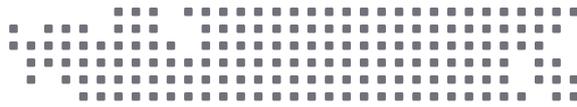


A SILK ROUTES PARTNERSHIP
FOR **MIGRATION**



**BUDAPEST
PROCESS**



Funded by

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Confédération suisse
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State Secretariat for Migration SEM



Ministry of the Interior
Finland



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Secretariat



ICMPD

International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

This publication prepared by the Budapest Process Secretariat celebrates the Budapest Process' 30th anniversary. It highlights the different phases of the dialogue. Since the early 1990s, the Budapest Process has gone through several phases or "chapters" of its life. To celebrate its 30 years, these chapters express the importance and relevance of the Budapest Process' geographic and thematic expansion over the years.

In addition, visuals, key moments and quotes from the past decades complement this publication as well as the projects which were implemented under the umbrella of the Budapest Process.

30 YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUDAPEST PROCESS

Michael Spindelegger, Director General ICMPD

This year the Budapest Process celebrates its 30th anniversary. Initiated in 1993, the dialogue brought together a group of 26 European countries in developing joint migration policy responses to the newly arising challenges and opportunities in the wake of the fall of the Iron Curtain. Since then, the Budapest Process has organised six ministerial conferences, the latest in Istanbul in 2019, and enhanced its membership to 53 countries and international organisations. Today, the Budapest Process is the longest-standing migration dialogue in the wider European context. During its 30 years of existence, it went through several transformations in its geographic and topical coverage but always kept its key principles of flexibility, informality and equal level participation. It successfully opened its scope towards the work on operational results and linked the dialogue with a range of regional projects. Its approach and methodology served as a blueprint for a number of other regional fora and its extensive network among state officials served as a springboard for migration dialogues covering new geographic regions.



Today and despite its long history, the Budapest Process is a “young” migration dialogue. Under its Turkish Chair and Hungarian Co-Chair, it underwent a fundamental reorientation and initiated cooperation with an entirely new group of countries. The Istanbul Declaration from 2013 established the Silk Routes Partnership with the aim to promote dialogue and cooperation on migration among the Silk Routes Partners. Based on the subsequent work, Ministers adopted the “Istanbul Commitments on the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration and its Call for Action “ in February 2019. Based on five guiding commitments - partnership, comprehensive migration management, human rights, support and solidarity, and knowledge - the implementation of the action plan focused on six priority areas: prevent irregular migration and facilitate return and reintegration, promote legal migration and mobility, integrate migrants and counter xenophobia, foster migration and development, combat trafficking in human beings and promote international protection. Reaching the end of its five-year cycle, the achievements of the action plan pave the way for a new chapter in the history of the Budapest Process. A 7th Ministerial Conference, planned to take place at the end of 2024, will discuss the endorsement of a number of proposals presented by the Chairmanship, amongst others the invitation to new countries to join the dialogue and the calibration of priority areas in view of important global and regional developments.

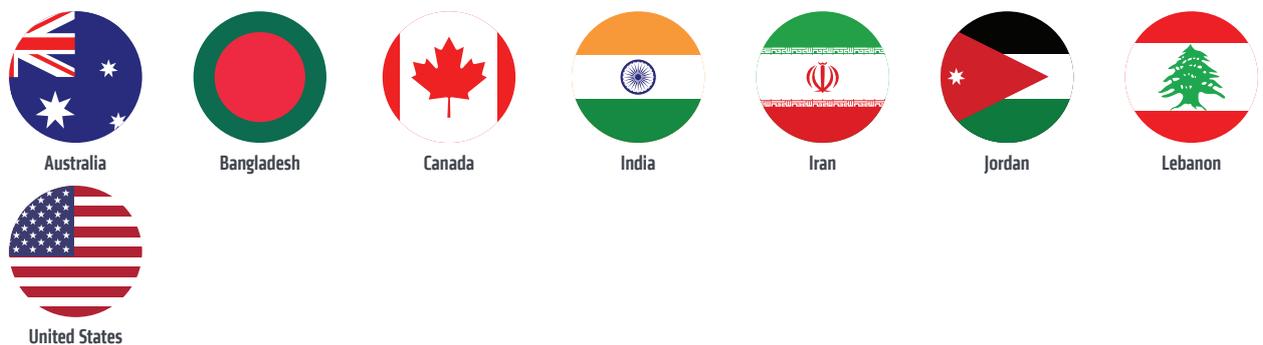
Thus, the envisaged readjustment will not affect a core principle: The Budapest Process is a state-led dialogue. States take the decisions, set the agenda and initiate the activities of the dialogue. As a Secretariat, the role of ICMPD has always been to support the Chairs and the participating states and organisations in their efforts. We have assumed this role with great pride and are very grateful for the trust you have put in us throughout the years. I want to sincerely thank the Chairmanship and all partners of the Budapest Process for their trust and support. And I want to assure you of the full commitment of the Secretariat and the whole ICMPD towards the principles, plans and priorities that will form the next successful chapter in the history of the Budapest Process.

