

MPF Exchange Event



Synopsis Report

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MPF Exchange Event

The MPF Exchange Event brought together current and past MPF grantees that implement(ed) projects working on the external dimension of migration policy, representatives from EU Member State governments, and EU services.

Morning Session: Borders and Security Cooperation Priorities

The first session of the MPF Exchange Event revolved around borders and security cooperation priorities. This session aimed to provide a platform

for current and past MPF grantees to share their experiences, exchange best practices, and look ahead to future priorities. The session also included a panel discussion to consider how border and security technology and processes are likely to evolve in the coming years and what this will mean for cooperation with priority partner countries outside the EU.



Afternoon Session: Power of Partnership Approaches

The second session of the event focused on partnership approaches under the MPF. It aimed to explore the diverse partnership approaches employed by the projects funded within the framework of the MPF, covering the full thematic spectrum of the external dimension of migration policy. Discussions during this session centred on fostering collaboration, identifying innovative partnership strategies, and delved into approaches that strengthen migration partnerships for lasting impact.

Morning Session: Borders & Security Cooperation Priorities

Opening Remarks

- Mr Pawel Busiakiewicz, Head of Unit HOME A3, Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- Mr Ralph Genetzke, Director, ICMPD Brussels Mission

The Borders & Security morning session kicked started the day with information on the EU's priorities, objectives and plans in the field of border and security initiatives linked to the external dimension of EU policy. In these times of geo-political crises it was confirmed that effective border management to ensure the legal movement of people and goods while stemming the illicit smuggling and trafficking of people is all the more relevant. Alignment

with international humanitarian and human rights standards is at the core the EU's approach to integrated border management and must be at the heart of our partnership approaches with non-EU countries.

Significance of the External Dimension of Borders and Security:

- **A Shared Challenge:** The European Union is facing a suite of challenges to the integrity of its external borders such as irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking, and organised crime, to name a few. These challenges require a common policy approach by EU institutions and member states in order to secure and safeguard the integrity of the Union's external borders.
- **A Shared Opportunity:** the management of borders is also about opportunities. A well-functioning border system (i) facilitates people's movement in an orderly and safe manner, (ii) it is a catalyst for international trade and economic growth, (iii) reduces delays and costs for businesses and people, as well as (iv) creates opportunities for innovation and growth through technologies.
- **Necessity of Partnerships:** Clearly, Europe cannot address these challenges alone, and hence partnerships are not just a choice, they are a necessity. There is a need to integrate and cooperate with partner countries in efforts to manage external borders and secure EU territory and to tackle shared migration challenges.

ICMPD and MPF's Contribution to the External Dimension of Borders and Security:

- ICMPD was created 30 years ago by the Governments of Austria and Switzerland with the specific task to forge migration partnerships between countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, specifically as secretariat to the Budapest Process.
- Three decades later, ICMPD has evolved into an organisation working globally, while looking for regional approaches. What did not change during this period is ICMPD's central belief that especially in the area of migration no progress can be achieved without partnership. In the past three decades, ICMPD has been embarking on partnerships related to policy, research or capacity development and has been advancing dialogues between the EU and partner countries that lead to partnerships addressing both the challenges and opportunities of migration governance.
- The MPF was set up seven years ago namely to respond to emerging priorities, policies and challenges on the side of the EU and its partners. Over the years, the MPF became a key instrument in sustaining and advancing partnerships on a wide range of topics of common interest and involving a large spectrum of actors from Europe and beyond. In addition to the grant-making programme, the MPF has been providing a platform for EU MS and priority countries to deepen their cooperation and develop joint strategies and actions revolving around issues of common importance.
- To date, the MPF has awarded 52 projects, with a total value of approximately 51 million euros.
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Presentations of new MPF Border & Security projects

In this session three new projects that were not yet presented at the first MPF Exchange event in 2022 had an opportunity to introduce their initiatives – describing successes, challenges and lessons learned.

