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BOMCA overview

Since its launch in 2003, the BOMCA Programme has implemented phases targeting capacity building and institutional development, developing trade corridors, improving border management systems and eliminating drug trafficking across the Central Asia region. Every new phase of BOMCA was designed to gradually continue the actions implemented during the preceding phases of the Programme. During its earlier phases, the Programme focused its resources on creating modern border management infrastructure.

Building on the success of the previous phases, this 9th phase intends to continue interventions in the area of institutional development, management of migration flows and trade facilitation. Its overall objective is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of border management in Central Asia by introducing advanced elements of Integrated Border Management (IBM), assisting governments in developing and reforming their migration governance, mobility and trade facilitation policies, and strengthening capacities of Border and Migration Agencies, and thus contributing to security and economic development at the national and regional levels.

The 9th phase of the BOMCA Programme was launched in June 2015 for 36 months with a total budget of 4 954 784.93 Euro.



Dear friends,

The Central Asian countries as well as the world at large are facing a number of ambiguous and multifactor security challenges and threats, addressing of which requires the consolidated efforts of politicians, diplomats and international experts.

At the beginning of 2000, the European Union began to actively cooperate with the Central Asian states, including the Kyrgyz Republic, on regional security and countering transnational threats. This cooperation resulted in the development and implementation of one of the largest EU-funded programmes in the Central Asia region, namely, BOMCA.

During the over 10 years of the programme's history in Kyrgyzstan and in the region as a whole, I can say that BOMCA diligently sought the best and most innovative ways to strengthen the capacity of its beneficiaries through technical support, institutional development and improvement of professional skills and the capacity of agencies involved in border management issues. Among these BOMCA achievements I would like to underline the development and approval by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of

the National Strategy for Integrated Border Management (IBM) in 2012. National IBM Strategy implementation remains one of the priorities of the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic. BOMCA is a permanent member of the IBM implementation Inter-Agency Commission, and we hope for further fruitful cooperation in the framework of the IBM National Strategy 2012 – 2022.

There is no doubt that the implementation of the ninth phase of the BOMCA programme is entrusted to professionals – we are pleased that the Consortium is led by our colleagues at the Border Guard of Latvia, and that one of the implementing partners is the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, which provided valuable expertise in the earlier phases of the programme.

In my opinion, the ninth phase of the BOMCA programme has successfully moved from the preparatory phase to the phase of its implementation. During this short period of time a number of important measures have been implemented in Kyrgyzstan aiming at effective implementation of the IBM strategy, capacity building and institutional development of border and customs services and donor coordination.

I would like to thank my BOMCA colleagues for their contribution and efforts and wish the programme success and fruitful implementation.

**Major General
Rayimberdi Duishenbiev
Former Head of the State Border Service, current Head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic**



Component 1. Sustainable institutional development and good IBM practices

The first quarter of 2016 was marked by a number of the various events aiming to strengthen the sustainable capacity of the border agencies in the region. These efforts, linked to Component 1, in particular concentrated on further developing human resources (cadre) policies and administrative management, and following the principles of IBM in theory and practice, in compliance with international law enforcement standards and norms.



Almaty hosts a regional meeting of border guards and customs training institutions

On 18-19 February representatives from the training institutions of four countries in Central Asia gathered to share their experience and ideas on capacity building activities in the educational processes.

Through promoting and facilitating continued exchange of professional experience in the educational process and professional development of border and customs agency personnel, BOMCA 9 supports this cooperation of training institutions striving to joint approach in development of training curricula, lectures, professional training courses and unification of education and training processes.

During the workshop the delegates presented and discussed current training systems in CA countries, and learned about innovative approaches and methodological tools such as distance learning systems. By having discussions in two working groups the professionals identified existing needs, gaps and good practices in the training processes, and defined topics within the training curricula where the exchange of trainers and students could be organised. Based on the training topics prioritised by the participants and outlined in the final document of the regional workshop, BOMCA will support an exchange of trainers and trainees among the training institutions.

BOMCA carries out technical assistance mission in Ashgabat

In the framework of the technical assistance mission of the BOMCA Programme, on 24-26 February the EU expert Mr. Gennadiy Mashkov, Deputy Director of the Customs Service of Latvia, visited Ashgabat and met with key national experts from border guards, customs services and phytosanitary agencies. The aim of his mission was to contribute to the institutional development of agencies involved in border control by developing concrete guidelines which could be used by the operation staff. During the mission the expert had a series of meetings with representatives from the State Border Guard Service and State Customs Service of

Turkmenistan, the State Service on Plant Quarantine, the State Service of Veterinary Control of the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan and the Sanitary-epidemiology Service of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan to discuss current procedures at the border for means of transportation and vehicles, present EU practices in this regard and jointly map areas for advancing inter-agency cooperation in performing joint control of means of transportation. As a result of this visit draft guidelines on joint vehicle searches were developed and shared with the Turkmen authorities.



Expert support to Uzbek training institutions in WCO accreditation

On 1-3 March an EU expert technical assistance visit aiming at provision of support in evaluating the compatibility of the existing customs officer training system with World Customs Organization (WCO) professional standards and recommendations of the European Commission Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD) took place in Tashkent. As a result of the mission and joint discussions with

the national experts from Uzbekistan, the EU experts developed practical recommendations for achieving World Customs Organization accreditation for the Uzbek Higher Military Customs Institute's training programme, which will be the marker for the Institute's alignment with international standards.



