DRAFT summary/conclusions

1. On 18-19 October 2016, the 9th meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Belgrade, Serbia.

2. The meeting focused on the second priority area of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration, namely ‘support the integration of migrants and counteract phenomena of discrimination, racism and xenophobia’. In addition, the meeting dealt with differences and similarities between the integration of newly arriving migrants and the reintegration of returning migrants. Reintegration is covered both under the third priority area of the Declaration ‘migration and development’ and the fourth priority area ‘irregular migration’. The purpose of the meeting was to define and discuss the state of play regarding immigrant integration and reintegration of returning migrants in the Budapest Process; and to identify priorities for further dialogue and cooperation, in particular related to cooperation with the Silk Routes countries. Challenges, good practices and also negative effects/outcomes of inexistence of integration and reintegration policies were also discussed.

3. The meeting gathered 65 participants from 28 countries – Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kyrgyz Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine – as well as the Bali Process, European Commission (EC), the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), European External Action Service (EEAS), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and experts from the EU Twinning Project “Support to the Advancement of Human Rights and Zero Tolerance to Discrimination” in Serbia, the Municipal Department on Integration and Diversity, City of Vienna and the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Hacettepe University Ankara.

4. The meeting was opened by Serbia (host), followed by welcoming remarks from Turkey (Chair of the BP and the Working Group), Afghanistan (Co-Chair of the Working Group) Hungary (Co-Chair of the BP), the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). In the opening session it was reiterated that both integration and reintegration are mutual processes. They demand the active engagement of both migrants and returnees and the receiving societies and communities. Both issues are intrinsically linked to a broad number of other policy areas, making them subject to both targeted policies and mainstreaming measures. In the EU, for instance integration is...
largely a national competence of the Member States. However, the EU provides incentives and support through various programmes and funds.

5. The keynote speech of Ass. Prof. Erdogan from Hacettepe University and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency AFAD, presented **Turkey’s multi-faceted experience with integration**. Starting as a country of emigration to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, today’s Turkey is a main migration destination and hosts the world’s largest refugee population, with almost 3 million Syrian refugees. As in many other countries, the stay of Syrian refugees in the country was perceived as temporary in the beginning. Meanwhile, Turkish authorities assume that Syrian refugees will stay in the country for a long time. Although no specific integration policy has been developed for this group yet, the authorities make a lot of efforts to accommodate Syrian refugees, ensure their (and their children’s) access to labour market and educational system. Providing citizenship to them has become a serious consideration.

6. In the first panel discussion on **supporting integration of migrants and refugees**, Dr. Struppe from the City of Vienna underlined in her keynote speech the importance of integration on the city and community level. Even today Vienna is still suffering from the lack of integration policies in the 1960s and 1970s. However, a shift in paradigm towards the acknowledgement of diversity has been made in the 2000s with social inclusion and intercultural competences becoming main priorities of the city’s integration policy. Panellists agreed that integration should start at an early stage to support the independence of migrants, in particular to avoid missing opportunities. On the other hand, it was also pointed out that an early access for asylum seekers to the labour market might hamper return in the case of a negative decision in the status determination procedure.

7. In the following session, examples on **integration and reintegration policies and frameworks** were presented. Mr. Perchinig of ICMPD made an introduction based on the European experience. He underlined that although there is no common definition of integration, there is a convergence in understanding that it is a combination of rights and duties of society and migrants. Lessons learnt in Europe also show that in general immigration is rather a long-term or permanent phenomenon than a temporary one, making temporary integration policies a problematic issue. Ass. Prof. Erdogan from Hacettepe University stressed that we need to accept differences and diversity first before implementing integration policies. The **Silk Routes countries** underlined that cultural and lingual proximity would facilitate the integration process and that return should be voluntarily and facilitated via particular reception centres.

8. In the second panel discussion on **counteracting phenomena of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and islamophobia**, Ms. Liegl from the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights Austria underlined that it is important to have structures in place people can refer to in case they feel discriminated. Anti-discrimination policies should be mainstreamed in both integration and reintegration policies as returning migrants also face discrimination for various reasons. Media was mentioned as an important stakeholder to counteract discrimination; however it is often also one that contributes to spreading discriminatory messages. Overall, the panellists agreed that political commitment and preventive measures in this field – one of the most essential one being mutual respect between people – are of utmost importance. They also underlined that independent monitoring and reporting is crucial.
9. On the second day of the meeting the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process presented their work and good practices, in particular as regards assisted voluntary reintegration programmes and information campaigns and encouraged enforced cooperation with the Budapest Process.

