a lively exchange of ideas and suggestions on the individual priorities of the Silk Routes and donor countries and on how to develop the presented project proposals further.

On the second day participants worked in three working groups in a role play, whereby the participants from the Silk Routes and donor countries took on the identities of each other and sought answers to questions such as 1) what their objectives would be at the end of 2015, 2) how they plan to reach these objectives, 3) what kind of support they would need in order to reach them and 4) their expectations from their counterparts (the Silk Routes Region countries if they represented a donor actor or in the donor countries if they represented a Silk Routes actor).

The following main results were drawn from the discussions:

- The proposals presented by ICMPD coincided largely with the priorities of both the Silk Routes and donor countries. However, most participants felt that the proposals were too ambitious and too big and should rather be broken down into smaller projects and actions. These smaller projects – mostly at national level - could function as building blocks to regional initiatives.
- At the same time it was also stressed that we need to make an early impact in the Silk Routes Region. A number of actions could be done responding to basic needs such as building an understanding of what trafficking is, before bigger projects and funding materialise.
- A number of countries pointed out the need for projects addressing development issues (including remittances) and also called for incorporating diaspora communities into the project proposals.
- The establishment of a Silk Routes Migration Academy or a similar regional structure with joint trainings was strongly supported. However, it was also stressed that the trainings should not be focusing on enforcement modules only but should embrace a more holistic approach of migration management.
- The Silk Routes countries Afghanistan and Pakistan listed the following as their top priorities for intervention: 1) capacity building including training and development of migration information systems for the migration authorities, 2) awareness raising on dangers of irregular migration as well as legal migration opportunities for their public, 3) the establishment of focal points (migration observatories) for exchange of migration related information and 4) joint trainings at regional level (for instance through the Silk Routes
Migration Academy), followed by 5) labour migration issues such as mapping of labour market needs and development of skills training.

- The donor countries underlined that returns and reintegration issues continued to be a top priority for them while they acknowledged the need for capacity building and that capacity building was *a priori* a condition for the successful implementation of any other actions in the migration area in the Silk Routes countries. The Silk Routes countries emphasised the need to carry out returns in phases.

- The UK indicated that there could be some funding from the return and reintegration fund to support small activities during 2013 for the design and further development of projects with tangible outcomes and also providing for some bridging and pilot actions to meet urgent needs.

- ICMPD explained that the European Commission is considering supporting a big project with a **regional approach** (the regional approach being the value added of the Budapest Process for them).

- ICMPD was requested to work further on the project proposals until the next consultation meeting in order to break them down into smaller projects (except the regional project which will be presented for Commission funding), in consultation with the Silk Routes countries, also looking into the areas of development and diaspora relations.

- The next consultation meeting will be held in Budapest on 5-6 March 2013 following the 3rd preparatory meeting of the Budapest Process Ministerial Conference.