

Budapest Process

33rd Senior Officials Meeting

Date: 5th December, 2023

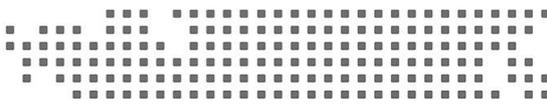
Location: Istanbul, Türkiye

Summary

1. The Annual Senior Officials Meeting of the Budapest Process (BP) **gathered 91 participants from 38 countries** – Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan; as well as the European Commission, European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Note: As decided by the Senior Officials in December 2022 and upon the invitation of the Turkish Chair, Lebanon participated for the first time in the Budapest Process. India was also present second time following the renewed invitation in 2023.

2. Opening remarks were delivered by BP Chair **Mr. Hüseyin Kök**, Deputy President of the Presidency of Migration Management at the Ministry of Interior of Türkiye. Further opening remarks followed from BP Co-Chair, **Ms. Timea Lehoczki**, Head of Unit of the Department for European Home Affairs Cooperation at the Hungarian Ministry of Interior as well as **Ms. Alexandra Sá Carvalho**, Deputy Head of the International Affairs Unit in the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission and **Mr. Michael Spindelegger**, Director General at ICMPD as host of the Budapest Process Secretariat.
3. The **main aim of this Senior Officials Meeting** was to take stock of the past year and initiate a discussion on the new Ministerial Declaration and its Action Plan, which is to be ultimately endorsed at the next (7th) Ministerial Conference of the BP in late 2024. This year's Senior Officials Meeting was special as it marked 30 years since the start of the BP and 10 years since the start of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration – a unique framework for dialogue, on-ground projects and knowledge creation and sharing. The meeting therefore concluded with a panel discussion where panellists engaged in a 'retrospection on a decade of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration' while ideas and suggestions were also provided on how to enhance the Partnership in the coming years. The panel was composed of representatives from Türkiye, Pakistan, Hungary, the European Commission and ICMPD. A gala dinner was organised in the evening to celebrate the two milestones of the BP.
4. **The Budapest Process' looking back on 2023 and forward to 2024**
The Budapest Process Secretariat shared its **key achievements from 2023** including its six meetings, production of publications, and operationalisation of the dialogue's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning tool. Substantial progress was also achieved in implementing the six



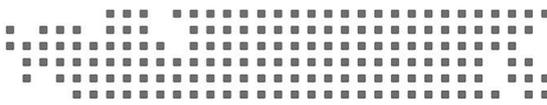
Chairman Proposals from the Senior Officials Meeting of 2022, including the successful set up of three new thematic working groups; geographic expansion of the dialogue; improved funding for the BP; and institutionalisation of the Reference Group with a more strategic steering role.

5. Representatives from the ICMPD and UNODC presented **highlights, successes and lessons learned from operational cooperation** under projects in the Silk Routes Region that were closely linked to the Budapest Process. The presentation of results from the projects underscored how the BP has ensured that its dialogue was translated into action, with a regular feedback loop ensured between the projects and dialogue meetings. For reinforcing this feedback loop, the Reference Group, formed in 2021, has come to play a strong role as it ensures that a red thread exists between dialogue and operational cooperation on the ground.

6. The Turkish Chair delivered a **presentation on the zero drafts of the new Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan**, outlining the changes to the two documents in contrast with the previous versions endorsed at the 2019 Ministerial Conference. The presentation set the stage for a plenary discussion in the form of a tour-de-table, with the aim of gathering from the participants their initial feedback on the drafts of the two documents.

7. In general, strong support was expressed by all participating and observer countries to the draft texts as they aligned with national priorities and reflected a balanced and holistic approach towards migration governance. Participating international organisations also welcomed the proposed texts. Detailed feedback would be provided to the BP Secretariat in writing in the coming weeks, however some noteworthy points are summarised as follows:

- Strive to **closely align the priorities and action points of the Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan with other strategic documents that have been endorsed at the multilateral level**. It was also suggested to **build better bridges between the BP and other dialogues**, in particular those dialogues whose participating states overlap with that of the BP.
- **Consider adding an Annex to the Action Plan**, which would briefly outline specific projects/project proposals that link to the action points of each Priority Goal in the Action Plan – essentially the Annex would serve as a draft Implementation Plan of the Action Plan, subject to periodic revision as per evolving needs and opportunities.
- When formulating the Action Plan, it is **important for the BP to prioritise a multi-stakeholder approach**, especially focusing on strong engagement of the private sector.
- It was appreciated by several countries that the Ministerial Declaration makes note of **national competences** vis-a-vis prerogatives on migration governance topics/priorities.
- The Action Plan must include points on **expanding and replicating successfully implemented innovations and pilot concepts** within the Silk Routes Partnership, while **data collection/analysis and targeted research should be prioritised** to continue enabling evidence-based policy making and implementation.
- The Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan should **anticipate, as best as possible, future drivers of displacement** in order to remain relevant and cater to the evolving needs of countries along the routes.
- Important to **consider all priorities goals as equally important** and not to assign more weight to certain priority goals.



- Some countries stated their keen **interest to continue supporting** the BP dialogue so that it continues to thrive; some countries also pledged to **provide resources (financial and in-kind) to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan** by reinforcing existing projects and initiatives or formulation new projects and initiatives.
- Given its mandate and strong credentials on the topic, the **EUAA announced its keen interest to support the BP with implementation of action points under Priority Goal 5** on international protection.

8. In closing, **the following next steps were outlined:**

- **Countries would provide written feedback** on the drafts of the Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan by **20th December 2023**.
- **BP Secretariat would receive and consolidate the feedback** on the drafts of Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action and **provide the consolidated feedback to the Chairmanship so that it could begin internal consultations on the revision of the two documents**. This process would be conducted until **15th February 2024**.
- After the conclusion of internal consultations, the **revised documents would be dispatched to the Reference Group**, which would assess the changes and provide strategic input the chairmanship **by end of March 2024**.

9. The Chair, Co-Chair and Secretariat thanked all participants for attending the meeting and providing their support, inputs and feedback to zero drafts of the Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan of the Budapest Process.