

# EU Support to Strengthen Border Security in the Middle East, North Africa Region

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a region suffering from various crises. Wars, civil wars, collapsed state administration, lack of public security, failed law and order systems generate different international security threats such as terrorism, weapon smuggling, trafficking of human beings, illegal migration and so on. These illegal activities from the region are also pose a serious security challenge for the countries of the European Union. For this reason, the EU is making huge efforts to improve the border management capacities of the countries of MENA region that are the source of illegal migration and other cross border crimes. The EU is operating four crisis management missions and different other projects in the region, whose main aim is to develop the capacities of local law enforcement and border security services. Crisis management missions and operations, and different development projects run by the Union are the primary means of effectively tackling the security challenges from this geographical area. In these missions, police and border guards officers, other law enforcement professionals and civilian experts are playing an increasingly important role. By acting as trainers, mentors and advisers law enforcement officers and civilian experts contribute to strengthening law, order, and border security in this part of the world.

**Keywords:** crises, terrorism, migration, border security, law enforcement development

## I. Introduction

The Middle East although the term refers to a geographically bounded area - located largely in Asia, but with a western border extending into Africa through Egypt - it is nevertheless a political-historical rather than a geographical concept. It was created during the 20th century thanks to the discovery of huge amount of natural resources like oil and gas. Also, it has a complex ethno-religious-political relations. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent end of British and French colonialism, the creation of the State of Israel, ethnic, religious and political conflicts erupted into armed conflict.

North Africa is a collective name for the African Arab countries on the southern Mediterranean coast and these states have close cultural and economic ties with each other.

The Arabic language, spoken in different dialects, unites the countries of the MENA region. They are also linked by the Islamic religion (except State of Israel), which plays a dominant role in the region. Regardless of linguistic and religious relations, each country and ethnic group pursues its foreign and domestic policies according to its own interests. This leads to tensions between the different actors. Their clashes often lead to armed conflicts between different countries or between different political and religious groups within a certain country. Besides the political tension the MENA countries are also strongly affected by climate change. Its population is growing rapidly but due to the harsh climates, extremely high temperatures, limited water sources and limited fertile soil force the local population to leave their homeland<sup>2</sup>. These negative factors contribute to political and economic instability in the region. In areas where the state cannot exercise control, terrorist organisations and various local armed groups

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iemed.org/publication/climate-change-in-the-mena-region-environmental-risks-socioeconomic-effects-and-policy-challenges-for-the-future/>

appears and take over the control. Political instability, wars and civil wars, which are the starting points for various global security challenges (international terrorism, weapons and drug smuggling, trafficking of human beings, etc.), are thus a direct threat to the EU.

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy<sup>3</sup> (CSDP) efforts to support the MENA region, is illustrated by the fact that 4 of the EU 12 civilian/police missions currently deployed in this geographical area. The main task of these EU missions is to support local, legitimate governmental bodies to restore and promote the rule of law. Strengthening public order and border security by training the members of local law enforcement agencies. The missions also implement technical improvements to enable the local partners to perform their tasks more effectively.

## II. EUBAM Libya Mission

The European Union Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya)<sup>4</sup> is a non-executive civilian/law enforcement<sup>5</sup> CSDP Mission. It helps Libyan authorities manage their borders and fight cross-border crime like human trafficking, weapon smuggling, and terrorism. The main task of the EUBAM Libya is to build the capacity of local organisations responsible for border control in the country. To support the effective management of Libya's land and maritime borders in the fight against cross-border crime. The EUBAM Libya fulfils its mandate through training, mentoring, monitoring and advising the local counterparts. Mission's staff are providing advises, training and mentoring the senior and middle management of Libya's law enforcement and border security services. In addition, it implements various projects to improve Integrated Border Management system of the host country. The mission also focuses on human rights and gender equality in the area of border management. It is also providing support for restoring the border security training system in the country and renovation of border guard training facilities.

The EUBAM Libya is also supporting the cross-border cooperation between Libya and the neighbouring countries especially with Sahel region<sup>6</sup>. Because terrorism, illegal migration and trafficking of human beings from the Sahel region pose a serious security risk also for Libya and as the target area for the EU.