PARTICIPATING AND OBSERVER STATES TO THE DIALOGUE

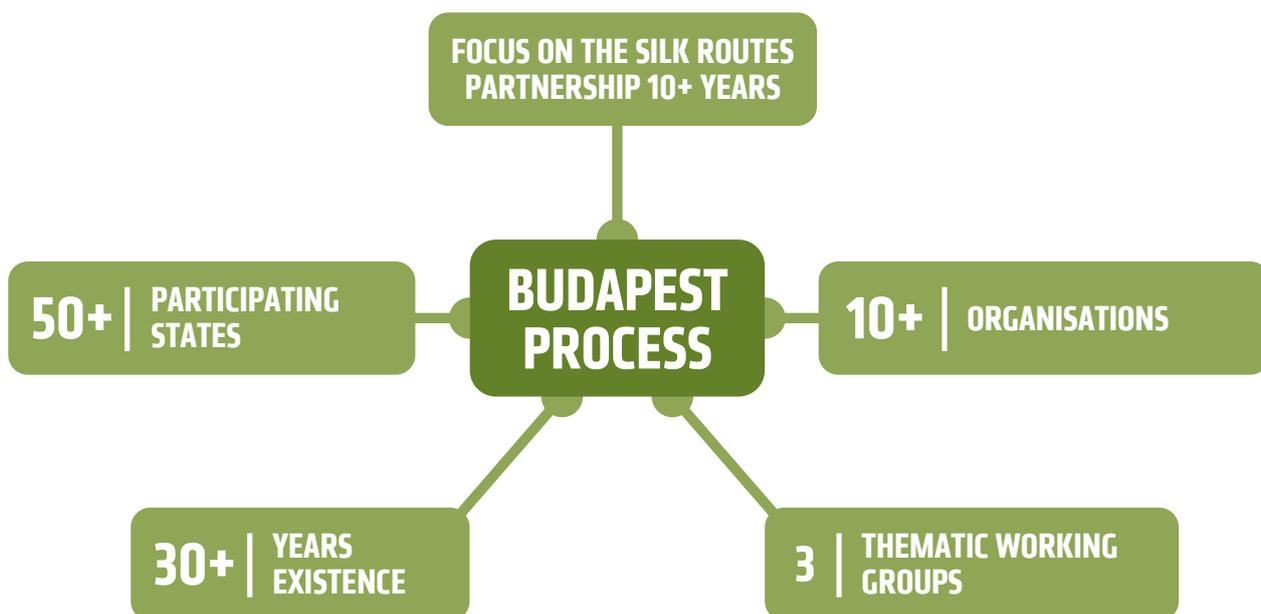
PARTICIPATING STATES



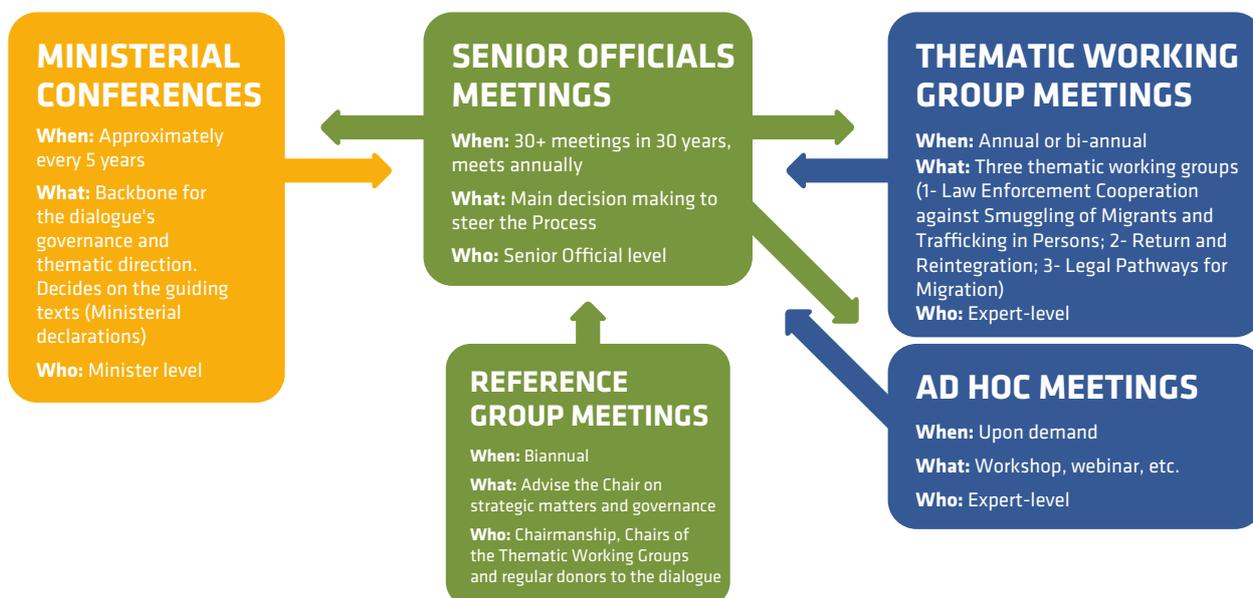
OBSERVER STATES



KEY FACTS ABOUT THE BUDAPEST PROCESS



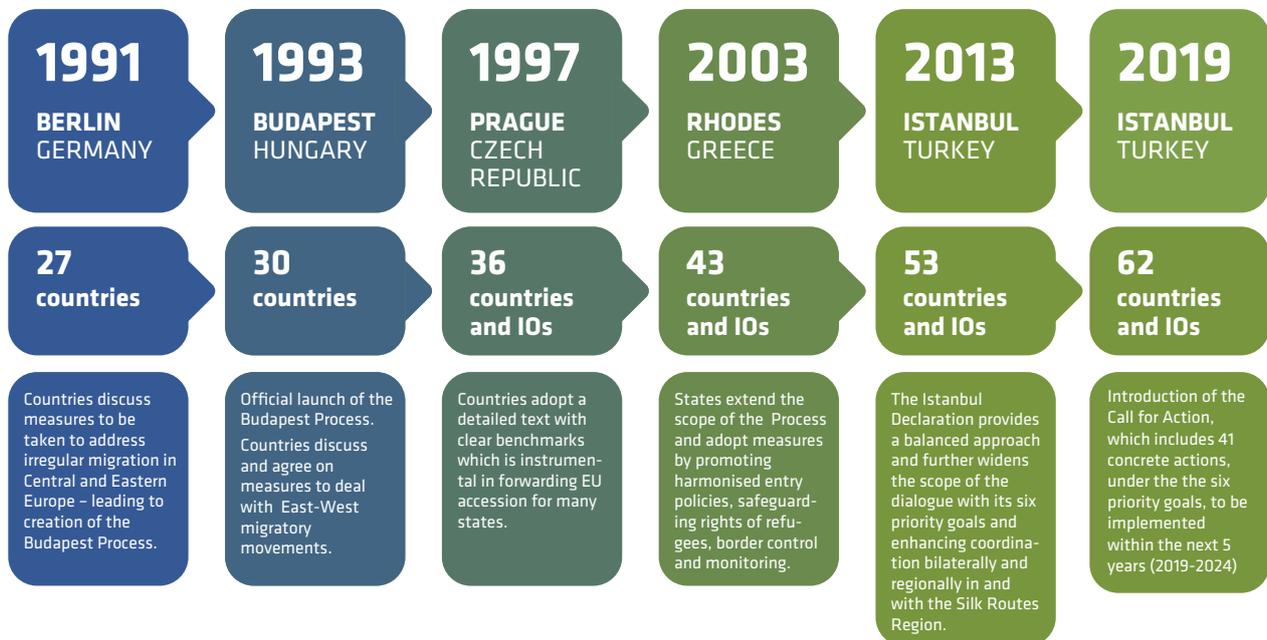
FUNCTIONING OF THE BUDAPEST PROCESS



1. INCEPTION OF THE DIALOGUE

The Budapest Process' inception began in the early 1990s in Berlin and led to the official start of the Budapest Process dialogue in Budapest in 1993. In October 1991, Mr. Wolfgang Schäuble (the then German Federal Minister of Interior) invited all Ministers of Interior of all 14 Member States of the European Community, of Switzerland as well as of 13 States of Central and Eastern Europe¹ to discuss "measures for checking illegal immigration from and through Central and Eastern Europe." This meeting was known as the Berlin Ministerial Conference where a final document was adopted recognising the common responsibility of all participating States to take decisive action against illegal migratory movements. A Working Group under the chairmanship of Austria, including Hungary and Italy, was created. This Working Group met over ten times throughout Europe from the beginning of 1992 to the beginning of 1993, under the leadership of the Austrian Schengen Coordinator at the time. Based on the agreements reached during the follow-up process to the Berlin conference, the Hungarian Minister of Interior at the time Mr. Péter Boross, organised another Ministerial Conference on 15-16 February 1993 in Budapest. The Budapest Process was named after this conference and led to the establishment of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials. The final document of the 1993 Budapest Ministerial Conference dealt mainly with combating irregular migration and smuggling of migrants. The recommendations adopted focused on border management, visa and return policies, readmission, trafficking and smuggling and asylum. Furthermore, it encouraged and developed a process for the legal harmonisation and exchange of information.

