Report of the Panel Meeting on Integrated Border Management

13-14 June 2019

Minsk, Belarus

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 13-14 June, the Panel Meeting on Integrated Border Management took place in Minsk. The event was hosted by Belarus (State Border Committee of Belarus) and was chaired on behalf of the EU by the European External Action Service (EEAS). The meeting was organized by the EEAS,DG HOME, DG NEAR and DG TAXUD, with the support ofthe International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Ukraine under the framework of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management.

The Panel Meeting gathered representatives from the European External Action Service, DG HOME, EUBAM, EU High-Level Expert Team on IBM in Ukraine, Frontex, EU Member States (Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland), six EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine), international organizations (IOM, ICMPD, UNHCR) and civil society.

The Panel Meeting provided an occasion to discuss recent developments in the European IBM; approaches to IBM strategies both at the EU level, including Technical and Operational European IBM strategy recently developed by Frontex, and the country level (in the EU Member States (MS) and partner countries); integrated approach to "green" border surveillance; as well as continuous EU support to cross-border cooperation in the EaP region.

The importance of practical aspects of the implementation of the IBM concept was emphasized at the meeting. As noted Radoslaw Darski, Deputy Head of Division, Eastern Partnership, Regional cooperation and OSCE, EEAS, "IBM is not a one-size-fits-all approach – on the contrary, national IBM strategies should be adapted to particular circumstances on the ground". The importance of further development of inter-agency and intra-agency cooperation as well as cooperation between partner countries was also highlighted by the Meeting participants.

On the second day of the meeting, a field visit to "Molodechnenskaia" border guard unit at the Belarus-Lithuania border was organized for insight into activities and best practices of the State Border Committee of Belarus.

Welcome and opening

Mr. Radoslaw Darski, EEAS, on behalf of the EU chaired the meeting, welcomed all the participants and thanked the Belarus authorities and colleagues from the State Border Guard Committee of Belarus for hosting the meeting in Minsk. He underlined that in 2014 Belarus also hosted a meeting on IBM and this fact shows a specific interest of Belarus to this topic.

Mr. Igor Butkevych, State Border Guard Committee of Belarus, in his welcoming remarks stated that the principles of IBM are becoming increasingly relevant in the light of the emergence of risks and threats of a transboundary nature. In this regard, the need to establish close and open interaction between law enforcement and other authorities at intra-agency, interagency, and international levels comes to the fore. He also expressed the hope that the meeting would provide an opportunity to discuss topical issues, share experience, establish useful contacts and develop new and more effective ways to counter the risks and threats in the sphere of border management.

Ms. Outa Hermalahti, EU Delegation to Belarus, in her welcoming speech reminded that Eastern Partnership is turning 10 years in 2019. She stressed the importance of the EaP Panel on Migration, Mobility, and IBM as a multilateral platform that provides an opportunity to discuss common issues that concern all the parties and effectively complements bilateral cooperation between EU and partner countries. She noted that IBM initially emerged as a practice and was "put on paper" much later. She reminded that the main idea of the IBM concept is a promotion of cooperation at different levels. The legal definition of the IBM emerged only in 2016 with the adoption of the EBCG Regulation. At the end of her welcoming speech, Ms. Hermalahti invited all Panel meeting participants to share their best practices and experiences in the field of IBM during the discussions.

Mr. Zeynal Hajiyev, IOM Belarus, on behalf of IOM welcomed the participants and noted the support of IOM in organizing the Panel's events and the importance of such activities that provide a platform for cooperation between countries and agencies. He stressed that IOM has a successful experience in developing cooperation with authorities of the EaP countries and listed the most prominent projects in the sphere of border management implemented by IOM in the EaP countries. He noted that migration is an issue that requires the involvement of all partners and stressed the importance of cooperation at different levels that was also highlighted in the Global Compact on Migration adopted in 2018. Mr. Hajiyev noticed that migration has a great potential to contribute to the development and that the main task for countries, regional and international organizations should be to make migration safe, regulated and orderly so that it can bring the benefits both to migrants and the hosting countries.

Mr. Radoslaw Darski, EEAS, noted that in May 2019 two meetings on an occasion of the 10th anniversary of the EaP were held – a ministerial meeting and a high-level conference. He summarized that for the last ten years considerable progress has been reached in cooperation with EaP countries in different sectors enhancing stronger economy, mobility, and people-to-people contacts. However, shortcomings remained in areas related to good governance, rule of

law, cooperation with civil society and freedom of the media. He mentioned that by 2020 the 20 Deliverables should be achieved, and the EU is going to trigger a structured dialogue with EU MS and EaP countries to determine the modalities of future cooperation within the EaP. Mr. Darski presented the agenda and officially opened the meeting.

