Budapest Process
4th Working Group on the Silk Routes Region
Final Intergovernmental Meeting of the Silk Routes I project

Islamabad, 28-29 October 2013

Final summary/conclusions

1. On 28-29 October 2013, the 4th meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting constituted at the same time the final intergovernmental meeting within the framework of the project on “Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes Region” implemented under the umbrella of the Budapest Process. The meeting was chaired by Turkey and co-chaired by Afghanistan as the Co-chair of the Silk Routes Region Working Group and the host, Pakistan.

2. The Working Group meeting gathered 58 participants from 24 countries - Afghanistan, Albania, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Kyrgyz Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Kingdom – as well as the European Commission, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

3. The meeting had three main parts:
   I. Presentation of results of the Silk Routes I project
   II. The way forward - regional perspective of the multi-annual strategy for the Budapest Process
   III. Migration management structures

4. In the first session, the results of three years of activity and developments in the Silk Routes Region were presented. ICMPD described the findings of the country reports on Afghanistan and Pakistan and the results of missions to both these countries as well as to Iraq. Representatives of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan also shared their views on the developments in their countries. Visualisations made on the basis of the results were also presented – i.e. an illustration of main migration routes on the i-Map and info-graphics produced on the basis of work carried out.

   The main remaining needs and priorities were pointed out by the Silk Routes countries:
   i. Capacity/institution building and further inter-agency cooperation on migration
ii. Increased international cooperation (establishment of working level contacts with other countries)

iii. To have a comprehensive view of migration management – as migration is very often seen as either a return or refugee issue

iv. Countering irregular migration and migration related crime, especially in view of the porous borders

v. All three countries find dealing with returns, sometimes in large numbers, a challenge. Efforts for reintegration and retraining are needed. Furthermore, first reception facilities are needed to take care of the people and take first measures for rehabilitation. Information to returnees before departure should also be improved.

vi. Data collection and management needs to be improved in all fields of migration, in order to have the solid basis for informed policy making.

5. In the second session the regional perspective of the multi-annual strategy for the Budapest Process and the Silk Routes Programme was discussed. The session was introduced by the host, Pakistan and followed by an open discussion.

6. Several concrete initiatives were identified as possible activities under the Silk Routes Partnership. The Silk Routes countries and other participants again underlined the need for:

   a) general capacity-building measures of responsible institutions and improved inter-agency cooperation,

   b) institutionalisation of migration policies,

   c) building partnerships at all levels between countries, also regionally,

   d) awareness-raising on the dangers of irregular migration and the possibilities to migrate legally; such awareness raising should be understandable to potential recipients and be provided also at community level,

   e) establishment of migration information centres,

   f) sharing information about available jobs,

   g) pre-departure and vocational training to potential migrants,

   h) centres to treat and board victims of migration related crime as well as returnees,

   i) reintegration assistance, also in the case of forced returns,

   j) vocational training for returnees,

   k) handling of unregistered/undocumented refugees,

   l) enhancing diaspora relations.

7. The UK informed about the progress of the project “Bridging Measures for Migration Management in the Silk Routes Region”. The UK noted that a quarter of the world was present in Istanbul adopting the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration – it is consequently a strong and broadly anchored document to which implementation support must be given. The UK has an interest also in further capacity building actions – demonstration of concrete deliverables is crucial for UK-support.
8. Information was given about the EU funded, larger scale, capacity building project being developed at the moment by the European Commission and Hungary, as the future project leader. Further consortium members at present were Turkey, Sweden, Bulgaria and ICMPD. The project is focusing on broad migration capacity building and will have five main modules on 1) sustainable improvement of training structures, 2) improved data management and knowledge base 3) a process for comprehensive migration policies 4) furthering intergovernmental dialogue and 5) will implement two pilot projects.