THE BUDAPEST PROCESS MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES:



¹ 27 participating countries: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Soviet Union, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.

2. PHASES OF THE DIALOGUE



- 1 Note from the Italian Delegation on the Conference of Ministers on the Prevention of Illegal Immigration, October 16, 1997.
- 2 Participation certificates for Border Realisation Meeting held in Koszalin, Poland 10-11 May 2000.
- 3 Invitation letter for Border Realisation Meeting held in Koszalin, Poland 10-11 May 2000.
- 4 Logo of the 2nd Budapest Meeting 1994.
- 5 Document explaining the composition of the Oslo Working Groups.
- 6 Map of Prague given to meeting participants.

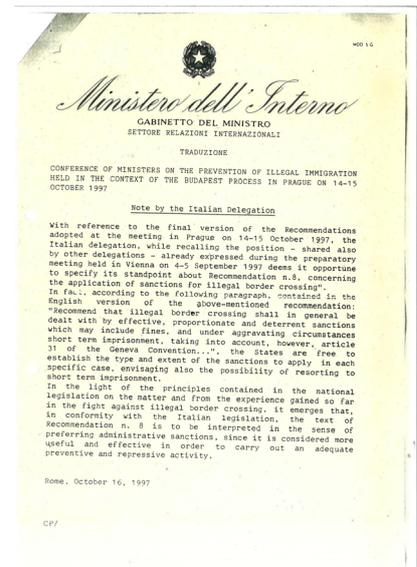
PHASE 1

FROM THE DIALOGUE'S INCEPTION TO THE RHODES MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Following the Budapest Process Ministerial Conference, the initial meetings of the Budapest Process led to the setting up of the Budapest Process Group of Senior Officials. Between the next Ministerial Conference that happened in 1997 in Prague, there were five senior official meetings held: in Budapest in 1993, Prague in 1994, Zurich in 1995, Oslo in 1996 and Vienna in 1997. Their highlights are further developed below.

The Budapest Group of Senior Officials

The Budapest Group of Senior Officials was set up as an informal consultative body to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Budapest Ministerial Conference. Since senior officials from all participating States could attend the meetings of the Budapest Group, these meetings became the most important pan-European forum for migration cooperation and would influence the European Migration debate for many years to come.