Tour-de-table:

The representative of Lithuania raised the issue of future activities of the EaP Panel on Migration, Mobility and IBM and highlighted the need to continue discussions on migration and mobility as well. The point was taken by the Chair.

Session I - Approaches to IBM strategies

Ms. Andreea Niculiu, European Commission, DG HOME, devoted her first presentation to the concept of European IBM. She presented some information on the EU external borders, the definition of the EU border management, its main components and the process of development of the European IBM concept. She listed the main threats in the area of border management in the EU, namely, financial crisis and Euro-crisis, geo-strategical instability in the EU's Neighbourhood, organised cross-border crime and terrorism, difficulties in detection of EU citizens who took part in activities of foreign terrorist organizations, reduced level of cooperation and trust between Member States (MS), large migratory flow and secondary movements of "transit" migrants. Such threats determined the need to develop a common concept of border management and tools for its effective implementation. She noted that the objective of the EU policy in the field of external border management is to develop and implement European IBM at national and EU level, described the main objectives of the European IBM, its elements and components of the strategic process. While describing four tier access control model Ms. Niculiu highlighted cooperation between Poland, Lithuania, and Belarus as an example of cooperation between the EU and EU MS and neighbouring third countries.
See *the presentation "European Integrated Border Management".*
Ms. Dace Kozule, Frontex, devoted her presentation to the Technical and Operational Strategy for European IBM (TO EIBM) elaborated by Frontex, in cooperation with EU MS/SAC and COM. She presented the policy context, the process of the Strategy development, its purpose, main pillars, strategic objectives and stages of implementation. Ms. Kozule highlighted that the main aim of TO EIBM is to facilitate the smooth and lawful transit of persons and goods across safe, secure and well-functioning external borders of the EU. She explained that TO EIBM establishes common vision, mission and values of EBCG, summarizes the strategic context, describes how the implementation of TO EIBM is to be governed, operationalizes EIBM in a comprehensive manner at EU and national levels, dentifies technical and operational activities and their added value. Ms.

Kozule also underlined it that Frontex is the guardian of TO EIBM, tasked with promoting and updating it, as well as with assisting the national authorities in its implementation.
See *the presentation "Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management".*

Tour-de-table:

Participants shortly discussed how the European IBM Concept could be used in cooperation between the EU and partner countries. Frontex representative noted that TO EIBM is offered as a useful tool also to non-EU countries, which may find it supportive in the process of the development and implementation of their national IBM Strategies.

Ms. Andreea Niculiu, European Commission, DG HOME, devoted her second presentation to outline border surveillance within the European IBM. She presented the legal definition and scope of border surveillance, its basic requirements set in the Schengen Borders Code and described the main phases of developing the European border surveillance. She stressed the importance of the connection of different surveillance elements and their maintenance as one system and noted that EU MS and partner countries should work together in order to exchange best practices and ideas regarding the effective usage of border surveillance equipment. Ms. Niculiu listed three levels of border surveillance levels and described the main elements of a typical border surveillance system (command and control layers, communication means, resources). At the end of her presentation, Ms. Niculiu presented main strategic and operational challenges for outline border surveillance and noted that measures in the area of border surveillance recently proposed by the EU were aimed at the establishing an integrated border surveillance system. She also shortly described the legislative framework for border surveillance activities in the EU.
See *the presentation "Outline border surveillance in European IBM".*

Mr. Andrei Girs, State Border Guard Committee of Belarus, revealed Belarus' experience of integrated "green" border surveillance. He noted that maintenance of "green" border surveillance is an important part of integrated border management and listed main threats and challenges in this sphere. He described the main components of integrated "green" border surveillance in Belarus as well as its main areas of development. He stressed that integrated surveillance systems allow to respond directly to border violations and do not require constant patrolling at borders. In the end, Mr. Girs presented a short film on integrated "green" border surveillance and IT solutions for effective border control in Belarus.
See *the presentation "National practice of an integrated approach to the surveillance of the "green" border and IT solutions for effective cooperation in the field of "green" border surveillance".*

Tour-de-table:

Participants discussed the necessity of cooperation with neighbouring countries on the use of IT-tools in border surveillance. It was noted that Belarus has experience of such cooperation with Ukraine and Latvia and that such cooperation requires a respective legal framework.

Mr. Pavel Andriianov, State Border Guard Committee of Belarus, revealed the country's experience in the use of IT solutions for border control. He noted that Belarus launched the process of automation of its BCPs in 2007. In order to maintain the whole information system effectively, it was decided to equip border detachments with IT specialists. Automation of the "green" border is a complicated task that may lead to possible overloads in the work of the data exchange system. The best way to support proper operation of the system is to employ IT specialists in the staff. Delegating such tasks to outsource contractors is less effective as these tasks are specific and time-consuming. Mr. Andriianov assured that Belarus is ready to share its experience in using IT solutions in border management.

