Conclusions

1. On 9-10 February 2011, the 2nd meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on the Black Sea Region was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, hosted by the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and co-chaired with the Bulgarian Border Guard, with the purpose of discussing ways to improve cooperation between the border guard services of the Black Sea Region.

2. The meeting brought together representatives of 20 countries (Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine) as well as the EU SITCEN, the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, Europol, Frontex, ICMPD, IOM, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, MARRI, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation BSEC, the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative Center and UNHCR.

3. The following points were made regarding opportunities and recommendations for improving cooperation and trust-building between the border guard authorities in the wider Black Sea Region.

   a. Joint/coordinated procedures and operations:
      i. Establishing new or expanding upon existing common contact centres/offices between two or more countries – bilateral, trilateral or quadrilateral – at strategically relevant border crossing points.
      ii. Conducting joint and/or coordinated border patrols at green and blue borders, for example, dividing the border into sub-sections and alternating border patrol in a chequer-board pattern.
      iii. Regularly updating and strengthening the implementation of bilateral border guard cooperation action plans.
      iv. Establishing joint border crossing points, sharing facilities/equipment and introducing joint controls/checks and eventually so-called one-stop control, where all controls at a BCP are coordinated by the agencies of both countries and partly carried out jointly.
b. Information exchange and communication:
   i. Deploying liaison officers and/or sharing liaison officers with countries who have deployed them. Where such liaison officers do not exist, other national contact points should be known to all.
   ii. Drawing up a common contact manual for the Black Sea Region, with a list of national single points of contact available 24/7, or, when a single point of contact is not possible, a list of national contacts according to topic and competence in the area of border management. A functioning network of national contact points is also the first step to make it possible to communicate early warning information.
   iii. Conducting regular meetings according to pre-determined protocols and according to need. For example, weekly meetings between chiefs of border crossing points (operational), meetings every three months at the regional level (operational and strategic) and yearly meetings at the central level (strategic).
   iv. As mentioned above, establishing new or expanding upon existing common contact centres/offices between two or more countries in order to speed up the information exchange for routine cooperation as well as real-time communication in case of emergencies or illegal activities or early warning information.

c. Joint training:
   i. Conducting joint training on issues of common interest, especially joint language training.
   ii. Implementing bilateral staff exchanges.

d. Joint infrastructure and equipment:
   i. As mentioned above, establishing new or expanding upon existing common contact centres/offices between two or more countries.
   ii. As mentioned above, establishing joint border crossing points, sharing infrastructure and equipment.

4. The following conclusions were made regarding the future work of the Working Group on the Black Sea Region:
   a. The thematic focus should be kept on the fight against irregular migration, but acknowledging and considering the link to the broader fight against organized cross-border crime.
   b. Next meeting of the WG should discuss “Document Security” (travel documents), adopting an inter-agency focus and taking into consideration the cross-cutting nature (and possible implications) of the topic.
   c. The strength of the WG is its flexibility and possibility to react to new topics of interest, it was therefore suggested not to fix the agenda. Nevertheless, topics to keep in mind for the future were a common understanding of concept of migration and training on e.g. asylum.

5. The Chair thanked all delegates for their active participation in the meeting and announced its intention to host the next and 3rd meeting of the Working Group in 2012.