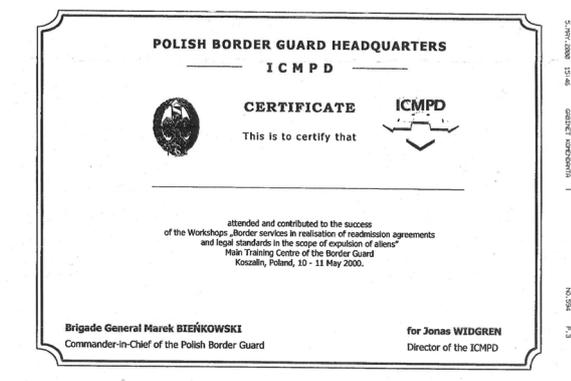


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The setting up of the Expert Groups to implement the BP 1993 Recommendations

In the Prague meeting held in 1994, expert groups were tasked with accelerating the implementation of the recommendations elaborated at the Budapest Ministerial Conference which included the following: the international criminalisation of 'trafficking in persons' (in our current understanding of the concept actually focused on migrant smuggling) with a view to harmonising the penalisation of employers of illegal migrants in participating countries. In addition, the exchange of information and the concluding

of readmission agreements and instruments of similar purpose and information in the field of illegal migration and trafficking in persons. Lastly, relevant financial and technical assistance for the crime prevention activities of countries in Central and Eastern Europe and international cooperation in returning illegal migrants. The expert groups worked according to a working group structure, dividing responsibility for the above recommendations among them, reports were elaborated, and meetings were organised with the support of ICMPD,



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Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) and the International Organization of Migration (IOM).

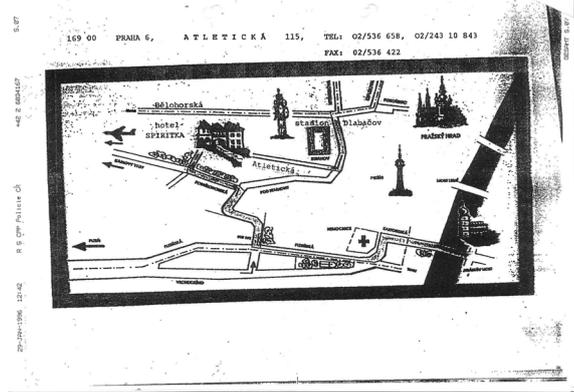
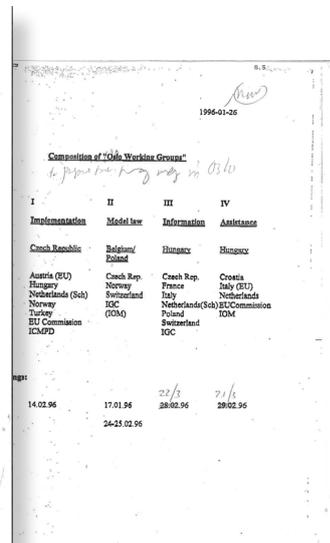
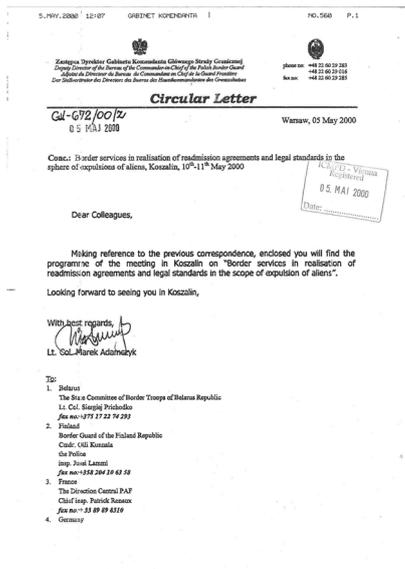
The need for the Prague Ministerial Conference in 1997

Furthermore, in the Senior Officials meeting in Oslo in 1996 it was noted that the 1993 recommendations were had been largely implemented and the Central and Eastern European countries had developed. However, the political and migratory realities had rapidly changed since 1993 so the Budapest Group recommended the convening of the Prague Ministerial Conference in 1997.

Several working groups were established as well following the Ministerial Conference:

- A working group with the purpose of evaluating the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Prague Ministerial Conference (chaired by Norway)
- A working group on the legal harmonisation (chaired by Denmark)
- A working group on Visa Policy Approximation (chaired by Slovenia)
- A working group Return and Readmission (co-chaired by France and Poland)
- A working group on South East Europe (chaired by Croatia).

Note: The Budapest Process was instrumental in the approximation and harmonisation process of Central and Eastern European countries in the EU accession process.





- 1 Rhodes Ministerial Conference 2003 booklet cover.
- 2 Rhodes Budapest Process Ministerial Conference 2003.
- 3 Program of the Bali-Budapest Returns Workshop Perth, Australia May 2004.
- 4 Ad Hoc Working Group on Migration flows from the Horn of Africa Emerging Eastern Flows in Utrecht 2010.
- 5 Rhodes Ministerial Conference 2003 Booklet Identification Badges page.