Mr. Antti Hartikainen, EU High-Level Expert Team on IBM in Ukraine, explored the ongoing IBM Strategy development in Ukraine. He described the work of the High-Level Expert Team. Mr. Hartikainen underlined that the Expert Team considered all main lessons learned from the previous IBM strategy drafting processes in 2015 and 2018, and, what is most important, involved all key Ukrainian stakeholders in the process. He noted that EU Delegation, European Commission, EUAM, Frontex, and EUBAM were also involved in this work. The IBM Strategy of Ukraine takes into account the legal framework of European IBM in line with EBCG Regulation as well as the latest Frontex IBM training programmes. Mr. Hartikainen described the work of the Interagency Working Group and the drafting process itself. He listed the main challenges met during the drafting process and key lessons learned. He also stressed that the EU IBM model fits very well for the EaP countries, but it needs to be tailor-made for each particular country as recourses, jurisdiction, border security situation as well as local conditions are different.
See *the presentation "Ongoing IBM Strategy development in Ukraine".*

Mr. Vadim Ilchuk, State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, followed up with the topic of integrated border management in Ukraine and the process of developing the national IBM Strategy. He summarized the key factors of success and stressed the role of the Interagency Working Group as a high-level coordinating body in this process. Mr. Ilchuk described the structure, main aims, and components of the Strategy and noted that three-years action plans should be developed in order to operationalize its implementation. The plans will provide for specific tasks, indicators, define the responsible authorities, as well as sources and amounts of funding for particular activities.
See *the presentation "Development of border management in Ukraine".*

Mr. Tony Mihaitoaia, ICMPD, devoted his presentation to the influence of IBM concept on the Europen Commission (EC) external cooperation. He stressed the importance of the IBM Guidelines 2010 as it provides a harmonized approach to the assistance offered by the EC in the area of border management. He described the role of IBM concept in the EC external cooperation and informed about the ICMPD's proposal regarding the update of the Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation.
See *the presentation "Integrated Border Management concept on EC external cooperation – key areas of interventions".*

Tour-de-table:

Participants discussed the Ukrainian IBM Strategy and the process of its development as a good example of effective cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders. The representative of the Civil Society Forum formulated some key principles of strategic documents drafting in IBM sphere. It was noted that the involvement of all stakeholders including representatives of civil society and the assistance of European experts were the main factors of success of Ukrainian IBM Strategy development process.
The Chair provided a short summary of the first part of the meeting. He highlighted the importance of cooperation between neighbouring countries and respective agencies, effective communication and information exchange, training and usage of IT-tools in IBM implementation.

Session II - EU support to cross-border cooperation: ongoing and future initiatives

Ms. Outa Hermalahti, EU Delegation to Belarus, explored continued EU support to the development of IBM in Belarus. She admitted a good level of cooperation between EU Delegation and state authorities and noted that Belarus is one of the countries that have already implemented a lot of IBM elements. She noted that the strategic basis for the EU-Belarus cooperation is the Mobility Partnership agreed in 2016 as well as an ongoing dialogue between EU and Belarus on customs issues. She listed the most prominent EU-supported IBM projects implemented in Belarus within IBM Flagship Initiative, Cross-Border Cooperation Programme and Mobility Partnership Facility and announced two EU-supported twinning projects aimed at supporting the State Border Committee of Belarus in implementation of the IBM Strategy adopted in March 2019 and at supporting the State Customs Committee of Belarus.

Mr. Pavel Vatskel, State Border Guard Committee of Belarus, devoted his presentation to the EU technical assistance in the sphere of border management in Belarus. He noted that the EU is the biggest donor of technical assistance to Belarus. He described implementation of EU-funded projects in IBM sphere in Belarus within EaP ("Strengthening Surveillance and Bilateral Coordination Capacity Along the Common Border Between Belarus and Ukraine" (SURCAP Phase I, II), EaP IBM Capacity Building Project), Cross-Border Cooperation (joint initiatives of border services to improve the efficiency of border control and border surveillance, "Development of Telecommunication Infrastructure at the Belarus-Lithuania Border" (BOMBEL-4)), Mobility Partnership Facility ("Improving Border Security by Enhancing Cooperation Between Belarus and Latvia"). Mr. Vatskel also listed some current and upcoming EU-funded initiatives aimed at supporting the demarcation of Belarus-Ukraine border, establishing contact points with Latvia, enhancing the potential of canine service of the State Border Guard Service of Belarus.