Stretching from Senegal to Eritrea, the Sahel region is bordered by the Sahara Desert in the north and tropical Africa in the south. The region faces serious and complex security and humanitarian crises. Since independence in the 1960s, violent extremism has been flourishing in many countries in the region. Weak and corrupt governance, economic problems, population growth and the worsening effects of climate change have dramatic results<sup>7</sup>. Until the overthrow of the Libyan dictatorship in 2011, the central government took a tough stance against security threats originated from the Sahel region, After the fall of Gaddafi's regime and the outbreak of the Libyan civil war, the central government collapsed. Internal political chaos developed in the country, instability and division characterize Libya since then. The army, border guards and law enforcement forces were disbanded. The country's borders were "opened", and nobody stopped the terror groups, the human traffickers and illegal migrants. The compounds of the armed forces were looted, and their supplies appeared on the black market<sup>8</sup>. The weapons fell into the hands of members of local organized criminal groups and terrorist organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy_en)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eubam-libya\\_en?s=327](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eubam-libya_en?s=327)

<sup>5</sup> In EU terminology, any mission that does not involve military force is considered a civilian activity.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sahel>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/05/interview-libyas-chaos-explained>

As a result of the chaos and civil war, Libya has become a major route for illegal migration, arms smuggling and human trafficking to Europe<sup>9</sup>. The Islamic State terrorist organisation, whose members are actively involved in smuggling, has emerged in the area.

In these circumstances, the EUBAM Libya mission has an important role to support the local law enforcement services to restore the law and order. Well-trained border guards, other law enforcement officers and civilian experts from EU Member States with extensive professional experience continuously train the middle and senior managers of the Libyan border security forces and other local law enforcement agencies. The different trainings provide opportunity to local colleagues gain theoretical and practical knowledge on the operation of the integrated border management system. They are trained on how to carry out border security related risk analysis. They also acquire knowledge of the planning, organising, and managing land and maritime border surveillance, conduct border security operations. They get information about international standards of border check at land border crossing points, at seaports and airports. The mission also takes huge efforts on strengthening cooperation with neighbouring countries against cross-border crime. Enhancing this kind of cross-border cooperation requires a high level of political commitment and professional approach to better tackle cross-border crimes. In this reason, the mission organises conferences and trainings to better understand the current situation and cross border challenges. It supports the application of strategies, measures, and technologies to make effective border control at the Libyan land and maritime borders.

The Mission works closely with other partners such as EU Delegation and other EU agencies. It is also cooperating with United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and other UN agencies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM)<sup>10</sup>, UN Development Program (UNDP)<sup>11</sup>, and bilaterally with EU Member States, who provide technical and financial support for Libyan Border and Coast Guards<sup>12</sup>.

### **III. EUAM Iraq Mission**

The EU Advisory Mission in Iraq (EUAM)<sup>13</sup> was launched in October 2017, in response to the Iraqi government's request to the EU, to implement Security Sector Reform (SSR). The mission's initial mandate was for one year (until 17 October 2018), with an annual extension based on local needs. The mission's current mandate runs until 30 April 2024<sup>14</sup>. EUAM Iraq is headquartered in Baghdad. The main tasks of the mission are to support the effectiveness of local, civilian law enforcement activity as part of the Iraqi National Security Strategy and the implementation of security sector reform in the country. These kind of development activities are supported also by other international organisations like the UN and NATO. The tasks include the implementation of institutional reforms and the fight against terrorism, organised crimes, and illegal cross border activities. In the mission's mandate is a key element also support for the development of a well-functioning integrated border management system in Iraq. As well as supporting effective action against corruption, money laundering and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage. EUAM Iraq mission staff support the Iraq National Security Council and Ministry of Interior officials responsible for leading the security sector reform. mainly through advice at strategic level.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://press.un.org/en/2012/sc10546.doc.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.iom.int/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.undp.org/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-delivers-support-border-management-libya-2020-07-16\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-delivers-support-border-management-libya-2020-07-16_en)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.euam-iraq.eu/en>

<sup>14</sup> COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2022/635 of 13 April 2022 amending Decision (CFSP) 2017/1869 on the European Union Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq)

After collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 and fail of international military action for stabilization led by USA, the country turned into chaos. A civil war broke out between the previously dominant Sunni minority and the Shiite majority. Organised crime activity has grown, and Islamic extremism has gained ground in the country. One of the most feared terrorist organisations in our current history, the Islamic State<sup>15</sup> (ISIS), was born in the country. Protecting state borders is a matter of national sovereignty and the responsibility of the Iraqi authorities. The disbanding of the state defence and security forces including the Border Guard Army forces after 2003 had a major negative impact on Iraq's ability to protect its state borders<sup>16</sup>. The process of reconstituting the Iraqi armed and security forces started in 2005 supported by the USA. It was a slow process, and the country suffered a setback in 2014 after ISIS grown up and invaded large parts of Iraq. The country lost the ability to control of its borders with Syria and Jordan after the ISIS took control of the border area<sup>17</sup>. Because the ISIS controlled the territory on both sides of the Iraqi Syrian border could provide free movement for terrorists, smugglers, and traffickers. Until 2017, when Iraq defeated ISIS, the border area was a paradise for terrorist and organised criminal groups till Iraq began to regain control of its borders. The border security is still critical, as Iraqi border security forces have limited ability to prevent smuggling and other cross border crimes at the Iraqi Syrian border. Also concerning the high number of Syrian refugees after 2011, there was not any comprehensive professional practice, rather Iraqi authorities at some border points dealt ad-hoc manner with it.

Another huge problem in the country since 2003 the crimes committed against cultural heritage. The territory of the country is one of the birthplaces of human civilization. There are thousands of excavation sites on its territory, which became targets of organized criminal groups after the fall of Saddam's regime. It is also difficult to estimate how many artefacts from these places and at what value disappeared in the international black market. The looting of the historical sites and smuggling them abroad flourished especially in the areas controlled by ISIS. This activity was one of the terrorist organization's sources of income. Before the American troops entered Baghdad in 2003, the national museum was also looted by members of local criminal gangs<sup>18</sup>.

The local Ministry of Interior (MoI) takes lot of efforts to restore the border management and border control supported by international partners. In this activity the EUAM mission is one of the main partner. Iraqi government created the Border Crossings Commission as an organisation directed by the Prime Minister and responsible for the management of infrastructure at border cross points.

This Commission is responsible for improving the quality of services provided at Border Crossings.

According to the Mission's mandate the EUAM staff are advising and mentoring local counterpart(s) on the strategic and operational level to enhance the security in the country including border security. Mission's supports the accountability of counterparts and analyses the weaknesses in the performance and to propose solutions for strengthening same.

The EUAM provides analysis and recommendations to the local partners in the area of developments. The EU staff plans and delivers training, according to the local needs. The Mission's experts advise and assist the Iraqi MoI Border Forces Command on the development of organisational structures and models to addressing to security challenges such as cross border crimes. They also assist the Iraqi MoI Border Forces Command on the development effective

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-State-in-Iraq-and-the-Levant>

<sup>16</sup> Robert Bateman: Iraq and the Problem of Border Security SAIS Review vol. XXVI no. 1 (Winter–Spring 2006)

<sup>17</sup> Kheder Khaddour and Harith Hasann: The Transformation of the Iraqi-Syrian Border From a National to a Regional Frontier. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth C. Stone: An Update on the Looting of Archaeological Sites in Iraq

command and control system to operate effective border security mechanism. The mission works on the development of an Iraqi Border Management Model according to international standards. The mission supports the local partner services on intra-agency, inter-agency and international cooperation contributing to a well-functioning Integrated Border Management system. They advise the Iraqi MOI Border Forces Command on information exchange, employment of databases and adapting procedures to the on-going introduction of biometric identification and travel documents.

With its advisory and mentoring activities, the mission contributes to increasing the capacity of local border security forces. As a result, the well-functioning border control system keeps out terrorists and smugglers, while at the same time helping legal cross-border travelers and foreign trade activity in the country.

#### **IV. EUBAM Rafah Mission**

The Arab-Israeli confrontation is one of the oldest ongoing conflicts in the world. Political, economic and often armed conflict between the opposing parties has been ongoing since the middle of the last century, with varying degrees of intensity. Mitigation, peacekeeping and normalisation of the conflict have long been a priority for some international organisations. In addition to the UN, the EU has also paid particular attention to the Mediterranean region, including the Palestinian territories, in recent decades. The EU has sought to play an active role in crisis management there. The Union remains committed to supporting the peace process and it is actively involved in crisis management, with two missions in the Palestinian territories supporting the rule of law and law enforcement capacity building. One of the missions is, the EU Border Assistance Mission for Rafah Crossing (EUBAM Rafah)<sup>19</sup>.

