# BORDER SECURITY
# REPORT

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# World Border Security Congress

## 25ᵀᴴ–27ᵀᴴ APRIL 2023
## SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA (BALKANS)

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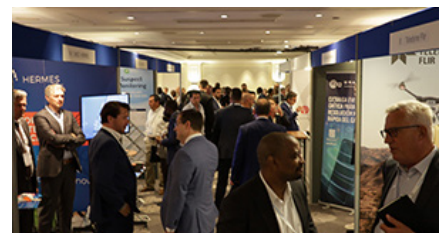
Ranked as the fourth "best reformatory state" out of 178 countries ranked by the World Bank in 2009, North Macedonia has undergone considerable economic reform since independence. North Macedonia has witnessed steady, though slow, economic growth and has implemented policies focused on attracting foreign investment and promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

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The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

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# The drugs business is booming!

When it comes to border security, most of the headlines you will see in the mainstream press revolve around issues of illegal migration. And that is understandable, given that illegal migration has been such an incendiary subject with voters in most Western democracies.

In fact, it could be argued that illegal migration has led to the rise and fall of many a political career and party and was even a key driver in the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. And the issue remains a major dynamic within the political discourse that politicians of all persuasions have to contend with, if they are to stand any chance of gaining or maintaining power.

This inevitably means more time, resources, intellectual and emotional capital, and political energy goes into illegal migration than any other border related issue.

This is of course music to the ears of drug traffickers. Anything that distracts the governments and border authorities creates the opportunity for drug traffickers to grow their business.

Almost every day we watch mainstream news programmes report on migrant related stories, whilst the regular major drug busts go almost unreported (except here at BSR of course).

Whichever side of the debate you sit regarding the subject of 'illegal' migrants, whether it can ultimately be beneficial for the society in which the migrants settle or is inherently bad, I think we would all accept that the consumption of illicit drugs is unquestionably harmful to both individuals and society in general and should solicit much more attention.

According to the UNODC World Drug Report, a staggering 284 million people worldwide, aged 15-64 used drugs in 2020. A 26% increase over the previous decade. Young people are using more drugs, with use levels today in many countries higher than with the previous generation.

Another report, the UNODC Global Cocaine Report says: "The global supply of cocaine is at record levels. Almost 2,000 tons was produced in 2020, continuing a dramatic uptick in manufacture that began in 2014, when the total was less than half of today's levels."

Regular major drugs busts make it sound as though the authorities are winning. And according to the same UNODC report "Interceptions by law enforcement have also been on the rise, at a higher speed than production, meaning that interdiction has contained the growth of the global amount of cocaine available for consumption."

This clearly sounds like good news But, how sure can we be of these numbers? It is difficult, if not impossible to know, because of course, we don't know, what we don't know!

What is true, is that in a volume businesses like illicit drugs, these seizure losses are simply a cost of doing business, in the same way as any legitimate business would suffer business losses. They are a calculated cost within the business model.

So, does the increase in seizures really mean that law enforcement is keeping up with the increased production of cocaine? Or is that 2,000 tons production number incorrect and the real production levels are much higher? Are we therefore kidding ourselves that we are keeping up with production. After all, this is an industry that is very good at hiding its activities.

If overall consumption of illicit drugs is up 26% and the UNODC are right about the cocaine, then it is other drug types that account for the growth, such as heroin, opium, cannabis or methamphetamines. Of 'Meth' and 'ecstasy', a record quantity of over 525 tons was seized in 2020, which represents a 15% increase year on year.

But, whatever your chosen poison, the overall trend is up and should be described as an epidemic.

The social economic and human cost of this trade is enormous.

In the US alone, more than 106,000 people died from drug-involved overdoses in 2021. Almost twice as many deaths as US military deaths in nearly 20 years of the Vietnam war. People with addiction often have associated health issues, such as lung or heart disease, stroke, cancer, or mental health conditions. The direct healthcare costs associated with abuse disorders totals

$118.5 billion annually. The overall annual economic impact of illicit drug abuse is estimated to be and $193 billion per year.

Remember, this is just in the US and does not include the associated crime, violence, deprivation, child neglect, abuse and broken families that are the collateral damage of the drugs trade.

It is therefore incumbent on everyone involved in border security to do everything possible to keep the fight against drug trafficking at the top of the political agenda, and to ensure that it gets the attention and resources it needs!

Join the discussion at this year's World BorderSecurity Congress in Skopje – April 25th to 27th

Tony Kingham
Editor

# PUSHBACKS BETWEEN ILLEGALITY AND NECESSITY

*by Christoph Freiherr von Harsdorf Dipl.-Jur.Univ., Assessor Iuris, Sworn and certified Court Expert, presently Principal Advisor to the Intergovernmental Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), formerly working at Federal Ministry of Interior of Germany and Ministry of Justice of the German Federal State of Bavaria*

**Pushbacks are in the political discussion.** On 7 December 2022, THE LEFT in the European Parliament presented the latest volume of its "Black Book of pushbacks" with some 3,000 pages mapping - what it calls – "systematic violence unfolding at Europe's borders." According to a press statement , *"the four volumes … filled with testimonies of people on the move who were beaten, kicked, humiliated and arbitrarily detained before being illegally pushed back, both at the EU's external borders, and from deep within the territory of its member states."*

The international organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the European

Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Frontex, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI) condemn Pushbacks at borders. The German Government declared „Push-backs will not be tolerated".

Justified ASYLUM claims guarantee special privileges and exemptions from immigration regulations It is at discretion of any migrant to proclaim ASYLUM at any time at any place. Unjustified asylum claims fall under "border protection" and "immigration management". Some confusions arise when press, media and societal discussions mix immigration (control-of-entry) questions with refuge and protection questions, a human-rights issue.

**Asylum is a noble principle and must not be discredited by unjustified Asylum requests.** In Germany, 190.692 requests for Asylum have been presented in 2022, out of which 18 % have been approved as Asylees or Refugees. 25 % of the applicants got subsidiary protection, 13 % did not meet the requirements of Asylum but cannot be readmitted, 22 % of all applications were rejected, 22 % became administratively obsolete.

**The EU Border situation is well known:** 330 000 irregular border crossings were detected in 2022, the highest number since 2016. EU and Schengen associated countries faced unprecedented challenges at their external borders.

States are formed by three constitutive elements: (1) Defined state territory, (2) defined population



on its territory and (3) sovereign state power that exercises a minimum of accepted ruling power. If international recognition as "state" is a pre-condition or rather a consequence of statehood, is discussed controversially.

EU citizens got used to crossing EU and Schengen Zone borders freely and uncontrolled. Children started to believe that state borders exist for the provision of restrooms, snacks, playgrounds and waste disposals.

**Borders however divide state territories according to international law.** As consequence of their sovereignty, states can reject a traveler due to lacking legal requirements. A rejection is per se not a Pushback. A rejection turns legally into a Pushback only if a traveler – any traveler – is not given the chance to articulate a request for Asylum or international protection.

A migrant can successfully proclaim Asylum or international protection or refoulement only for the national

territory she/he is on. Once such request is articulated, a traveler changes her/his legal status, from "migrant" (with or without required documents) to "Asylum- or Protection-seeker".

Where and when Pushbacks happen, they happen on one given state's territory, not on no-man's-land, not on a "vacant" stateless territory between two states. There is no legal vacuum between two states and their territories – independent from border control stations and border controls or accessibility. Borders can cross hills, river, gorges.

In Pushbacks, migrants cross intentionally a state border and are sent back to the state's territory they come from. Pushbacks can happen with or without knowledge of the state they come from and go to. Double (reverse) border crossings, if not permitted by authorities, violate the sovereignty rights of two states: the first state's - due to an un-authorised leaving and re-entering after rejection, and the second

state's - due to an un-authorised entering.

**Asylum is a right related to a state's territory.** No national Asylum authority can process Asylum claims for providing Asylum in another state. Asylum must be claimed for the state the migrant is in. A migrant, being on state A's ground can successfully only claim Asylum in state A and not in any other state. Pushed-back migrants are either in state A or B, never in both and never in none of them. Before leaving state A, they can exclusively claim for Asylum in state A. After crossing into state B's territory – legally or illegally - migrants can only claim successfully asylum in state B. After officially having applied for Asylum, a migrant becomes a registered, recognised Asylum- or Protection-seeker with all corresponding rights.

No one and no law however can prevent an Asylum- or

Protection-seeker from claiming Asylum or Protection in more than one state or more than once. But legally, the Asylum-or Protection-seeker can only be successful with a claim for Asylum in the state she/he is in.

National authorities exercise the power to grant or reject migrants' applications for Asylum or Protection. No national or international authority can grant asylum for territories outside of their jurisdiction. National authorities can and must only process applications for Asylum in and for their own state territory.

**What makes Pushbacks illegal?**

The IOM Glossary of Key Migration Terms does not contain "pushbacks".

**Collective expulsions of aliens are forbidden.** Article 4 of Protocol No 4 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) interdicts

collective expulsions. In various judgments, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has condemned Pushback practices. The Court found a violation of Article 4 of Protocol No 4, when the procedure for expulsion did not consider personal circumstances of each individual (Čonka v. Belgium); when "applicants have been prevented from applying for asylum or international protection" (Sharifi and others v. Italy and Greece); or "when applicants were refused entry into a state territory without giving proper regard to their individual situation" (M.K. and others v. Poland).

**Refoulement is prohibited.** The prohibition of refoulement is enshrined in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Article 33(1) regulates that states are prohibited to expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories, where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion', protecting refugees against being returned to a risk of persecution.

Whereas the 1951 Refugee Convention only applies to refugees, Article 3 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment expanded the scope of its protection to include expulsion, stating that state parties may not 'expel, return ('refoul') or extradite a person [regardless of their legal status] to another State where there are substantial grounds

for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture'.

The principle of Non-Refoulement is also laid down in Article 7 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in Article 3 of the 1984 United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and in Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights.

EU law acknowledges the prohibition of refoulement in Article 78(1) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Articles 18 and 19 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, down to secondary EU law, such as Article 21 of the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), Articles 9, 35 and 38 of the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) and Articles 4(4) and 5 of the Return Directive (2008/115/EC).

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in its judgment of 17 December 2020 (Commission v. Hungary) found that Hungary had failed to fulfil its obligations under the Return Directive. Hungarian police forcibly escorted illegally staying third-country nationals to a strip of land between the border fence and the Serbian-Hungarian border without prior compliance with the substantive and procedural safeguards provided for in that directive.

The Schengen Borders Code Regulation (2016/399/EU) stipulates that third-country nationals who do not fulfil all the entry conditions are to be refused entry to the territories of the Member States (Article 14). In such cases, the authorities must issue a decision stating the precise reasons for the refusal, without prejudice to the special provisions concerning the right to asylum and international protection. The Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) sets out rules on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection, including at the border, in the territorial waters or in the transit zones of the Member States.

**How to turn Pushbacks into legally accepted rejections?**
Applicants must have their applications examined individually, objectively and impartially, be informed in a language they can understand, and have the right to consult a legal adviser and to an effective appeal before a court of tribunal; there are also specific guarantees for vulnerable people. Relevant are the EU Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), the Sea Borders Regulation (656/2014/EU) and the Frontex Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2019/1896). The EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum: The European Commission published on 23 September 2020 a new "Pact on Migration and Asylum", claiming that 'all necessary guarantees will be put in place to ensure that every person would have an individual assessment and essential guarantees remain in full, with full respect for the principle of non-refoulement and fundamental rights'.

**A legally sound Border control mechanism can easier be stablished than Border Control Authorities believe.** Taking fingerprints can be combined with handing out leaflets in all necessary languages with signatures having

received them and wishing to not apply for Asylum or international protection and not being "refouled". Those who however opt for Asylum or international protection claims are taken to Reception Centres. All others are rejected. Photos by mobile phones can be used for documentary purposes.

**Pushbacks are not only illegal, but also inopportune.**

o After being pushed back by just one state at just one state border, rejected migrants do not "disappear" from the region. They are still floating around, trying as many border crossings as necessary to reach their final destinations which is mostly the EU.

o Through Pushbacks, border control authorities miss a great chance to get into contact with migrants, to inform on Asylum and other international protection, on ways to regular migration, on regulations and sanctions.

o Irregular migrants travel frequently – without knowing - through regions with job opportunities. Wine yards in North Macedonia, touristic zones of Albania, fertile soils of Bosnia and Herzegovina, construction sites in Montenegro or the metropolitan area of Belgrade – jobs are everywhere. Pushed back and uninformed migrants pass through safe and prosperous regions without taking notice of opportunities.

o Pushed back migrants cannot disclose special needs, disabilities with the consequence that national authorities cannot offer assistance, cannot identify legitimate demands of vulnerable individuals for protection. Infections and epidemics continue to cross borders without being diagnosed and treated.

o Pushed back migrants cannot report anything tactically valuable, like their intentions and routes, like their victimisations (offences committed towards them by other migrants or by traffickers or by officials), the names and gains of human traffickers, drug offences, terroristic activities, corruption of officials, smugglers, rapists, thieves, forgers of documents.

o Pushbacks ignore and contradict intelligence-led Policing. If data4policy are not available, policy cannot consider them.

o Pushbacks do also not allow Integrated Border Management (IBM).

The securitisation lense and the debate about the legal status of migrants (legal/Illegal, regular/irregular) nebulises the – on the long run - relevant question "How can a migrant – any migrant - become a law- and rightful, productive, loyal and self-sustained member of a guest community?"

1. *https://left.eu/issues/publications/black-book-of-pushbacks-2022/*

2. *'Migrants talk to migrants' is a campaign within the 'WBAware project implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), funded by the European Union (EU) and co-financed by the German Federal Ministry of Interior and Community and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior.*

# New initiative discusses options for tackling organised crime in West Africa



Decisive efforts are needed by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states, the ECOWAS Commission and civil society to deal with the root causes of organised crime, enhance service delivery and work to strengthen community resilience to transnational organised crime. Resolute actions against money laundering and corruption, which enable these illicit markets, are also vital.

These were among the issues discussed at the first Regional Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Addressing Transnational Organised Crime in West Africa. The dialogue was launched in Abuja, Nigeria by ECOWAS Commission and Organised Crime: West African Response to trafficking (OCWAR-T) Project implementing partners.

It provided a platform for ECOWAS member states, the

ECOWAS Commission and affiliated institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), development partners and experts to explore new opportunities to tackle organised crime and enhance community resilience in West Africa.

Despite the significant efforts of ECOWAS member states and civil society, illicit economies linked to human trafficking, drugs and non-renewable resources remain a risk. The illicit trade in counterfeit medicines, methamphetamines and tramadol are reportedly growing in many regions of West Africa, as is the illicit trade of arms which threatens regional stability.

West Africa benefits from significant resilience to organised crime, but the region remains vulnerable to political setbacks, corruption and transnational organised crime. Further, in line with broader global trends, the COVID-19 pandemic has eroded state resilience and granted criminality new opportunities to flourish in West Africa.

The dialogue was also an opportunity for ECOWAS to launch the West African Research Network on Organised Crime. The network is part of the ECOWAS strategy to work with civil society to ensure effective responses to organised crime in line with the ECOWAS Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organised Crimes in West Africa of 2008.

# Burundi: EU allocates €9 million to refugee crisis

The EU has allocated €9 million to assist Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries and those who voluntarily returned home. Since 2020, Burundian refugees – who fled the violence in Burundi in 2015 – have started to return home, but over 300,000 of them still remain in neighbouring Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda.

Out of the total amount of €9 million, €1.5 million will be allocated to projects on disaster preparedness.

All countries in the Great Lakes region are prone to both natural and human-induced disasters, and in 2022 over 75,000 people were internally displaced in Burundi, mainly due to natural disasters.

Over €47 million have already been released to support humanitarian partners in the DRC and the Republic of the Congo, and a Humanitarian Air Bridge has been launched to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the east of the DRC.

# CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH MONITORING REPORT, ENABLING SEAMLESS TRAVEL TO THE EUROPEAN UNIONS

*eu-LISA deliver their conckusions from the Research Monitoring Report*

The legislative, security and technological landscape of international travel has changed considerably in the past two decades, while the number of travellers has almost doubled. These changes have affected the experience of travelling.

However, travel facilitation has been and remains an important goal for most countries. This report provided an overview how the main developments in international travel can support a more seamless and contactless travel experience.

EU regulations, travel industry practices, and new technological solutions can support the alignment of the travel facilitation and security objectives at all steps of the traveller journey, from the application for a visa or a travel authorisation up to the eventual border-crossing. Travel authorisations are undergoing a major revision, particularly due to the EU's ambition to fully digitalise the Schengen visa procedure, which is expected to facilitate the process and reduce associated costs for all involved.

The European Travel Information and Authorisation System, scheduled to enter into operation by November 2023, will also modify the experience for third-country travellers that were previously not required to apply for a travel authorisation when visiting the Schengen Area. However, ETIAS will include functionalities that will support seamless travel, in particular, reducing the risk of refusal at the border crossing points.

In the past couple of years, pre-border checks have gradually become an integral part of international travel, allowing more time for checking the backgrounds of inbound travellers. The entry into operation of EES and ETIAS will have a significant impact on pre-border checks, as international passenger carriers will be granted formal access to the EU's JHA information systems to ensure that their passengers have the right of entry to the Schengen Area.

In particular for EES, the preenrolment of information and of biometric data is expected to be a challenge at first, and the industry has been working closely with Member State border agencies to develop supporting systems and ICT solutions, such as self-service terminals or portable devices that will support the process and mitigate potential queues. Novel concepts and technologies have also been under development to streamline the process of border checks.

Automated border control continues to be an important technology supporting seamless travel, and the concepts of digital identity and digital travel credentials are expected to



*Automated border control at the external border of the Schengen Area: Narva etnry point at the land border crossing between Estonia and Russia*

further accelerate identity verification at the borders. Automated border control continues to be an important technology supporting seamless travel, and the concepts of digital identity and digital travel credentials are expected to further accelerate identity verification at the borders.

In the EU, in conjunction with the deployment of EES, automated border control gates are expected to become widely used for processing all inbound travel from third countries, provided that TCN travellers are in possession of biometric passports, which has the potential to significantly improve their travel experience, especially by reducing queues at ports of entry.

In some use cases, the industry has shown that all these building blocks can be combined to offer a fully seamless and contactless experience to all travellers. However, it bears noting that the most advanced technologies and concepts are often prepared by the

air travel industry for air travel use cases.

While this industry has the necessary resources to contribute to the development of advanced technologies and robust standards, use cases for other modes of transport, such as trains, buses, or people crossing borders in their personal vehicles, remain less studied and researched. On the other hand, some portable devices and new concepts can apply to all types of border-crossings, and the regulatory frameworks are ready to support their use.

Going forward, these use cases must continue to be analysed and further researched in order to come up with novel solutions to cover all types of transport and border-crossings, to avoid the situation where the benefits of seamless and contactless travel are enjoyed only by a select category of international travellers, while others must still wait in long queues to cross a border.

# PORT SECURITY MONITORING AS A BORDER CROSSING POINT IN THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

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The description of state borders nowadays in our region seems to be different from state to state, despite the proximity they may have to each other. This is an obvious factor especially in the case of countries which can be considered as a bridge between outside and inside the European Union. The situation is more complicated when such a state has intersecting boundaries as land, sea and air. In this case the country encounters various problems in border protection. First it will have to protect the illegal entry of refugees coming from war-torn countries or Third World countries and secondly, it will have to ensure the clandestine non-crossing of persons from their country to another country.

Problems encountered at land borders remain difficult geographical terrain in which even border areas, which refugees continue to use as crossing points, endangering their lives. The forecasting and implementation of new technologies has begun to reduce unsafe border areas. Today technology is allowing states to control difficult areas by means of tracking devices. But

is it possible for a state to have every inch of its land border under its control? Practice has shown that even the most technologically advanced countries have the passage of clandestines by land. The same problem can be encountered from maritime borders. Today maritime state borders are also traceable through radars and other marine technological tracking devices. But even in the maritime space, the possibilities of clandestine passage of vessels have not been extinguished, since the techniques for losing the tracing of naval vessels from these devices have also been discovered. In the case of the protection of maritime borders, the tracking of vessels which move clandestinely, is added to another task: Protection and saving of life at sea. In this case, persons trying to cross the border illegally will have to be protected and their lives at sea will be saved. Then there are the problems related to the area of territorial waters in which they were traced and then to the state to which they belong where the repatriation should take place.

