

## **Reference Group for the Budapest Process' Implementation of the Call for Action**

### **Terms of Reference**

***May 2023***

#### **1. Background to the set-up of the Reference Group**

In February 2019, the Budapest Process (BP) participating states reaffirmed their commitment to partnering with the Silk Routes countries and the dialogue itself. "The Istanbul Commitments on the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration" were adopted with its "Call for Action", a five-year action plan with 41 action points in 6 priority areas.

In December 2019, Senior Officials agreed to focus on the implementation of the "Call for Action" and endorsed an Implementation Plan of the Call for Action, which includes priority topics and activities until the end of 2024.

In January 2020, the implementation of the Call for Action kick-started with a focus on Priority Goal 1 (Prevent and counteract irregular migration, facilitate return and readmission of irregular migrants, and combat criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants) and Priority Goal 2 (Better organise and improve conditions for legal migration and mobility). This focus remained in 2021 and 2022 coupled with other activities from other priority areas in the Implementation Plan.

In May 2021, the BP Chairmanship set-up a Reference Group (RG) to enhance and support the dialogue's activities and enhance the implementation of the Call for Action.

#### **2. Objectives of the Reference Group**

As a general objective, the RG offers the chance to deepen engagement for the dialogue by developing a red thread between senior official and thematic meetings as well as on the ground operational cooperation and capacity building.

The Reference Group (RG) contributes to the implementation of the priority areas as agreed by Budapest Process Senior Officials, as decision-making body for the dialogue.

More specifically, the RG meetings are also the setting to build upon and follow-up on the conclusions and recommendations reached in the thematic working group meetings. The outcomes of the Reference Groups' meetings are presented at the annual Senior Officials Meetings.

#### **3. Tasks of the Reference Group**

##### **- Strategic Guidance to the Dialogue**

- Provide advice and guidance to the Chairmanship of the BP on ways and means to ensure effective implementation of the Call for Action;
- Stimulate and deepen cooperation among BP partners and ensure long-term engagement within and through the dialogue;
- Report back to the annual Senior Officials Meeting to share the annual results of the dialogue and the projects and knowledge outputs under its umbrella;
- Advocate funding stability for the BP dialogue;

## - Operationalisation of the Dialogue

- Follow-up on the recommendations made in thematic and ad-hoc meetings of all BP participating states and organisations, including providing feedback to the outputs produced (such as reports, resolutions, guidelines, standards, etc.);
- Reinforce the planned activities on the agreed priority areas and propose new activities and initiatives, based on current needs and the global and regional migration situation;
- Contribute to the preparation of annual and multiannual work-plans and preparation of projects for implementation;
- Support fundraising efforts for initiatives, programmes and projects developed under the dialogue;
- Identify areas for further enhancing the dialogue's knowledge-base.

## 4. Composition of the Reference Group

Members of the RG should be limited to ensure effective cooperation in the process.

Respectful of a geographical balance, the composition of the RG takes into account the importance of including countries of origin, transit and destination. Membership requires a commitment to attend-RG meetings and actively engage in its tasks.

The RG consists of a maximum of 12 countries as well as the European Commission. International organisations can participate as observers at RG meetings upon invitation on an ad-hoc basis.

The RG is composed of 10 permanent and 3 rotating members as follows:

- Permanent members: The BP Chairmanship, the RG Rapporteur, the Co-Chairs of Thematic Working Groups<sup>1</sup>, Silk Routes and European countries, principal dialogue donors as well as the European Commission.
- Rotating members: Three participating/observer states of the BP dialogue join the RG as rotating members on a yearly basis.

## 5. Rules of procedure for rotating members and for the replacement or enlargement of the Reference Group permanent members

- Any participating/observer state of the Budapest Process may apply in writing to the BP Secretariat to join the Reference Group as a rotating member on a yearly basis;  
Decisions on rotating membership is taken by consensus through written procedure, initiated by the Secretariat.
- Replacement of a permanent member of the RG is discussed in the subsequent RG meeting. Decisions on replacement of a permanent member is taken by unanimity with consideration for the geographical balance.
- Enlargement of the RG through additional permanent members is discussed in the subsequent RG meeting. Decisions on enlargement is taken by unanimity by the RG, with consideration for the geographical balance.

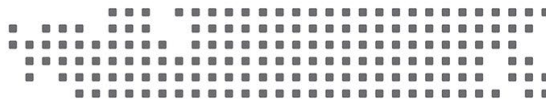
## 6. Role of the Rapporteur/s of the Reference Group

The members of the RG are the main drivers of the RG. Work will be led and facilitated by a Rapporteur<sup>2</sup>, supported by the BP Secretariat. As such, the Rapporteur will be responsible for:

- Chairing the meetings and prioritising the areas of discussion of the RG, keeping salient trans-regional issues and challenges as well as requests of RG member states in mind;

<sup>1</sup> The three thematic working groups cover: (I) Law Enforcement Cooperation against Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons (via COLEP); (II) Return and Reintegration; and (III) Legal Pathways for Migration.

<sup>2</sup> Sweden is the Rapporteur of the Reference Group since April 2022



- Liaise closely with the BP Chair, Türkiye and Co-Chair, Hungary, in cooperation with the BP Secretariat, ICMPD;
- Review the outputs produced as a result of the meetings, and propose follow up actions or next steps;
- Liaise with the Chairs of the Thematic Working Groups on a needs basis in cooperation with the BP Secretariat.

## **7. Working Language**

The working language of the RG is English. Interpretation may be foreseen if requested on an ad-hoc basis.

## **8. Meetings occurrence**

The RG meets at least twice a year. Meetings can be held virtually or in person on the margins of BP meetings or as a standalone meeting.

## **9. Budget and Logistics**

- The work of the Reference Group is assisted by the BP Secretariat and expenses related to Reference Group meetings are covered by the BP budget managed by the Secretariat;
- Fundraising for additional activities, initiatives or specific projects can occur as deemed appropriate by the Reference Group.