Budapest Process
First Intergovernmental Meeting of the Silk Routes Project
Ankara, 18 November 2011

Summary/Conclusions

1. On 18 November 2011, the first Intergovernmental Meeting of the project “Fostering Cooperation in the Area of Migration with and in the Silk Routes” (Silk Routes project), was held in Ankara, chaired and hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with ICMPD.

2. The purpose of the meeting was to officially launch the project, adopt its work plan and present the preliminary findings of the first two months.

3. The meeting brought together representatives of 25 countries (Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and Ukraine) as well as the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the European Commission (EC), Frontex, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) as the Secretariat of the Budapest Process.

4. The meeting was opened by Turkey, as the Chair of the Budapest Process and a donor of the said project. The opening statement was followed by welcoming remarks by other donor countries; Afghanistan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland as well as ICMPD.

5. The representative of the European Commission made a presentation on the latest communication on the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, which was announced in Brussels on the same day as the meeting.

The communication added new aspects to the Global Approach to Migration, existing since 2005, making it truly global and migrant centred with an increased focus on mobility. In addition to the existing three pillars on irregular migration, legal migration and migration and development the Global Approach to Migration will also have a new pillar on external protection. It was underlined that a meaningful dialogue needs to incorporate all the above pillars and may not focus on one issue only.
The European Commission expressed strong support to the Silk Routes project and activities of the Budapest Process in this region. References were made to EU led initiatives such as the Rabat Process and the Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment and the Commission declared preparedness to invest both financial and human resources in further efforts in this direction.

6. ICMPD, as the implementing body of the Silk Routes project, made a description of the project and presented main tools to be used as well as the preliminary findings on the basis of the first two months of desk research. The presentation was followed by a tour de table starting with the Silk Routes countries.

7. Participating states expressed the importance of including issues of regular migration and asylum procedures and of establishing not only bilateral but trilateral cooperation mechanisms to look into legal migration channels and asylum.

8. The links between development and migration were underlined. States expressed their wish that the dialogue with the Silk Routes countries results in actions also addressing and supporting development.

9. It was requested that the Budapest Process countries be updated regularly by ICMPD on ongoing and planned projects.

10. Donor countries of the project discussed possible use of additional funds raised (extension of covered countries, project duration or activities) and agreed to include Iraq and Iran in the project. In addition, actions dealing with minors would be most welcome.

11. Frontex will further assess ways of assistance to participating states within this initiative, mainly in the areas of data sharing on migration flows and trends as well as identifying trainers of EU MS who might be interested to participate in training activities.

12. The Afghan delegate explained that lack of security is the main reason for Afghani migration and that unless this cause is tackled, emigration from his country will continue. Return of deported persons is a problem. Although Pakistan has set out to extend residence permits for Afghani migrants until the end of 2012, persons have been deported lately from Iran as well as some European countries. Also in the Gulf countries work permits of Afghans have not been extended lately.

13. UNHCR underlined that the main issues in the Silk Routes countries and the main findings presented by the project team were on forced movements and unless these were addressed, it would not be possible to build capacity and address migration problems in the region.

14. The following conclusions were made
   a. The work plan of the project was endorsed.
   b. ICMPD will, in cooperation with the Turkish Chair, work to engage and involve Iraq and Iran in the project activities.
   c. ICMPD will be contacting both the Silk Routes countries and the donor (and other Budapest Process) countries in the next two months to organise the upcoming fact-finding missions to the Silk Routes Region for the first half of 2012.

15. The Chair thanked all delegates for their active participation in the meeting and announced that Georgia will be hosting the third meeting of the Silk Routes Region Working Group in June 2012.