The Covid-19 pandemic added new problems to border control modalities. Today there must be ways of control while maintaining a safe distance with the individual. This controls should be performed only with technological equipment and physical contact should be eliminated. Can we have 100% reliability in the technological apparatus for these controls? Various issues are related not only to the reliability in the well-functioning of technology, but to the fact of the massive existence of cybercrime which is also evolving in parallel with

this technology. Also an unresolved issue between border countries is the definition of border areas. And when we are dealing with countries that do not yet have a defined maritime border area, the problem of using natural land and sea resources arises. Crossing with or without consciousness the means that collect these natural resources such as fisheries is also a way of crossing the border illegally and violating the sovereignty of a state. But are they criminals? Does it constitute a criminal precedent especially in cases where maritime boundaries may not yet be defined and how are these cases handled? These are questions that are answered only in internationally recognized practices and relevant conventions. And yet, common international practices can lead to the best use of natural resources by agreeing on security in these maritime border areas. Given the diversity of border issues, inter-institutional cooperation of relevant border control bodies is an essential element which is already

defined in national and international legislation.

A model of inter-institutional cooperation in the protection of state maritime borders is the Security Committee which is a mandatory organization for every international port by the Solas Convention - Chapter XI - International Ship and Port Security Code. Essentially, improving the protection of each state's borders remains co-operation with neighboring states and co-operation with international administrations and organisations.

In accordance with the ISPS code and the law no. 168/2013 "On Security in Ships and Ports", the State Maritime Security Authority, a department of the General Maritime Directorate, has been operating in the Republic of Albania for 13 years. The State Maritime Security Authority is the authority that coordinates the work, monitors the implementation of the law, international codes and conventions for security in the ports of the Republic of Albania and ships with

the Albanian flag. The duties of this authority are:

1- The State Maritime Security Authority is the authority that takes the necessary measures to strengthen the security on ships and in the open ports of the Republic of Albania, as well as guarantees that the measures taken are in accordance with the national law "On security on ships and in ports" and with the ISPS Code.

2. The State Maritime Securiy Authority periodically checks the security exercises at the port terminals according to the security plan to test their response in cases of danger and compiles a detailed

report on the state of the security force after the exercise, also, proposes the measures to be taken for the improvement of the identified problems.

3. The State Maritime Securiy Authority, in implementation of this law, may realize bilateral or multilateral agreements, of a technical nature, with the competent authorities of contracting states, for alternative security measures covering short international voyages, for fixed lines between port terminals of the signatory parties, provided that:

a) these agreements do not affect the level of security;

b) the agreements are subject to periodic review.

4. The State Maritime Securiy Authority carries out periodic effectiveness inspections in the open ports of the Republic of Albania to assess the implementation of the Port Security Plan.

In assistance for monitoring the open ports of the Republic of Albania is the cooperation with the United States Coast Guard. At the end of each visit, the American Coast Guard gives its suggestions for improving Security in the open ports of the Republic of Albania. Today, every open port of the Republic of Albania

has at its disposal a complete infrastructure for monitoring the surrounding perimeter, land and sea border control through human resources and land and sea means. Considering the level of risk that sensitive places like ports and airports carry, the inspection by our authority aims to control port security on the ability to prevent border risks. When we talk about border risks, what is in mind are:

• Attempts to cross the border illegally

Since the middle of 2019, this has been the main risk that most sea borders have faced. The Security Force of the Durrës Port Authority was the department that for about 2 years faced every day an average of 15-20 people, generally from the Middle East, who tried to cross the border illegally. Through the various measures taken by the largest Port in our country, today this number has decreased significantly and is moving towards minimization.

• Contraband or attempted smuggling of narcotics and prohibited substances

This is a problem that is in the center of attention in the meetings of law enforcement agencies on the maritime borders of the Republic of Albania.

• Various activities that constitute a breach of security. As mentioned above, our Authority operates under the International Ship and Port Security Code. For the implementation of this code and the prevention of security violations, our authority coordinates the work with the ports and monitors them for compliance with the Security Plan.

As for the above, they constitute incident reports. Reports of incidents that occur in each port are referred to our authority by the Port Security Officer who must also declare the measures taken by the port security sector, and more specifically by the Security Force or in other words by the Port Police .

All incident reports that refer to the State Maritime Security Authority are collected and placed in a separate database for each port and at the end of the month they are combined for all ports.

At the end of each month we have the exact data on the incidents that happened in each port as well as the measures taken for the problems that each port had. Every six months, our Authority issues specific analyzes on past risks in each port and at this moment new tasks are distributed for each port to prevent the increase of each risk.

The same pattern also exists for compliance inpections. Our authority carries out at least one

inspection for each port every month. Data on port problems are extracted from these controls, and tasks are given by our Authority for the elimination of these deficiencies along with a certain deadline. At the end of 6 months, based on the specific deficiencies found for each port, risk analyzes are built for each port to work harder on eliminating the most numerous deficiencies. Findings of deficiencies are mostly encountered in the perimeter fences of the ports, in the fulfillment of tasks by the Port Security Force as well as in the identification of the most sensitive areas. Special attention is paid to camera surveillance as well as training and exercises organized by the Security Force.

The state maritime security authority is responsible for the security assessment of the port/port facility. Through this evaluation, it becomes possible to follow the procedures for the creation and subsequent approval of the Security Plan, which is approved by the Minister of Infrastructure and Energy. This

whole process is carried out not only through monthly and annual inspections, but also through the risk analyzes mentioned above and the information collected by the port directorate itself.

The Security Committee is another important activity which is the focus of the State Maritime Security Authority. This Committee is organized by the Director of the Port for which it is mandatory once every three months, but its organization can also be requested by our Authority. Representatives of the Border Police, Port Harbour Master, Customs, Security Force, State Maritime Security Authority participate in this committee and, as the case may be, representatives from the Local Government or other law enforcement agency in the port may be requested. In this committee, collaborations are discussed and created for the smooth progress of work for port and border security.

The selection of Security Force employees is another procedure that is presided over by the State Maritime Security Authority. In the selection of port police officers, there is a procedure which includes a theoretical and practical competition. This competition is organized by a commission consisting of the Port Security sector and the State Maritime Security Authority.

In conclusion, the GISIS system. The Global Integrated Shipping Information System is a system through which data on ports, capacity and their level of security are disclosed. In the event that a port loses the right to an international security certificate, this is declared in the Gisis system to inform ships that seek to dock or process at that port.

## 98 tonnes of cocaine seized in WCO-UNODC Operation TIN CAN Tackling organized crime and insider threats exploiting the supply chain

A major joint operation involving customs, police, and other agencies from across the world has cracked down on organized crime and insider threats exploiting the container supply chain.

Under Operation TIN CAN, 58 countries cooperated to carry out 43 arrests and 158 drug seizures, including the seizure of 98,734 kilograms of cocaine and 314 kilograms of cannabis herbals.

The key to the success of this method depends on both access to and insider knowledge about the location of a specific container – one that is often stored amongst thousands of other containers. It also relies upon coordination between insiders at both ends of the transport supply chain.

Operation TIN CAN was organized by the World Customs Organization (WCO), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Australian Border Force in partnership with members of the World Shipping Council.

Importantly, this operation confirmed that the rip on/rip off (or blind hook) concealment methodology is the preferred modus operandi of criminals when moving illegal drugs around the world. Indeed, this modus operandi was observed in 107 reported container cases during the operation, which resulted in seizures of 62,834 kilograms of cocaine. Other concealment techniques were used for the remaining seizure amounts.

## Crackdown on criminal network that produced and distributed methamphetamine in Europe



With the support of Eurojust and Europol, judicial and law enforcement authorities in the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia have taken down an organised crime group (OCG) responsible for the production and distribution of at least 4.7 tonnes of methamphetamine in Europe. During a joint action, 16 suspects were arrested and over

**3.3 million tablets containing raw material for the production of the drug were seized.**

**According to the investigation, the perpetrators used a Romanian company to purchase the precursors (raw materials) and incorporate them into two pharmaceutical products, 50 and 120 milligram tablets of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. They used a formula that allowed them to quickly extract these precursors afterwards for the production of methamphetamine in clandestine laboratories. One of the suspects was partner and director of this company.**

**The tablets produced in Romania were shipped to companies in several European countries that purchased them without having a marketing authorisation in those countries. The tablets did not reach their declared destination, but were sent to various locations in Poland. From there, the shipments were split into smaller quantities and delivered to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where they were distributed to clandestine laboratories.**

## 17 countries join forces to prevent chemical terrorism on European soil

Specialised counter terrorism units from 17 countries worked hand in hand with Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre to restrict access to instructions online on how to use high-risk chemical for terrorist attacks.

A number of chemicals routinely used in industrial processes or professional functions can react upon mixing, producing hazardous substances that could be used to carry out chemical terrorist attacks.

Investigators scoured the clear and dark web to identify and refer for removal propaganda and instructions on the use of high-risk chemicals, and the toxic gases they generate, in terrorist material and online fora.

As a result, over 120 individual pieces of content were referred to 21 online service providers to secure their swift removal.

## 20 suspected money launderers and drug traffickers arrested

A joint investigation supported by Europol has led to the arrest of 20 suspected money launderers and drug traffickers. The operation was led by the Spanish Guardia Civil, with support from the Italian Central Directorate for Anti-Drugs Services (Direzione Centrale Servizi Antidroga), and resulted in the seizure of more than EUR 5.5 million in criminal assets and over 2 tons of drugs.

Based in the South of Spain, the criminal network was composed of Albanian, Italian, Spanish and Moroccan nationals, and was led by Italian nationals who evaded capture using forged identity documents.

## INTERPOL meeting pushes for 'more data, faster results'



Recent INTERPOL-coordinated operations in the Asia region, such as Operation Lionfish against drug trafficking and Operation Haechi-III against social engineering fraud, have highlighted the transnational and fast-moving nature of many regional crime threats.

A key element on the conference's opening day has been the need to strengthen the exchange of actionable intelligence within the region via INTERPOL channels.

"Asia can emerge as a global game-changer for law enforcement," said INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock. "When we listen to this region, sitting at the crossroads of global trade and disruptive technology, we receive new intelligence, new insights.

"It is a simple equation: the more names, the more biometric data, the most passports we have in our databases, the better and faster we will see results on the frontlines," Secretary General Stock added.

INTERPOL's 19 global databases contain more than 125 million records from law enforcement around the world, including data on firearms, stolen works of art, missing persons and foreign terrorist fighters.

## Two arrested for live streaming child sexual abuse

Colombia police have safeguarded three children and arrested their mother and aunt, accused of live streaming the children's sexual abuse for profit.

Australian authorities first brought the case to INTERPOL's attention in December 2022 after finding a video depicting child sexual abuse on the Darknet. The video material was uploaded to INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database, where specialized officers from around the world could consult and analyse it for clues.

One month later, the United States Federal Bureau

of Investigation alerted INTERPOL's Crimes against Children (CAC) unit to the possible identity of one of the offenders, pinning their likely location as Colombia. The CAC unit confirmed their hypothesis, uncovering a number of clues and prepared a comprehensive victim identification report for Colombian authorities.

Upon reception and investigation, Colombia's national police confirmed the location and identity of the children and the two offenders. They found that the mother and aunt had been using specific platforms to produce and sell made-to-order, live sexual abuse video material for 'customers' abroad.

## Fighting crimes against children through collective action

The importance of implementing offender prevention models and support services in each country to prevent child sexual abuse and increase the ability of investigators to prevent harm was high on the agenda.

Discussions also focused on the exponential global increase in sextortion of children, involving the use of blackmail threatening to publish sexual information, photos or videos of a child.  The motivation by offenders in this area can include financial gain, obtaining additional exploitive material or humiliating and inflicting physical or emotional trauma. This type of crime is particularly prevalent against children and young adults who are easily targeted through social media and other online platforms.

The INTERPOL meeting emphasized the devastating impact of sextortion for victims, causing immense emotional distress, social stigma and in some cases, leading to self-harm and increasingly, suicide.

To combat the spread of sextortion, the INTERPOL Specialists Group on Crimes Against Children emphasized the need for individuals and organizations to develop proactive initiatives against these crimes.

## Support programme for cities to respond to challenges of integrating refugees and migrants launched in Poland



With cities often at the forefront of responding to the challenges of integrating refugees and migrants, four major international organisations together with the Union of Polish Metropolises launched the Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities, a series of training courses that draw on their

knowledge and expertise to assist city administrations.

Over the next 18 months, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will offer a series of training courses for staff from a range of local authorities in Poland to address numerous aspects of migrant and refugee integration in cities.

"Integrating migrants is not an option but a necessity – and one that benefits everyone, creating more inclusive and sustainable cities for all," said ODIHR First Deputy Director Kateryna Ryabiko. "Cities are well-placed to understand the needs of the people arriving and what is needed for residents as well as the local labour market and service infrastructure to absorb them."

## Uzbekistan and OSCE Join Forces to Combat Money Laundering

Promoting good governance and combating corruption, money laundering and financing of terrorism are key areas of OSCE activity.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Technical Assistance Plan for Uzbekistan on anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), developed after the publication of the Second Evaluation Report of the EAG Secretariat in 2022. The

report, which aims to bring national AML/CFT systems in line with international standards, identified a number of shortcomings, which the Technical Assistance Plan aims to address. Discussions thus focused on strengthening the host country's capacity to effectively overcome those, especially by identifying areas for better co-operation among donors and providers of technical assistance and defining the timeframe for the implementation of the Plan.

## OSCE supports Moldova in addressing security challenges

The war against Ukraine has directly affected Moldova's public and security sectors, with the authorities facing increasing challenges in addressing the influx of people and goods coming into, or transiting through, the country.

During the visit, OSCE officials met with the Head of the General Police Inspectorate (GPI) and representatives of the General Inspectorate of Border Police (GIBP) as well as several directorates and subdivisions pertaining to analytical analysis, operational management, public order and security, criminal investigation, canine support and anti-corruption. In addition to assessing the capacities of these directorates, the meetings involved field visits to a regional police inspectorate, a visit to the special

police brigade "Fulger", and practical demonstrations of police work.

"It is very important for the police to be a well-trained force, capable of being close to citizens and performing its duties efficiently, and this can be achieved by increasing the level of professionalism of police employees." said Viorel Cernăuțeanu, Head of the General Police Inspectorate of the Republic of Moldova.

## IOM and East and Horn of Africa Governments Renew Commitment on Labour Migration Governance



Labour Ministers representing governments from 11 countries in East and Horn of Africa have today committed to strengthen regional and national collaboration, coordination and advisory structures on labour mobility, gender-sensitive migration governance, and regional Integration for development and economic growth.

In a signed joint progress statement, the Ministers further agreed to strengthen high-level ministerial meetings and Regional and National Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and existing RMFM Technical Working Groups (TWGs) working on bilateral labour agreements, ethical recruitment, migrant workers' rights, skills development and job creation. They also committed to adopting the recommendations of the TWGs on youth employment, return and reintegration of migrant workers, gender and diaspora, private sector engagement, and consular services.

The governments further committed to establish new structures to give gender, private sector engagement, and migrant workers' health, mechanisms for the enforcement of ethical recruitment standards, and promised to continue training private recruitment agencies.

## Venezuelan Refugees, Migrants, and Their Hosts Need Help to Chart a Brighter Future

Nearly 7.2 million Venezuelans have left their country in recent years. The vast majority, 6 million, are hosted by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

While various regularization and documentation initiatives have been implemented in the region, allowing access to vital rights and services for many, the international community needs to continue protecting refugees and migrants from Venezuela and investing in the communities hosting them.

Additional funding is required to support and complement the efforts made by neighboring

countries to provide options and stability to Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their hosts. They must not be left behind amid the numerous humanitarian crises worldwide.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region continue to struggle to meet the most basic needs, including food, health care, education and housing. The increasing cost of living, the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of documentation or regular status, and high unemployment rates have left them particularly vulnerable.

## IOM Statement on the Situation of Migrants in Tunisia

Tunisia's recent announcement to uphold the principled values of eliminating all forms and manifestations of racial discrimination and improve assistance and residence permits for migrants in the country is welcomed. The commitment to combat trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling that can help in countering xenophobia and misinformation about migration, remains a priority for IOM. We urge States, international actors, as well as media to collectively counter harmful and negative rhetoric, hate speech and hate crimes.

IOM reiterates the UN Secretary-General's call to all, to ensure that the dignity and rights of migrants are upheld at all times, everywhere, regardless of their migratory

status, nationality, race, or gender. "Migrants need to be protected everywhere. Migrants have human rights," said UN Secretary General António Guterres. "When I hear political leaders describing migrants in a way that doesn't take into account their dignity and the fact that they are human beings, with human rights, it is something that deeply shocks me. It shocks me in Tunisia, it shocks me in Europe, it shocks me everywhere."



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## Frontex Executive Director and Greek officials agree on cooperation on returns



Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens, Greek Minister of Migration and Asylum, Notis Mitarachi and Minister of Citizens' Protection, Panagiotis Theodorikakos agreed today on a plan to expand the

agency's support in the area of returns.

As part of a dedicated action plan, Frontex will provide additional support to Greece in a number of return-related activities, including reinforced operational and technical support in voluntary and forced returns.

Frontex will also assist in establishing working relations with non-EU countries, and support Greece in identification and counselling of migrants to inform them about the possibilities to return voluntarily to their home countries and receive reintegration support.

"Returns are an essential part of border management, so I am proud that we can provide even more support to Greece in this important area," said Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens.

## Forced Return Monitors Network Meeting: With every person's dignity in mind

The Frontex Fundamental Rights Office hosted members of the agency's pool of forced return monitors and representatives of monitoring institutions from Member States and Schengen Associated Countries, as well as European Union's and key international stakeholders.

It was an opportunity to exchange on the latest developments of forced return monitoring activities of the agency and explore ways on how to strengthen the work in this domain. Their main message is clear:

returns are challenging, but they must always be respectful and humane.

"Return monitors are very much needed. They are there to safeguard the legitimate right of people who are subject to returns," Kalnaja said.

Forced return monitors observe and report on Frontex-supported return operations on the basis of objective and transparent criteria and cover the whole return operation from the pre-departure phase until the handover of returnees in the third country of return.

## Frontex against firearms trafficking

Frontex hosted a meeting in Warsaw dedicated to firearms smuggling from Ukraine following the Russian aggression. It was the first in a series of events focusing on firearms trafficking.

Frontex supports combatting firearms smuggling with several activities, one of them is training. The agency developed a specialised handbook to assist national border and customs authorities in both EU and non-EU countries in reinforcing their operational response against arms-related crime. The meeting was also the opportunity for Frontex to present an addendum to this handbook, focused on weapons trafficking following the invasion. It provides comprehensive knowledge related to firearms, their parts and ammunition, associated documentation, and specifically the phenomenon of

firearm trafficking globally and regionally.

Mikko Martiila, European Firearms Experts Vice-Chair: "Frontex has once again taken the initiative to help national police forces, border guard and customs authorities in their endeavour to fight arms-related crime. This event is an excellent opportunity for us and our partners to share our knowledge on weapons smuggling, discussing particular cases of interest as well as the current cooperation with Ukraine on smuggling counteraction.

# Guardia Civil dismantle criminal organization for defrauding more than 5 million euros from companies around the world through computer attacks



The Civil Guard has dismantled a criminal organization specializing in telematic scams in which 25 people have been arrested and another two investigated that, from different points of geography, attacked companies around the world. Victims have been found in Germany, Australia, Brazil, Cyprus, Scotland, the United States, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, Turkey and Vietnam.

In the operation, nine searches were carried out at homes and commercial offices in the towns of Alicante, Caravaca de la Cruz (Murcia), Fuenlabrada and Parla (Madrid), Seseña (Toledo) and Valencia, in which numerous computer devices have been seized and telecommunications, 54 credit cards and documentation. 42,700 euros have been intervened, between cash and money blocked in the authors' accounts. In addition, 137 bank accounts have been blocked and a total of 400 bank accounts used by the criminal group have been investigated.

The agents have been able to prove the fraud of more than 2 million euros to 23 companies located in 16 different countries, although it is estimated that the total defrauded amounts to 5 million euros and that the number of affected companies can range around 100.

# ICMPD: TEN MIGRATION ISSUES TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2023

*The International Centre for Migration Policy & Development provide an insight into the 10 migrarion issues to look out for in 2023.*

2023 will again be a challenging year for EU migration policy. Below is a non-exhaustive list of trends and developments that will be high on the agenda of decision makers and analysts alike.

## 1. High migration pressures in times of global polycrisis

The world faces a number of crises that interact with increasing velocity and impact, a situation that is described as a state of "global polycrisis". It also marks a turning point in global and European migration history. A new migration environment is shaped by the continued effects of long-term trends and drivers, increasing economic and demographic imbalances, climate change, growing geopolitical competition and the

instrumentalisation of migration as a means of hybrid aggression. It is characterised by growing levels of mobility, both voluntary and forced, both legal and irregular. The EU member states recorded a 64% increase in detections of irregular border crossings in 2022 and a 46% increase in asylum applications in 2022. The EU was not alone in this; other regions of destination observed similar developments. The United States recorded an increase of 41% of cases at its southern border and almost seven times more attempted arrivals by boat than in 2021. There is little to suggest a trend reversal in 2023. Migration pressures will stay high and destination countries will have to deal with flows of refugees and irregular migrants.