Since 2006, the mission supports the Palestinian Authority's<sup>20</sup> border police, customs agency, and other law enforcement forces involved in border security related tasks. It is assisting in the development of an Integrated Border Management system. The Rafah Crossing Point is currently the only "gateway" to the outside world, where, under strict rules, local Palestinian residents of Gaza can leave the Strip and travel to and from the outside world, subject to prior notification. The legal basis for the operation of EUBAM Rafah is the Joint Action Plan adopted by the Council of the European Union on 12 December 2005, the "Agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel on Movement and Access" signed on 15 November 2005, and the "Guidelines for the Rafah Crossing Point Agreement" signed between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Egypt. The Parties have agreed that the EU Mission at the Rafah Crossing Point will act as a third-party as observer. It monitors and supports the work of the legitimate PA's border security forces. It also ensures the crossing point's operation in accordance with international standards.

Following the Hamas takeover in 2007, EUBAM Rafah was withdrawn from the Gaza Strip according to a decision taken by the EU Council and, with a reduced number of personnel, is currently located in Israeli territory to train and mentor members of the legitimate PA border police and customs services. The EU considers Hamas as a terrorist organisation, and does not recognise the legitimacy of the 2007 takeover, and considers only the legitimate PA based in Ramallah (West-Bank) as a partner.

Currently, EUBAM Rafah is carrying out its mandated tasks at the Al Karama crossing point in Jericho with a reduced staff. The mission regularly organises trainings, workshops and study visits for the staff of PA border security forces. In 2015, the Palestinian experts were able to gain experience in Hungary on the training system related to border policing. Also they were

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.eubam-rafah.eu/>

<sup>20</sup> Internationally recognised, legitimate Palestinian Government

briefed about the planning and organising border policing activities, the system of road, rail, air, river border check and customs control in our country.

Despite international efforts and repeated agreements between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, the "return" of the Rafah crossing point has not been implemented in practice and the PA and the Mission continue to share responsibilities only at the Al Karama terminal. At the political level, the idea of terminating the Mission has been raised repeatedly due to the failure of the return to Rafah. This was not supported by most EU member states, as it would be a kind of "betray" of the PA, and therefore the mission continues to operate, albeit with reduced staffing, in support of legitimate Palestinian border police. Thus, Palestinian border police and customs services are ready to return to Gaza at any time following a possible political settlement, to take over control of all border crossings at short notice and control the maritime and land borders with the help of the EU, in line with international standards.

## **V. Hungarian participation in the activity**

### ***A The EU Specialized Team***

Hungary as located on the main route of the illegal migration to EU has a deep concern about stabilization of MENA countries. In this reason the country regularly deploys border police and other law enforcement expert to support the stabilization process. The European Union's Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) invited Member States in December 2019 to set up a border security specialized team to reinforce EUBAM Rafah Mission<sup>21</sup>. The main tasks of the international specialized team (ST) were to "set up" the border management Command and Control Centre (CCC) at Al Karama Border Crossing<sup>22</sup> in accordance with international standards. Also, the team was to train the local law enforcement officers who are later serving in the CCC. And ST was to tasked to draft the necessary regulations for the CCC operation. The selection of the candidates of the international team and the decision on their deployment was taken on 20 February 2020.

The EU decision makers were looking for active law enforcement, border police/guard and customs officers serving in the national authorities of the Member States with appropriate professional skills in the field of border control, customs control, risk analysis and operation management.

The CIVCOM decided to organise a joint pre-mission training for the members of the ST before their deployment, which was to prepare them to deal with the different challenges in the area of operation, in addition to the knowledge related to integrated border management. The Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian authorities agreed to nominate experts to ST together. Since Hungary supported the deployment of the team from the beginning at political level and nominated two suitable experts for the ST, CIVCOM officially requested the Hungarian National Police HQ to prepare a pre-deployment training program for the team. The training concept was prepared by the designated staff of the Civilian Crisis Management Sub-division of the Hungarian Police Education and Training Centre<sup>23</sup>. The program contained the specificities of the mission and the expected security risks.

The training concept was accepted by the European Union and Hungary was officially requested to organize the training, which took place at the Szeged Border Police Training

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<sup>21</sup>WK 12871/2019 INIT (EEAS/CPCC.1(2019)7483335 Ramat Gan, 22.10.2019) working document

<sup>22</sup>The crossing is located in Jericho West Bank and operated by the Palestinian Border security forces.

