



Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management

**Concept note for the upcoming panel meeting focusing on IBM issues
(27-28 September 2018, Odessa, Ukraine)**

The Eastern Partnership Summit of 24 November 2017 endorsed the 20 Deliverables for 2020 and a revised architecture which includes a Panel on Migration, Mobility and IBM. This new Panel is the result of merging the previous Panel on Asylum and Migration and the one on IBM. Whenever focusing on IBM issues, the revised Panel would continue to be chaired by the EEAS.

The upcoming meeting of the Panel will have a focus on IBM. The host country is Ukraine.

Following consultations among relevant line DGs (NEAR, HOME and TAXUD) and the EEAS, the suggested topics for discussion are:

1. Strengthening the cooperation with EaP countries in the European Border Surveillance system (EUROSUR)

The European border management is built on the concept of involving all relevant stakeholders in the area of border control, search and rescue and return. Therefore, the integrated management of EU external borders (IBM) concept is being developed. Setting a proper framework for information exchange and cooperation between actors is an essential aspect of the Integrated Border Management. This is what the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) framework is about: to foster enhanced cooperation with the agencies involved but also with third countries.

EUROSUR defines a framework for information exchange and cooperation between EU Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in order to improve situational awareness and to increase reaction capability at the external borders of the Member States.

The Eurosur Framework consists of the following components for situational awareness:

- national coordination centres (NCCs)
- national situational pictures
- a communication network
- a European situational picture established

- a common pre-frontier intelligence picture
- a common application of surveillance tools

The reaction capability consists in the definition of border sections and the attribution of impact level to external border sections triggering compulsory reactions at national and European level.

Main objective is to present the EaP countries the concept of EUROSUR, its reinforcement and seek for the ways of strengthening the cooperation with EaP countries.

2. Cooperation in the field of customs and the Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET) initiative

In 2017 Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union and EU Member States set up an expert team aimed at improving the control of external border and preventing the entry of dangerous goods that could be harmful to people or to environment or to the European Union's, the Member States' and citizens' financial interest. The improved controls also contribute to smoother and faster border crossing.

CELBET (Customs Eastern Land Border Expert Team) pools expertise from 11 Eastern and South- Eastern land border EU Member States for strengthening and improving their operational cooperation at the external borders of the European Union. CELBET is part of a comprehensive EU Customs 2020 cooperation programme providing national customs administrations with the possibility to create and exchange information and expertise. It allows, among others, establishing various human networks by bringing together national officials from across Europe.

CELBET expert team is working in six areas:

- risk management (risk-based selection for controls/facilitation)
- operational controls
- equipment and procurement
- training
- evaluation/performance measurement
- co-operation with border guards and neighbouring countries

EU participating countries include Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Croatia.

Main outcomes involve coordinated controls in the 174 border crossing points, targeted risks profiles, joint intensified activities, mapping of customs equipment, best practices to optimise the use of equipment in border crossing points, training modules, identification of competencies and pilot training for customs officers, coordinated measurements at border crossing points and at EU level, dialogue with border guards in the border crossings points and with border agencies from non- EU countries.

3. Different modalities of continued EU support

The point would include the Frontex-led regional capacity building project, status of implementation and discussion plan of activities in the remainder of implementation period (until end 2018). As for the moment, there is no steering committee for the project planned, the Panel could act like a kind of steering committee (COM needs this feedback from beneficiary services). It will also be useful in terms of possible future needs/support for capacity building in this domain.

Information could also be provided on the status of the decision process of the latest approved projects under the Flagship Initiative (on MD-UA + on UA-BY borders): the adoption of Commission Financing Decision is expected by time of Panel.

As regards recently contracted projects under the Flagship Initiative on MD-UA border, which concerns mainly coordinated/joint control at BCP's, discussion could address obstacles, lessons learnt, etc. Furthermore, a number of IBM-related projects were approved under the Poland-Belarus- Ukraine CBC program (would be for information, to demonstrate continued support)

If ready, a presentation on the new IBM-program for Ukraine could be done, especially interesting if the Panel takes place in Ukraine (could be done by SGUA). This should be seen as an example of structured approach for supporting/improving IBM

If the Panel takes place in Odessa, EUBAM should be involved (Odessa is their home base). They have recently done a screening of the Odessa Port (incl. recommendations). EUBAM (or port authorities) could present this at the occasion of a field trip (incl. what has already been followed-up or not). The point could be widened to broader issue of IBM in ports (several big port projects ongoing/under preparation in the region, involving European IFI's - EBRD, EIB – in Odessa, Yuzhni, Tchernomorsk, Baku, Anaklia).

To complete the picture of EU-support, the Panel could address the EIB involvement in (early) discussions with Armenia on financing upgrade of the Mehri BCP (feasibility study done), as well as the discussion (advanced stage) between EIB and Belarus on financing upgrade road Minsk-Vilnius which includes the refurbishment of the Khameny Log BCP (signature of loan expected this April).