Component 1. Sustainable institutional development and good IBM practices

BOMCA supports professional development of national partners



On 28-30 March a national workshop was held in Kazakhstan on human resources management and financial planning and control.

The workshop aimed to provide information exchange on management of human resources, and financial planning and control in compliance with international standards and replicating EU models and

good practices. It provided an opportunity to comprehensively evaluate the existing system of human resources management and financial management and control, share opinions and professional experiences and define training needs for possible further on-the-job trainings .

Customs agencies and universities from Central Asia move towards a unified approach to education of customs officers



A two-day regional workshop on a common training system for customs officers was held in Bishkek on 5-6 April, facilitated by experts from Riga Technical University and the State Revenue Service of Latvia. The wide audience of the workshop included senior-level customs officials and human resources officers, academics and university staff from major universities in Central Asia.

The delegates exchanged their experience and learned about good practices of EU MS – in particular Latvia – in such spheres of the educational system as development of curricula, recruitment of academic personnel, methodological support, and co-

operation between agencies and education institutions. Also, professional standards of the European Commission's TAXUD and the PICARD programme of the WCO were evaluated as well as steps to be undertaken by training institutions for accreditation of curricula by the WCO.

Based on the workshop's results, including gaps and challenges jointly identified during the activity, the EU experts will develop ideas on possible steps for Central Asian countries on the way to advancing the educational system for customs officers.

Kyrgyzstan hosts the 12th CABS I Conference



On 27-28 April Bishkek hosted the 12th Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABS I) Conference, gathering over 120 participants from 15 countries to discuss a modern integrated border management (IBM) approach to strengthening the security of borders while facilitating legitimate movements and trade. The conference is the result of a cooperation between the EU, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and BOMCA as well as the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. Participants at the event included officials from Central Asian States, Afghanistan, and EU Member States as well as key international actors in the field of migration such as ICMPPD, IOM, UNHCR, and UNODC.

The conference was structured into three thematic sessions, focusing on the issues of border management, mixed migration

flows and trade facilitation, where participants reported on the results achieved during the past years, and gaps and challenges to overcome. During the discussions the participants looked into issues of coordination amongst Central Asian states and international stakeholders, and possible follow-up activities to further promote border management and security. While important challenges were defined, such as resource constraints, tension in border areas, limited cross-border movement, trade obstacles, and emerging security and development threats, the delegates fully committed themselves to continuing the cooperation and joint efforts and highlighted the importance of keeping this multi-partner platform.



Component 2. Legal and procedural instruments to manage regular and irregular migration at borders

Further development of the legal and procedural instruments, introduction of advanced practices of cross-border mobility and addressing the multifaceted challenges caused by mixed migration flows from, through and to Central Asia are the key objectives of Component 2. The component activities began with a workshop aimed at ensuring proper profiling and identification of travellers, including vulnerable migrants.

The programme foresees a variety of activities under this component – from expert missions to study visits – which collectively aim at setting up a basis for sustained good governance of migration with a view to strengthening the link between migration, mobility and employment in the region.

Trainings on identification and profiling techniques



Between 9 March and 18 March a training expert from the State Border Guard College of Latvia, Mr. Juris Madzuls, conducted national workshops on identification and profiling techniques for relevant national experts from Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. 38 officers and officials from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan participated in 3-day training

workshops in Astana and Bishkek respectively.

This BOMCA initiative is intended to improve existing legal and procedural instruments to manage both regular and irregular migration at borders and to manage in a better way the current challenges in identification of potentially dangerous persons which may pose a risk to the public order and security.

“We brought good EU practices in effective identification and profiling of border violators and different categories of travellers, including vulnerable migrants. There are many modern approaches, sophisticated systems and IT technologies, but no IT tool could replace the human brain”, said Mr. Madzuls.

Component 3. Facilitating legal trade and transit of goods and countering various forms of smuggling

The last of the three components of the programme aims to introduce measures improving the efficiency of procedures regarding flow of goods at borders, and thus facilitate regional and international trade.

At the beginning of February BOMCA invited two EU experts from the Customs Authority of the Republic of Lithuania – Ms. Vida Mickiene and Mr. Rimantas Rackauskas – to conduct discussions on the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and its implementation aspects in Kazakhstan and to review the compatibility of the national legislation of Kyrgyzstan with the General Annex of the RKC.

Working meetings on revised Kyoto Convention



The benefits of the working meetings were widely recognised by national experts in both countries in terms of positive changes in their knowledge, attitudes and confidence related to Revised Kyoto Convention implementation and accession. Having presented and discussed a variety of particulars in relation to the national experiences,

the delegates made a commitment to ensure quality implementation of the RKC as a vital component of trade facilitation in Kazakhstan. In Kyrgyzstan, the experts agreed to pursue their efforts to finalise the process of accession to the Convention. The discussions during the working meeting highlighted the strong level of interest shown by Kyrgyz experts in issues related to the simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures. The same type of workshops are planned for another three countries in 2016 and serve as preparation for the regional meeting for all countries to discuss related measures planned or already implemented by the CA customs administrations with regard to RKC accession.



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