PHASE 2

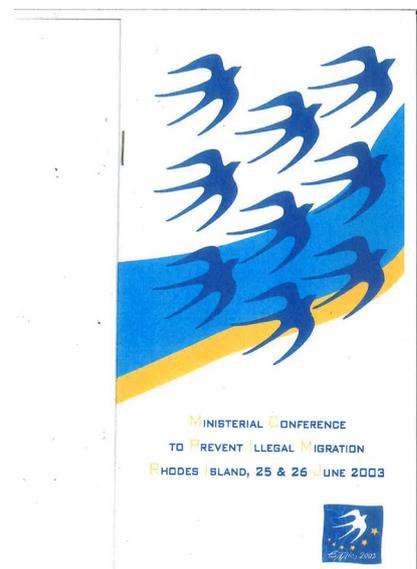
FROM THE RHODES MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, THE DIALOGUE'S EXPANSION AND SHIFT IN CHAIRMANSHIP

Eastward geographic expansion

The second phase of the Budapest Process came as the Central and Eastern European countries were about to become members of the European Union. Taking into consideration the long-lasting success of the Budapest Process working methodologies, it was agreed that the framework should be kept. Countries further east, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan were invited to join the dialogue while maintaining a focus on South East Europe.

Initial thematic expansion of the dialogue at the Rhodes Ministerial Conference

In addition to the geographical shift there was also a change in the focus of the migration debate, away from a pure migration control perspective to a more holistic approach embracing the full range of topics around migration. As a result of this the importance of offering legal migration channels and looking at how migration impacts development and vice versa came to light on the agenda. These changes were visible in the results of the Rhodes Ministerial Conference.



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The participating states of the Rhodes Ministerial Conference reflected the pan-European and the trans-Atlantic dimensions of the process with Australia, Canada and the USA being present. The statements at the conference also expressed the connection to inter-governmental processes dealing with irregular migration in other parts of the world, such as the Bali Process, which the Budapest Process still works with in present day.

New Working Groups established and continuation of select previous Working Groups

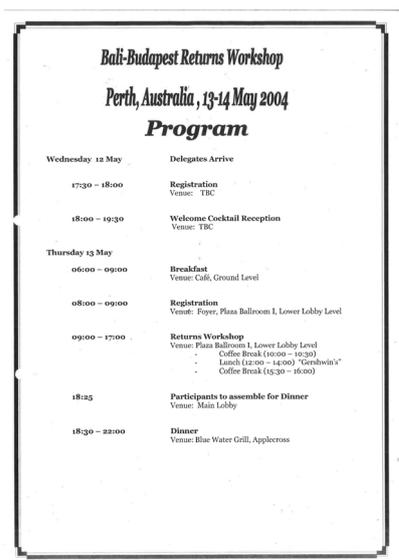
Three new working groups were also established:

- the Working Group on Approximation of Penalty Scales for Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants (chaired by Belgium);
- the Working Group on Immigration and Admission Policies (chaired by Hungary and Slovakia);
- the Working Group on the Development of Migration Systems (chaired by Bulgaria).

Other Working Groups continued to meet, such as the Working Group on Irregular Movements and Asylum and the Working Group on Return and Readmission. In addition, joint meetings were held with the Bali Process in Perth in 2004 and in Vienna in 2005. Türkiye initiated a joint conference held in 2007 with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) on “Trafficking in Human Beings in the Black Sea Region”. This meeting was a predecessor to the Working Group on the Black Sea Region, which held its first meeting in 2008 (chaired by Bulgaria).

A shift in governance with the new Chairmanship

With the geographic expansion, Türkiye was endorsed as Co-chair of the Budapest Process after the Rhodes Ministerial Conference in 2003. With the new direction of the Budapest Process in the 2000s, Türkiye formally took over the Chairmanship of the Budapest Process at the 14th meeting of the Budapest Group of Senior Officials which was held in Istanbul on 19-20 October 2006.



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Phase 3



- 1 Budapest Process Ministerial Conference booklet map & Istanbul sights.
- 2 Budapest Process Ministerial Conference 2013.
- 3 Budapest Process Ministerial Conference 2013 logo.
- 4 Senior Officials meeting routes map 2013 Istanbul.
- 5 Working Group Silk Route Region International Protection Tehran 2016.
- 6 Sticker for the Budapest Process Senior Officials Meeting Ankara 2011.
- 7 Folder Cover Budapest Process Black Sea Working Group Meeting Sofia 2012.

PHASE 3

THE FOCUS ON THE SILK ROUTES REGION AND THE SILK ROUTES PARTNERSHIP FOR MIGRATION

A further regional expansion to include the Silk Routes

In 2009, the Turkish Chair initiated a broader follow-up process through a letter at ministerial level, asking participant countries to clarify their commitments and priorities. In line with the priorities of the chair, the vision of the Chair of the Budapest Process was shared in 2010. The Chair proposed the introduction of a third phase with a regional focus, expanding the network of cooperation further eastwards, to include the countries along the historic “Silk Routes”. Consequently, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan were invited to become new participating and observer states to the dialogue.

The Silk Routes Regional Working Group and the new regional structure of the dialogue

Senior Officials confirmed adding a new regional working group, the Working Group on the Silk Routes Region (chaired by Türkiye), along with the Working Groups of the Black Sea Region and the South East Europe Region. This regional set-up deepened the dialogue’s regional focus. Furthermore, Senior Officials agreed that the dialogue should be a fully balanced migration dialogue including priorities of all participating states. Therefore, in addition to the main topics addressed within the dialogue thus far (such as irregular migration, return



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and readmission and asylum), the topics of legal migration, as well as links between migration and development should be included in the work of the Process.