## 2. A focus on the Western Balkans and Central Mediterranean migratory routes

In 2022, the Western Balkans Route and the Central Mediterranean Route recorded 75% of all detections of irregular border crossings into the EU. This was caused by increasing migratory pressures in important origin and transit regions due to growing instability and conflict, the economic fallout from the war in Ukraine, the increasing significance of Tunisia as a point of departure alongside Libya, and visa-free access for important nationalities of origin to neighbouring countries and the subsequent attempts to cross into the Schengen Zone. A tightening of visa regimes and route-specific EU action plans in the second half

of the year have the potential to reduce the numbers in 2023 but will not fully outweigh the impact of other powerful drivers shaping migration along the two routes.

## 3. A possible second wave of refugees from Ukraine

Since the beginning of Russia's invasion on 24 February, 7.9 million Ukrainians have fled to Europe and 4.9 million have registered for Temporary Protection or similar schemes in the EU and other European countries. The attacks on critical infrastructure as of October destroyed 50% of the energy system and put immense strains on Ukrainian society but did not result in significant numbers of people leaving. 18 million Ukrainians, however, are considered in urgent need of humanitarian support inside the country. Host countries have to anticipate scenarios of increasing and perhaps sudden inflows of Ukrainian refugees in 2023. The different scenarios range from 500,000 to 4 million persons and contingency plans must prepare for

such high numbers.

## 4. The labour market integration of Ukrainians and exit strategies from temporary protection

The Ukrainian refugees who arrived last year will start to enter into employment more strongly in 2023. Positive labour market outcomes require more targeted support in the areas of language training, childcare, skills acknowledgement and on-the-job training. This challenges host countries' systems with a shorter immigration tradition and less experience in integration policies. At present there is little hope for an early end to hostilities. This should, however, not prevent a discussion on the necessary steps to exit from temporary protection in a well-prepared way. Temporary protection will be extended until March 2024. This will give sufficient time to consider what is necessary in developing post-temporary-protection strategies and to develop an approach that is thoroughly coordinated between the member

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states but also with the Ukrainian authorities who have a strong interest in the return of their citizens as soon as hostilities end.

## 5. The work on instruments to address the instrumentalisation of migration

The EU will have to deal with attempts to instrumentalise migrants as a means of hybrid aggression in 2023 too, as confirmed by the Russian government announcing that flights will be launched from North Africa and the Middle East to the exclave of Kaliningrad, which borders the member state Poland and easily serves as a springboard for irregular movements towards the EU. The EU's draft Instrumentalisation Regulation, initiated in 2021 and intended to serve as a main instrument addressing instrumentalisation, did not find a majority at the Interior Ministers Council in December, also driven by concerns about a weakening of the Common European Asylum System standards. It will be important to revisit the regulation and continue the work on commonly agreeable instruments in 2023, keeping in mind that instrumentalisation is likely to continue, requiring coherent responses from the EU together with its partners in regions of origin and transit.

## 6. The debate over visa regimes in the EU and beyond

In 2022, irregular arrivals and new asylum applications in the EU (other than Ukrainians) comprised, in



their majority, applicants from war- and conflict-ridden countries. But they also included a considerable share of nationalities with very low prospects for a positive decision on their claims who at the same time benefited from visa-free or facilitated access to EU member states or neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, Serbia has committed to tightening its visa regulations, the recently launched European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) should help to identify irregular migration risks linked to specific origin countries, and the newly concluded migration and mobility partnerships will facilitate legal migration but also enhance the cooperation on preventing irregular migration. In view of the high attention paid to irregular migration and asylum in the political debate, the review of existing visa regimes will, however, stay high on the political agenda also in 2023.

## 7. The effects of the global supply and cost-of-living crisis on migration

It is difficult to identify soaring living costs or food insecurity as single factors stimulating migration flows but, when seen in conjunction with other factors, their relevance is not contested either. The increase in irregular migration flows observed in Europe and other world regions in 2022 is at least partly attributed to factors related to living costs, food insecurity and climate events. Against this backdrop, the extent to which the international community pays attention to related developments and the degree to which the countries of the global north provide support to the countries most affected by higher food prices, boosting food production and making agricultural sectors more resilient will be an important factor in controlling irregular migration flows in 2023.

**8. Economic downturn, labour shortages and the discussion on legal migration channels in Europe**

The debate over shortages on European labour markets continued throughout 2022 despite the economic uncertainties resulting from the war in Ukraine. Almost all European countries reported a lack of skilled workers and labour shortages across most sectors. Around six million jobs were waiting to be filled throughout the year. As fallout from the war in Ukraine, the EU economy will be weak in 2023. GDP growth is forecast to reach only 0.3% and inflation will remain high at 7.0%. The outlook on labour markets, however, is less pessimistic. Unemployment rates should rise moderately from 6.2% in 2022 to 6.5% and employment growth is expected to increase again in 2024. It is therefore quite

likely that the reduced labour market demands due to the economic downturn will not outweigh the structural labour force losses due to demographic change. Labour migration issues will stay on the European agenda in 2023.

**9. A growing number of migration partnerships between EU member states and non-European partners**

Not least because of growing labour supply needs, European governments have stepped up their efforts to actively recruit workers in countries of origin or to enter into comprehensive migration and mobility partnerships in 2022. Portugal concluded agreements on employment and residence of workers with India and Morocco, while Germany and India signed an Agreement on Migration and Mobility, intended as a model for further agreements in this field. India has concluded similar agreements with Finland, France and the United Kingdom and will sign one with Austria as well. A main benefit of these agreements is that they do not solely focus on the labour market needs of destination countries, but ensure a broad political basis for cooperation on training issues, migrants' rights, combating illegal migration and ensuring the return and reintegration of illegally staying migrants. In 2023, it will be interesting to see how much the numbers of such agreements will grow and how quickly they

will move to the level of practical implementation.

**10. The last opportunity to finalise the Pact on Migration and Asylum**

In September 2020, the European Commission presented the so-called New Pact on Migration and Asylum, supposed to initiate a fresh start in the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The pact included a number of legislative proposals that were contested from the beginning due to long-standing disagreement among Member States over fundamental directions of the CEAS. There has been considerable progress since then but divisions persist. Next year will provide the final opportunity to complete the work and to agree the pact or at least some of its legislative proposals before the next European elections in 2024. It remains to be seen whether the extraordinary European summit in February, devoted to important migration issues and the approval of the pact, will achieve a final breakthrough.

## Transit and transportation department seized 180 kilos of marijuana



The seizure of the narcotic and the capture of the person were carried out at a checkpoint developed by the uniformed officers whose purpose was to generate prevention and control activities for road users.

On the La Libertad-Fresno bridge road, km 7+150, road controls allowed detecting a vehicle that covered the Palmira-(Valle) - Bogotá route, model 1983,

black color for public service, with a van-type body that through the cove modality It had 41 rectangular brown packages, inside which contained transparent hermetically sealed bags with the drug known as marijuana according to the Approved Preliminary Identification Test (PIPH), a total of 180 kilos of marijuana with a commercial value of 167 million pesos.

While the uniformed officers of the traffic section verified the regulatory vehicle documentation, a van-type vehicle entered the checkpoint and after verifying the documentation, the uniformed officers asked the driver to open the gate to check the load.

Once said gate was opened, a characteristic smell of marijuana came out from the inside; reason for which they carried out the inspection finding on the roof of the truck, the packages that contained the narcotic.

## Gendarmes detect a parcel with 1,283 illegally transferred ammunition



When inspecting the load of the vehicle, members of the Colastine Road Safety Section, dependent on the Santa Fe Norte Nucleus Squad, uniformed officers were alerted by the weight and size of a package, for which they reported the fact to the General

Prosecutor's Office of the Public Prosecutor's Office .

Consequently, the officials proceeded to open the parcel, verifying that it was carrying two boxes with a total of 1,133 22 Long caliber ammunition, as well as another three boxes with 150 22 Magnum caliber ammunition.

By order of the intervening Magistrate, the personnel of the Force seized the projectiles, for being in violation of Law 20,429. They remained in the custody of the Santa Fe Police, while the driver of the transport continued his itinerary, after providing the corresponding witness statement.

## Counter-terrorism 'rhetoric' used to justify rise of surveillance technology: human rights expert



Some countries and private companies are using "counter-terrorism and security rhetoric" to justify a major increase in the deployment and use of cutting-edge surveillance technology, with no regulation, and at an "enormous cost" to human rights, said an independent UN expert.

In a report to the latest session of the Human Rights Council, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, warned of an alarming increase in the use of "intrusive and high-risk technologies", according to a press release issued by the UN human rights office (OHCHR).

This includes drones, biometrics, artificial intelligence (AI) and spyware, which is being ramped up in the ongoing fight against terrorism, without due regard for the rule of law, governance and human rights, she said.

**Exception becoming the norm**

"Exceptional justifications for the use of surveillance technologies in human rights 'lite' counter-terrorism often turn into mundane regular use," said Ms. Ní Aoláin, pointing to the impact on fundamental rights such as freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and the right to privacy.

"There must be a pause in the use of intrusive high-risk

technologies until adequate safeguards are in place," she said.

The Human Rights Council-appointed independent expert expressed concern about the growing domestication of the use of drones in several countries, the widespread misuse of spyware technology against civil society groups, dissidents and journalists, and the increasing adoption of biometric data collection.

**'Unregulated transfers' must end**

"The unregulated transfer of high-risk technologies to States engaging in systematic human rights violations must end," the Special Rapporteur said. She urged authorities to more effectively regulate companies involved in the transfer of surveillance technologies abroad.

"In the absence of regulation, the cost to human rights can only increase with no end in sight," Ms. Ní Aoláin said.

**Global ban on 'killer robots'**

She joined the call for a global ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems and highlighted the specific obligations of the various UN counter-terrorism bodies to ensure that any guidance and advice provided on new technologies is fully consistent with the UN Charter, and international law.

Instead, she presented to the Council in her new report a new and innovative approach to regulating spyware, which would focus on ensuring that "minimum human rights standards" are applied, by both governments and companies, in the development, use and transfer of high-risk surveillance technologies.

## Increasing Arrivals of Rohingya Boats



The number of Rohingya refugees arriving in South-East Asia via sea and land routes has increased exponentially in recent months. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded almost 3,300 arrivals in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in 2022, marking roughly a 290 per cent increase compared to around 850 arrivals in 2021.

As the increase in arrivals continues in 2023 – with nearly 300 in January, alone – IOM is scaling up its operations in the region to provide vital humanitarian assistance.

In Indonesia, where most of the arrivals have been recorded, IOM is working closely with the government, NGO partners and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to facilitate access to basic services. IOM has provided protection, health services – including mental health-, in addition to refurbishing temporary shelters and ensuring water supply, access to food, sanitation and waste management.

Additionally, our teams are conducting information sessions in Rohingya language to support the refugees in identifying the risks linked to human smuggling and trafficking, gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.

# SOME BORDER CROSSING POINTS ARE MORE INTERESTING THAN OTHERS?

*By Roni Tidhar, Head of Cyber Security & Int'l Consulting Services, IAA's {Israel Airports Authority)*

Border protection is a tricky business. On one hand every country wants to supervise to the highest level of security and confidence that its sovereignty is kept, its society is protected (immigration), its policies maintained and executed, its laws are in power (Criminal, Anti-Terrorism and more), and its financial interests are met via customs regulations and monitoring and smuggling prevention (In & Out - human trafficking, wildlife, national assets and treasures, etc.). It is tricky because it involves some-to-many stakeholders, most works for

the crown, but some stake holders are public or even private operators, and we all rely on multi supplier chains with their imbedded possible gaps and risk on influencing the reliability of systems.

On the other hand – we are in need to supply best service for users and clients, and hopefully that the travel experience and ambience will be inviting, instead of intimidating…

The headache includes physical systems over ride, or even digital involvement. Criminal organization are targeting border security.

Including pedestrian int'l crossings or commercial motorized activity, and look for cyber jeopardy of IT/OT systems. To gain access in a border they invest accordingly, including recruiting or manipulating employees working in those sites and junctions. If it wasn't complicated so far, lets add some more spice to that by bringing some examples for international border crossings facilities that share different states and jurisdictions.

When we travel through international border crossing facilities, usually we are accustomed to departing a terminal in an origin state and landing/docking/arriving at another terminal controlled and operated by the destination's jurisdiction. You leave one country to end in another – this is the common practice, globally. But, there are some unique exceptions to the 'standard model', that proves that border intersections can work in cooperation, keeping each country's border secured and autonomous, and even with some economic advantages.



*Source: Oktay Cetintas, Deputy COO EuroAirportBasel-Mulhouse*

The most prominent example lies at the triangle of borders between Switzerland / France / and Germany – "EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg" (BSL). The exact geo-location is on France's soil north to Saint Louis commune that borders at 3km from the airport with Swiss town of Basel. The airport sits a mere 2.5km distant from the Rhine River that marks the border with Germany, just in the heart of Europe.

The location serves travelers from and to these three states' neighboring provinces, in which the major cities are represented in EoroAirport's name Basel (SC)

– Mulhouse (FR) – Freiburg (DE).

It was inaugurated on May 1946, a year after WW2 ended in Europe, as a joint venture between France (providing land) and Switzerland (to build runways & terminal). During previous century 50's, a Swiss customs-free 2.5km road was constructed to link the city of Basel directly (as a 'corridor') to signify its shared jurisdiction (supported by later 1949's bilateral treaty signage). In 1987 the 'triumvirate' brand was completed when Germany was added with some airport management responsibilities (due to being a significant market share of travelers).



*Breaking ground 1946*
*Source: EuroAirport company presentation*



*Today*

*Source: Oktay Cetintas, Deputy COO EuroAirportBasel-Mulhouse*

Taking into consideration that a passenger can buy air ticket from origin airport to either BSL or MLH or EAP destinations, but will land eventually in the same EuroAirport – is tricky enough (including fare differences, multi-lingual service providers, and even different labor laws governance implications )… but there are some more operational coordination that influences the travel experience.

Although the airport lies entirely on French territory, the airport is actually split to 2 sections, where Switzerland enjoys some extraterritorial rights (set up in the special bilateral treaty which makes Euroairport, to many affects and purposes, a Swiss airport as well as a French one) . These allow Swiss rules customs, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and policing within the Swiss part while French laws apply on the rest of the airport, introducing unique authorization to French policing to perform random checks in the Swiss part as well.

The airside of the airport is arrange to accommodate Schengen traffic as well as other activity. French & Swiss Immigration officers are deployed 'shoulder to shoulder' to service non-Schengen visitors according to their due destination (the responsibility of passengers is to approach the correct border control agent in differing uniforms, according to their granted entry visa to EU or SC) . With dual customs checkpoints to ensure relevant national regulations, and with French police in overall responsibility for the airport's security, assisted by the airport's civilian aviation security team.

Preforming aviation and/or border security, immigration supervision and customs regime in multi-national facility is a challenging than usual. We all want to control all

aspects that constitutes homeland security (HLS) in our domain, and here we see an example of need to adopted and share while keeping national interest. In order to achieve this, a delicate balance should be kept amongst the Board of Directors or Executive Committee (or any other form of directorate) to create exactable 'check & balances' mechanism, in which every stakeholder gain responsibilities, and periodical rotation are performed, so leadership and control are shared (hopefully) equal . In BSL case it is eight French Directors and eight Swiss, and since the 1980'S the German authorities have also been represented at some of the airport's governance organs - represented by nine members of Tripartite Consultative Committee (Beirat), with an advisory board and more nearby cantons and communities representatives.

This tripoint facility proves it can be done. Achieve modern security and border and customs controls and supervisions, while allowing economically prosperity and travel experience, to just shy over 10 million customers in 2022.

Not that far from there, Geneva Airport (GVA) is also interesting case study. It lies almost completely on Swiss soil, yet, the runway actually "invades" France's borderline. This dilemma was sorted out by another international treaty

between the two nation-states (from 1960's), agreeing on territorial equal land-swap, while granting France a sector in the airport. A designated road allows direct access to French nationals to go domestic (pier F) without "entering" Swiss territory or customs at all. French customs officers are deployed in the airport with the Swiss, to ensure no breech of EU regulations, while security is the solely Swiss by nature.

Yet, not all potential innovative cooperation to join forces necessarily works. In Gibraltar Int'l Airport (GIB), the plan to have Spain's terminal sided to the local British one did not come through eventually. Later, it became even more complex with UK brexiting the EU. Achieving airspace agreements to include joint operations, settle border and customs requirements and related security supervision necessary between Gibraltar/UK/Spain/EU regulations is yet to be seen.

In Israel, after signing the peace treaty with Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1994, there was a plan to develop a joint modern international airport to replace Eilat's (IL) and Aqaba (AQJ) airports which lie some 5km apart with a border line dividing. Arguable political and security constrains led the Israeli side to build a new R&R Int'l Ramon Airport (ETM) a few kilometers north. A miss, no doubt for collaboration efforts.



*Photo: AP*

Looking at other continents we can identify a great example on US southern border in San-Diego (TJX), where Cross Border Xpress (CBX) elevated bridge offers a walk across the border to passengers processed through Mexican customs and immigration check points, and then to check-in and pre-boarding security. Passengers arriving from international flights to TIJ can cross to US soil with passports and proper I-94 / Visa, and will go through Customs & Border (CBP) scrutiny processes. Each country is responsible for security aspects in its border side of the connected terminal.

Going north, on the US/Canada border some airfields are actually located on/cross the official line of the 49th parallel. Operating these small facilities (some unpaved or gravel runway) evidently considered as port of entry with applicable formalities and even considered

international, accessible from to states and offering some customs services. Between them we can name: Washington's Avey Field, Montana's Del Bonita/Whetstone International Airport, Coronach/Scobey Border Station Airport, Coutts/Ross International Airport, North Dakota's International Peace Garden Airport, and Minnesota's Piney-Pinecreek Border Airport.

In Europe, the Schengen treaty, trains running between different member countries to ride without actual stop for passport inspection, as I experienced personally few weeks ago, when the voice announcements for next station has changed mentioning that we crossed from Germany to Swiss territory. So the train operates as agreed joint jurisdiction platform.

To summarize, Border security is challenged by many threats scenarios and consists of several defense measures that are in need

of tight coordination. Usually, in order to coordinate such efforts, common national laws, regulations, and even social aspects like same language, values, mentality, and national pride. Here I brought some unique case studies of different models of collaboration and coordination between states working together for same mission.

## Parliamentarians affirm importance of cooperation on border security



With smugglers considering Switzerland as a business model, the country's authorities are experiencing an influx in the number of illegal entries, thus bringing to light the need to tighten the entry rules and impose stricter border controls.

The German Police Union (DPolG) also emphasised the need to tighten border controls in Switzerland.

A report provided by the Schwabische revealed that

in the past two months alone, the number of illegal entries between Lake Constance and Basel increased sharply. Of the 7,587 unauthorised entries that the federal police registered in January, a total of 1,410 were registered in Switzerland, SchengenVisaInfo.com reports.

The figures show that this is hardly less than the 1,466 people who were arrested coming from Austria, while the Austrian-German border has been a migration hotspot since 2015.

In addition, authorities in Switzerland have revealed that the number of detections at the German-Swiss border has quadrupled from 2,512 registered in 2021 to 10,472 recorded last year. Such figures show that detections at the German-Swiss border have surged significantly.

"Smugglers have discovered Switzerland as a business model," the head of the German Police Union (DPolG), Ralph Kusterer, pointed out in this regard.

## BOC Zamboanga intercepts P4.9-M worth of undocumented cigarettes

The Bureau of Customs Port of Zamboanga (BOC-POZ) intercepted one unit of motorized wooden watercraft "Jungkong" loaded with 141 master cases of undocumented cigarettes estimated to be valued at PHP 4.9 million.

A joint apprehending team composed of BOC-POZ Enforcement and Security Service (ESS) and Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) personnel with the PNP 2nd Zamboanga City Mobile Force Company (2nd ZCMFC) conducted a seaborne patrol operation along the vicinity waters of Barangay Arena Blanco in Zamboanga City and intercepted the watercraft carrying the illicit goods.

The watercraft, manned by four (4) crew members from Parang, Sulu, originated from Jolo, Sulu, and was bound for Zamboanga City.

Crew members failed to present legal documents for the alleged smuggled cigarettes and the transport of goods to Zamboanga City.

The master cases of cigarettes were apprehended in violation of Section 117 of R.A. 10863 or the "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA) of 2016 in relation to Executive Order Number 245 entitled "Amended Rules and Regulations Governing the Exportation and Importation of Leaf Tobacco and Tobacco Products."

# AGENCY NEWS AND UPDATES

**E**U helps Bulgaria and Romania to protect borders against migrants



The European Commission has announced two pilot projects with Romania and Bulgaria aimed at stopping irregular migration at the EU's external borders.

"Strengthening the external borders with enhanced surveillance measures to be implemented at the Bulgaria-Turkey border is a key priority," stated the EU Commission as it announced the 'pilot project.

