

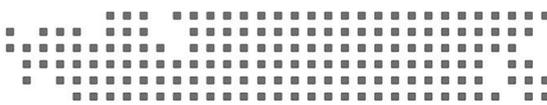
Budapest Process

Annual Senior Officials Meeting

Online, 2 December 2020

Summary

1. The Annual Senior Officials Meeting gathered **97 participants from 39 countries** – Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine– as well as the European Commission, the Regional Support Office to the Bali Process, the Council of the European Union, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
2. Deputy Director General **Mr. Ramazan Seçilmiş** from Turkey's Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) opened the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), representing Turkey as Chair. He noted his appreciation for the work accomplished since his role in the 6th Ministerial Conference and the many meetings and engagement throughout the year, addressing a special welcome to the Silk Routes Countries after 10 years of participation in the dialogue. **Mr. Gábor Tóthi**, Head of Department for European Cooperation at the Ministry of Interior of Hungary reminded countries of the institutional flexibility of dialogues like the Budapest Process to address emerging global challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic and reiterated the importance of international cooperation. **Ms. Silvena Pesta**, Deputy Head of Unit at the European Commission underlined the importance of the Budapest Process as a vehicle for trust and capacity building while highlighting the new EU Migration and Asylum Pact with its focus on partnership and solidarity. Finally, **Mr. Martijn Pluim**, Director for Migration Dialogues and Cooperation at ICMPD in charge of the Budapest Process Secretariat encouraged countries to remain pragmatic and to use the dialogue as one of the adaptive and reactive instruments to support a sustainable return to normality.
3. The Chair gave the floor to the Budapest Process Secretariat to present the **achievements of the Budapest Process as a dialogue and its two flanking EU-funded projects**. In a year marked by an unexpected pandemic, the Secretariat highlighted how the Budapest Process kept its focus on priority goals 1 and 2 of the Call for Action, namely irregular migration and labour migration, reverting swiftly to virtual meetings and the development of knowledge outputs. Both EU projects implemented under the BP also kept activities ongoing, providing institutional and capacity building to governments, awareness raising on migration issues, policy support as well procuring essential goods in response to the crisis. The link between the



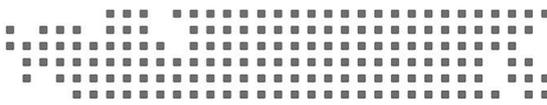
projects' and the BP Call for Action was highlighted as well, specifically action points under priority goals 1, 2, 4 and 5¹.

4. The Budapest Process Secretariat then presented the **next steps for 2021**, the calendar as well as suggestions for projects in the Silk Routes to complement ongoing activities. The Chair invited participating states to endorse the calendar for 2021.
5. The Chair opened the **plenary for states' interventions**. Turkey invited countries to make statements by sharing their work in 2020 by focusing on how their priorities and activities tie into the BP Call for Action. Overall, countries highlighted how cooperation on migration remains a priority for them and shared how they adapted to the new regional realities, whether in the Western Balkans, the Black Sea Region or the Silk Routes Region. Most notably, priority goals 1, 2 and 6² were mentioned by the countries. **EU Member States** highlighted the importance of EU Asylum and Migration Pact in ushering a new season for cooperation on migration. **Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Norway** highlighted their support to activities flanking the Budapest Process with a focus on awareness raising and the work of the Migrant Resource Centres in Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan. **Spain as upcoming Chair of the Rabat Process in 2022 and the Czech Republic as Chair of the Prague Process in 2021** reiterated their support to the BP and shared an openness to future cooperation and synergies with the other dialogues mentioned.
6. **Afghanistan** highlighted their work on a comprehensive return and reintegration strategy as well as elements of their cooperation with Pakistan, Iran and Turkey in 2020 covering priority goals 1 and 2. **Albania** shared some of legislative changes, particularly the law for foreigners as well as their formalised cooperation with Frontex and their initiative to finalise readmission agreements. **Austria** highlighted their focus on priority goals 1 and 5 as well as their continued support to new projects in the region, particularly on information campaigns to curb irregular migration and their support to awareness raising in Pakistan. **Azerbaijan** shared the State Migration Service's shift in 2020 to e-services, the extension of a project to enhance migration and border management capacities, launch of a Regional Training Centre to improve training and capacity building on migration in the region, as well as their recently signed bilateral agreement with Turkmenistan covering several areas in the Call for Action. **Bangladesh** shared how they prioritised integration especially for returning migrants and their work with several donors to ensure sustainable reintegration in the country. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** shared their continued focus on strengthening capacities of the border police amongst others and welcomed the signature of the readmission agreement with Pakistan in 2020. **Bulgaria** shared appreciation for the Budapest Process' activities in 2021 and reiterated their support to the implementation of the Call for Action suggesting a study visit for the Western Balkans on

