

Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management

Concept note for IBM Meeting

Minsk, 13-14 June 2019

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management succeeded the EaP Panel on Migration and Asylum in accordance with the decisions of the Eastern Partnership Summit of November 2017. The Panel is designed specifically to contribute to the implementation of the Deliverable 17 of the EaP Deliverables 2020, namely to supporting progress on visa facilitation and liberalization dialogues, readmission, IBM and Mobility Partnerships.

The meeting will be hosted by Belarus on 13-14 June 2019 in Minsk in cooperation with the European External Action Service, the European Commission and with the support of the International Organization for Migration, Mission in Ukraine. The general thematic focus proposed for this meeting is information exchange while the specific attention will be given to “green¹” border surveillance, based on the national experience of Belarus; developments in adopting and implementing respective IBM strategies (both at the EU and country level); as well as to the EU support to cross-border cooperation in the EaP region (ongoing and future initiatives).

The suggested discussion points are as follows:

An integrated approach to the “green” border surveillance

As a follow-up of the discussion on EUROSUR held during the previous IBM Panel in Odessa in September 2018, this meeting will provide an opportunity to explore the more specific issue of “green” border surveillance in the context of IBM. The national experience of Belarus will be in the focus of this discussion.

Although in recent years the EU has provided significant assistance in the development of relevant infrastructure (e.g. EU funded and IOM implemented projects “SURCAP” and “SURCAP II”), the “green” border with the EU countries on the side of Belarus is still experiencing an acute shortage of modern engineering and other equipment to protect the border and adjacent areas and ensure an adequate response to the large number of threats posed by cross-border crime. This leads to a gradual shift of the flows of irregular migration and illegal substances from the checkpoints to the “green” border, which creates both a tangible economic, human and other burdens on the state, as well as barriers to simplifying the border crossing procedures for local border populations.

¹ “Green” border is the external land borders outside BCP areas



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by the
International Organization for Migration

To ensure the effectiveness of “green” border surveillance, an integrated approach is required at national, regional and local level. This should encompass a strategic concept combining different elements of the land border surveillance system such as: designing an overarching strategic procedure; ensuring a comprehensive situational awareness by setting stationary and mobile surveillance; increasing the capacities of the staff involved in border surveillance to ensure sufficient number and tailored training; improving the engineering infrastructure, including equipment of units and border sections with modern technical means of protection and control; enhancing the intra-agency coordination between the border guard units and; improving the inter-agency cooperation with other national authorities involved as well as the international cooperation with neighbouring states (including through establishing joint patrols and joint mobile units along the green border ensuring systematic exchange of information for border surveillance, including through Common Contact Points (CCPs) etc.).

The Panel meeting will provide an opportunity for Belarus to present the current implementation of an integrated approach to “green” border surveillance, including recent achievements and challenges, as well as to receive feedback from the EU Member States and other Partner countries based on their national experiences. The European Commission (DG HOME) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) will present the European IBM concept and the strategic process to ensure efficient implementation; as well as will provide some insights and share the best practices related to “green border” surveillance in line with the European IBM concept.

Possible issues for discussions:

- *How countries can ensure efficient coordination and communication for border surveillance?*
- *How do you compile the national situational picture on the land border? How can IT solutions increase the effectiveness of border control and facilitate the cooperation?*
- *How can technology boost the efficiency of border surveillance? How do you see the development of the management of human resources in the context of technological progress?*

European and national IBM Strategies

The European Border and Coast Guard Regulation laid down the general principles for a European Integrated Border Management and thereby for the first time legally enacting the concept enshrined in Article 77(2)(d) of the Treaty of Functioning of the EU. The concept of European Integrated Border Management has been developed to guarantee an effective and uniform management of the EU external



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by the
International Organization for Migration

borders, contributing to the well-functioning of the Schengen area and giving effect to the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities between Member States as set out in the Lisbon Treaty.²

Article 3 of the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) Regulation³ envisages that the European Border and Coast Guard shall, by the decision of the management board based on a proposal of the executive director, establish a technical and operational strategy for the European IBM.

Article 4 of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation lists 11 components, including border control, search and rescue in situations which may arise during maritime border surveillance operations, risk analysis, interagency cooperation, cooperation between Member States, a Schengen quality control mechanism and solidarity mechanisms, in particular Union funding instruments. The European Integrated Border Management at national and Union level shall consist of these components.

Following a dialogue between the Commission and the Member States, of which the Council and the European Parliament were kept informed, it was established that the operationalisation of the Integrated Border Management (IBM) concept should be delivered through a three levels strategic process composed of the main political elements to be set by the Commission, the technical and operational IBM strategy to be elaborated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the national IBM strategies to be concluded by the Member States.

In Annex 6 of the 7th Progress Report on the European Agenda on Migration, the Commission established the political guidelines to be followed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the Member States for the strategic implementation of the European IBM and for the drafting of the technical and operational IBM strategy and the national strategies for IBM. Three horizontal components (training, research and development and fundamental rights) were added in this document to complement the 11 components of the European IBM included in Article 4 of the EBCG Regulation.

In March 2019, the Management Board of the Agency endorsed the content of the technical and operational IBM strategy concluded by the Agency in close cooperation with the Commission and the Member States. The Commission was tasked by the Council (Council Conclusions of June 2018) to perform a thematic evaluation of the national strategies for IBM, six months after the adoption of the technical and operational IBM strategy by Frontex, to support the efficient implementation of the European IBM.