- **PROMETHEUS II** - Mr Jean-Christophe Hilaire, Police Commander, Chief of Bureau, Ministry of Interior, France

Following a successful first phase, the 'Prometheus II' project aims at strengthening the capacities of Georgian authorities to effectively manage and control migratory flows. The project sustains capacitybuilding activities targeted at the Georgian Border and Patrol Police. Capacity building activities will be extended to specialized investigators at the central (Central Criminal Police Department) and/or local level (Adjara Police Department, Tbilisi Police Department), which will strengthen cooperation efforts with the EU and improve the capability of Georgian law enforcement authorities to respond to irregular migration flows and challenges. The project also includes support to the structural (re)organization of Georgian border and migration services and their respective operational activities, mainly the Border Management and Coordination Division within the Information Analytical Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the aim of enhancing investigative capacity to uncover and dismantle active organised criminal networks.

- **RAPAK** - Mr William Huddleston, RAPAK ICMPD Project Manager

The RAPAK project supports the Government of Pakistan to elaborate and pilot the establishment of Risk Analysis Units within its Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), at the HQ, zonal, and border crossing points (BCP) level. The project will establish functioning information exchange mechanisms, procedural and analytical tools, and sustainable training solutions embedded in national training institutions. The development of FIA risk analysis capabilities, structures, and processes will contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness of border protection and will provide FIA units with adequate information to tackle identified security threats.

- **Strengthening Georgian Border Police (GBP) Capacities for Green and Sea Border Surveillance** - Mr Kaspars Fismeisters, Senior Specialist of the International Cooperation Board of the Central Board of the State Border Guard of Latvia

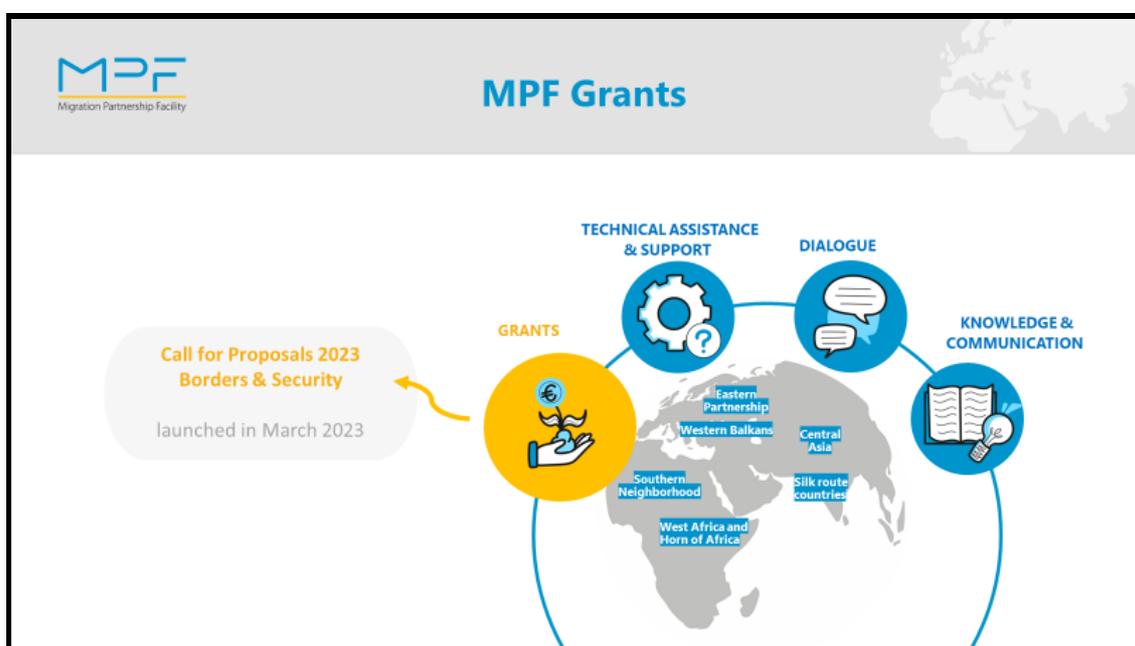
The project aims at strengthening the capacities of the Georgian Border Police (GBP) for green and sea border surveillance. The GBP Aviation Unit's knowledge and skills will be enhanced via a series of training focusing on migration-related challenges and technical equipment dedicated to border surveillance will be improved. To this end, the Latvian State Border Guard (SGBL) will donate one helicopter to GBP and train its staff on operation and maintenance of the new type of helicopter. In addition, the project will contribute to creating the necessary preconditions for greater alignment with the European Union's acquis in the area of Integrated

Border Management and will improve platforms for joint interventions in cross-border cooperation and information exchange.

