

Budapest Process

32nd Senior Officials Meeting

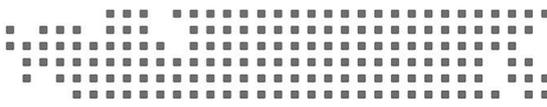
Date: 1st December, 2022

Location: Istanbul, Türkiye

Report

1. The Annual Senior Officials Meeting of the Budapest Process (BP) **gathered 64 participants from 32 countries** – Albania, Austria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom; as well as the European Commission, European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Council of the European Union, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
2. After two years of virtual Senior Officials Meetings, Senior Officials gathered again in person in Istanbul, Türkiye. **Dr. Savaş Ünlü**, President of the Presidency of Migration Management at the Ministry of Interior of Türkiye opened the Senior Officials Meeting, representing Türkiye as Chair. Further opening remarks followed from **Ms. Timea Lehoczki**, Head of Unit, Department for European Home Affairs Cooperation, Hungarian Ministry of Interior and **Ms. Alexandra Sá Carvalho**, Deputy Head of Unit in the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission. Finally, **Mr. Michael Spindelegger**, Director General at ICMPD as host of the Budapest Process Secretariat closed the opening session by welcoming BP partners in Istanbul.
3. The main aim of the Senior Officials Meeting was not only to take stock of the past year but also to **strategically discuss the Chairmanship's Proposals on the dialogue's future**. The meeting was capped off by a panel discussion on the key ingredients for successful partnerships with the Silk Routes Region, with many interesting ideas and suggestions emerging from the discussion between representatives from Türkiye, Iraq, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the European Commission and ICMPD.
4. The Budapest Process Secretariat shared the **key achievements from 2022** including its eight meetings, various publications, the dialogue's Theory of Change and the initial meetings of the Cooperation between Law Enforcement Practitioners (COLEP). It was appreciated that this outputs happened alongside the regular projects implemented in the Silk Routes Region under the umbrella of the Budapest Process. A draft work plan for 2023 was presented which built upon achievements in 2022 in the priority areas 1 and 2 of the Call for Action. Partners welcomed the specific roles taken on by Sweden as the current Chair of the Reference Group and Bulgaria as current Chair of COLEP as well as the ad-hoc activities, online and in-person, supporting the priority areas of the dialogue.

5. The Chair presented the **Chairmanship's Proposals which included:**
 - Hold a 7th ministerial conference (introduce a new Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action);
 - Geographically expand the dialogue and invite new countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and India (re-vitalise the participation of the latter) to the Budapest Process;
 - Add new themes to the next Declaration and Call for Action – inter alia – the nexus of migration and development, climate change, health, and gender; Reform the BP's regional working groups structure into a thematic working groups structure;
 - Improve the funding structure of the BP such that funding is raised more systematically and sustainably;
 - Institutionalise the Reference Group (RG) by ascribing to it the role of the hitherto 'Friends of Chair' as well as allowing it to take on other important tasks and steering functions such as helping in the drafting of the new Ministerial Declaration & Call for Action.
6. On the Chairmanship's Proposals, countries overall welcomed them and **appreciated the direction in which they brought the dialogue for the future**. Many partners reaffirmed their commitment to the dialogue, its flanking projects and to the possibilities for further cooperation;
7. **On the First Proposal**, countries agreed that a next ministerial conference should be held – it was proposed to begin holding consultations on the contents of the next Ministerial Declaration and its Call for Action as soon as possible – this would ideally be achieved via a 'drafting group' that would report its progress to the Senior Officials Meeting at the end of 2023;
8. **On the Second Proposal**, countries welcomed the suggestion that the Chairmanship approach selected countries to join the Budapest Process should they be interested;
9. **On the Third Proposal**, countries expressed a desire to continue focusing on Priority Goals 1 and 2 of the Call for Action, while also enhancing the focus on Priority Goals 5 and 6, given the recent geo-political and socio-economic crises; Moreover, newly suggested themes should be horizontally addressed rather than added as new priority goals in the new Ministerial Declaration; it would also be important to align the BP's Priority Goals with other international agreements and frameworks; it was highlighted that the BP should carefully align the thematic working groups with the expressed priorities of the BP and to ensure the working groups are designed to make them as output oriented as possible. Finally, an improved coordination amongst Chairs of other working groups was also brought forward with the option to cooperate beyond the BP with other migration dialogues in an effort to ensure complementarity in approaches;
10. **On the Fourth Proposal**, several countries committed funding for 2023 and others reiterated their support to the dialogue and promised to explore possibilities for funding in the coming years; in addition, other partners offered in-kind support (e.g. the use of the expertise or hosting meetings);
11. **On the Fifth Proposal**, countries were open to the Reference Group taking on a new role but agreed this should be further discussed with the Reference Group partners directly;
12. More generally, on the concrete aspects of the dialogue's future, it was stressed that BP meetings should continue to strengthen their focus on **producing practical solutions and ideas for tangible projects on priority areas** as well as providing constructive feedback to ongoing projects; partners welcomed the dialogue's ability to provide relevant outcomes and continued trust and cooperation in the Silk Routes Region.



13. In closing, **the Chairmanship agreed on the following next steps:**

- The Chairmanship will provide time until early 2023 for partner countries to revert back on the proposals should they have any specific concerns or additional suggestions;
- The Chairmanship will reach out to specific countries suggested for the geographical expansion of the dialogue;
- The thematic related queries and comments will be discussed during the consultations held in 2023 for the drafting of new Ministerial Declaration;
- The Chairmanship will initiate preparations for the Ministerial Conference ahead of the next Senior Officials Meeting;
- The Chairmanship will convene a meeting with the Reference Group Chairs, Sweden and Pakistan, to discuss how to establish a more defined role for the Reference Group in the future.

14. The Chair, Co-Chair and Secretariat thanked all participants for attending the meeting and provided their support, inputs and feedback to the next steps of the Budapest Process.