Distinguished Ministers, Your Excellencies, Esteemed Representatives of States and International Organisations, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to start by extending my sincere appreciation to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina for convening this meeting today and allowing me to speak in front of such a distinguished audience.

ICMPD is an international organisation with solid European roots, which aims to promote innovative, comprehensive and sustainable migration policies and to function as a service exchange mechanism for governments and organisations. It lies at the core of our mandate to support our Member States in effectively dealing with the consequences and challenges that affect all areas related to the movement of people. We achieve progress in these areas through our efforts in fostering intergovernmental dialogues, offering services in the areas of research and documentation, and providing technical assistance and support to stakeholders to enhance the capacities needed to effectively and efficiently function in an increasingly demanding political environment.

ICMPD sees itself as a facilitator that provides these services to its Member States and, therefore, I consider it a great honour to speak here today in one of our most recent Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina join ICMPD on 15th April 2011. And we at ICMPD are very much looking forward to 2014, when Bosnia and Herzegovina will chair our Steering Group.

Our role as a facilitator acting for and on behalf of our Member States is further highlighted by the composition of our consortium. Three of the five consortium members implementing this project are Member States of ICMPD. Hence, I would like to further extend my appreciation to one of our founding Member States, and thank our consortium leader, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, for the trust they place in ICMPD to act as the implementing agency for this project.

In 2011, our colleagues from the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior approached ICMPD in order to entrust us first, with the coordination of the project application and ultimately with the administrative and logistical implementation of this important project. Thus, we are proud to also
be currently implementing together a twinning project in the area of Integrated Border Management here in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as numerous other projects in the Western Balkan region and around the globe.

I would also like to thank the Ministry of Interior of Hungary and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Slovenia, both Member States of ICMPD, as well as the Police Academy of the Federal State of Brandenburg and our associate partner Transparency International in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the trust you place in us and for your close and effective cooperation. Neither our application, nor the implementation of this project so far, would have been possible without your support and your extraordinary expertise in law enforcement matters.

A complex project like this one could not be implemented without the hard work and continuous efforts of our team here in Sarajevo. Hence, I would like to thank our expert team and specifically our local staff for your commitment and intense work.

The composition of our consortium reflects ICMPD’s strong belief in European values and principles and its work as a partner and facilitator for its Member States, as well as for the European Commission. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s recent membership to ICMPD also supports the country’s endeavour to gradually approximate its legislation to the EU acquis and reflects its commitment to achieve the overall objective of this project, namely, to bring Bosnia and Herzegovina’s law enforcement institutions up to the level required for EU accession.

I consider our efforts in this project as a crucial additional stepping stone that contributes to the existing efforts of the EU and of individual EU Member States to support Bosnia and Herzegovina’s pursuit of EU membership. With this in mind, ICMPD is looking forward to successfully implementing this project with our Member States and partners, our counterparts at the European Union Delegation and in the respective Ministries, as well as with all other stakeholders.

With hard work and dedication, we will be building upon established partnerships and working towards a more secure Bosnia and Herzegovina within a more secure Europe.

Thank you!