

OSCE Newsletter

OSCE Efforts to Strengthen Border Security and Management in South Caucasus

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ILO-ICMPD-OSCE Anti-Trafficking project in South-Caucasus

(OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings)

The multi-year anti-trafficking project funded by the EU and jointly implemented in the South Caucasus by ICMPD, ILO and the OSCE, presents a common effort of the international community to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the development of a comprehensive response to trafficking in human beings (THB).

Within this project and through its field operations in these three countries, the OSCE advocates for the establishment of National Referral Mechanisms (NRM, co-operative frameworks through which State institutions in partnership with civil society assist and protect victims of trafficking) such as the ones initiated by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR).

Under the support of the **OSCE Office in Yerevan**, a study visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia was organized in November 2008 for the NRM Working Group. As a follow up, the NRM was drafted and has already been adopted by the Armenian Government.

The OSCE Office in Yerevan is also involved in building the capacity of the law enforcement specialized bodies in trafficking-related investigation, with the objective to improve the capabilities of national authorities to detect criminal activities linked to THB, based on a victim-centered approach to the investigation. A team of legal experts has been put together in

order to draft a comprehensive anti-trafficking law enforcement manual, which will be revised by the relevant law enforcement agencies and possibly incorporated into their training courses, ensuring the sustainability of this exercise.

In December 2007, the **OSCE Office in Baku**, in partnership with the ILO and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, organized a conference on the revision of the National Action Plan with participation of the relevant ministries, international organizations and NGOs.

Moreover, the Office organized in 2008 a basic awareness raising training on anti-trafficking for judges and contributed to a study on determinants of labor exploitation and trafficking in Azerbaijan.

At present, the Office is assisting the Government of Azerbaijan in establishing a NRM Working Group. For that purpose, a workshop was conducted in December and once the draft NRM concept is developed, a study tour to a selected country with a well established NRM will be organized. The Office is expected to contribute to the drafting of the National Action Plan, which is currently under consideration by relevant stakeholders.

Additionally, and within the framework of the project, the **OSCE Mission to Georgia**, in co-operation with the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, organized a study trip for Georgian anti-trafficking practitioners to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Moreover, a training for social workers involved in minors' issues in child-care institutions from the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science was conducted by La Strada Ukraine within this project. ■

OSCE Mission to Georgia supported the establishment of interagency and cross border co-operation

(OSCE Mission to Georgia)

Bridging Central Asia and Europe, the South Caucasus location exposes Georgia and its neighbors to such threats as trafficking in drugs and human beings, illegal migration and the illicit movement of dual use commodities. These countries are committed to strengthening the security of their common borders and fighting these inherent threats.

Since the launch of its Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) in 1999, the OSCE Mission to Georgia has assisted the country's relevant agencies in the reform and development of their border management capabilities. The experience gained throughout years of continued support and close co-operation with the other international donors has allowed the OSCE Mission to establish a sound foundation to provide effective support to Georgian border security and management agencies.

Although the BMO ended in 2004, the Mission continued to support efforts to strengthen the capacity building of border agencies. The Transitional Institutional Support Programme (TISP), launched in May 2008, was the most recent example of this support.

The TISP was designed in light of the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept of 2005 and, in particular, in line with its core principle of co-operation. It illustrated how, by bringing the border officials from Georgia and its neighboring countries together, the organization sets out to strengthen the ability of border security and management agencies to facilitate free and secure movement of persons and trade across the borders, while reducing the trans-border threats inherent to the region. It has been partially financed by the Austrian, Finnish and Czech Governments, and has been implemented by the OSCE Mission to Georgia in co-operation with the OSCE Offices in Baku and Yerevan.

Trainings for members of the Border Police of the Ministry of Interior and the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance were organized to focus on the effective co-ordination and co-operation among the Georgian agencies responsible for border security and



management. The broader element included cross border workshops for the border security and management agencies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

While the lectures were given on a range of topics, such as law enforcement, risk analysis, management and other senior management issues, hands-on exercises gave participants a chance to test their knowledge and new skills.

The OSCE Mission to Georgia has been instrumental in supporting the Georgian border services, contributing to establishment of interagency and cross border co-operation. Significant progress has been achieved in the sphere of border security and management in Georgia and the ongoing reform has acquired its own positive momentum. ■

The Office in Yerevan facilitates cross-border co-operation between Armenian and Georgian border and custom officials

(OSCE Office in Yerevan)

In the course of 2007, the OSCE Office in Yerevan and the OSCE Mission to Georgia jointly explored the need and possibility to conduct trainings for the representatives of Armenian and Georgian border security and management agencies. Initial assessment of cross-border co-operation showed there were no systematic meetings between those counterparts. Additionally, there was no common agreement on the nature of information to be shared. An OSCE follow up project was initiated to conduct joint cross border seminars and trainings.