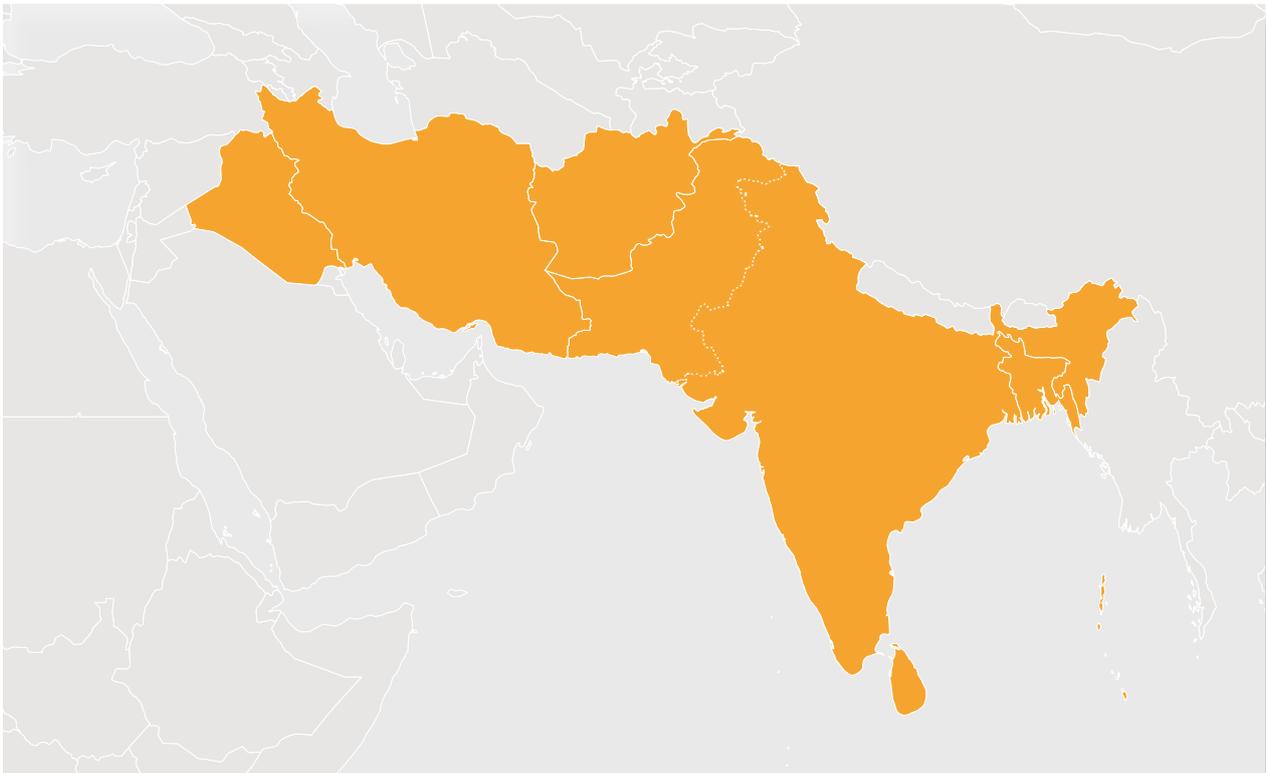
The 2013 Ministerial Conference and the Silk Routes Partnership for migration

The 2013 Ministerial Conference held in Istanbul marked the 20th anniversary of the Budapest Process. The participating states adopted “The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration,” which makes it one of the most far-reaching and balanced declarations dealing with migration adopted by such a diverse group of countries. Its six priority goals below were agreed upon:

1. promote legal migration and mobility;
2. prevent and counteract irregular migration, facilitate return and readmission of irregular migrants, and combat criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants;
3. integration of migrants and counteracting phenomena such as discrimination, racism and xenophobia;
4. migration and development;
5. prevent and combat trafficking in persons;
6. promote international protection.



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Projects implemented under the umbrella of the Budapest Process

As of 2011, projects supporting the priorities of the Budapest Process began implementation. The Intergovernmental Meeting of the Silk Routes Project held in November 2011 officially launched the project “Fostering Migration Cooperation in the Silk Routes Region” co-funded by the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Türkiye. In 2014, a new four-year project “Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process” was initiated and aimed to improve basic structures for migration management and competencies in the Silk Routes countries. Funded by the EU, led by Hungary, and consisting of eight donor countries², the success of this project led to new projects flanking the dialogue. In 2017 and 2018, two new EU-funded projects, “Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes” and “Integrated Border Management in the Silk Routes Countries”, were launched to further implement the Priority Goals agreed upon at the 2013 Ministerial Conference.



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² Bulgaria, Hungary (lead partner), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom.



2019



Phase 4



PRESENT

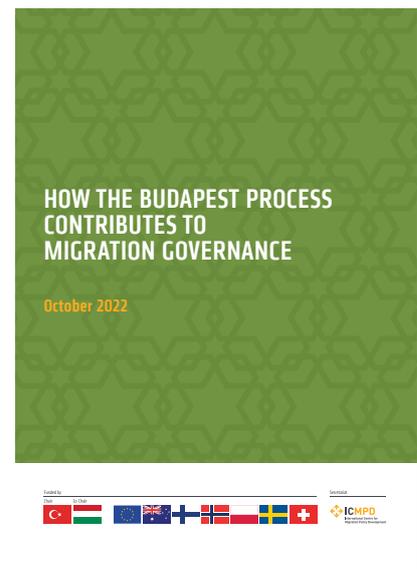
- 1 Budapest Process Publication 2022.
- 2 Budapest Process Ministerial Conference 2019.
- 3 Thematic Meeting Return and Reintegration 2023.
- 4 Budapest Process Ministerial Conference 2019 Conference Booklet.
- 5 Michael Spindelegger thoughts and reflections from ICMPD as the Budapest Process Secretariat.
- 6 Senior Officials Meeting 2022.