The panellists took some questions from the audience relating to the role played by Frontex, the push for technologies and procurement by partner countries and how the cooperation in some of the projects may have been affected by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing geo-political turmoil.

MPF Borders & Security Call for Proposals

The MPF present the contents of the open Call for Proposals with funding available from both BMVI and ISF sources. Information may be found [here](#).



Looking Ahead – What are the priorities for cooperation on borders and security?

The last session before lunch was a panel session, moderated by Mr Borut Erzen, Head of ICMPD's Border Management and Security Programme. Key issues covered included what will the evolution of border and security technology and processes (e.g., the use of artificial intelligence) in the coming years mean for cooperation with priority partner countries outside the EU?

Speakers:

- Mr Erik Silfversten, Assistant Director at RAND Europe
- Mr Vilim Lukas, Department of Public and European Law at the University of Finance and Administration in Prague

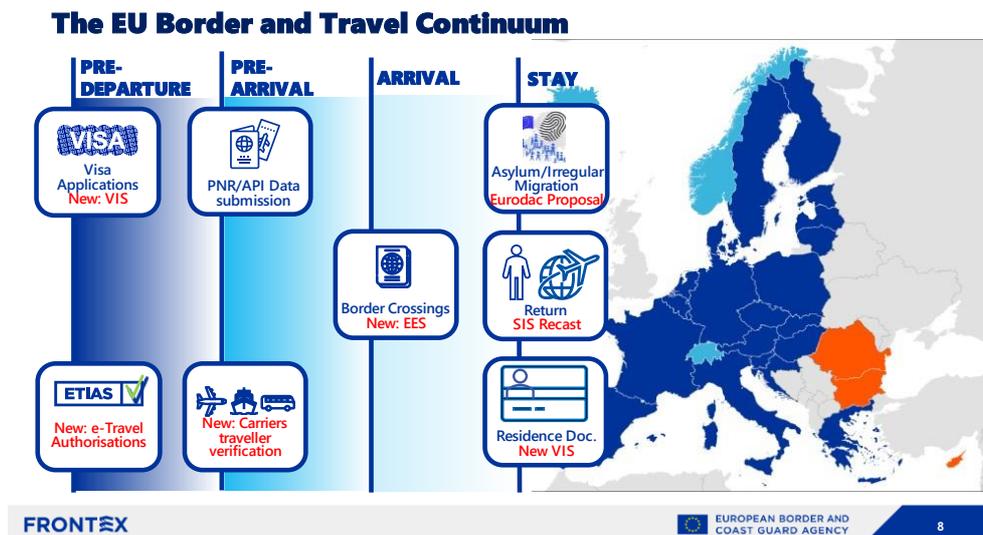
- Ms Silvia Carta, Advocacy Officer – Migration Policy at PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)
- Mr Richard Ares Baumgartner, EU Affairs Strategic Advisor at Frontex

This session saw presentations by expert analysis and speakers with a focus on fundamentals such as what is artificial intelligence and what are its likely limitations? Erik Silfversten presented challenges, risks as well as potential areas where AI is more likely to be utilised in the short-term.



Mr Lukas Vilim detailed the different ways that technology was opening up opportunities for organised crime and manipulation of vulnerable groups to dangerous smuggling networks or trafficking and noted the areas where additional vigilance to detection, strategic communications and effective information management may counter.

Mr Richard Ares Baumgartner from Frontex further helped to set the scene with a presentation on the existing and planned European Border Continuum.



Ms Silvia Carta took up the case of vulnerable groups, particularly those on the move across EU borders or already within the Union irregularly.

 PICUM

1. Context

- ◆ The **migration context** is one where there are already **enormous inequalities** in terms of those using technology and those against whom they are used.
- ◆ **Fighting irregular migration** has been a **hallmark of EU common asylum and migration policy** for past 22 years → surveillance of borders, strong predominance of returns, readmission agreements, criminalization of humanitarian assistance.
- ◆ Growing tendency to merge criminal law and immigration policy.