The first seminar was organized in Bagratashen on the Armenian-Georgian border in October 2008. International, Armenian and Georgian experts conducted practical trainings covering such topics as smuggling of narcotic drugs and nuclear materials, trafficking in human beings, and detection of forged documents as well as the elements of integrated border management. A Turkish National Police expert delivered



a course on drug substances detection. The second joint Armenian-Georgian seminar is to take place in 2009.

In addition, in the course of 2008, the OSCE Office in Yerevan supported the Armenian Government and non-governmental organizations in establishing a National Referral Mechanism (described in more detail in the previous article) within the relevant project aimed at strengthening the capacity of governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate identification, assistance and protection to all victims of human trafficking. ■

OSCE Office in Baku to Expand Border Security and Management Activities

(OSCE Office in Baku)

Over recent years, the OSCE Office in Baku has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at the



improvement of border security and management in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Office assisted the host Government in developing State programs to reform the border security and management system and to fight trafficking in human beings, and in training Border Guards and Customs Officers. These activities were conducted in interaction with five national institutions responsible for co-ordinating border activities (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Border Service, the State Customs Committee, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of National Security) and in co-operation with the OS/Borders Team, the ODIHR, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the OSCE Mission to Georgia.

In the framework of the co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Georgia, the Office in Baku has organized two cross-border workshops held at the Red Bridge, Georgia on 16 and 17 July

and in Lagodekhi, Georgia on 6 and 7 August 2008.

The workshops were geared toward representatives of border security and management agencies and were focused on strengthening the ability of the customs and border guard agencies to facilitate free and secure movement of people and goods across borders while addressing such threats as trans-border organized crime, terrorism, trafficking in

human beings, narcotics, weapons and commodities related to weapons of mass destruction.

Currently, the Office is in the process of developing and initiating new border related projects aimed at improving the capacity of the Government of Azerbaijan to develop interagency and international co-operation. ■

EU support in the sphere of border security and management in the South Caucasus

(EUSR Border Support Team in Georgia)

The Border Support Team (BST) of the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Caucasus has been operating in Georgia since September 2005. The BST's main objective is to assist the Georgian authorities in developing the conditions for the implementation of a new border management concept based on the European model of Integrated Border Management (IBM).

The BST has continued to provide assistance on border management issues throughout 2006-2008 as the Georgian government continues to make progress in its reform efforts. Georgia's Integrated Border Management Strategy was endorsed in February 2008 and the drafting of an Implementation Action Plan (IAP) is currently in progress. The first draft is to be formally endorsed in 2009. The drafting of rules and regulations in accordance with EU best practices to facilitate technical implementation of the reform process, focusing on border crossing points, is ongoing. Field activities along Georgia's borders continue in order to advise and assist the Georgian Border Police (GBP) in its implementation of EU procedures at the technical level.

Once the IAP first draft has been agreed upon, it will be disseminated for the consideration and comments of all involved ministries. Based on that feedback, a final draft will be elaborated and endorsed within the timeframe of the current BST mandate. In line with the Border Management Strategy, the BST has initiated the facilitation and promotion of co-operation

between border control agencies. For this purpose, at the initiative of the BST, a Joint Working Group, consisting of representatives from the Border Police, the Revenue Service and BST, was established.

In accordance with the Georgian ENP Action Plan and the provisions of the Border Management Strategy of Georgia, the BST and its Georgian counterparts continue to co-operate closely on issues related to Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for border officials. The added value of SOPs for border crossing points is to set common rules, principles and preconditions for the proper functioning of border crossing points through, among others, the efficient processing of lawful traffic and reduced bureaucratic obstacles. From the beginning of its mandate in September 2005, the BST has also provided legal assistance to its counterparts.

The BST State Border Advisers (SBA) have worked closely with GBP regional and sector offices regarding the implementation of EU best practices. Each local unit was assisted by the BST for several weeks. In order to receive feedback from all border regions on the implementation of new "Green Border" SOPs, this type of assistance has been combined with short, tailor-made visits to local units.

A concept for continued assistance in 2009 has been presented to the EU Member States. The new concept is a continuation of current tasks with the aim of completing the team's activities at the beginning of 2010.

The EUSR Border Support Team maintained regular interaction and close co-operation and co-ordination with the OSCE Mission to Georgia. It actively supported the first phase of the TISP Cross Border Workshops by contributing speakers and lecturers. ■