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Mr. Johann Wagner, Border 21, focused his presentation on the concept of twinning. He noted that twinning projects bring together public sector expertise from EU MS and beneficiary countries with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer to peer activities. Mr. Wagner listed the main principles of twinning and highlighted that twinning projects are implemented with a view to the mandatory results to be achieved and that twinning itself lies on learning by doing principle and sharing of best practices. He also described the experience in developing the twinning fiche for the State Border Committee of Belarus in 2019 and listed mandatory results identified and agreed during that process. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Wagner highlighted the importance and usefulness of twinning projects.
See *the presentation "Twinning",*

Ms. Emilia Adamska, Polish Border Guard, devoted her presentation to the Polish Border Guard experience of establishing and functioning of police and customs cooperation centres (PCCCs) and consultation centres (CCPs). She described the legal basis for establishing such points, listed modalities of their operation, main tasks, the scope of information exchange as well as the most common categories of shared information.
See *the presentation "Police and Customs Co-operation Centers (PCCCs)".*

Mr. Urmas Koidu, EUBAM, revealed the role of EUBAM in establishing joint border control along the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and launching joint BCP "Palanca". He explored the legal framework for joint border control and described its main benefits, especially if it is implemented as "one-stop-shop". Mr. Koidu noted that Road Map for Extension of Joint Control 2019-2022 envisages the joint control establishing at 26 BCPs at Moldovan-Ukrainian border. The EUBAM support envisages drafting annual plans for joint control development, further assessment of infrastructure needs, evaluation of newly established joint BCPs and contribution to the optimization of the number and status of BCPs.
See *the presentation "Joint Control at the Moldova-Ukraine Border Crossing Points".*

Ms. Tamar Salukvadze, Ministry of Interior of Georgia, devoted her presentation to the ongoing and planned EU funded projects in Georgia. She listed the main implemented ("Better Coordination of Protection of The Land Border Between Georgia And Azerbaijan", "Border Operations Management System", EaP IBM Capacity Building Project) and ongoing ("Reinforcing Coordinated Migration and Border Management") projects, the main activities within these initiatives and their main outcomes. Ms. Salukvadze also described the key components of future initiatives within EU4 Security, Accountability and Fight against Crime Programme and EU assistance (SAFE).
See *the presentation "EU support on Integrated Border Management in Georgia".*

Tour-de-table:

Participants shortly discussed continuous EU support in the field of IBM in EaP countries.

A representative of Belarus emphasized the role of the IBM Flagship Initiative which was notable for quick consideration of applications for the provision of international technical assistance and stressed the importance of further development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of IBM as well as the EU continuous support. Representatives of Belarus and Latvia revealed highlighted successful bilateral cooperation in the field of IBM. Georgian representative noted that the discussions and information presented during the meeting, especially regarding European and national IBM strategies development, were really useful for Georgia, which is currently elaborating its national IBM strategy and action plan. A representative of Azerbaijan noted that the importance of such meetings is that one can compare the dynamics in cooperation and implementation of projects in the field of border management. Participants also stressed the importance of more practical discussions during the Panel meetings and encouraged the EU MS and EaP countries to be more proactive in bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of IBM.

Summary and closure

Mr. Radoslaw Darski, EEAS, admitted that such events as Panel meetings provide its participants, both from EU institutions, EU MS and partner countries, with added value in terms of exchange of information on policy developments and possible areas for cooperation. He summarized the main takeaways of the meeting discussions – the importance of practical implementation of IBM strategic documents; the importance of intra-agency, interagency and international cooperation on IBM issues; usefulness of IT-tools in "green" border surveillance; the need of EU support and cooperation between EU and EaP countries on border control issues. He also underlined that IBM is not a one-size-fits-all approach – on the contrary, national IBM strategies should be adapted to particular circumstances on the ground.

He thanked the participants for their active participation and the Belarusian colleagues for hosting the meeting.

Mr. Darski also expressed his gratitude to Georgia that confirmed its interest in hosting the next Panel Meeting on IBM issues.

14 June 2019 – Day 2

Field visit to "Molodechnenskaia" border guard unit

On the second day of the meeting, a field visit to "Molodechnenskaia" border guard unit at the Belarus-Lithuania border was organized for insight into activities and best practices of the State Border Committee of Belarus. During the visit participants got acquainted with organization of the border guard unit, its practice of using surveillance and information exchange systems and implementing IT solutions for maintaining effective border control. Participants also learned

Belarus experience of organizing the Canine Training Centre and using its capacities for border protection.

All the presentations mentioned in this report, as well as all the materials related to the meeting, can be found on the Panel website. The presentations are accessible to logged-in users only.