What are the consequences of these measures?

What is the "criminalisation of migration"?

This term refers to policies that treat undocumented migrants as a potential security threat and irregular migration as a crime (e.g. by criminalising acts such as irregular entry and stay).

Overall, this session was very well-received with some disappointment that the time did not permit sufficient space for questions and discussion. Therefore, it was agreed that the MPF would arrange an additional one or two sessions online where more time could be made available for engagement. **A further session will therefore be held on 30th October at 10am. Registration and access may be found [here](#).**

Afternoon Session: 'Power of Partnership Approaches'

Opening Remarks

- Ms Alexandra Sa-Carvalho, Deputy Head of Unit HOME A3, Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- Dr Jennifer Tangney, MPF Senior Manager, ICMPD

The representative from DG HOME confirmed the necessity of partnerships as migration usually involved more than one country and therefore combined approaches to address vulnerability, root causes of precarious, irregular migration as well as legal pathways that benefit both the country of origin and destination need to be designed. Steadfast in this commitment

to partnership, DG HOME has been funding the Migration Partnership Facility since 2016 and is proud that the programme has grown and evolved to meet the needs of EU member states and their cooperation interests with priority countries over the years. Implementation of the Pact will rely on strong partnership approaches and -

through the MPF - models for these are tested and learnings generated.

The diversity of projects within the MPF portfolio demonstrates the breadth of partnership models and learning how specific engagement types may be more suited to certain contexts will be a useful evolution when considering future projects.



MPF Presentation – The Power of Partnerships

The MPF undertook a mapping of the 48 projects that have been awarded since the inception of the programme in 2016, to explore the typologies of partnership that exist in this migration domain and to try to cluster within a framework, projects that adopted similar approaches.



Five typologies of partnership were identified in the initial research:

- **Operational Partnerships**
- **Policy and Dialogue Partnerships**
- **Capacity Partnerships**
- **Action Research**
- **Skills/Labour Mobility Partnerships**

Presentation of Partnerships

MPF projects from all five typologies were invited to present their initiatives and explain why their partnership approached was shaped as it was/is.

Operational Partnership:

[‘Enhancing capacities of Border Police forces to detect forged identity and travel documents for preventing and combating irregular migration and trafficking in human beings’](#)

Mr Donatas Škarnulis, Head of Criminal Investigation Board, State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

Capacity Partnership:

[‘Strengthening Migrant Integration through Cooperation between Portugal and Cabo Verde – Coop4Int’](#)

Ms Ana Couteiro, Coop4INT Project Manager and Head of Migrant Integration Support Unit of Portugal.

Labour Migration and Skills Partnership:

[‘WAFIRA - Women As Financially Independent Rural Actors’](#)

Mr Oussama Elbaroudi, WAFIRA Project Officer

Policy Dialogue Partnership:

[Prague Process](#) & [Budapest Process](#)

Mr Alexander Maleev, Senior Project Manager, Prague Process Secretariat & Ms Caroline Ambiaux, Project Manager, Budapest Process Secretariat

Action Research Partnership:

[‘INSigHT - Building capacity to deal with human trafficking and transit routes in Nigeria, Italy, and Sweden’](#)

Ms Giovanna Marconi, INSigHT Project Manager & Associate Professor at the University IUAV of Venice and Ms Michela Sempredon, INSigHT Research Coordinator & Senior Researcher/Lecturer at the University of Parma.

Conclusion of the Session

All MPF grantees present were asked to locate themselves next to the classification that they found to be most relevant to their project. It very quickly through discussion became clear that the Skills/Labour Mobility Partnerships typology would be better suited to being considered as hybrid as the current denomination considered its thematic content rather than operational approach for categorisation. It was agreed that a hybrid category would be created whereby complex projects that adopt multiple partnership means may be included.

The final **Partnership Approaches to Migration Partnerships** report will be drafted to include the presentations of the participants and will have an updated matrix following from the discussions.

Closure of the MPF Exchange Event

Final Words

Mr. Oleg Chirita, Head of Global Initiatives in ICMPD, concluded the event stressing the need for collaboration and for EU Member States to empower partner countries as they develop their projects so that they may have more ownership of results and increase the chances of sustainable outcomes.