9. IOM reiterated readiness to extend support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration and to create synergies with its important portfolio of activities in the region in order to facilitate the achievement of the agreed goals, implement new activities and enhance the capacity in thematic areas outlined for future cooperation in the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration together with the Chair and the Secretariat as well as all participating countries. IOM will launch a project in 2014 to develop complementary actions to implement the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration.

10. A theoretical background presentation was also given on certain priorities for concrete cooperation under the Silk Routes Partnership: 1) Awareness raising, 2) Migration Information Centres 3) Pre-departure information and procedures for returnees and 4) Reintegration of returnees and the use of vocational training programmes.

11. In the third session, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Turkey and the UK presented their internal structures of migration management, authorities involved, division of tasks and responsibilities and coordination and cooperation structures. The mapping of the migration management structures aimed at contributing to the initiatives that will be carried out under the Silk Routes Programme as of 2014. In several presentations, the importance to involve civil society in migration management was pointed out.

12. As a general summary of presentations and interventions made by the various participants, the following points should be mentioned:

   a) It has become apparent that the Silk Routes countries themselves are increasingly becoming countries of transit and immigration in addition to being traditional countries of emigration.

   b) It should also be noted that youth in the Silk Routes countries represent a huge part of the population. In combination with slow economic growth, migration will continue to be seen as a life option.

   c) In parallel to moving away from the traditional picture of migration (with individuals making rational and informed decisions to migrate) to a new economy of labour migration (where the decision to migrate is taken by the family with a view to reduce the risks of a household), the Budapest Process has increasingly embraced all areas of migration, in particular with the adoption of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration.

   d) Today good migration governance needs to look at the transfer of information and qualifications across the borders. Diplomas are the currency of the labour market, but there is no currency exchange of diplomas. Skills recognition, especially of informal skills, emerges as one of the important areas to make migration more orderly and manageable.

   e) In this respect, we need clear knowledge and information about skills in demand, recruitment, placing and return practices, labour conditions and rights and support structures. Joint vocational training schemes can be designed.
f) We have a structural information imbalance and we need to fill in the gaps and complement information provided by recruitment agencies, migrant and family networks and fraudulent actors with structural information. We also need to include trusted family and diaspora networks in our work.

g) In this regard, the Budapest Process/Silk Routes Partnership for Migration has a good tool in its hands with the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration which refers to the importance of taking action to ensure and provide clear, accessible and understandable information to potential migrants on possibilities for orderly migration and rules and regulations, including relevant pre-departure information as well as raising awareness of, and providing clear information to, potential migrants, on the risks and dangers associated with irregular migration.

h) Migration Information Centres are public awareness raising campaigns tools, referred to by many of the participants. The two days’ discussions have shown the need for awareness raising and information sharing. There have been many fraudulent advertisements in Pakistan for visa and/or overseas work for instance, which should be countered by awareness raising campaigns and migration information centres.

13. The following concrete proposals were made:

a) It was proposed that both larger and more specific actions to implement the Silk Routes Partnership should be carefully coordinated during the implementation. It was proposed and agreed to link such actions through a Silk Routes Programme, with a coordination mechanism between key actors.

b) The presented mapping of ongoing and planned initiatives is welcome. A more thorough, joint mapping exercise with the involvement of other international organisations and the EU would be useful to have a more comprehensive overview and would provide a structural link to the Ministerial Declaration as well as to the initiatives under the “Silk Routes Programme”.

c) There is a need to link the BP-Silk Routes Partnership with the neighbouring regional dialogues such as the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. Furthermore, the links to activities of other important stakeholders such as the US, Canada and Australia should be investigated (observer countries to the Budapest Process).

d) The Budapest Process could also make a contribution to the migration debate at global level, including the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development.

e) Several BP countries present explored the possibility to establish more migration partnerships at bilateral level.

f) It was noted that the quadrilateral meeting held between Greece, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey will be followed up as relevant, also including Afghanistan.

14. The Chair thanked all participating countries for their engagement and contributions and entrusted the Secretariat with the task of summarising discussions and conclusions as well as to circulate results.