<sup>23</sup>The Police Education and Training Centre has since been reorganised and the sub-division has been renamed Foreign Deployment and Peace Support Division. Source: <https://rokk.hu/bemutakozas/szervezeti-felepités/gazdasági-szervek/kikepzési-es-tanfolyamszervezési-foosztály/rokk-kisz-kulcszolgálati-es-beketamogató-osztály/> (Downloaded:15 June 2023)

Centre<sup>24</sup> between 2-5 March 2020. The training costs were co-financed by the European Union Police and Civil Services Training (EUPCST)<sup>25</sup> program (10% domestic funding, 90% financed by EUPCST).

The team has been set up to cover the whole spectrum of integrated border management, with some members having experience in customs, border control, international police cooperation, risk analyses, travel document expertise, and management of operations. Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia nominated 1-1, Hungary sent 2 officers to the ST, also, Germany was represented by one border police officer.

The training was divided into two modules: a professional module on integrated border management and a module on security awareness due to the high-risk environment in the mission area.

### ***B The tasks of the Specialized Team***

Unfortunately the six trained officers in March 2020 cannot be deployed in the end, as on 6 March 2020, the Palestinian Authority closed access to foreigners to the areas under its control, and a few days later the State of Israel closed its borders in view of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>26</sup>. The actual deployment of the team did not take place until October 2022.

The six trained officers waited for several months in a kind of standby at their home duty station to be deployed and then slowly "dispersed". Several of the team members have successfully applied to other CSDP missions, Frontex and one to the EU HQ in Brussels. Thus, a total of two officers were available when the CPCC decided in June 2022 to deploy the ST.

Only Poland and Hungary were able to provide a suitable candidate with the appropriate expertise in short deadline. So, the ST was finally deployed to the area of operations with a total of four officers and started its mission in October 2022. However, this did not jeopardise the effective implementation of the task, as the professionalism, knowledge and mentality of the selected experts made up for the lack of personnel.

The tasks of the ST were defined by the European External Action Service (EEAS) as follows:

- Support to start the operation of CCC,
- strengthening cooperation within and between the different organizations under the command of the Palestinian General Administration for Borders and Crossings (GABC),<sup>27</sup>
- defining the tasks of the CCC in the cooperation,
- train the selected, future staff of the CCC to carry out their tasks effectively,
- identify the shortcomings in the current GABC organizational structure and its operation, make proposals for corrections.

The team, in consultation and close cooperation with the EUBAM Rafah Mission's and GABC's heads, planned, organized and implemented its two-month activity as follows:

- Developing organizational and operational regulations for the CCC and its staff in line with international standards. Establish Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for the Al Karamah Border Crossing Point.

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<sup>24</sup>Border Policing Training Centre Source: <https://rokk.hu/bemutatkozas/szervezeti-felepites/rendorkepzo-akademia/jarorkepzo-tagozat-szeged/hatarrendeszeti-oktatobazis/> (Downloaded: 15.June 2023)

<sup>25</sup>The Steering Committee of the European Union Police and Civilian Services Training (EUPCST) Source: <https://esdc.europa.eu/2021/12/15/european-union-police-and-civilian-services-training-eupcstljublijana-slovenia-14-16-december-2021/> (Downloaded: 15.June2023)

<sup>26</sup>US Embassy in Israel Travel Advisory –March 13. 2020.

Source: <https://il.usembassy.gov/travel-advisory-march-13-2020/> (Downloaded: 18 June 2023)

<sup>27</sup>The GABC is an umbrella organisation responsible for border control and manages the activity of all relevant LE agencies taking part in the integrated border management.

- Develop written regulations for the implementation of border and customs controls in line with international standards. Define in written form the tasks and responsibilities of the Head of CCC, for the Shift Commanders and the staff assigned to serve in the CCC.
- Conduct theoretical and practical training for future CCC operators, as set out in the written regulations. listed above.
- Mentoring, monitoring, and advising the staff of CCC, after starting its operation.

### ***C Training of the CCC staff***

During the two-week long training, theoretical lectures and practical sessions were mixed to break the monotony and keep the students' attention. The main objective of the training is to prepare the future staff of the CCC for the effective operation of the Centre, in accordance with international standards. The other objective was to train them to plan, organize and manage joint operations.

