

BORDER MANAGEMENT

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IN FOCUS

THE EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS BORDER MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

By Ambassador Alan Waddams

Head of Delegation of the European Commission in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

This July, the European Commission allocated € 1.5 million from its Rapid Reaction budget for border management activities in Central Asia. This is being used to kick-start the EU's border management programme in Central Asia which will be implemented with the help of UNDP. The Border Management Services and Development agencies of the EU Member States (Austria, Finland, France, U.K.) and acceding countries (Poland) will provide the expertise. The programme will receive a total of € 23.5 million over the next three years. This underscores the EU's commitment to this region and its belief in the importance of improved border management.

In Central Asian States, the organisational problems of creating completely new national services to provide adequate, transparent and reliable border management have been compounded by budget shortages as different priorities compete for limited revenues. Border controls and police services can, therefore, be easily and significantly improved for the benefit of all: travellers, governments and the border services themselves which need to understand their role and responsibilities in order to carry them out effectively and confidently. Remedying the situation is at the core of the Commission's long-term strategy in Central Asia.

At this stage, 13 projects have been designed:

SECTOR 1: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Project 1: Support to the legal reforms made by the countries in the region in the area of border management

SECTOR 2: INFORMATION

Project 2: Creation of information exchange capacities including communication networks

Project 3: Regional web site on modern border management

SECTOR 3: TRAINING

Project 4: Regional training on modern border management - Phase 1
Project 5: Regional training on modern border management - Phase 2

Project 6: Creation of Training Centres

Project 7: Mechanism for regional training cooperation

SECTOR 4: CAPACITY AT BORDERS POSTS

Project 8: Establishment of joint border posts

Project 9: Creation of mobile units

Project 10: Creation of dog units and training capacities

Project 11: Reinforcement of visa management at airports

SECTOR 5: SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Project 12: Integration with local communities and improvement of working conditions

Project 13: Mine prevention

The overall thrust of these measures is to improve border management services and policing in the region through an extensive training programme, the provision of relevant equipment as well as a campaign to address the use of mines for border control.

One of the principal EU objectives is to strengthen the capacity of the Central Asian States to fight illicit trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings. The programme will also have a positive impact on the economic development of the region by facilitating crossing of borders and increased intra- and inter-regional trade. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the programme has been developed in the perspective of integrated border management and the progressive transition from military-like structures towards professional, civil units. In short, the programme is part of a package designed to help develop effective and efficient border controls which prevent illegal movements and facilitate legal movements of people and goods while gathering the correct amounts of revenue according to the law for the individual States of Central Asia.

HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CONFERENCE

Scholars and law-enforcement officers from CIS countries gathered in Almaty to participate in international counter-terrorism conference on November 11, 2003. Participants of the conference were given a presentation on approaches used by Kazakhstan's national security agencies and, later met representatives of the media.

Participants of the conference presented to Kazakh journalists highlights of the results of cooperation between national security agencies of the CIS countries. Last few years have marked an increase in general and specific-level cooperation between CIS countries in fight against terror.

According to heads of the Committee on National Security of Kazakhstan, the border situation in Kazakhstan is relatively problem-free. However, Mr. Bozhko, the First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on National Security of Kazakhstan underlined the importance of educating cross-border communities to ensure further stability of the border situation in Kazakhstan.

Source: *Khabar News Agency* (www.khabar.kz)

THE FIRST BORDER MANAGEMENT COURSE

Border officers from Central Asian countries participated in the first regional border management course, which was held in Bishkek 3-28 November 2003. It was organized by the European Commission and UNDP.

In general, this one month programme was about border services employee development. This professional training of border guards was based on internationally accepted laws and

constitutional rights of any citizen. When Central Asian border guards were in Vienna, they familiarized themselves with methods and techniques of their Austrian colleagues.



As one of the participants of the training, Colonel Nuriddin Amirkulov from Tajik delegation mentioned "this workshop is of vital importance for improving our further work. Such events, workshops and trainings help us to learn more about the practices and problems of our colleagues. It is extremely valuable, and no problems arise between the border services of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - we resolve all the issues jointly."

According to Cholponbek Burjuev, Head of Operations Division of the Border Troops of the Kyrgyz Republic, a wide array of issues has been discussed such as smuggling of drugs and weapons, and illegal turnover of goods that are prohibited to be exported or imported to and from any country.



Close cooperation of BOMCA with all the stakeholders in the process of improving the Border Management in Central Asia, including governments, other agencies, programmes and projects, and the international donor community is viewed as a key in achieving coherence and complementarity of the mutual efforts.



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