10. IOM reminded in its keynote speech on fostering sustainable reintegration of returning migrants that factors impacting upon reintegration are similar to factors that pushed migrants to leave their countries in the first place. IOM underlined that interventions at different levels (structural intervention such as improving governance, community based initiatives like strengthening resilience of communities and individual support including economic, social and psychosocial support) are necessary for successful reintegration. As in integration, there is a shared responsibility between migrants (returnees), host countries, countries of origin, families and communities, private sector, humanitarian and development actors. Sweden presented the ERIN (European Reintegration Network) and EURLO (European Return Liaison Officers) projects and pointed out that a more comprehensive EU approach is needed for reintegration in the country of return and that reintegration should be part of a comprehensive return policy.

11. During the plenary discussion it was emphasised that reintegration policies should not be isolated from the rest of the society and community and should kick in at an early stage. Nowadays, the trend was to move away from mere cash incentives to more complex support, encompassing both the macro (structural) level interventions such as overall good migration governance and the micro level through addressing migrant and community needs. Overall, the importance of information sharing was highlighted – information provided to returnees in both host countries and countries of return as well as information on returnees shared between countries.

12. In closing, the experts and the Chair summarised the following points:

   i. Although there is no commonly agreed definition of integration, there is a mutual understanding that integration does not only concern migrants, but is aimed at improving the social cohesion and quality of life of both the resident and the migrant population in increasingly mobile and diverse societies.

   ii. Social cohesion is based on rights and duties – on the one hand the right to equality in and access to the core institutions of a society, the labour market, the education system, housing, health etc., and on the other hand the acceptance of the binding nature of the legal framework and the readiness to acquire the necessary knowledge to participate in a society, ranging from language acquisition to knowledge about the institutions and the core values of a society.

   iii. Whereas the host society has the duty to offer migrants the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills for participation, migrants are required to participate in the integration programmes offered.

   iv. Individuals have different learning histories and learning capabilities, and depending on their profession and training they will need tailor-made integration programmes. The one size fits all approach to be found in the early times of integration have been widely overcome by individualised integration packages.

   v. Whereas there is the need for targeted integration support offered to migrants mainly in the arrival phase - e.g. information in the mother tongue or targeted
programmes for women or the youth, the already existing institutions have the core responsibility for the long-term integration of migrants. Integration thus demands a sensible balance of targeted measures and mainstreaming of equal access and treatment at all institutional levels.

vi. A main challenge is the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad. There is a need to improve the comparability of training certificates and develop effective programmes which allow full usage of the competencies of migrants obtained abroad. Special emphasis has to be placed on “bridging measures” which allow immigrants to fill formal and practical gaps in their professional education in line with host countries requirements.

vii. Protection against discrimination and equal treatment are core elements of a successful integration or reintegration policy. Both aspects are anchored in international law: the Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and the Convention on the rights of migrant workers and their families. The provisions of the conventions are to be mainstreamed into integration and reintegration policies and practices. In this respect, prevention of discrimination is crucial.

viii. Furthermore, for integration policies to be successful there is a need to strongly counteract racism, extremism and xenophobia and to further a welcoming culture in the receiving countries. In order to make full use of integration policies, migrants should feel accepted and welcomed.

ix. Capacity building and training of the relevant institutions – administrations, the police, the judiciary, school teachers, journalists, etc. are essential elements of successful integration and anti-discrimination policies. Ensuring equality through monitoring of the implementation of policies is required.

x. With increasing migratory flows from and through the Silk Routes region, there will have to be more efforts for integration. More flows will also translate into higher number of returns and consequently will require more efforts for reintegration.

xi. Voluntary returns are more effective and preferred than forced returns and reintegration should ideally be an integral part of return programmes.

xii. Apart from individual assistance provided to returnees, more interventions at the structural level are needed for successful reintegration in the countries of return. Community aspects, such as infrastructure needs due to returns, need to be taken into account more strongly.

xiii. There is a shared responsibility between countries of origin and host countries for reintegration efforts.

xiv. In order to make more effective use of the individual experiences of the Budapest Process countries and deepen the cooperation in the area of integration and reintegration among them, the Silk Routes Region Working Group will look into compiling common standards and good practices for the Budapest Process countries.

13. The Chair confirmed that the Senior Officials Meeting in 2016 will be held in Antalya, Turkey.
14. The Chair, Co-Chairs, Secretariat and Host thanked all participating countries and organisations for the engaged discussions during the meeting. The Secretariat was tasked to summarise the discussions and to circulate results within the Budapest Process network.