



Crossing Borders, Combatting Crime: a Real- World Lesson in Police Cooperation

The cross-border nature of transnational organised crime makes it essential for countries to work together to effectively combat these illicit activities. This is the primary purpose of the EU-funded International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) that were strengthened through the project 'Further strengthening of International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) Network in South-eastern Europe (SEE) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries'.

Standing stronger together

Joint surveillance exercise (AI-generated image)



A joint surveillance exercise between Hungarian and Romanian law enforcement showcased the effectiveness of cross-border collaboration in combatting transnational crime, highlighting how international cooperation enhances operational efficiency, strengthens regional security, and prepares countries for closer integration with the European Union. This initiative marked a pivotal achievement for countries involved in the project, namely Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine, reinforcing the importance of shared efforts in tackling transnational organised crime and fostering stability across borders.

"We now have more contacts, especially with the Romanian counterparts. We have common issues during the examination of specific cases. These contacts are useful and facilitate the examination process." – ILECUS law enforcement officer, Moldova

From Simulation to Security: A Story of Cooperation

Within the project's wide geographic scope, a police cooperation exercise at the Hungarian-Romanian border was one valuable example of the type of border security work conducted during project implementation. In October 2022, Hungarian and Romanian law enforcement officers came together for the joint border surveillance activity, connecting law enforcement teams from different countries under the ILECU's framework to tackle a simulated transnational crime. The exercise involved tracking a target vehicle from Budapest to the Hungarian-Romanian border, where Romanian authorities took over and Hungarian officers briefly continued across the border before fully handing over the operation to their Romanian counterparts.



Joint surveillance exercise (AI-generated image)

Using drones and advanced surveillance technologies, the teams showcased the technical capabilities and strategic coordination necessary for such operations. Officers adhered to the legal framework under Article 40 of the Schengen Convention, emphasising respect for sovereignty and legal compliance. **For participants, the exercise was a transformative learning experience that offered a model for other countries nearing EU membership.**

"We will continue to keep in touch with most of the colleagues, many of them are our neighbours. It is easier to request information when you know the focal point, operating context, and legislation. We have definitely built a wider network." – ILECUS law enforcement officer from Romania

International cooperation (free stock image)

A legacy of collaboration

By fostering trust, sharing expertise, and enhancing operational readiness, the project 'Further strengthening of International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) Network in South-eastern Europe (SEE) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries' has proven to be an effective initiative for combatting transnational organised crime, leaving a lasting legacy of security and cross-border collaboration.

About the MPF

This grant project was part of the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to support the external dimension of the EU's migration policy. The MPF funds projects that promote dialogue and cooperation on migration and mobility between EU Member States and partner countries outside the EU.

About the project

The project 'Further strengthening of International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) Network in South-eastern Europe (SEE) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries' was running between January 2022 and December 2023. The project was implemented by ICMPD on behalf of Romania and Hungary in five countries, namely Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine.

About the evaluation

Testimonies used in this document were collected as part of the final evaluation of the project 'Further strengthening of International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) Network in South-eastern Europe (SEE) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries' completed between May and August 2024. The evaluation was led by Blomeyer & Sanz, who makes part of a consortium of six consultancies and NGOs, namely Blomeyer & Sanz, Diversity Development Group, Migration Policy Group, Policy Impact Lab, Samuel Hall and Tandans.



**Funded by
the European Union**