The project will use a multidisciplinary approach to strengthen border control, including deploying cameras, vehicle patrols and watchtowers to monitor the movement of migrants.

As well as increasing border protection

it will mean "fast asylum procedures and more effective returns [of migrants]," said European Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson.

**D**HS's new Operation Blue Lotus has already stopped more than 900 pounds of fentanyl from entering the United States

DHS announced that Operation Blue Lotus, a new coordinated and surge operation targeting the smuggling of fentanyl, stopped more than 900 pounds of fentanyl from coming into the United States in its first week. Led by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and working with federal, state, tribal and local partners, DHS is investing additional personnel, technology, and other resources along the southwest border to detect and seize this dangerous drug at and between ports of entry.

The operation, exemplary of the Biden Administration's multi-pronged

strategy, includes an increase in targeted inspections conducted by CBP Officers and HSI Agents, canine units, and advanced technology at locations along the border. Intelligence gained through Operation Blue Lotus will enhance the targeting of drug traffickers at the border. It is designed to help continue to build criminal cases against the transnational criminal organizations behind the networks and facilitators dealing in this deadly substance.

**B**order Patrol Agents Seize Nearly $1 Million in Cocaine

U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to the Newton-Azrak station arrested two men when agents found 73 pounds of cocaine inside their vehicle.

The incident occurred when agents patrolling Interstate 15 conducted a vehicle stop on a Jeep Liberty near Murrieta. While questioning the 31-year-old driver and 42-year-old passenger, an agency K-9 alerted to the Jeep.

# BORDER SECURITY REPORT



Agents searched the vehicle and discovered 30 wrapped packages inside two duffle bags in the rear passenger seat. The brick-shaped packages tested positive for cocaine. The narcotics have an estimated street value of $991,500.

## Man charged after tins filled with cocaine rather than fruit found in £1.75m police probe



Officers had been investigating the attempted importation of cocaine with a potential street value of around £1.75m.

Derick Everton Grant, who is originally from Jamaica, is the director of a food importation company which allegedly arranged the shipment of 10 pallets of ackee - the national fruit of the Caribbean nation. It was being important to Portbury Dock in Bristol, UK.

When Border Force officers searched the shipment they identified a number of boxes in which the tins were filled with cocaine rather than fruit. The tins contained a total of 22kg of cocaine.

## Italy Seeks Meeting With Slovenia, Croatia, on 'Balkan Route' Migration

As the number of migrants arriving in Rijeka, Croatia, near the Slovenian and Italian borders, rises to some 200 a day, Italy has called for a three-way Italian-Slovenian-Croatian meeting in Rome to discuss ways to tighten border controls.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajanion on Friday announced that a meeting will be held "in Rome in the coming weeks with Slovenia and Croatia to find a form of collaboration regarding the [migrants'] 'Balkan route'."

The announcement followed a meeting in Ljubljana between the Italian minister and his Slovenian counterpart, Tanja Fajon, where the two discussed migration.

Italy has been talking for months about a "high-level meeting" on the so-called "Balkan route" of migration to address an issue that the right-wing Rome government has been prioritizing without success since it came to power following September 2022 elections.

## Poland says over 10.5M people crossed into country since beginning of war in Ukraine

More than 10.5 million crossed into Poland since the beginning of the Russian assault on Ukraine last February, Polish authorities .

With the crossings of over 22,500 people from Ukraine to Poland on Sunday, the number of crossings from Ukraine to Poland since Feb.24, 2022, exceeded 10.5 million, Polish Border Guard wrote on Twitter.

During the same period, on the other hand, over 8.6 million people crossed from Poland for Ukraine, it added.

## 37 foreign citizens found hiding in vehicles at the Romanian border



a Georgian citizen and a Turk, driving a van and a vehicle, presented themselves for border formalities on the way out of the country road registered in Poland and Turkey. According to the documents accompanying the goods, the drivers were transporting pallets and metal for commercial companies in Austria.

Based on the risk analysis, the border police carried out a thorough control of the means of transport. A total of 37 foreign citizens were discovered hidden in the cargo compartment, respectively in the storage crates on the sides of the semi-trailer .

The persons were picked up and transported to the headquarters of the sector for investigations where, following checks, our colleagues established that they are citizens of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, who entered Romania legally.

## Iraq-Iran Strengthen Border Security, Signs Deal in front of Iraqi PM



A border security assignment has been signed by Iraq and Iran as the Iraqi officials claim that this could strengthen the frontiers with the Kurdish region. A vulnerable space as the Khurdish armed forces pose a threat as per Tehran and "can completely and fundamentally end the vicious actions of these groups."

The deal was signed by the Supreme National Security Council Secretary, Ali Shamkhani, with the National Security Advisor of Iraq, Qasim al-Araji, in front of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al-Sudani.

The Iraqi Prime Minister's Office gave out a statement that said that this agreement is necessary for "protecting the common borders between the two countries and consolidating cooperation in several security fields."

An Iraqi security official who was present at the signing stated, "As part of the security agreement, Iraq guarantees that no armed groups will be able to breach the border with Iran through its territory in the Iraqi Kurdish region."

## Laos and Cambodia agree to step up border security



The Lao and Cambodian governments have agreed to continue cooperation in the field of security, and in particular to strengthen joint security operations around the borders of their neighbouring provinces.

General Vilay Lakhamfong and Samdech Krolahom Sar Kheng chaired the 2023 bilateral security cooperation meeting, which was attended by high-ranking delegations from Laos' Ministry of Public Security, Cambodia's Ministry of Interior, and leaders from Lao and Cambodian provinces that share borders, including Champassak and Attapeu.

Although planned meetings between the two sides had not been able to take place last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the two delegations praised the positive spirit and strong cooperation between relevant officials at all levels, especially those in bordering provinces of Laos and Cambodia.

This cooperation had led to the maintenance of peace and order and problems had been solved amicably, helping to strengthen neighbourly relations.

## Belarus tightens border with Poland after 'terrorist' shot

Belarus has stepped up security along its border with Poland after security forces killed a foreigner in the region who allegedly was planning a terrorist attack, the Belarusian human rights group Viasna said.

The Belarusian KGB security agency said the alleged terrorist was killed in a shootout in the city of Grodno, just east of the Polish border. It did not identify the suspect's nationality or give other details, but said its officers along with police and border guards were conducting "special operations" in the city.

Border guards were intensely inspecting vehicles and luggage and scrolling through mobile telephones at the Kazlovichy border crossing with Poland, Viasna said.

## Indo-Tibetan Border Police Seizes Naxal Dump, IED Components



The 44th Battalion of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) recovered a naxal dump, including IED components, country-made weapons, wireless sets, medicines, etc., in a search operation in the Kotuljhar jungles of District

Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki in Chhattisgarh.

During the operation the naxal dump that was found by ITBP had all the fatal components which could have been used for various missions.

## Border agents arrest 16 people on FBI's terror watchlist at Mexico crossing

Nearly 70 non-US citizens on the FBI's terror watch list have been caught trying to illegally cross the country's southern border since October — a disturbing trend that appears set to easily beat last year's alarming figure.

There were 16 such people listed in the Terrorist Screening Database who were encountered attempting to illegally enter the US from Mexico in February alone, according to new data released by Customs and Border Protection.

The total number of the illegals who were on the terror watch list and stopped at the southern border since Oct. 1, the start of the CBP's fiscal year 2023, is now at 69, authorities said.

## BOC-Subic apprehends 'smuggled' sugar valued at P86-M

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) Port of Subic, through the BOC Intelligence Group (IG) headed by Deputy Commissioner Juvymax R. Uy and Enforcement Group (EG) headed by Deputy Commissioner Teddy Sandy S. Raval, apprehended thirty (30)

20-footer containers of misdeclared sugar from Hong Kong with an estimated value of PhP 86 million.

Derogatory reports from the IG and EG led to the issuance of Pre-Lodgment Control Orders by District Collector Maritess T. Martin against the 30 5×20' containers declared to contain slipper outsoles and styrene butadiene rubber but suspected to carry refined sugar.

BOC officers conducted a non-intrusive examination and 100% physical examination, which yielded 15,648 bags/sacks of Refined Sugar. The assigned examiner recommended the issuance of a Warrant of Seizure and Detention.

## Law Enforcement Stops Yola with 3,051 Pounds of Cocaine

US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO), along with federal, state and local law enforcement, intercepted today a vessel transporting 3,051 Pounds (1384 Kilograms) of cocaine, arresting three non-citizens from Venezuela near Palmas de Mar, in the islands' eastern coast. The estimated value of the contraband is approximately $ 32 million.

The crew of an AMO Coastal Interceptor vessel located a lights-out vessel traversing at high speed. The unit lost sight of the vessel and requested assistance from a U.S. Coast Guard Bull-17 aircraft.

The USCG aircraft located the vessel 10 miles off the coast of Humacao, Puerto Rico, maintaining surveillance to assist the AMO Marine unit and a Puerto Rico Police FURA Marine and Intelligence units.

## BOC Intercept Illicit Cigarettes Worth P19-M

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) – Port of Davao recently seized 499 master cases consisting of 24,950 reams of illicit cigarettes with an estimated value of Php 19 million and a used motorized banca along the territorial waters of Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

The BOC Water Patrol Division (WPD) was patrolling the gulf of Davao Coast when it sighted a low-lying kneel banca "MV Amiesha" and its cargo covered with tarpaulin. Upon inspection, crew members failed to present legal documents for the alleged smuggled cigarettes.

# CANADA LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TARGETING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE: PROJECT ANTON

*By Barry MacKillop, Deputy Director, Intelligence, Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada*

Canada's financial intelligence unit, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), recently helped launch Project Anton, a new international public-private partnership aimed at improving awareness and understanding of the global threat posed by illegal wildlife trade, and targeting the laundering of proceeds from this despicable crime domestically and internationally.

Project Anton is led by Scotiabank in Canada and supported by The Royal Foundation's United for Wildlife network, which was founded by Prince William, FINTRAC, AUSTRAC's Fintel Alliance in Australia, the South African Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task

Force, the United Kingdom Financial Intelligence Unit, Western Union and numerous other government, law enforcement and non-governmental organizations in Canada and around the world with unique knowledge, expertise and tools in combatting illegal wildlife trade.

**The devastating impact of the illegal wildlife trade**

Wildlife crime refers to the trade of wild plant and animal species in contravention of national and international laws and regulations. Wildlife crime can include commercial, import, export, and re-export activity and can occur at any stage in the supply chain, including but not limited to sales, delivery, transport, purchase, and possession of protected species of flora and fauna. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulates the legal wildlife trade and ensures the protection of animal and plant species from over-exploitation and poaching.

Illegal wildlife trade is a major and growing threat to the global environment and biodiversity, imperilling endangered species already on the edge of survival, and threatening fragile habitats, communities and livelihoods. It has been estimated that 55 African Elephants are poached on the African continent every day. In Canada, bears are killed for their bile, paws and other parts, which are then sold for a large profit

domestically and internationally. Moose, wolves, reptiles and narwhals, among others, are also considered species at risk for the Canadian illegal wildlife market.

Illegal wildlife trade can also have significant public health impacts, as the circulation of animal parts increases the chances of disease transmission and can be a path for future pandemics. According to the World Health Organization, close to 75 percent of emerging infectious diseases over the past three decades that have affected humans originate in animals. Illegally sourced and traded wildlife lacks sanitary measures and increases the risk of human infection.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, has identified illegal wildlife trade as a major transnational organized crime, which generates billions – some

have estimated approximately 20 billion (USD) – of criminal proceeds each year.

According to the Wildlife Justice Commission, illegal wildlife trade is considered a lucrative, low risk and high reward criminal activity, and often involves fraud schemes, tax evasion and other serious crimes that facilitate the illicit enterprise. The Commission has also found that organized crime groups involved in wildlife crime are often involved in other domestic and internationally connected criminal activity such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, firearms trafficking and money laundering.

Corruption is one of the most important facilitators of illegal wildlife trade and enables every stage in the illegal trade chain from poaching and illegal harvesting through to transportation, processing and export, to sales and the laundering of proceeds.

A 2020 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime highlighted that suspected illegal wildlife traffickers from 150 countries had been identified, illustrating that wildlife crime is a transnational issue. This demonstrates the importance of establishing a committed global network of public and private sector entities to combat this appalling crime.

**Project Anton: International Collaboration**

Project Anton was named in honour of Anton Mzimba, Head of Security at the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve and a Global Conservation Technical Advisor, who was murdered in front of his family in 2022 for his passionate commitment to protecting and conserving wildlife.

This innovative new international public-private partnership focuses on improving awareness and

understanding of the threat posed by illegal wildlife trade in Canada, and targeting the laundering of proceeds from this crime domestically and internationally. By following the money and generating actionable financial intelligence for law enforcement in Canada and around the world, Project Anton will assist in identifying, pursuing and prosecuting perpetrators – and broader networks – linked to illegal wildlife trade.

Project Anton is facilitating the ongoing engagement and sharing of information between partners domestically and internationally, where authorities permit. It further enhances the collective knowledge of money laundering methods, typologies and indicators that will enhance detection and reporting from businesses to their respective Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs).

In support of this initiative, FINTRAC published an Operational Alert,

Laundering the Proceeds of Crime from Illegal Wildlife Trade, meant to assist businesses and partners in identifying and reporting financial transactions related to the laundering of proceeds of crime from this cruel criminal enterprise. This, in turn, will facilitate the production of actionable financial intelligence in support of law enforcement investigations in Canada and abroad.

In addition to providing money laundering indicators, FINTRAC's Operational Alert also describes the general money laundering methods associated with illegal wildlife trade, including the use of nominees, front companies and the layering of funds between accounts, as well as the types of transactions suspected of being related to the illegal importation of wildlife into Canada and exportation from Canada.

With the reporting that FINTRAC has received to date, the Centre has already disclosed actionable financial intelligence to law enforcement under the umbrella of Project Anton.

The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre recognized the support that FINTRAC's financial and open data analysis provided to the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment's understanding of an international wildlife trafficking network linked to Australia, Canada, Spain and Malaysia. AUSTRAC mentioned that FINTRAC's information provided additional

insight into the nature, duration and status of particular relationships and generated a number of new intelligence leads.

Project Anton is modelled after Canada's other successful, ongoing public-private partnerships, which are aimed at combatting the laundering of proceeds related to human trafficking for sexual exploitation (Project Protect), online child sexual exploitation (Project Shadow), trafficking of illicit fentanyl (Project Guardian), romance fraud (Project Chameleon), illicit cannabis activities (Project Legion) and money laundering in British Columbia and across Canada (Project Athena). In total last year, FINTRAC provided 757 disclosures of actionable financial intelligence to Canada's law enforcement agencies in relation to these existing public-private sector partnerships, with disclosures often containing hundreds or even thousands of financial transaction reports in each package.

**The role of border services in detecting illegal wildlife trade**

Illegal wildlife trade poses a serious environmental, economic, security and public health threat in Canada and around the world. Border services and officials across the globe play a crucial role in helping to detect and combat this heinous illicit activity.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is a key partner in this initiative. It is responsible for providing integrated border services



that support national security and public safety priorities, while also facilitating the free flow of persons and goods across the border. At the Canadian border, all goods entering the country are carefully screened and any illegal wildlife products discovered are held and referred to Environment and Climate Change Canada for further analysis and direction. CBSA's officers use a variety of risk assessment tools to identify people, goods and conveyances that may pose a threat to the security and safety of Canadians.

FINTRAC is able to disclose actionable financial intelligence to the CBSA in support of enforcement efforts at the Canadian border when the Centre has reasonable grounds to suspect that the information would be relevant to a money laundering offence, terrorist activity financing offence or a threat to the security of Canada.

Following an analysis of suspicious transaction reports relating to illegal wildlife trade received between 2011 and 2022, FINTRAC identified the suspected illegal importation of wildlife into Canada, particularly from China and Sub-Saharan Africa and the suspected exportation of wildlife from Canada to other jurisdictions, such as the United States and China. These transactions highlight the international scope of illegal wildlife trade, including the use of animal traders around the world, and the importance of sound border controls.

The illegal importation of exotic wildlife into Canada often starts with a Canadian trader who orders wildlife through a coordinator located, for example, in Australia, Asia or Africa. The coordinator manages all aspects of an illegal trade operation required to source wildlife for the Canadian trader including the engagement of
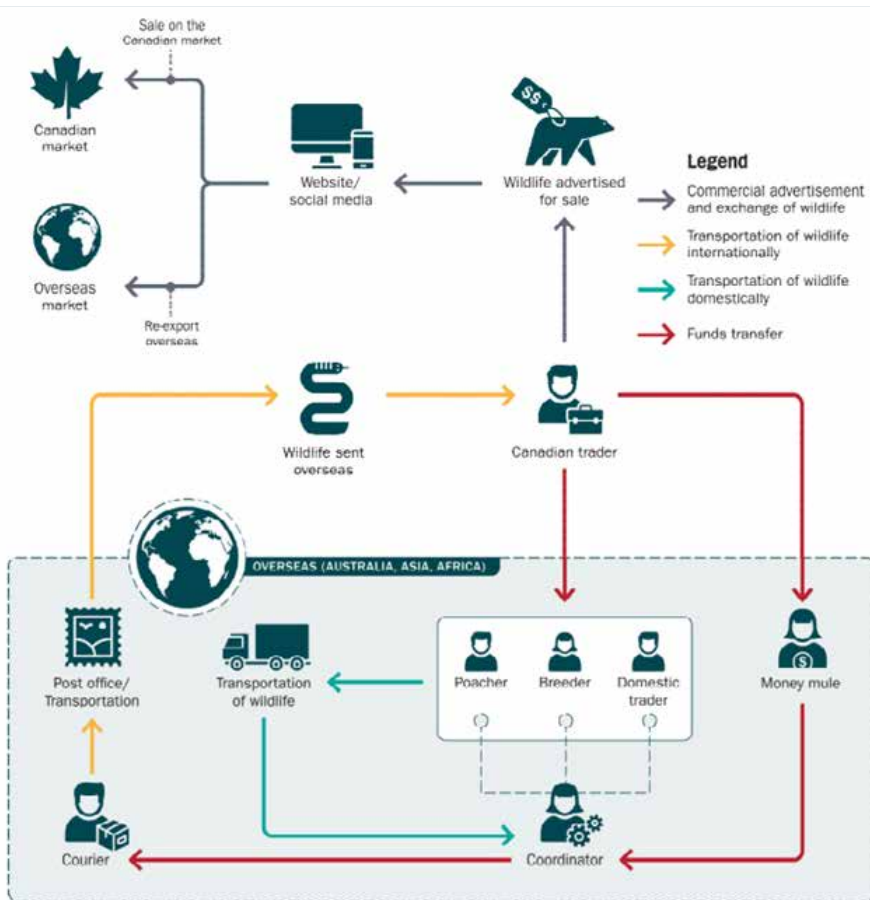
*Figure 1: Illegal import of wildlife into Canada*

poachers, breeders, traders, money mules and couriers located in their country.

The Canadian trader sends funds directly to the trader, poacher and breeder located abroad for wildlife sourcing, and indirectly to the coordinator through a money mule in order to mask their role in managing operations. Poachers, breeders, or traders transport wildlife to the coordinator through legitimate or illicit channels. In the case of the legal domestic trade of live animals, breeders and traders may be unaware of their participation in the illegal wildlife trade.

Wildlife is transported to a courier who is paid to ensure transportation of animals to the Canadian trader. Transportation can be indirect, through the postal service or transportation companies often funded with cash, or directly by couriers who conceal wildlife in their luggage or their person when travelling to Canada. The Canadian trader may advertise the trafficked animals for sale on a website or through social media. Advertisement can take place for the sale of animals on the domestic market

or for their re-export overseas. Contact information such as addresses, phone numbers and email addresses found on online and social media platforms may provide useful leads for identifying suspicious financial transactions linked to traders in illegal wildlife trade.

**Figure 1: Illegal import of wildlife into Canada**

The same roles and trade dynamics seen in import networks are also present in illegal export networks for Canadian wildlife. Overseas traders, much like Canadian traders, will source Canadian animals for sale on their foreign markets. In Canada, coordinators manage breeders, poachers, traders, couriers, and money mules in moving money and wildlife abroad. Though many of these similarities are present, export networks do not appear to include a re-export component, as seen in illegal importation networks.

**Figure 2: Illegal export of wildlife from Canada**

Through its analysis, FINTRAC developed money laundering indicators that could enhance the awareness and understanding of illegal wildlife trade operations and assist border officials in identifying animal goods potentially linked to this illicit activity, including:

• Media and/or law enforcement information links client or transacting parties to the illegal wildlife trade.

• An individual is the owner, operator,

employee or associated with an industry that could be used to facilitate illegal wildlife trade (e.g., import/export of goods, fisheries wholesaler, pet store, freight company, animal control).

• Individual or an entity has open source information linking them to the possession and/or advertising the sale of species of concern for illegal wildlife trade, particularly endangered species (e.g., geckos, turtles, and tortoises).