¹ The "Call for Action - a five year plan" lists actions under the 2013 six priority areas identified for cooperation:

1. Prevent and counteract **irregular migration**, facilitate return and readmission of irregular migrants, and combat criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants,
2. Better organise and improve conditions for **legal migration and mobility**,
3. Support the **integration** of migrants and counteract discrimination, racism and xenophobia,
4. Strengthen the positive impact of **migration on development**, both in countries of origin and of destination,
5. Prevent and combat **trafficking in persons**, address its root causes and provide adequate protection and support to trafficked persons,
6. Promote **international protection** and the respect of the rights of refugees, in line with international standards

² see above



border management in 2021; they concluded by mentioning their work with Austria and ICMPD on awareness raising in Pakistan. The **Czech Republic** mentioned their focus on countering irregular migration and preventing criminal and smuggling networks more specifically. **Germany** reiterated the crucial importance of a solution to migration challenges which is fair, human and effective, finding a balance between sustainable return and providing protection for those in need; they reaffirmed the need to build capacities along the migration routes in parallel. **Iran** ensured their smooth provision of services for Afghan refugees in the country as well as the importance to continue cooperating in a time where the pandemic can encourage countries to focus solely on internal matters. **Hungary** reminded participants of the thematic meeting in Budapest on return and reintegration which kick-started the implementation of the Call for Action a few days before the lockdown and the opportunity to further discuss cooperation avenues in line with action points under priority goal 1; they highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation in the fields of border management, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings as well as return and readmission, especially in the aftermath of Covid-19. **Moldova** shared their wish to intensify bilateral activities with neighbouring states exemplifying this through their joint declaration with Turkey and the planned ones with Ukraine and Romania. **Norway** reiterated its support to the implementation of the Call for Action through the BP activities under priority goal 1 in 2020 and their support to the Migrant Resource Centre in Baghdad. **Pakistan** voiced its appreciation for the BP as a cooperation platform, highlighted the recent finalisation of the cooperation agreement with ICMPD as well as their continued interest in participating in Talent Partnerships as mentioned in the EU Asylum and Migration Pact. **Spain** shared how both labour and irregular migration policies have been challenged by Covid-19 sharing the case of the Canary Islands in particular where cooperation with migration partners is essential. **Turkey** voiced its wish to help source countries strengthen their internal structures and protect the dignity and human rights of migrants and refugees; they specifically highlighted their focus on priority goals 1 and 5 of the Call for Action, combatting trafficking in human beings through a recently started project supporting victims of trafficking.

7. The Chair gave the floor to organisations. **EEAS** reiterated that the EU strongly wishes to focus on partnership and the external dimension of migration management in a holistic manner, including with Afghanistan and Pakistan; they mentioned an appreciation for the BP as an appropriate forum for cooperation. The **ILO** welcomed the BP's focus on labour migration in 2020, sharing that promoting decent work in times where gaps in our labour systems are exposed is timely. **MARRI** shared its appreciation with the Budapest Process' regional meetings in 2020 and welcomed participants to a Regional Conference with a focus on the effects of Covid-19 mid-December. Finally, **UNODC** shared updates on its work in the Silk Routes Region through the Glo.Act project, including capacity building and policy work to counteract smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan.
8. The **Turkish Chair** thanked all participants for their engaged discussions and assured to follow-up on some of the points raised in plenary. Turkey thanked Hungary as Co-Chair and the European Commission for their support and the Secretariat for the continued support and preparations of the meetings.