PHASE 4

THE ISTANBUL COMMITMENTS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALL FOR ACTION

The 2019 Ministerial Conference and the Istanbul Commitments

The adopted political declaration “The Istanbul Commitments on the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration” and its action plan “A Call for Action – a five-year plan” were another milestone for the dialogue. Both documents built upon the achievements of the 2013 Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration while taking into account the migration developments of the past years. The Call for Action presented 41 concrete actions to be implemented within the next years under the same priority goals. In this regard, the Budapest Process turned its attention to the implementation of the five-year action plan 2019-2024.



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The Implementation of the Call for Action

In 2020, participants endorsed the “Strategic Document and Implementation Plan” to implement the Call for Action. In parallel, the Silk Routes EU-funded projects were still being implemented and sharing their outcomes at the annual Senior Officials Meetings, where the links between operational cooperation and migration dialogue were made. Senior Officials agreed that the focus of the dialogue in 2020-2022 would be on labour migration and irregular migration including smuggling of migrants and return and



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reintegration. The Budapest Process continued to successfully implement activities, albeit virtually, in the Implementation Plan despite the Covid pandemic. In addition, a tracking tool to visualise the dialogue’s impact and results was developed.

The Budapest Process Reference Group

In May 2021, the Budapest Process strategic consultation structure with the priorities and needs of participant countries: The Reference Group. This newly established Reference Group aimed to develop a red thread between meetings and opportunities for deepened engagement within the dialogue. This would allow a select group of countries from along the routes to gather in an informal setting to build upon and follow up on the conclusions and recommendations reached in the Working Group meetings. Chaired by Sweden, the Reference Group was also tasked with supporting the Chairmanship in the preparations for the next Ministerial Conference.

A new Working Group Structure

The Chairmanship introduced a new Working Group structure with a shift to thematic meetings instead of regional meeting. Thematic meetings respond better to the wish of dialogue partners to reach action-oriented recommendations within the six priority goals. The focus of the BP on Priority Goals 1 and 2, focussed on irregular and legal migration, are reflected in the chosen thematic working groups (WG), which BP partners endorsed in December 2022. The three Thematic Working Groups of the Budapest Process are:



- WG 1: Law Enforcement Cooperation on Irregular Migration - co-chaired by Bulgaria and Iraq. This Working Group includes the Community of Law Enforcement Practitioners (COLEP) with ten countries who meet and engage in activities to develop responses to SoM and THB along the routes;
- WG 2: Return and Reintegration - co-chaired by Bangladesh and Türkiye;
- WG 3: Legal Pathways for Migration - co-chaired by Italy and Pakistan.

Preparing for the Ministerial Conference

The Chairmanship announced the need for a new Ministerial Conference following the upcoming end to the Implementation Plan of the Call for Action at the end of 2024. Senior Officials endorsed this decision and initial preparations for the 7th Ministerial Conference ensued.



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PAST PROJECTS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE BUDAPEST PROCESS

Fostering Migration Cooperation in the Silk Routes Region – Silk Routes I Project

09.2011-11.2013 | ~600.000 EUR | Funded by the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Türkiye

This project focused on ensuring orderly migration, protecting the rights of migrants, and activating the links between migration and development in the Silk Routes Region.

The country migration reports established at the end of the project helped the authorities in the Silk Routes countries to develop a broader understanding of migration issues and realities, and demonstrated the shortcomings in the collection, analysis, and sharing of migration data.

The consultations established a unique cooperation framework between donor and Silk Routes countries to the extent that all countries participating in these consultation rounds expressed their wish to continue such close and informal consultations beyond the project. In this regard, the project deepened the cooperation between the countries of the Budapest Process and the Silk Routes countries, paving the way for upcoming projects.

Bridging Actions for Migration Management in the Silk Routes Region

05.2013 – 04.2013 | ~208.000 EUR | Funded by the United Kingdom

This project focused on initiating pilot capacity building actions in migration management and laying the groundwork for more comprehensive and regional migration management projects. It built upon the priority assessment of the Silk Routes I project. The project helped to sustain the positive momentum gained from the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration adopted in the 6th Ministerial Conference.

Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process – Silk Routes II Project

02.2014 – 04.2017 | 4.000.000 EUR | Funded by the European Union, Bulgaria, Hungary (Lead Partner), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom

This project was the first big step and multilateral pledge to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Declaration.

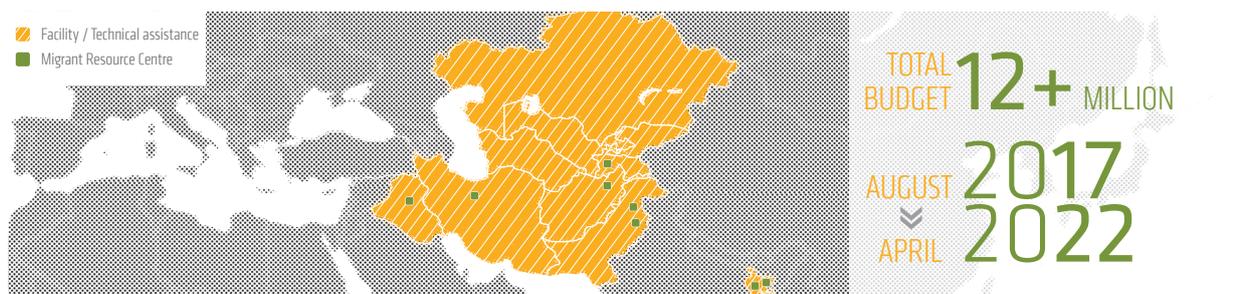
During its 3+ years of implementation, the project strengthened the migration management capacities of authorities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan at national level. In addition, capacities at region level were strengthened between all three countries and included Bangladesh and Iran. It also initiated the

development of sustainable training systems, enhanced data management, and supported migration policy development frameworks. Finally, the first Migrant Resource Centre was set up in Pakistan and the initiative Regional Law Enforcement Cooperation (RELEC) between the Silk Routes Countries and Türkiye was launched.

Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes Countries – Silk Routes III Project

08.2017 – 04.2022 | 12.000.000 EUR | Funded by the European Union

IMPROVING MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN THE SILK ROUTES



This project built on the foundations and achievements set by earlier initiatives implemented under the Budapest Process and achieved further benchmarks in partnership with the Silk Routes Countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan) and Central Asian Countries. It furthered the regional dialogue based on shared and clear understanding of migration and mobility between the Silk Routes countries, Central Asian countries, and European counterparts. It also improved migration governance and mobility and to operationalise the Budapest Process through concrete initiatives under Flagships and Facility. In this regard, the project had three main components: Dialogue, Facility, Flagships.

Dialogue

- Support to the Budapest Process
- A consultative forum with over 50 governments and 10 international organisations
- Developing systems for orderly migration
- One of the longest-standing cooperation frameworks on migration for Europe and its eastern neighbours

Facility

- Demand driven facility for technical assistance to enhance migration management in all areas of migration, including gender aspects of migration and climate change induced migration
- Call for Proposals for large scale initiatives to implement Istanbul Ministerial Declaration priorities in the Silk Routes and Central Asian Countries, including small scale infrastructure projects

Flagships

- Migrant Resource Centres in five Silk Routes countries
- Furthering Regional Law Enforcement Cooperation (RELEC), Silk Routes and Turkey
- Developing initiatives for furthering protection of migrants' rights

Integrated Border Management (IBM) in the Silk Routes Countries

01.2019 – 12.2024 | 12.000.000 EUR | Funded by the European Union

The IBM Silk Routes project supports the countries in the region to build more effective and efficient border management systems, and in doing so strengthen the capacity of state authorities to combat irregular migration, encourage safe migration, and enhance trade and prosperity across borders. The project is currently working in four partner countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan. Along many achievements, the project developed capacities of more than 1700 officials in different IBM areas and contributed to development of the national strategies; 2 National IBM Strategies and Action Plans drafted in Afghanistan and Iraq and drafting process is ongoing in Pakistan. Further, various IBM awareness activities conducted across entire region through international cooperation and knowledge exchange. The following is expected to be achieved in upcoming months:

WAY FORWARD:



Shift from individual capacity development to institutional issues-focused capacity development

of the countries



Support finalisation, endorsement and implementation of the **Iraq National IBM Strategy and Action Plan**



Development of FIA border control capacity

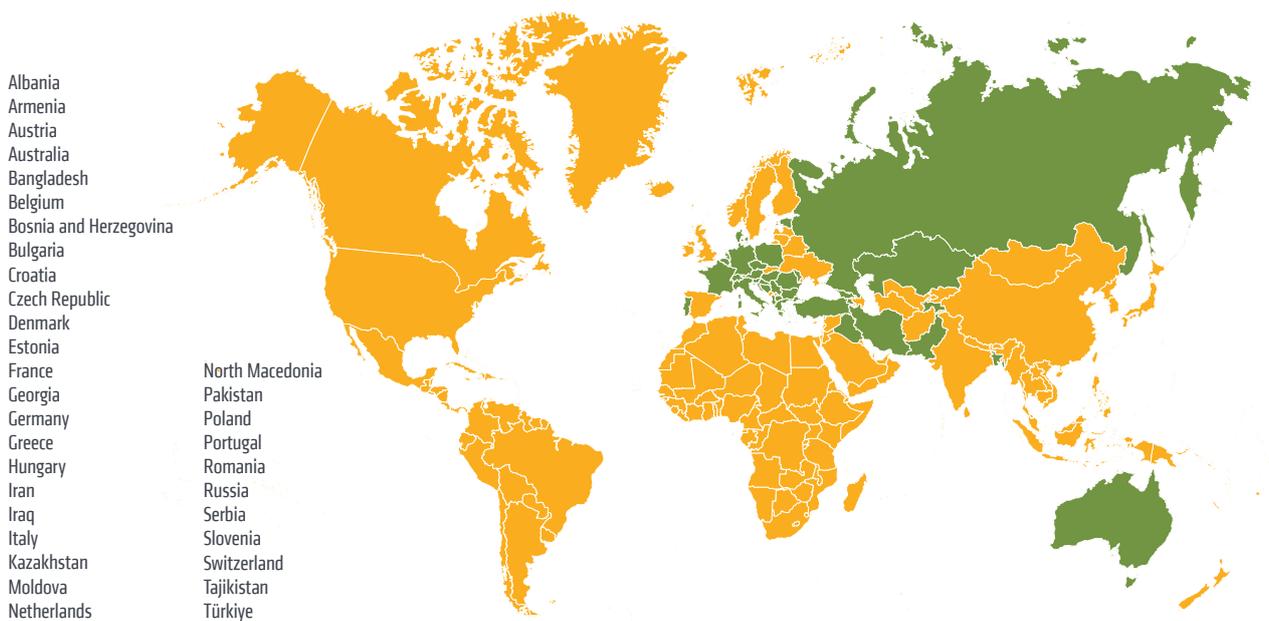
including information exchange, inter-agency cooperation and operational procedures at air border crossing points

THE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR THE BUDAPEST PROCESS' SUCCESS:

STRENGTHS OF THE BUDAPEST PROCESS



AN OVERVIEW OF WHERE MEETINGS WERE HELD IN THE PAST 30 YEARS



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