• Individual or entity provides misleading or falsified documentation concerning wildlife trade (e.g., incorrect permits).

The full list of money laundering indicators associated with illegal wildlife trade can be found in FINTRAC's Operational Alert.
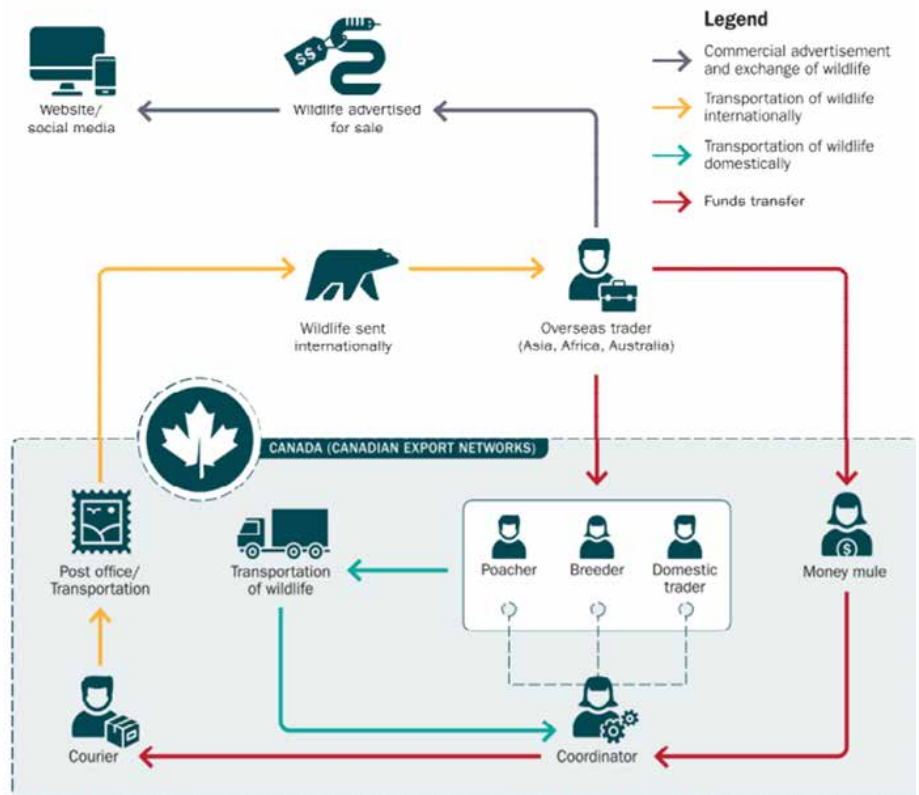


*Figure 2: Illegal export of wildlife from Canada*

## Dismantled a clandestine workshop with almost 500 kilos of material to manufacture explosives

The Civil Guard, as part of the "Termes" operation, has dismantled a clandestine workshop in the town of Montmajor, in Barcelona, with 468 kilos of precursors and chemical substances, material destined to manufacture explosives. A person accused of illegally manufacturing explosives by hand by mixing these substances that he acquired over the Internet has been arrested.

The investigation began exactly one year ago when agents from the Information Headquarters of the Civil Guard learned through the Intelligence Center against Terrorism and Organized Crime (CITCO) of a suspicious transaction of explosives precursors through a trading platform. on-line.

After the judicial authorization, the Civil Guard

searched the residence of the person investigated where he found 348 kilos of regulated explosives precursors and 119 kilos of other chemical substances also used for their illegal manufacture. In addition, a fuse and 2.2 kilos of handmade gunpowder were seized, discovering that he used the house as a workshop and laboratory for the illegal manufacture of explosives.

This clandestine laboratory was equipped with both machinery and laboratory material such as flasks and test tubes of different capacities, an electric heating mantle, magnetic stirrers, vacuum pumps, flow controllers, a still for distillation and an increase in the degree of concentration of the compounds. chemicals, precision thermometers and scales, and even a gas mask for protection from dangerous chemical vapors.

# X-RAY DIFFRACTION TECHNOLOGY – THE NEXT FRONTIER IN AUTOMATIC THREAT DETECTION

*By Kevin Davies, Global Director – Ports & Borders, Smiths Detection*

**The winding road of threat detection**

Today's ever-evolving threats require ever-evolving technological advancements in security screening. The threat from a growing range of items currently prohibited, or classified as dangerous, in shipping, such as lithium batteries, fentanyl, liquid meth, cocaine, novel explosive devices and firearms demands increasingly high standards for detection equipment. Moreover, with accelerated growth in international trade and e-commerce, short delivery times, and increasingly interconnected global supply chains, the need for efficiency across the air cargo ecosystem, both in mandatory security screening and in screening

for contrabands or dangerous goods, has increased.

In response, next generation screening is likely to move even further towards automatic threat resolution and away from operator-based analysis. As well as advancing security, this will also address operational efficiency by significantly reducing the false alarm rate. AI and deep learning are supporting the development of sophisticated detection algorithms, but the sheer diversity of new threats and constantly changing composition of substances will require an even more sophisticated approach. Security operators are looking to future proof their operations to ensure the quick, efficient, and safe transit of goods.

The answer lies in a combination of computed tomography (CT) and X-ray diffraction (XRD) technologies. CT uses density to detect substances and XRD perfectly complements this by accurately identifying unknown materials with 'common' densities as some threats and benign substances have similar or identical densities. XRD is not a new technology, but recent advances in the technology have made it even more suitable for integrated security screening applications.

**Why XRD?**

Today, XRD is an established method of identifying unknown crystalline materials, for example,

inorganic/organic compounds and minerals, based on their molecular structure. A valuable tool for measurement and analysis, it is used in a broad range of industries and disciplines including pharmaceuticals, forensics, microelectronics, geology and engineering.

In security screening, XRD offers automatic, non-invasive detection and delivers superior levels of material analysis and substance identification. This makes it particularly suited to detecting narcotics in powder, liquid or solid forms and constantly changing compounds.

The technology has already shown exceptional sensitivity in finding and identifying narcotics in incoming aircraft luggage. It can significantly reduce the need for hand searches, trace detection and other manual

processes. This also positively impacts staff resourcing, productivity, and operating costs. To further improve efficiency, XRD scanners can be used to screen items pre-selected based on intelligence received or suspicious X-ray images recorded at the point of origin; or integrated into a materials handling system.

**Tag teaming**

Conventional X-ray and Computed Tomography (CT), which produce 3D volumetric images, have been very effective in detecting explosives and, more recently, contraband, prohibited items, dangerous goods and other targeted items. There are, however, some unique challenges when it comes to improvised explosives and narcotics, which combine to make detection of these items very complex. For example, inconsistencies in physical

characteristics occur when drugs are cut with other substances or different density substances are put into explosives. Unlike explosives stemming from military and industrial applications, 'home-made explosives' vary enormously in composition and content.

Simply put, CT technology looks at density to detect suspicious items, whereas XRD is a completely different approach based on the interference of electromagnetic waves on atoms. The fundamental difference is X-ray diffraction results in a spectral analysis rather than X-ray absorption which provides image density information.

The spacing between atoms within a molecule interferes with the X-ray waves and the signals from this interference provide data on the spacing. As each substance has a

different pattern of spacing, the XRD uses the measurements to create a 'diffraction fingerprint' and hence differentiate between materials – even those with very similar densities. XRD was developed to investigate crystalline solids which have a very orderly structure. However, it is equally effective in identifying amorphous solids (e.g. glass) and liquids despite their more disorderly configuration which can still be well described with statistical parameters.

There is no singular security screening method that ensures 100% of all threats and contraband will be intercepted at checkpoints. Human error, incorrect operation, and mechanical malfunction will never be completely removed from the security screening process. Therefore, security operations that rely solely on one screening method

to automatically detect threats are not as effective as operations that utilize multiple complementary screening methods.

**Ready for lift off**

Early XRD security screening systems have demonstrated increased efficiency in alarm resolution; and already shown exceptional sensitivity in finding and identifying narcotics in incoming aircraft luggage. Recent new advances now mean the technology is ready for broader deployment.

By replacing legacy X-ray sources with multi focus X-ray sources, therefore both CT and XRD, the latest systems are faster and more efficient with multiple diffraction beams covering a continuously moving belt. Full screening tunnel coverage enables highly parallel data acquisition. Reliability has been improved and maintenance streamlined by locating components on a fixed frame with moving parts restricted to the belt.

At this stage, two primary use cases have been identified for XRD. Firstly, as an orthogonal technology to existing, multi-level EDS applications; and secondly, for inbound contraband detection.

**Minimising false alarm rates in a high-volume environment**

Regulators define orthogonal technology as a system which can be deployed for alarm resolution of objects diverted from the first level of

screening (Level 1). Effectively, XRD becomes the Level 2 process, using diffraction technology to analyse and ideally clear suspect items flagged up at the first automatic EDS stage (typically using CT technology for the most accurate results). In this levelled configuration, an XRD scanner is incorporated into the main handling system and a single device can be fed by several first level EDS scanners.

Typical applications include multi-level hold baggage screening at airports as well as high-speed operations, for example fast-forwarding small parcels. Automatically clearing false alarms or benign objects via XRD has been shown to reduce false alarm rates from 20% to 4%. The result is a significant reduction in operator online resolution, manual searches or trace detection – which, in such high-volume applications, translates into substantial operational cost savings.

Further reductions in false alarm rates can be achieved by deeper integration of the two technologies. This is known as a 'System-of-Systems', where the CT and XRD information is combined for joint decision making and therefore even greater, and quicker, resolution and accuracy. The CT system delivers its detection result downstream to the XRD which adds the diffraction fingerprint for any potential threat item.



**Another string in the bow for customs agencies**

Precise material analysis also makes XRD an effective weapon for customs agencies to intercept the increasing volume of narcotics and other prohibited items heading across borders. Custom agencies are under constant pressure to intercept narcotics distributed in small packages or envelopes via postal or courier services from crossing borders. Though millions of kilos of illicit drugs are seized every year, detection technology could help these demanding operations become even more efficient. In wider aviation, customs operators could also screen inbound flows of passengers at security before they enter a country.

Conventional X-ray and Computed Tomography (CT) scanners have proven to be very effective in detecting explosives and more

recently also contraband, prohibited items, dangerous goods, and other targeted objects. There are, however, some unique challenges when it comes to narcotics. Narcotics detection is complex, as they are often cut with other substances, which changes their physical characteristics, and are inconsistent in shape and form. The answer for detection, therefore, lies in leveraging XRD technology to elevate detection accuracy.

When applied in this setting, items are generally picked out for in-bound investigation based on intelligence, data analysis or suspect X-rays taken at the point of departure. As screening is selective, the XRD is deployed as a Level 1 scanner.

Another key development, and one which is already well underway, is harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI) for object recognition. Cargo screening

equipment is now being enhanced with 'smart' algorithms which identify an ever-expanding list of dangerous goods and contraband. These algorithms can be trained through machine learning techniques to offer powerful and accurate detection of objects. Any new substance or contraband compound detection will require a close partnership with Customs agencies and airports to support any improvements in current algorithms as well as new ones to be developed.

**What next?**

XRD perfectly complements the strengths of CT technology and together they can take detection accuracy to even higher levels required in response to tomorrow's evolving threats. The technology will continue moving forwards with further technological enhancements and cost savings. Speed of screening and detection will increase, and it planned that it will eventually match CT throughput. More algorithms will be introduced to deal with an expanding list of targets as well as future-proofing the technology against emerging threats and regulatory changes.

Ultimately, we are likely to see CT and XRD technology combined into one unit. In this scenario, each item will be checked by both technologies simultaneously, leveraging the strengths of both techniques. This will add another line of defence for Customs agencies and security operators alike when coupled with existing technologies. Watch this space…

## ISIL terror threat still high and increasing in conflict zones, Security Council hears



Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov briefed the Security Council where he presented the latest UN report on the terrorist organization, underlining the need for concerted global action.

Mr. Voronkov began by focusing on the plight of victims and survivors of terrorism worldwide.

"Because beyond the headlines and behind the numbers, there are numerous people and communities who were affected by the heinous crimes of Da'esh and other terrorist groups and individuals," he said.

The Da'esh threat remains high and has increased in and around conflict zones where the group and its affiliates are active, he reported.

Their expansion in central and southern Africa, and the Sahel, remains particularly worrying.

"Previous reports raised concerns over an increased risk of attacks in non-conflict areas by unaffiliated lone actors and small cells inspired by Da'esh as pandemic-related restrictions eased," he told ambassadors.

"While this has not materialized over this reporting period, the level of terrorist activity continues to be a concern to Member States."

Da'esh also continues to use the Internet, social media and video games for propaganda and recruitment purposes, along with new and emerging technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems, or drones.

Meanwhile, scores of people affiliated with the extremists, including children, remain in camps and detention facilities in northeast Syria.

Mr. Voronkov drew attention to the dire situation, warning against the far-reaching consequences and slow pace of repatriations.

He emphasized that the foreign terrorist fighter issue is not exclusive to Iraq and Syria, but a global challenge, with implications that go beyond accountability and prosecution for crimes.

## AU, EU and UN Push for Urgent Action to Address the Pressing Needs of Migrants and Refugees in Libya
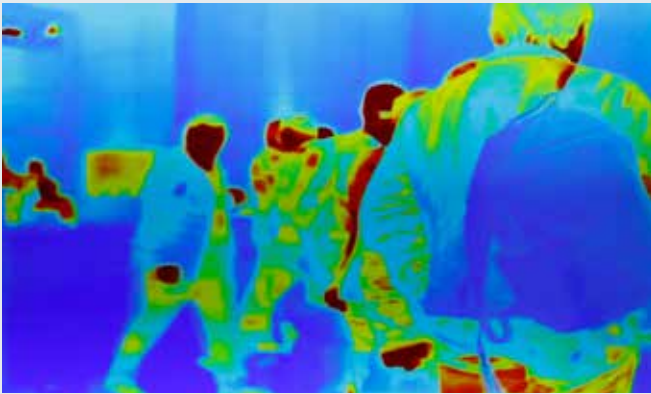


the AU–EU–UN Tripartite Taskforce on the Situation of Migrants and Refugees in Libya met in Brussels. The international community and Libyan authorities must work together to improve the plight of migrants and refugees in Libya.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission, Minata Cessouma Samate, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and the IOM Director General, António Vitorino, to discuss and advance the priorities of the Taskforce.

The Tripartite Taskforce Members reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the Libyan authorities' efforts for tackling the urgent needs on the ground. While working alongside other actors, they will step up their efforts to further support the developments of non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks for migrants and refugees, based on international and AU standards and human rights, with the aim of protecting and saving lives along the migratory routes and particularly in Libya.

They further urged the Libyan authorities to end arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees starting with the women and children as well as other individuals with specific needs or disabilities. The

Taskforce is ready to assist the Libyan authorities to ensure practical alternatives such as release into the community or accommodation in Migrant Response Centres (MRCs), where they can receive psychosocial support and health assistance.

The Taskforce called on the international community to support the Libyan Authorities to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, notably by facilitating effective prosecution efforts and prevent the risks of re-trafficking and disappearance. The Task Force also agreed to support awareness raising on the dangers of the journeys along the migratory routes and to seek durable solutions for migrants and refugees.

The Taskforce committed to support the Libyan Government's efforts to ensure improved migration governance and border management whilst fostering full respect for the human rights of refugees and migrants and access to protection. They further called on the Libyan authorities to issue documentation for labour migrants in the country and recognize documentation provided to refugees, pending the establishment of a comprehensive national migration management system.

They committed to support stepping up voluntary humanitarian returns from Libya, notably by facilitating the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) and Reintegration Programme for individuals in Libya who wish to return home voluntarily and are assessed not to be in need of international protection. They called for the abolishing administrative exit fees for those departing from Libya.

The Taskforce called on the enhanced use of Emergency Transit Mechanisms in Niger and Rwanda, and emphasized the need for the international community, including the AU and EU to offer tangible support, notably by considering expanding legal, safe and regular pathways for migrants and refugees. This includes humanitarian corridors and enhanced resettlement places for refugees and voluntary returns and reintegration.

# TRANSFORMING PASSENGER DATA INTO ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE AT THE BORDER

*By Renaud Irminger, CEO, Travizory*

With regards to data collection, a country's border offers one of the richest touchpoints for Governments looking to monitor their territory. Beyond the border, these touchpoints are few and far between, with both the quality and quantity of the data collected reducing significantly the further away you move from the border.

In the simplest sense, this data provides insight into who is traveling to the country, when and for how long. But the scope for analysis and examination extends far beyond this - yet many governments are still failing to fully grasp the opportunity with both hands.

Whether it be for more effective profiling and immediate decision-making by law enforcement or for trends analysis and long-term policy development, when utilized intelligently this traveler data can transform the way a country policies its borders.

**The State of Data at Borders Today**

In many countries Border Agencies are still overly, if not completely, reliant on manual data collection. Passengers are handed paper forms on the plane, to be completed before arrival and presented to Immigration. In cases where a Visa on arrival is required, the same or similar data must be provided by the traveller, albeit in a different format, via a separate paper form. The issue with this approach is that it is wildly inefficient, ineffective and inaccurate.

The Seychelles, a country that has recently undergone a major digital transformation, no longer issues paper forms to in-bound passengers. By moving data collection online, the Border Agents can now border enter a person in less than forty-five seconds. Previously, it would have taken 3-4 hours and 4-5 Immigration Officers, just to manually enter the data from the 300 paper forms into the online database.

Why this matters is twofold: manual data entry leaves room for mistakes, and Border Agents focus on administrative tasks instead of the specialist profiling that they are trained to do. Illegible forms can render entire datasets redundant and undermine the purpose of collecting such detailed data in the first place.

Additionally, this passive collection of data leaves much to be desired when it comes to security and risk-assessment. The general consensus in the sector is that data, when used effectively, gives governments the ability to shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to their borders. Digitalised borders allow smart analysis to prevent and predict issues - with Border Agents intervening before a problem arises in-country. Digital systems identify known unknowns and unknown unknowns before arrival or at the border, supported by the intelligent application and analysis of data and passenger information.

All of this enhances security, and while completely avoiding risk is never realistic, minimizing the risk of a country unknowingly allowing a high-risk traveller to enter should always remain a priority.

**Navigating API-PNR requirements**

Since February 2021, all UN member states have been mandated to implement API-PNR systems. The goal of such a policy is to enhance data collection at the border, and improve data sharing across borders in a bid to tackle transnational crime and fight international terrorism.

Two years later, many countries are still not compliant. These countries face immense pressure from the UN and ICAO to introduce new systems to facilitate responsible and effective data collection. The information, collected directly from the airlines, provides advanced knowledge about who is on the plane, such as how they paid for their ticket, who they are seated next to and how much luggage they checked in. Such information can be used by Customs, Immigration and other law enforcement to build a more detailed picture of the individual and make smarter decisions as a result.

API-PNR data can offer an extremely strong foundation to develop insights about travelers but when applied on its own, has some

severe limitations:

1. API-PNR data is demonstrably limited as a targeting tool, focusing on known high-risk individuals and not unknown risks (i.e. those not on watchlists).

2. PNR data is not always consistent which can compromise the quality or completeness of the data. This will inevitably have analytical implications.

3. API-PNR is primarily a technology for the air transport sector, leaving maritime or land borders vulnerable.

4. Interactive API (which vets individuals during the check-in process) issues a binary board/ not board directive to the check-in agent. Due to the short timeframe for vetting, the profiling methods used are relatively basic and can be inaccurate.

As  threats become increasingly sophisticated, border agents are

best served by a combination of multiple datasets - each offering their own unique layer of information to deliver truly complete visibility at the border.

**Transforming data at the border in 5 steps**

Today, innovative technology companies are disrupting the border security market by offering powerful, intelligent and automated solutions.

As a government looking to improve existing tools or even to implement a solution from scratch, there are a number of things that need to be considered.

**1. Moving from collection to analysis**

It is fundamental to shift thinking away from the passive "collection" to the proactive "analysis" of data at the border. When done right, smart data analysis enables more effective profiling and risk-assessment

followed by real-time decision-making. As a result, governments can expect to see a reduction in high-risk travelers at the border and successful mitigation of  security incidents both at the ports of entry and in-country.

A more effective approach is a collaboration between data scientists and border security agents - leveraging the skills of both to develop a powerful risk engine. Border agents can use their expertise to determine the data / indicators that would be necessary and relevant to their roles. The data scientists then determine where it can be obtained and together determine how best to use the data to gain insights.

**2. Use multiple data sources**

Using multiple live data sources together elevates capabilities 100-fold. Using API, PNR, Visa, travel authorization and permit data together can significantly enhance efficacy and accuracy when profiling. With the right technology, biometric and biographic data is combined into a single view of the traveler, including supplementary data sources such as coded seat maps, airport data, airline data for a comprehensive overview of each individual.