² Article 80 Lisbon Treaty

³ [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard and amending Regulation \(EU\) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation \(EC\) No 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation \(EC\) No 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC](#)



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by the
International Organization for Migration

The new EBCG Proposal introduces a four-level multiannual strategic policy cycle to ensure the effective implementation of the European Integrated Border Management by the European Border and Coast Guard, comprising of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the border guard authorities in the Member States. The cycle will start with political steering for the European Integrated Border Management, provided in the form of a Commission delegated act, which will then be implemented through the technical and operational strategy prepared by Frontex and national strategies prepared by the Member States.

During the Panel meeting, the representative of the Commission will depict the main elements of the strategic process to ensure efficient implementation of the European IBM at the Union level also addressing the 11 components of the European IBM and the three horizontal topics highlighting the relation between the technical and operational IBM strategy and the national strategies for IBM. Frontex experts could update on the changes in the Agency's mandate expected upon the adoption of the EBCG Proposal as well as on the new Technical and Operational European IBM strategy developed by Frontex.

The survey⁴ conducted as a part of preparation for the previous IBM meeting in Odesa demonstrated that all the EaP states, although not being covered by the European IBM (unlike the EU MS), realize the importance of cooperation both with EU (and its MS) and between themselves and, thus, develop and implement their own IBM concepts and strategies with due consideration of the EU best practices and with comprehensive EU support.

Almost all Partner countries have either adopted or are in the process of developing (updating) their strategic IBM documents. Belarus adopted the national IBM Concept in March 2019 and, thus, could present its main objectives and components to the Panel participants. In Ukraine, the High-level Interagency Working Group on IBM issues was launched in January 2019. The main objective of the Group is to finalize the development of the national IBM Strategy. The process is supported by the EU through EUAM.

The meeting will become a platform for sharing the experiences and exchanging the views between the EU, EU MS and EaP countries regarding the IBM strategies and their role for effective border management.

Possible issues for discussion:

- *Could the European IBM concept be a good basis for further development of the national IBM concept in the EaP states? Could the cooperation between the EU and the EaP states be influenced by the renewed concept?*

⁴ [Panel Meeting on Integrated Border Management, 27-28 September 2018, Matrix Compilation](#)



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by the
International Organization for Migration

- *What are the main challenges for EaP countries in the process of IBM strategies development?*

EU support to cross-border cooperation in the EaP region (ongoing and future initiatives)

The EU continues to provide active technical and financial support aimed at enhancing the cross-border cooperation in the EaP region.

On 31 December 2018, the EU-funded EaP IBM capacity building project implemented within the EaP/IBM Flagship Initiative ended. The project aimed at ensuring effective control of the external borders by addressing migratory challenges and combating cross-border crime by enhancing the collaboration at national, cross-border and international levels. Further possibilities of structured cooperation between Frontex and the EaP states could be explored during the Meeting. The participants may also discuss further activities within the IBM Flagship Initiative and other EU supported tools, including TWINNING.

The importance of cooperation at different levels (intra-agency, interagency and international) for efficient Integrated Border Management became the key message of the previous IBM meeting held on 27-28 September in Odessa. This time special attention may be paid to modalities of cross-border cooperation in relation to information exchange, implementing IT solutions in border control etc.

In particular, the participants may share their recent experience in establishing common contact points (CCPs). CCPs, where officers from different countries work closely together while also sharing the same premises, serve to accelerate the work of relevant authorities, promote the smooth exchange of information for routine cooperation as well as in the case of emergencies and violations of the law. The main task of CCPs is information exchange on daily operations and responding to direct requests. This can include information exchange on documents, personal data, means of transport, ascertaining the identity of a person, re-admission of irregular immigrants, special operations undertaken by border guard patrols for prevention and control, general sharing of intelligence, information regarding cross-border hot pursuit.⁵

So far, some EaP countries have already established the CCPs and could present their experiences and lessons learned during the Panel meeting. For instance, the CCP “Pinsk-Zhytomir” was launched between Belarus and Ukraine in 2017 within the framework of EU-funded project “Strengthening surveillance and bilateral coordination capacity along the common border between Belarus and Ukraine, SURCAP Phase II”, implemented by IOM Missions in Belarus and Ukraine. In the same year, the CCP “Záhony” between the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine and the Police of Hungary began operating. Currently, Belarus

⁵ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/ibm-eap/document/1-guidelines-integrated-border-management-european-commission-external-cooperation-european>



The Project is funded by the
European Union



The Project is implemented by the
International Organization for Migration

is exploring the possibility of establishing another CCP on the border with Latvia, while the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are developing their respective capacities on CCP management with the support of EUBAM.

The meeting could be a good opportunity to explore the experience on the matter of other Partner countries from the Caucasus region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia).

In addition to that, IOM and EUBAM could update on the implementation progress of ongoing EU-funded projects on IBM and cross-border cooperation.

Possible issues for discussion:

- *What are the possible directions of continuous cooperation between Frontex and EaP countries on border control?*
- *What are the prospects of the EU-funded IBM projects for the EaP states?*

The meeting will be followed by the field visit to the segment of the State Border between Belarus and Lithuania organized by the State Border Guard Committee of Belarus.



The Project is funded by the
European Union



IOM•MOM
The Project is implemented by the
International Organization for Migration