Underpinning all of this functionality, however, is robust identity resolution, to reliably link an individual across all data sources. While this can pose a challenge, the collection of facial biometrics from the traveler provides

the building blocks for accurate and secure identity verification using artificial intelligence.

## 3. Automate alerts and profiling for effective short-term action

Automation is key for combing through vast amounts of data efficiently, and alerts such as watchlist matches can be automatically flagged for further (manual) assessment. Profiling rules for known risk profiles based on input from border security subject matter experts can enhance the screening process. These rules must be tied to the country and their specific threats. Predictive profiling using AI for complex profiles that cannot be easily articulated performs the same task. However, authorities don't need to specify the combination of data attributes that constitute a risk profile, the AI does this with sufficient examples of high risk travelers.

All of this allows the border agent to focus on manual risk assessment of just the 1% of high-risk travelers, ensuring the responsible use of AI in what is a highly-sensitive sector.

## 4. Visualizing the data

Border Agents shouldn't have to be data scientists in order to access and use the data that they have access to. Next-generation border systems will provide tools for border security agents to mine the data, using their experience and intuition. From user-friendly interfaces, to intuitive design, the platform itself is developed with

the end-user in mind. By balancing ease-of-use and power, the system can be up and in use quickly and limited training is required.

## 5. Constant improvements and updates

Performance management is key when it comes to handling constantly evolving and highly-complex environments. In order to be effective, there is a need to establish a feedback process for users of the platform. This will enable the data scientists to understand how accurate the system is, in practice, and assess ways to improve. The border agents can then identify practical interventions based on how well the watchlists are performing; whether there are too many false positives or too few hits; or whether the thresholds for biometric matching need to be adjusted.

There is lots of talk of the "digital border" throughout the sector and many new providers are stepping up to the plate to deliver the next-generation of border management solutions, directly to Governments. While eliminating the need for paper or increasing efficiency are undoubtedly key objectives for many, perhaps the most powerful outcome of digitisation is the access to unprecedented amounts of data. When collected, analyzed and applied correctly, this opens up a world of opportunities for border agents and policy-makers looking to tackle modern day threats head-on.

# IMPROVING NAME MATCHING IN HIGH-STAKES, HIGH-VELOCITY SCENARIOS

*By Declan Trezise, Director of Global Solutions Engineering, Babel Street*

Until recently, when envisioning Antwerp and Rotterdam, people thought of art nouveau architecture, wide boulevards, and tulip gardens.

But drug trafficking has transformed these Belgian and Dutch port cities. Antwerp and Rotterdam have morphed into European gateways for the Latin American cocaine trade. In Antwerp, police seized more than 110 tons of cocaine in 2022, up more than 100 percent from 2018. In Rotterdam, more than 50 tons of cocaine were confiscated in 2022 alone. Officials believe that drugs seized represent less than 10 percent of the total trafficked.

The drugs wrought violence. Antwerp has suffered dozens of grenade attacks. Belgium's justice minister now lives in a safehouse. Murders have plagued the Netherlands.

To combat the flow of drugs and other illicit cargo — including weapons and trafficked humans — border security agencies in

Europe are following the lead of similar agencies in the United States and the United Kingdom. They're implementing artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for name matching and entity recognition. These capabilities help officials halt the flow of contraband — often before it leaves the docks.

**The lay of the sea**

Belgium and the Netherlands are small countries: their arable land is not unlimited. It's no surprise, therefore, that food is a major import. Illegal drugs are often hidden in consignments of fruit.

**But where?**

Antwerp and Rotterdam are both major ports. At the Port of Antwerp (the second largest in Europe) more than 231 million tons of cargo are loaded or unloaded each year.  How

can border officials determine which container ship has cocaine hidden among its avocados?

**By examining data.**

Required onboard paperwork lists each ship's point of origin and destination; the name of the export company using it; that company's address; a cargo manifest; and other identifying documents. The truck picking up the cargo carries vehicle registration and a driver's license.

Effectively examining and enhancing this information — then comparing it against watchlists and aligning it with existing intelligence — can aid border officials in spotting and stopping drug traffickers and other criminals. AI capabilities including name matching and named entity recognition (NER), help in this effort.

But too often, border security

organizations lack these capabilities.

**The limitations of search platforms**

Currently, many border security organizations use full-text search engines for name matching and entity recognition. These search engines may be powerful and well-respected, but they were not built for these tasks.

When used for name matching, search engine capabilities lie somewhere between match/no match determinations and fuzzy matching. Older systems rely on complex rule sets to determine whether one name matches another, but they can't account for every possible name variation.

Fuzzy matching — a computing approach that considers degrees of truth — is an improvement over



Figure 1 The many ways that names vary
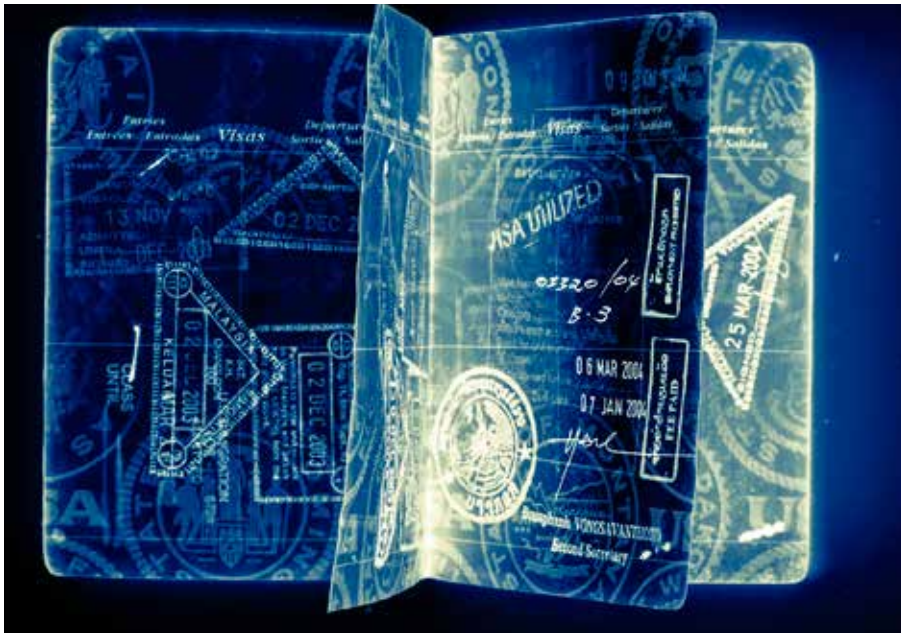
exact name matching systems in several ways. By taking into account real-world issues such as typos, misspellings, alternate spellings, and disordered data components, it is much more likely to accurately match names across two or more datasets. But fuzzy matching still can't analyze the many ways that names vary across languages, scripts, and cultures. Missing potential matches is simply not good enough for border security. That's why AI-powered name matching is needed.

**The value of AI name matching technologies**

Imagine you're screening for a known bad actor named Juan Andrés Herrera. Search platforms may only find instances of his full name, spelled correctly, in Spanish. AI-powered name-matching technologies, meanwhile, can

return instances of John Andrew Smith (Juan's name in English) and Jean André Favre (French). They can find instances of his name rendered in a non-Latin scripts (（フアン・アンデレ・エレーラ in Japanese).

They can detect aliases or nicknames such as Juju Herrera, and misspellings such as Jahn Herrera.

AI name matching technologies also outperform search engines and older name matching approaches when matching addresses and corporate names.

Corporate names present a particular challenge. Names might differ by a synonym such as "PennyLuck Drugs" and "PennyLuck Pharmaceuticals," or regularly use initialisms. Name matching technologies that handle

organizational names well can spot these. You may regularly dine at your favorite steak house, "WBM," and pick up your prescriptions at a chain that calls itself "VFP." Name matching can link these initialisms to the companies' official names, "World's Best Meats LLC" and "Very Fine Pharmaceuticals, Inc."

**Linking entities to real-world identities**

Named entity recognition (NER) capabilities find records in different data sets that refer to the same entity, then link that information to real-world people, places, and organizations — while considering the context in which an entity is mentioned.

But there are a lot of Juan Andrés Herreras in the world. How do you avoid needlessly consuming investigators' time with a barrage of info on all the Juan Andrés Herreras you don't care about?

NER capabilities automatically narrow the field, presenting investigators with the information relevant to the "Juan Andrés Herrera" they're querying. They automatically reject mentions of Juan Andrés Herrera, a public relations executive living in New York City. They reject obituaries written about Juan Andrés Herrera. They reject news stories about Juan Andrés Herrera winning a mathematics award at his 8th grade graduation in 2022. Concurrently, NER software flags reports of a Juan

Andres Herrera, 32, of Bogota twice arrested for drug trafficking.

**Faster data triage with named entity recognition**

In 2021, Belgian police were able to decipher the encryptions used by SKY ECC — a secure messaging app widely used by drug traffickers. Roughly 164,000 drug traffickers around Antwerp were using SKY ECC to exchange 1.5 million messages daily. Cracking Sky ECC gave authorities access to 1 billion messages. But Belgian authorities simply did not have the manpower to analyze them all in a timely manner. The Belgian federal prosecutor estimated that it would take the police 685 years to read every message. To analyze all those chats in a day, the Belgian police could have leveraged NER to simultaneously extract the people, places, and organizations mentioned. Instead of searching for specific names — which they wouldn't have known in the first place – the authorities could review a list of extracted names and prioritize which messages to review first.

**Adopting AI name matching for border security**

AI-powered name matching technology is currently in use to check the names of millions of people crossing international borders. By using advanced name matching technology, border security agencies can improve the accuracy of verification operations, reduce the



number of false positives that require extra screening, and enhance overall border security by ensuring no matches are missed.

# BORDER SECURITY-MAINSTREAMING TRAINED AND FUNDED NIGERIA POLICE

*By Martin Igwe, The Director Media & Advocacy, West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA Nigeria)*

Needs assessment is a process for determining how to fill the gaps between a current and desired outcome in organization. It helps to determine what is needed to be accomplished to reach a project goals. Needs assessment helps decision makers engage better initiative peculiar to existing problem take advantage of existing reality and avoid costly mistakes in finding solutions.

As we converge to discuss future policy implementation issues and challenges of Border Security, there is need to have on hand needs assessment of countries this will help understand the underlying

drivers of each country's border insecurity.

China for example has fourteen neighbors along its land borders and faces Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei across the sea with their diverse cultures and complicated relations which present a grave security situation in china borders (Chinese journal of international affairs).

Research confirms that Russia shatters and splints its borderlands, from Dombes in Europe to Damascus in Asia, Russia's vast Eurasians borderlands have

*Usman Alkali Baba Inspector General of Police Nigeria*



*Alhaji Suleiman Abba (Chairman Nigerian Police Trust Fund)*



Dr Solomon E Arase

*Chairman Nigeria Police Service Commission*

become the kremlin buffer zones to nearly uninterrupted expanse of conflicts in the last two decade. Russia has exploited existing regional conflicts and cleavages and created new ones. In doing so, it exclusively preventing its neighboring states from consolidating into more organic regional entity.
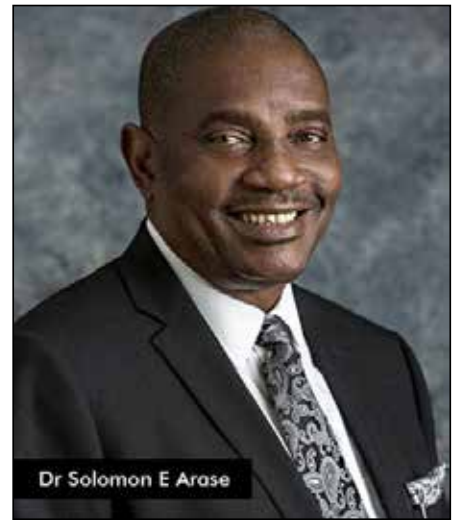
Border insecurity in Central America's Northern Triangle is not new. Government in El-Salvador, Gautemala and Hunduras have historically neglected their hinterlands and pourious borders with Mexican drug traffickers  taking advantage of uncontrolled borders to constitute a threat to peace. The Maghreb countries of Morroco, Algeria and Tunisia face threats to their borders from transitional illicit networks such as terrorist groups (peace brief Sept.19, 2016). In Nigeria increasing border security personnel with well trained and funded police can be of great value. Mainstreaming Nigeria police into what can be Border Special Forces

which comprises border securities like custom service, immigration service, NDLEA. Joint forces all over the world with coordinated collaboration with global borders Agencies have proved effective, with only surveillance equipment the south Korean Border troops after issuing a level 2 alert cut a man believed to be either a spy or a defector from North Korea. This action was professionally executed even when forward fencing sensors on the fences which are designed to automatically sound an alarm when someone is dictated  approaching malfunctioned.

The cause of Border insecurity in Sahel Region may be totally different from the cause of border conflict Between Bulgarians and northern Macedonia, while some causes can be due to effect of climate change, others can be more of international politics and diplomacy, after the Australian soldiers approaching the out skirt of the east Timorese hamlet  came under heavy attack by Indonesian

police the review of the cause of incident only found out that the location of border differs in each country's maps hence to avoid further border conflict one kilometer exclusion zone was established on each side of the Indonesian- east Timor land border.

Mainstreaming a well and funded Nigerian Police to a unified National Border Special Force is a necessity to Nigeria border to curtail border insecurity. Sinking political differences Nationally and Internationally taking advantage of the reward of global co-operation has become expedient World Border Security Congress should also constitute a Civil Society working group saddled with the mandate of complimenting agencies effort of communicating latest threat to peace in our borders and to eliminating early warning signals capable of degenerating to full blown border conflict WELCOME to SKOPJE.

# FIBER DETECTION AND RANGING (FIDAR) – A FORCE MULTIPLIER FOR PERMANENT PERSISTENT BORDER SURVEILLANCE

*BY David Hill, Sintela, ONYX, fibre-optics, border security, border surveillance*

SINTELA

Whether a border is open or has a physical barrier, effective monitoring of border activity requires gapless and persistent surveillance along its entire length. To do this with cameras and radar is impractical due to the high cost of deployment over long distances and the associated long term maintenance requirements. Land or airborne patrols, only provide intermittent coverage and can be spotted and

evaded by people attempting a border crossing. Using techniques in optical fiber analogous to those used in sonar and radar, Fiber Detection and Ranging (FiDAR) provides a low-cost method of achieving covert, long range, gapless and persistent border surveillance, with a high probability of detection and low nuisance alarm rate.

FiDAR systems use standard telecom grade optical fiber from

within a buried fiber-optic cable to detect activity close to the cable. This is achieved by injecting pulses of light into the fiber which are partially backscattered as they travel the length of the fiber. The backscattered optical signals are sampled, and time sliced into individual channels corresponding to distance along the cable and then converted into acoustic signals. This results in the fiber cable acting as a very long array of independent, simultaneously sampled 'microphones' able to detect and locate minute vibrations generated by the activity of Items-of-Interest (IoI) such as vehicles, people, fence climbing, fence cutting, digging etc. within the vicinity of the buried cable.

The ONYX™ Sensing Unit from Sintela is the industry leading FiDAR system, selected by the US Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for their Linear Ground Detection Program (LGDS) and is deployed along the Southwest border between the US and Mexico. For other customers ONYX™ is also used to provide perimeter surveillance around critical national infrastructure.

In a typically configuration, ONYX™ can simultaneously interrogate two 50 km optical fibers, providing 100 km coverage with a channel spacing of 10 m or less. This provided a gapless array of 10,000 independent sensing channels with each having an acoustic bandwidth



of few milli-Hertz to 1,000 Hz and with enough sensitivity at the end of both fibers to detect and classify the activity of common IoI.

ONYX™ Sensing Units are typically rack mounted inside instrument cabins setback from the border or at Points of Entry. These units are connected to the front ends of the sensing fibers in cables which can be attached to fences, or as recommended best practice, buried using vibrating cable plough to a depth of 0.25-0.75 m next to the fence. Along borders, ONYX™ Sensing Units are typically deployed in pairs to provide redundancy and improve performance with primary and secondary fibers running in parallel to the border. The primary fiber is buried within a meter or so of the border fence line whilst the secondary fiber is deployed in parallel, several meters away. If an all-dielectric

cable is installed, once weathered in, it becomes undetectable and cannot be defeated using electronic countermeasures. With the appropriate choice of fiber-optic cable and burial, as well as detecting surface activity the fiber cable can detect subterranean tunnelling activity. Furthermore, if deployed alongside nearby access roads and trails ONYX™ provides a further level of surveillance, able to detect the movement of illegal immigrants and the trajectory of vehicles dispatched to pick them up.

In quiet conditions the detection of activity along a sensing fiber-optic cable is relatively straightforward as the energy produced against the background noise is easy to threshold. However, in noisy background situations, where lots of activity can easily create an alarm, a more sophisticated approach is required. At Sintela we use a

combination of heuristic algorithms and machine learning to identify IoI from the background noise. The machine learning algorithms we have developed are continually trained using labelled data acquired from our fleet of ONYX™ Sensing Units deployed across the world. This approach provides accurate detection, localisation, and classification of IoI, ensuring very high probabilities of detection, but crucially maintains a very low nuisance alarm rate.

Using the powerful built-in AI computer, ONYX™ can also control and process video from ONVIF compatible cameras. Once ONYX™ has detected the activity of an IoI from along a border it can send a message to the closest camera to slew-to-cue onto the precise location. Using video analytics, the video feed from this camera can then be processed within ONYX™ to classify the IoI. Combining the video feed with video classification markers whilst synchronising the video with the acoustic sound detected and the acoustic classification provided by ONYX™ provides a unique capability producing real-time detections with a high level of confidence.

ONYX™ is a low-cost, low maintenance technology providing a unique surveillance capability along borders. With its high probability of detection, accurate classification, and low nuisance alarm rate, ONYX™ is used to quickly initiate and direct the deployment of border force resources, to intercept and stop illegal border crossings.

## ABF targets drug smuggling at regional ports



The Australian Border Force (ABF) has been conducting highly visible surveillance operations in WA'sMid West, as part of its mission to detect illicit drugs being smuggled into Australia along its vast coastline.

ABF officers in the Geraldton Port patrolled the Batavia Marina boat ramp and Geraldton fishing harbour, as well as boarding vessels entering the port.

The ABF undertakes operational activity in regional areas to target drug smuggling, with new technology to help officers detect drugs hidden on the hulls of ships. ABF Superintendent Shaun Senior said Australia is a hugely attractive market for transnational serious organised criminal syndicates seeking to import illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine.

"Historically, most of the drugs coming into Australian sea ports were hidden in cargo on commercial ships. ABF officers are among the best in the world at identifying drugs in these circumstances," Superintendent Senior said.

"Modern, professional crime syndicates are always looking for new ways to avoid our targeting capabilities in sea ports."

"The purpose of the operation is to harden the border by delivering a coordinated and sustained capability to discover, detect, disrupt and dismantle transnational organised crime that may compromise Australia's border integrity.

"The Australian border is a critical national asset that goes well beyond defining national territory. Our border protects our interest, drives economic prosperity and connects us to the world."

"We worked closely with our law enforcement partners, including the Australian Federal Police, WA Police and also local port authorities, including Mid West Ports here in Geraldton."

"Together we will continue to make the border a hostile environment for criminals trying to import illicit drugs."

## New ABF office in Tokyo bolsters coast guard and customs partnerships

The strong relationship between Australian Border Force (ABF) and its coast guard and customs partners in Japan was further enhanced with the opening of a new ABF office in Tokyo by ABF Commissioner Michael Outram APM.

The Tokyo office opening coincides with the appointment of a new ABF Counsellor for Japan, Superintendent Julie Pettrey, reflecting the rapidly growing relationships between ABF, Japan Coast Guard (JCG) and Japan Customs and Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance  (Japan Customs).

Commissioner Outram said the new ABF office

will seek to advance cooperation with the JCG and Japan Customs and serve as the regional hub for engagement with partners, including the Border Five and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD).

"Japan is an important partner of Australia, and we share a mutual interest in a free, prosperous and resilient Indo Pacific," Commissioner Outram said.

 "The opening of a new office within the Australian Embassy in Tokyo reflects the rapidly growing relationship between our two nations as strategic partners on border security, customs matters and civil maritime security."

# TWO REGULA DEVICES WHICH ARE A MUST AT EVERY BORDER CHECKPOINT

*by Regula Forensics*

Cross-border management is a tough task that requires effective solutions. On the one hand, hardware and software tools must reveal counterfeit documents. On the other hand, they must contribute to rapid and comfortable border crossing. Finding the sweet spot between the two is a crucial objective for the verification industry, and is exactly what Regula solutions do.

Regula devices for first-line document checks have already been approved by the border control services of 80 countries. For more than 30 years of non-stop learning & engineering in the field of document authenticity verification, Regula has created not only impeccable hardware & software solutions, but also training courses on counterfeit detection, as well as

an Information Reference System, the most extensive database in the world, which deals with documents from 214 countries and territories. All these ensure security for border crossings and improve the travel experience.

**70x4M — Authenticity verification in the blink of an eye**

Regula document reader models for border control are equipped with automated authenticity control (AAC) technology, which performs scanning, reading and authenticity verification in just a couple of seconds. All you need to do is put a passport inside the reader. One of the most popular models from the whole product line of readers is the Regula 70X4M. This compact device reads the data page and automatically inspects relevant

security features in white, infrared, ultraviolet, and coaxial lights. The advanced Optical Character Recognition technology, trained to work with identity documents, recognizes all sorts of data, including engraved and embossed text. Smart algorithms instantly read barcodes, machine-readable zones and RFID chips. After this step, the device software carries out cross comparison of the textual and graphical data obtained from the VIZ, MRZ and RFID. The Regula 70x4M is optionally supplied with an integrated Information Reference System to compare the examined document with the corresponding document sample from the database. The SDK that comes with every Regula reader is integrated into your existing systems and sets up a customized data handling workflow. The Regula 70X4M is made of hard plastic and is equipped with a flip-top cover to protect against external lighting effects that might affect scanning and character recognition.

**4205D — Rapid, precise and super user-friendly**

Besides document readers, there is a full range of desktop solutions that can be used for manual checks. They have a wider spectrum of abilities for document examination: they can be used for quick checks of not only passports, but also other types of travel documents, such as ID cards, driver's licenses, visas, etc. The most popular model from the whole product line of express authenticity verification devices is the Regula 4205D, a compact device which is compatible with the Information Reference System, which includes a vast



**Document reader Regula 7024M**

✓ Up to 26 verification checks

✓ White, IR, UV, and coaxial lights

✓ Optional integration of IRS document database

✓ MRZ, RFID, barcode reading

✓ Cross-comparison of textual & graphical data obtained from VIZ, MRZ and RFID

**Desktop device Regula 4205D**

✓ For various types of travel documents

✓ White, IR (870, 950 nm), and UV (254, 313, 365 nm)

✓ Optional integration of IRS document database

✓ MRZ, RFID, barcode reading, IPI visualization

✓ 30x on-screen magnification

range of document templates, along with detailed descriptions of their security features, from 214 countries and territories. The device is equipped with white, UV (254, 313, 365 nm), and IR (870, 950 nm) light sources, as well as infrared transmitted 870 nm and oblique 870 nm, and has modules for reading MRZ, RFID chip, and barcodes, as well as a module for IPI visualization. Every tiny detail can be examined, thanks to the

30x on-screen magnification on the 10.1-inch multi-touch screen. The device body is made of metal, and can be attached to a table with a G-lock for anti-theft purposes.

The whole range of Regula products for first-line border control covers mobile, desktop, and embedded solutions. To learn more about them and see the specifications, visit the website: www.regulaforensics.com



**Regula**
forensic science systems

Automated document verification and manual authentication for questioned documents

# 2023 WORLD BORDER SECURITY CONGRESS:

## SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA

## 25TH-27TH APRIL 2023

*The World Border Security Congress moves to Skopje, North Macedonia on 25th-27th April 2023, for the next annual gathering for the border security, management and protection community.*

**World Border Security Congress**

**25th - 27th April 2023**

**SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA (BALKANS)**

The Balkans Peninsula is usually characterized as consisting of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia—with Greece and Turkey also considered as part of that geographic region.

The Balkans has historically been the land route between Europe to the Middle East, the Levant, and North Africa, for both people and goods.

That East/West traffic in people and goods made the gateway city of Constantinople, (modern day Istanbul), one of the richest and

most sophisticated cities on earth, and certainly the richest in Europe throughout the Middle Ages.

But the regions ethnic, religious, and cultural mix has led to a tumultuous history of political and religious upheaval. The last major conflict in the 1990's that left the region awash with weapons.

Parts of the region remain relatively poor compared to their richer neighbours in the European Union, and that means the region is fertile ground for corruption and organised crime.

Poverty combined with the regions historical instability, and the

geographic location, has made the region a major route for illegal migration and human trafficking, as well as a route for drugs, weapons entering the EU. It is also a main route for returning foreign terrorist fighters.

**Weapons**

The Western Balkans remains the main route of entry for small arms into the EU legacy weapons from the region and from conflict countries in the Middle East. Small arms trafficking is a highly profitable business for organised crime, with plenty of weapons cheaply available and a ready market in Europe. The "Small Arms Survey" estimates that more than 6.8 million firearms can be traced to the countries of the West Balkans. It was established that the weapons for the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, were bought over the counter in Slovakia as decommissioned weapons (easily re-activated) and the weapons used in the Bataclan club massacre also

in Paris were also sourced in the Balkans.

Combine the easy availability of weapons in the region and returning foreign terrorist fighters transiting through the region and the potential problem is obvious.

**Drugs**

According to a UNODC report as far back as 2015, the estimated value of opiates trafficked through the Balkan route from Afghanistan to Europe was $28 billion annually.

More recently the UNODC has reported that an expansion of methamphetamine manufacture in recent years has added another layer of complexity to the illicit drug economy of Afghanistan and has increased the threat to consumer countries.

Between 2009 and 2012, UNODC, jointly with the Afghan Ministry for Counter Narcotics, conducted annual surveys on commercial

## CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

### TUESDAY 25TH APRIL

| | |
|---|---|
| 8:30am - 12:00pm | Site Visits |
| 9:30am - 12:30pm | AU-ECOSOCC/AYPSC Workshop |
| 1:30pm - 3:30pm | **MINISTERIAL OPENING, WELCOME AND OPENING KEYNOTE SESSION** |
| 3:30pm - 4:00pm | Networking Coffee Break |
| 4:00pm - 5:30pm | **PLENARY** - The threat posed by terrorists and organised criminal groups and their smuggling networks |
| 7:00pm | Welcome Reception (Invitation Only) |

### WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:00am - 10:30am | **PLENARY** - Securing maritime borders and combatting maritime crime |
| 9:00am-10:30am | **TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP** |
| 9:30am - 7:00pm | Exhibition Open |
| 10:30am - 11:15am | Networking Coffee Break in the Exhibition Hall |
| 11:15am - 12:30pm | **BREAKOUT  WORKSHOP** - Trafficking in human beings & migration-related crime (the migration crisis in the digital age) |
| | **CLOSED AGENCY WORKSHOP** - Continued efforts in information sharing and agency cooperation |
| 12:30pm - 2:00pm | Delegate Lunch |
| 2:00pm - 3:30pm | **PLENARY** - Countering terrorism and cross border organised crime |
| 2:00pm-3:30pm | **TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP** |
| 3:30pm - 4:15pm | Networking Coffee Break in the Exhibition Hall |
| 4:15pm - 5:30pm | **BREAKOUT WORKSHOP** - Changing Challenges to Trade and Customs |
| | **CLOSED AGENCY WORKSHOP** - Mainstreaming Human Rights into Immigration & Border Management |
| 5:30pm - 7:00pm | Networking Reception in the Exhibition Hall |

### THURSDAY 27TH APRIL

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:00am - 10:30am | **PLENARY** - Continuing development of digital borders and use of data – (including API / PNR on-going developments, travel documents security, and traveller programs) |
| 9:00am - 10:30am | CT Workshop |
| 9.30am - 4.30pm | Exhibition Open |
| 10:30am - 11:15am | Networking Coffee Break in the Exhibition Hall |
| 11:15am - 12:30pm | **BREAKOUT WORKSHOP** - Capacity building and training in tough times |
| | **CLOSED AGENCY WORKSHOP** - ID, data sharing and combatting Fraudulent ID |
| 12:30pm - 2:00pm | Delegate Lunch |
| 2:00pm - 3:30pm | **PLENARY** - Panel Discussion: Delivering effective border management in uncertain times |
| 4:00pm | World Border Security Congress Round Up and Close |

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cannabis production in Afghanistan. The 2012 survey estimated the total area under cannabis cultivation at 10,000 hectares, enough to produce 1,400 tons of cannabis resin.

These figures predated the recent return of the Taliban to power in that country, which threatens even greater quantities of drugs heading for Europe and elsewhere.

All these drugs find a ready market in Europe and a substantial percentage of it via the Balkan route.

**Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking**

According to the IoM since 2015, some 1.5 million migrants have transited through the Western Balkans. In 2020, Europol noted, "a growth of migrant smuggling activities in the region, with criminal networks employing increasingly exploitative measures

to defeat controls. Early and proactive identification of risks and vulnerabilities among mixed migration flows remains a challenge and obstacle for authorities to address and suppress trafficking effectively."

It is also inevitable that such large flows of migrants will be used by terrorist groups to infiltrate returning foreign terrorist fighters into Europe.

The Balkans is and will remain a complex and fragmented region, often buffeted by global and regional crisis whilst struggling with its own major economic and political challenges.

Only through increased consultation and cooperation across the region and with help from international agencies, intergovernmental organisations and the European Union will those be met.

Which is why the World Border

Security Congress is coming to the region to play its part in making that a reality.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level three day event that will once again discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

The Congress looks forward to welcoming you to Skopje, North Macedonia on 25th-27th April 2023 for the next gathering of border and migration management professionals.

Further details can be viewed at www.world-border-congress.com

Registration is now open for you to apply for your delegate pass to attend the 2023 World Border Security Congress.

Supported by:

# CLOSED AGENCY ONLY WORKSHOPS

**FOR BORDER AGENCIES AND AGENCIES AT THE BORDER ONLY** – If you are interested in participating in the Closed Agency Only Workshops, in order to obtain clearance to attend the Closed Workshops, please register via the Online Agency Registration complete the Agency Registration Form and return, to begin the approval process. If you have any queries please contact Neil Walker, Event Director, World Border Security Congress at neilw@world-border-congress.com.

The World Border Security Congress aims to promote collaboration, inter-agency cooperation and information/intelligence sharing amongst border agencies and agencies at the border to better engage and tackle the increasing threats and cross border security challenges that pertain to today's global environment.

Border agencies and agencies at the border can benefit from the 'Closed Agency Only Workshops', **hosted by the UNCCT Border Security and Management, Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and International Organization for Migration (IOM)** with a series of behind closed door discussion and working group opportunities.

This years Closed Agency Only Workshop topics are:

**Wednesday 26th April 2023 - 11.15am - 12.30pm**
**Continued efforts in information sharing and agency cooperation**
*Moderator: UNOCT | UNCCT | Border Security and Management*
Information sharing, and inter-agency co-operation are two sides of the same coin. One will not work without the other! But what are the barriers to co-operation and information sharing? Most often they are political, cultural and technical. So, how do we overcome those barriers and implement real co-operation and information sharing?

**Wednesday 26th April 2023 - 4.15pm - 5.30pm**
**Mainstreaming Human Rights into Immigration & Border Management**
*Moderator: International Organization for Migration (IOM)*
Irregular migration across the world continues and remains a dangerous prospect, especially for women and girls. The OHCHR has developed recommended principles and guidelines on human rights at international borders. These are intended to translate the international human rights framework into practical border governance measures. Part of any practical framework must include improved legal routes for migration as well as strategies to deter irregular migration. It should include swift processing of irregular and regular migrants once they have arrived and an effective and humane returns policy, including detention.

**Thursday 19th May 2022 - 11.15am - 12.30pm**
**ID, data sharing and combatting Fraudulent ID**
*Moderator: OSCE Transnational Threats Department*
Document fraud is one of the major challenges facing border officials worldwide. Fraudulent documents are used in organised smuggling of weapons, drugs vehicles and people. They have also been used in terrorist attacks. Most fraudulent document cases are picked up at airports, but that is probably because airports are where biometrics are most widely used. Sharing data on lost or stolen ID documents is a major weapon in the agency arsenal, but data sharing is key to making this work.

# Congress Programme

## Tuesday 25th April

**1:30pm - 3:30pm**     **MINISTERIAL OPENING KEYNOTE AND WELCOME**

Oliver Spasovski, Minister of Interior, North Macedonia

Sašo Smileski, Head of Border Police/Assistant-Director for Border Affairs and Migration, Ministry of Interior, North Macedonia

Vladimir Pivovarov, National Coordinator for Integrated Border Management, National Coordinative Center for Intergrated Border Management, North Macedonia

Sonja Bozinovska Petrusevska, Head of Mission, IOM Skopje

Senior Representative, Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Senior Representative, European Association of Airport & Seaport Police (EAASP)

**4:00pm - 5:30pm**     **Plenary Session - The threat posed by terrorists and organised criminal groups and their smuggling networks**
*The links between terrorist groups and organised criminal groups is well known. Both groups utilise many of the same networks and methods to traffic people, weapons (SALW) and drugs, either for financial gain and /or to achieve their political objectives. It is therefore not a great leap of credulity to imagine these channels being used to traffic CBRNe equipment and materials for use as WMD's. So, identifying and closing down these channels is of critical importance for our citizens health and safety.*

Michael Hughes, Director, INTERPOL Washington

Cristian Fanelli, Law Enforcement Expert, Border Management Branch, AIRCOP (UNODC)

**Khat Importation to the UK and European Union -** Clare Marr, Immigration Liaison Officer, Home Office International Operations, UK

**Threats of Terrorists and Border Security** - Major General John Ochai, Director of Special Research in the Nigerian Armed Forces

**Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking as Sources of Funds for Financing of Terrorism -** Zlate Dimovski, Professor, Faculty of security- Skopje

**Addressing the Profound and Enduring Impacts of Weapons Trafficking in post-Ukraine Conflict Europe -** Bethany Banks, Independent Expert, Owens Banks Consulting

**7:00pm - 9:00pm**     **Welcome Reception (invitation only)**

# CONGRESS PROGRAMME

## WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL

**9:00am - 10:30am**     **PLENARY SESSION - SECURING MARITIME BORDERS AND COMBATTING MARITIME CRIME**

*Maritime borders are and will remain the most challenging border environment to secure, and not just because the actual border is out at sea or in the 'Blue Borders'. Once the border is crossed you have the sheer length of the coastlines that have to be secured, much of it rugged and inaccessible. But also because of the multi-dimensional nature of a maritime and 'Blue' border. Maritime borders are surface and sub-surface, land, and air, and where each of those environments meet you have a unique set of technical and mitigation problems that need to be solved. This session looks at the issues and some of the solutions.*

Ashraful Hoq Chowdhury, Director General, Bangladesh Coast Guard

Capt. Victoriano José Bernardo Anaya, Head of National Coordination Center for the Maritime Surveillance of Coast and Borders, ICC coordinator, Guardia Civil, Spain

Ramon Ribas De Reyna, Head of Maritime and Coast Guard Unit, EUCAP Somalia

**Chris Trelawny, Deputy Secretary General, INTERPORTPOLICE**

**Securing ports along the maritime Balkan routes -** Ruggero Scaturro, Analyst, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)

**9.00AM - 10.30AM**     **TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP**

*See some of the latest border tech solutions demonstrated and dicussed during the Technology Workshop.*

**Transforming the real-time data at borders into actionable intelligence -** Renaud Irminger, CEO, Travizory

**From Edit Distance to Neural Networks: Understanding Name Screening Technologies -** Philip Blair, Senior Research Engineer, Babel Street

**Border Surveillance at Scale -** Dimitrios Kottas, CEO/Founder, Lambda Automata

**Aviation Security Evolution in Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities with an Eye on the Future of Border Management -** Ali Hussein Nasser, Aviation Security Quality Control Manager, Iraqi National Inspector, and Instructor, Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) & Yazan Alwashah, Operations Manager, CRDF Global

**Transforming the real-time data at borders into actionable intelligence -** Mikael Ibáñez Lavesson, Tech Sales / Product Specialist, MSAB

**Access the Truth to Accelerate Digital Investigations -** Luigi Portaluri, Director South Europe, Grayshift

# Congress Programme

**11:15AM - 12:30PM** **WORKSHOPS**

### BREAKOUT WORKSHOP - TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS & MIGRATION-RELATED CRIME (THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN THE DIGITAL AGE)

*Human traffickers are rapacious, ruthless, callous, and unscrupulous, but they are also intelligent, cunning, ingenious and adaptable. This means that wherever a gap or weakness in our borders is closed, they will immediately look to find a new gap to exploit. We have seen this repeatedly but most recently in the Channel where traffickers have switched emphasis from smuggling people through the Port of Dover and Shuttle (of course this is still going on daily) to providing unseaworthy small craft for the perilous journey across the channel. Targeting the traffickers is clearly the best way of tackling the issue, but what can border agencies do to affect this?*

**Approach to safeguarding and MSHT at the the UK Border** – Amanda Read, Border Force National Operational Vulnerability/ MSHT lead, Border Force

**International cooperation of national coordination centers for border management as a basis for fighting against organized crime at border crossings** – Vladimir Pivovarov, National Coordinator for Integrated Border Management, National Coordinative Center for Intergrated Border Management, North Macedonia

**Conduits of Cross Border Insecurity: Border Residents, Migrant Smugglers and Human Trafficking** – Abdul-Razak Tahiru, Head/Transnational Investigations and Henry Kumah, Assistant Inspector, Ghana Immigration Service

**Importance of Border Security-Albania Case** – Dr Lorenca Bejko, Diplomat/First Secretary, Albanian Embassy in Netherlands

### CLOSED AGENCY WORKSHOP - CONTINUED EFFORTS IN INFORMATION SHARING AND AGENCY COOPERATION

**Moderator: Gorancho Stojkovski, Programme Management Officer, United Nations Office on Countering Terrorism, Special Projects & Innovation Branch | CT Travel Programme**

*Information sharing, and inter-agency co-operation are two sides of the same coin. One will not work without the other! But what are the barriers to co-operation and information sharing? Most often they are political, cultural and technical. So, how do we overcome those barriers and implement real co-operation and information sharing?*

**Project SOTERIA** - Vivian Choy, Criminal Intelligence Analyst, INTERPOL

**How border management cooperation initiatives arise between neighboring countries with a history of violence or suspicion** - Danilo Diniz Correia, Independent researcher - Border Management and international politics

**Joint Operation for stronger border surveillance on the border between North Macedonia and Greece with support of foreign police officers** - Risto Shpritov, Department for border affairs and migrations, Head of Unit for support, Ministry of Internal Affairs, North Macedonia

# Congress Programme

## Wednesday 26th April

**2:00pm - 3:30pm**

### Plenary Session - Countering terrorism and cross border organised crime

*The links between terrorism and organised cross border crime is long established. How much and how often terrorist organisations and organised crime work together is more difficult to ascertain. We often see news reports about returning terrorist fighters using human trafficking routes to cross borders, but whether this is terrorists masquerading as irregular migrants or direct collusion between organised crime groups and terrorists is difficult to know. This session will look at what we do know about collusion and what we can do to counter it through the use of, for example, Watchlists and biometrics.*

**Terrorism as a phenomenon, the return of foreign fighters and their infiltration in the direction of preparing and executing terrorist acts in the Republic of North Macedonia, with a special ascent of the role of the Ministry of Interior in detecting and suppressing terrorist threats** – Tony Mihajlovski, Chief inspector, Section for terrorism investigations, Bureau for public security / Ministry of Interior, North Macedonia

**Behaviour detection approaches for border security** – Marina Tzvetkova, Project Officer, & Guido Ferraro, Project Manager, EC Joint Research Centre

**UNOCT Counter Terrorism Travel Programme** - Gorancho Stojkovski, Programme Management Officer, United Nations Office on Countering Terrorism, Special Projects & Innovation Branch | CT Travel Programme

**Demarkation and Good Borders – Good Neighbors** – Mile Milenkoski, Border Security Expert, North Macedonia

**Counterterrorism and Border Security Systems in Republic of Korea** – Bora Park, Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Strategy, Korea

**Human rights-compliant counter-terrorism approaches** - Johannes Heiler, ODIHR Adviser on Anti-Terrorism Issues, ODIHR

**2.00PM - 3.30PM**

### Technology Workshop

*See some of the latest border tech solutions demonstrated and dicussed during the Technology Workshop.*

**Long range, gapless and persistent border surveillance using buried optical fiber** – David Hill, Chief Technology Officer, Sintela Ltd

**X-ray diffraction – innovative technology for detecting drugs** – Thierry Ball, Global Business Development Director Smiths Detection

**Automation Reliability, Human-Machine System Performance and Operator Compliance: A Study with Airport Security Screeners supported by Automated Explosive Detection Systems** – Sara Bracceschi, Head of Consulting & Services, Customs, Center for Adaptive Security Research and Applications (CASRA)

**Public Safety and Personal Safety - The one-two punch of LES technology–** David Gerulski, Executive Vice President, Integrated Biometrics

**The new and agile way of sending API and PNR Passenger Data to governments** - Manu Niinioja, Law Enforcement Expert, WCC Group

**Karan Khurana, Head, Business Development – Europe & Asia, Elistair**

# Congress Programme

**4:15pm - 5:30pm** **Workshops**

### Breakout Session - Changing Challenges to Trade and Customs

*Trade is the lifeblood of any countries economy and customs duties represent significant sources of revenue for national governments. However, the illegal trade in counterfeit goods, endangered species, cultural heritage continues to pose a major problem to border and customs authorities worldwide and rob countries of both revenue and in many cases irreplaceable assets. In many parts of the world long, porous borders plus lack of infrastructure and resources, make this problem even more challenging.*

Bob Van Den Berge, Law Enforcement Expert, Container Control Programme, UNODC

Samy Gardemeister, Director of Enforcement, Finnish Customs

**Implications of Informal Trade on Border Security in West Africa: Lessons Learnt in Nigeria** – Sanusi Tasiu Saulawa, Chief Superintendent of Customs, Nigeria Customs

**Fighting Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Goods: An Innovative European Project. RITHMS: Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security (GA 101073932 – HORIZON-CL3-2021-FCT-01-08) –** Jelena Levak, Senior Project Manager, 'RITHMS project' Consortium

Paul Ignibere, Director, African Young People Support Centre

### Closed Agency Workshop - Mainstreaming Human Rights into Immigration & Border Management

**Moderator: Junaid Arshad Khan, Project Officer Immigration Border Governance, IOM Western Balkans**

*Irregular migration across the world continues and remains a dangerous prospect, especially for women and girls. The OHCHR has developed recommended principles and guidelines on human rights at international borders. These are intended to translate the international human rights framework into practical border governance measures. Part of any practical framework must include improved legal routes for migration as well as strategies to deter irregular migration. It should include swift processing of irregular and regular migrants once they have arrived and an effective and humane returns policy, including detention.*

**Exchanging of migration statistics in the Western Balkan** - Sasko Kochev, Director & Jordan Simonov, Data and Policy Analyst, MARRI RC

**Readmission - effective return and reintegration** - Snezana Trajanovska, Head of Foreigners and Readmission Unit, MoI, North Macedonia



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# CONGRESS PROGRAMME

## THURSDAY 27TH APRIL

**9:00am - 10:30am**

**PLENARY SESSION - CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL BORDERS AND USE OF DATA – (INCLUDING API / PNR ON-GOING DEVELOPMENTS, TRAVEL DOCUMENTS SECURITY, AND TRAVELLER PROGRAMS)**

*As the world moves rapidly towards digital borders with the fully integrated use of API and PNR data, this session brings us up to date with the experiences of the early adopter programmes and implementation and examines these ongoing experiences and lessons that can be shared to help global partners make the transition more seamlessly and cost effectively.*

**Expansion of Facial Biometrics and Mobile Technology -** DEAC Diane Sabatino, Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Jorge Rodrigues, ETIAS Project Officer, Frontex ETIAS Central Unit

Oksana Kurysheva, Associate Programme Officer, Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Annick Galante, Legal officer, National Travel Targeting Center (NTTC), Belgian National ETIAS Unit, Belgium

**Assessing ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card: Challenges and Opportunities in Nigeria -** Willie Aziegbe Eselebor, Independent Researcher & Consultant, Universal Research & Training Institute, Nigeria

**Registered Traveler Programs to support border control management and facilitate flows -** Emmanuel Wang, VP Europe Business Development, IDEMIA

**9.00AM - 10.30AM**

**CT WORKSHOP - AGENCY ONLY**

**Effective legislation at the Border**

*Moderated by: Counter Terrorism Border Operations Centre (CTBOC), Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (CTPHQ), United Kingdom*



Register Online Today at www.world-border-congress.com

# CONGRESS PROGRAMME

**11:15AM - 12:30PM          WORKSHOPS**

## BREAKOUT SESSION - CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING IN TOUGH TIMES

*What are we doing to address the skills gaps in our organisations. Once we have identified those skills gaps, how do implement the  development, and strengthen the doctrine, skills, processes, instincts, and culture to meet fast changing circumstances.*

**Border surveillance of the southern Schengen external borders of Hungary – latest update of innovation soloutions** – Monika Herczeg, Head of Unit – Police Cooperation and Border Management Unit & Leonard Zsakai, Senior police executive, Ministry of Interior, Hungary

**Modernization Efforts by the Nigeria Customs Service: Problems, Prospects and Lessons Learnt** – Babatunde Olomu, Comptroller & Misbau Murtala Sadiq, Superintendent of Customs, Nigerian Customs Service

**Protection-sensitive border management policies and procedures** - Admir Skodo, Senior Policy Analyst, Migration Policy Institute

**Passenger Targeting Trainings** - Manu Niinioja, Law Enforcement Expert, WCC Group

## CLOSED AGENCY WORKSHOP - ID, DATA SHARING AND COMBATTING FRAUDULENT ID

*Document fraud is one of the major challenges facing border officials worldwide. Fraudulent documents are used in organised smuggling of weapons, drugs vehicles and people. They have also been used in terrorist attacks. Most fraudulent document cases are picked up at airports, but that is probably because airports are where biometrics are most widely used. Sharing data on lost or stolen ID documents is a major weapon in the agency arsenal, but data sharing is key to making this work.*

**Moderator: Colleen Ryan, Border Advisor, Border Security & Management Unit, Transnational Threats Department (TNTD), Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**

Luca Tagliaretti, Deputy Executive Director, eu-LISA

Lost/stolen passport; international warrants; watch lists - Ralph Markert, INTERPOL

# CONGRESS PROGRAMME

**2:00pm - 3:30pm**

**PLENARY SESSION - PANEL DISCUSSION: DELIVERING EFFECTIVE BORDER MANAGEMENT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES**

*Delivering effective border management in unforeseen circumstances, like COVID19 or the migrant crisis - is it about developing the culture of adaptability, better communications or having the systems, processes, and mechanisms in place to put together quick reaction teams across agencies and national borders? Or is it something else? Corruption of border officials or politicisation of law enforcement also brings its challenges. This panel will discuss what is required to react to what we do not know, knowing what we do!*

DEAC Diane Sabatino, Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Mariette Frencken, Staff Department, Border Management Unit, Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

Donato Colucci, Head of Border Identity Solutions, IOM HQ

Ana Cristina Jorge, Director of Operational Response Division, FRONTEX

Andy Smith, Director, Government & Industry Relations, SITA

**3:30pm - 4:00PM**    **CONGRESS ROUND UP AND CLOSE**

*\*invited*

# Site Visits

## Site Visits to Skopje International Airport; or Blace Border Crossing & Transit Reception Centre, Tabanovce

### Tuesday 25th April – 8.30am-12noon

#### Skopje International Airport



Skopje International Airport is the largest and busiest international airport in North Macedonia, owned by TAV Airports, handling over 2 million passengers a year.

The airports 40,000 m2 terminal building, containing 23 check-in counters, has the capacity to handle four million passengers a year and includes 40,000 ton annual capacity cargo hangar.

Its busiest routes include Basel/Mulhouse, Istanbul, Zürich, Vienna, Dortmund, Memmingen Cologne/Bonn, Malmö and Hamburg.

Skopje International Airport is the 7th time winner of the Airport Service Quality Award in the category: "Best Airport by size in Europe".

With the full co-operation of the Airport Authority and airport operator TAV Airports, The World Border Security Congress is delighted to offer, a guided site visit of Skopje International Airport for a limited number of delegates.

#### Blace Border Crossing & Transit Reception Centre, Tabanovce



Tabanovce Border Crossing sits on the main road between North Macedonia and Serbia and was reconstructed at an investment EUR 1.8 million. It has increased the number of traffic lanes to four entry and three exit lanes. It also provides modern facilities for carrying out the necessary border and customs formalities by border authorities. Border crossing for passengers includes all elements necessary for normal functioning and control of passengers and passenger vehicles.

The modern border crossing provides a number of benefits, not only improved passenger traffic and facilitated cross-border trade, but also better access of Macedonian products to European markets and improved competitiveness of the domestic economy.

The Transit Reception Centreat Tabanovce, focuses on assisting asylum seekers, providing temporary accommodation for stranded foreigners and refugees/migrants.

Supported by IOM Skopje, the TRC Tabanovce has installed containers to serve as temporary accommodation for the stranded migrants, and ensured the wellbeing and survival – the basic human rights – for the stranded migrants and refugees.

The World Border Security Congress is delighted to offer, with the support of the MoI and IOM, a guided site visit of Tabanovce Border Crossing and The Transit Reception Centre Tabanovce for a limited number of delegates.

**For further details and book your place visit www.world-border-congress.com/site-visit**

**Spaces are limited so ensure you book your place on the site tour early.**

# NETWORKING RECEPTION

## NETWORKING RECEPTION

Networking Reception
Sponsored by:

**SITA**

**WEDNESDAY 26th APRIL**
**5.30pm - 7:00pm**
**Exhibition Floor**

We invite you to joins us at the end of the Wednesday 26th April for the World Border Security Congress Networking Reception in the exhibition area at the Aleksandar Palace, which will see the border security industry management professionals gather for a more informal reception.

With the opportunity to meet colleagues and peers you can build relationships with senior border agency and security officials in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

The Networking Reception is free to attend and open to industry professionals.

We look forward to welcoming you.

## Register Online Today at www.world-border-congress.com

# African Young People Support Centre / African Smart Cities Innovation Foundation / AU-ECOSOCC Workshop



## Cross Border Crimes and the Need for Effective Engagement with Women and Youth at the Border-Communities

### Tuesday 25th April - 9.30am-12.30pm

The African Young People Support Centre (AYPSC) and African Smart Cities Innovation Foundation (ASCIF) are both Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) registered and in Nigeria with aims objectives of supporting and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in Nigeria and across Africa continent.

A large percent of cross-border traders, especially those engaged in informal trade, are women. Understanding their needs and giving them a platform to speak at this Side-Event is incredibly important. The youth are Africa's largest composite of human capital. As the youngest continent, Africa needs to invest in ensuring that its youth have credible pathways to engage in productive activities so that they may reap the promise of their dreams and become architects of their own prosperity rather than committing crimes at the borders.

The Workshop will be highly interactive and will be centred on a meaningful dialogue between policy/decision makers, agencies of government, civil society members, and stakeholders active at the forefront of addressing Border and Communities development.

We will examine the high rate of people, especially the young, who engage in the border crimes and illegal trades, likewise the resultant effect of this crimes on their immediate community and society at large, while focusing especially on how if affects children and women who are most at the receiving end of the negative impact.

This Workshop will further look at the challenges of appropriate mechanism in the West Africa sub-region to monitor cross border crimes within the region. Some of these criminal activities manifest in the form of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons/ammunitions, trafficking in human beings especially women and children, smuggling of drugs, cattle rustling, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed robbery, '419' activities, and attack by the Boko Haram insurgents. The existence of these criminal activities poses serious challenges for countries in the sub-region. Such challenges include lapses in national security apparatuses and the criminal justice system, uncoordinated state security agencies, weak collaborative efforts, and legal regulatory frameworks.

The Workshop will also engage on what the AfCFTA means to Africa's women and youth exporters and how they can be best supported to utilise opportunities in intra-African trade in reducing illegal trading and crime at the border. It will also address the informality of regional trade which is dominated by women and youth that face significant barriers to trading across borders.

**Workshop Time**
Tuesday 25th April 2023 : 9.30am - 12:30pm

Delegates of the World Border Security Congress are entitled to participate in this African Young People Support Centre (AYPSC) and African Smart Cities Innovation Foundation (ASCIF) Workshop.

**Register online at www.world-border-congress.com/registration**

Watch the latest webinar recordings at **www.border-security-report.com/webinar-library**

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### Border Security and Migration Challenges in South East Europe

View directly at www.border-security-report.com/webinar-border-security-and-migration-challenges-in-south-east-europe/



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### Securing Maritime Borders

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### The French Government's efforts to fight cross-border crime – the API/PNR case study

View directly at www.border-security-report.com/webinar-the-french-governments-efforts-to-fight-cross-border-crime-the-api-pnr-case-study

# Doculus Lumus Allows Multiple Energy Sources

In today's technology-driven world, each and every person has more than just one device to charge. Whether that is a smartphone, tablet, laptop, smartwatch or other digital gadgets. But what to do if you are in the middle of your work, your needed tool is empty and there is no chance of charging at the moment?

Doculus Lumus, the mobile document checking device, allows multiple energy sources to examine ID documents in every situation at any time.

Doculus Lumus can be operated in 3 ways: with standard AAA batteries, the optional integrated accumulator, available as Option LI, as well as with rechargeable AAA batteries. Whenever the accumulator runs low and there is no chance to charge at the moment, simply insert two spare batteries. For a more sustainable approach, use rechargeable AAA batteries. The patented technology of Doculus Lumus enables the automatic switch to batteries when the accumulator is empty. At the next convenience or possibility, take the batteries out again and recharge the integrated accumulator. The specially designed belt bag holds space for two spare batteries to bring along in the field.

For front and second line it comes down to reliability. With Doculus Lumus, border guards never run out of energy in their day-to-day work and are able to secure the borders 24/7.

# WCC Group announces the launch of its HERMES Passenger Data Gateway

WCC Group a leading provider of Passenger screening and targeting software (Advance Passenger Information System, APIS).

With the launch of the Passenger Data Gateway, WCC expends it's offering and ability to fully-support governments with an end-to-end solution. The HERMES Passenger Data Gateway offers full control over obtaining, managing, and forwarding Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Records (PNR) passenger data. Alternative commercial service providers offer gateway services that act as a "black box". The main differentiator of WCC's PDG is that the government has full control over the data and the associated data connections. Next to that WCC's HERMES Passenger Data Gateway integrates seamlessly with the HERMES APIS Passenger Screening and Targeting software. It also fully supports the more advanced Interactive API (iAPI) standard with direct connections to airlines Departure Control Systems (DSC).

In order to support as many governments around the Globe, WCC will also offer connections to other APIS systems than HERMES. At WCC, we believe in an open eco-system with affordable software for every country. Where, we as a company, ensure the quality of our software and ever developing improvements and upgrades.

# foster+freeman unveils their latest innovation for the examination of Questioned Documents; the VSC900

foster+freeman Ltd, manufacturer of advanced technology for the examination of questioned documents, announced the launch of a new mid-range VSC workstation that offers comprehensive forensic-level examination facilities in a compact format.



The all-new, VSC 900 is suitable for a range of questioned document examinations applications. The extensive selection of features makes the new questioned document examination workstation suitable for all manner of printed or handwritten documents, including passports, ID cards and banknotes.

For the travel and identity document examiner, the VSC 900 bridged the gap between frontline passport scanners, and a full-scale forensic-level instrument. The new VSC 900 offers a range of examination facilities that stretch beyond those typically available on the front line.

For the forensic document examiner, the VSC 900 offers a full suite of analysis techniques to distinguish genuine versus counterfeit.

The VSC 900 workstation provides a compact yet powerful alternative to foster+freeman's flagship product the VSC 8000 H/S, the world's most advanced Video Spectral Comparator for document examination.

# Elistair Introduces ORION HL, A Tethered Drone Designed For Tactical Communications

Elistair is pleased to announce the launch of Orion Heavy Lift (HL), to support growing demand for variable height antennas from military, public safety and homeland security customers.



As tactical communications evolve to match the rapidly changing needs of operators on the ground, tethered drones offer significant benefits when flexibility and mobility are critical. With the need of highly effective ground units to have increased mobility, tethered drones are enabling the establishment and extension of secured mobile networks, thanks to their rapid deployment time and persistence in the air.

Leveraging the original Orion platform used by military forces and security forces in over 30 countries for ISR missions, the Orion HL benefits from the same level of automation, ruggedization and safety architecture as its parent. Able to carry payloads of 4 kgs at 90 meters and 5 kgs at 50 meters height, for flight durations of 50 hours, Orion HL is deployable in minutes and easily transportable.

Along with Elistair's new Payload Development Kit, partners can now seamlessly integrate their payloads and sensors to widen the capabilities of the platform for the end-users. A beta-testing program with selected partners allowed the successful integration of a CORDIS Array II from Radionor, a 5G relay and a SIGINT payload.

# Smiths Detection launches compact CT checkpoint X-ray

Smiths Detection has announced that it has launched the HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX Model S, a smaller footprint version of its successful, security operator preferred, Computed Tomography (CT) passenger checkpoint scanner.



This new model, which is 20cm narrower and 350kg lighter than the HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX, can be easily integrated into existing and new airport or critical infrastructure checkpoints. Both models of the HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX feature industry leading image quality and low levels of energy consumption, a belt speed of 0.2m/s, which is 30% higher than other CT X-ray scanners, alongside low noise levels and zero vibration, improving the checkpoint experience for both passengers and security operators.

The HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX Model S harnesses the power of CT X-ray scanning eliminating the need to remove electronic devices, liquids and gels from hand luggage by producing 3D volumetric images, reducing the number of trays and speeding up the security screening process. The new Model S also features the original model's award winning operator interface.

The HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX Model S can be seamlessly integrated alongside both Smiths Detection and third-party technology, supporting the development of open architecture solutions.

# Leidos Selected to Lead Security Technology Enhancements at London Luton Airport

Leidos was recently named the principle contractor for technology upgrades across multiple security checkpoints at London Luton Airport (LLA). As one of the UK's busiest airports, LLA served over 13 million passengers in 2022.



As the principal contractor, Leidos manages all subcontractors and associated consultants working on the project. This includes oversight of building modifications to create two central image processing rooms. The company will also install its security systems and other third-party security solutions at the checkpoints.

Under the agreement, Leidos will deploy 12 of its integrated ClearScan™ cabin baggage scanners and ProPassage™ automated tray return systems. ClearScan is a computed tomography (CT) scanner with advanced explosive detection algorithms. This capability eliminates the need to remove electronics and approved liquids from carry-on baggage. The large, automated ProPassage trays reduce the number of trays needed per passenger in the divest area and helps prevent sweep-outs, a common issue with light items in shallow trays. The combination of these two technologies will enable faster processing of passengers through the checkpoint.

LLA will also deploy Mosaic™, Leidos' open-architecture software platform. This cyber-secure solution integrates all security components into a single management system and will provide the airport with actionable business intelligence across the entire security screening operation.

## Sepura and VNC Automotive Promote an In-Vehicle Hybrid Broadband Solution

Sepura are promoting the latest development in their broadband portfolio, the integration of the SCU3 hybrid LTE/TETRA device with in-vehicle infotainment solutions.

VNC Automotive's Cobalt Cube® product enables the integration of the SCU3 as well as ancillary devices such as light bars, sirens, CCTV and facilitating the control of these devices through a vehicle's existing touchscreen. This capability significantly reduces the costs and complexity of installing multiple devices and offers forces a proven upgrade path to deploy dual mode devices.

Built on the market-leading Android operating system, Sepura's SCU3 is a mission critical hybrid device, providing compatibility with a wide range of applications designed to run on existing Android devices whilst also featuring a TETRA module, enabling narrowband voice and data.

## OSI Systems Receives $600 Million Award for Cargo and Vehicle Inspection Systems

OSI Systems has announced that it has been notified of an award valued at approximately $600 million, which includes 16% value added tax (VAT), from Mexico's Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA) for cargo and vehicle inspection systems and related services.

Under the award, the Company is expected to provide a range of inspection systems, including the Eagle® high energy and low energy cargo inspection portals, the Carview® vehicle inspection system, and the Certscan® multi-site integration platform, to inspect trucks, buses, and cars at several Mexican customs border checkpoints at the country's northern and southern borders. The Company also expects to support the civil works, training, and follow-on maintenance.

OSI Systems' Chairman and CEO, Deepak Chopra, commented, "We are honored to receive this significant award and deeply appreciate the trust and confidence that SEDENA has placed in us. With our successful track record worldwide, particularly in customs and border security initiatives, we possess a profound understanding of how to effectively manage these complex projects."

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# World Border Security Congress

## 25TH–27TH APRIL 2023
## SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA (BALKANS)
www.world-border-congress.com

## Developing Border Strategies Through Co-operation and Technology

### INVITATION TO ATTEND - REGISTER ONLINE TODAY

**You are invited to attend the 2023 World Border Security Congress**

The Republic of North Macedonia is a landlocked country in the Southeastern region of Europe known as the Balkans. It gained independence in 1991 as one of the successor states of Yugoslavia.

In March 2020, North Macedonia acceded to NATO, becoming the 30th member state and accession process to join the European Union remains ongoing.

Ranked as the fourth "best reformatory state" out of 178 countries ranked by the World Bank in 2009, North Macedonia has undergone considerable economic reform since independence. North Macedonia has witnessed steady, though slow, economic growth and has implemented policies focused on attracting foreign investment and promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

By virtue of its position North Macedonia sits on the Balkan route for illegal migration into the European Union and therefore faces border challenges that require a collective, collaborative, and holistic response, making it the ideal place for the next meeting of the World Border Security Congress.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

We look forward to welcoming you to Skopje, North Macedonia on 27th-29th April 2023 for the next gathering of border and migration management professionals.

**www.world-border-congress.com**

*for the international border management and security industry*

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