In the training session, emphasis was placed on the following:

- General introduction of the concept of IBM.
- The role of border police and customs service in IBM.
- Cooperation and coordination between the organizations involved in border management.
- Compliance with human rights provisions and rules in border control, respect for human dignity.
- Collecting, analysing, evaluating and sharing information between the different organizations.
- Cooperation within and between organizations related to border control, and the process of cooperation with neighbouring countries and their border security services.
- Principles of risk analysis related to border control and border security, practical implementation of risk analysis.
- Reporting procedures, different reporting methods.
- Implementation of gender equality in border control.
- Cultural awareness, cultural, linguistic and religious differences, prevention and management of conflicts arising from them.
- Radio communication training, international standards for using HF<sup>28</sup> and VHF<sup>29</sup> radios.

Specific professional skills required to carry out border and customs controls in the framework of integrated border management:

- First line border check, the technical equipment used for it, the control procedures, post-control decisions.
- Second line border check, the technical equipment used for it, the control procedures, the post-control decisions.
- Identification of passengers, detection of forged or falsified travel documents, detection of impostors.
- Providing physical security of the crossing point, GABC staff and passengers.
- Managing possible emergency situations during border control.
- Profiling of passengers and the detection and effective response to potential risks.
- Carrying out customs checks and the technical equipment used by customs services.
- Safe and effective screening of buses.

On the last three days of the training, we organized a live exercise session where participants could put into practice the theoretical knowledge they had previously acquired in the classroom.

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<sup>28</sup>High frequency

<sup>29</sup>Very high frequency



The participants of the training were divided into three working groups, which focused on the operation of the CCC. This included a practical familiarization of all participants with each and every working stations of the terminal. Familiarization with the widely understood IT and technical tools that will be used in the CCC room.

In this part of the activity the teams rotated like a carousel, one was deployed at the entry side of the terminal, one on the exit side and one in the CCC performing operational tasks. This gave them the opportunity to put the theoretical knowledge into practice.

At the end of the training, all trainees received a certificate of recognition attesting to their successful completion of the course.

During the last part of the ST activities, the CCC's future operators ran the Centre in a kind of test run. ST task was to monitor and mentor their activities. The 13 best performing officers selected by GABC operated the CCC in real conditions. The international experts just “standing behind” them, monitoring their activities and giving advice when it was needed.

This part of the activity was a real surprise for me as the former leader of the ST, because our local colleagues took over immediately and used the CCC in a professional manner from the very first moment. The officer who acted as shift commander was able to manage the activities of the whole team. He briefed the staff according to operational needs, giving clear tasks to the CCC operators. The CCC operators were skilled in the use of the various technical tools, and they could manage the flow of information between the CCC and the various units and services of the GABC deployed at the terminal.

Having monitored CCC operators professionalism, we concluded that the selected and trained PA GABC staff is able to operate the Command Centre in accordance with international standards and operational needs. Of course, further technical and operational improvements are needed.

## **VI. Border security project in Lebanon**

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)<sup>30</sup> is an international organisation with 20 Member States. It operates in more than 90 countries worldwide and takes a regional approach to its work to build effective cooperation and partnerships along main migration route's countries. Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Mediterranean, the Silk Road, the Western Balkans and Turkey are the regions and countries in its focus. Its approach to migration management, linking policy and research, migration dialogue and capacity building, contributes to better development of migration policies around the world. The Vienna-based international organisation has also representative office in Brussels and has local field offices in 30 countries in Europe, Asia, and North Afrika. ICMPD financially funded by Member States and the European Commission, also the UN and other international donors. The organisation founded in 1993, it has an UN observer status and cooperates with other partners on migration management.

As part of a project called „Developing National Capacity for Integrated Border Management (IBM) in Lebanon” the Hungarian University of Public Service Law Enforcement Faculty actively took part<sup>31</sup>. The aim of the EU-funded project is to provide professional skills in border management to effectively support the Lebanese border police in the fight against illegal migration and border-related crime. To initiate the project, the dean and deputy dean of the faculty of law enforcement travelled to Beirut, where they gave a presentation about the university's ongoing border police training and education system. Then in the first part of project's executive phase, two Hungarian border policing experts held several days IBM related

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.icmpd.org/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://rtk.uni-nke.hu/hirek/2023/08/31/integralt-hatarigazgatasrol-a-libanoni-partnereknek>

training for senior and middle managers of the Lebanese border security forces and other law enforcement agencies in Beirut.

The theoretical training included presentations on the European Union's IBM model.

The main topics were the followings:

- Introduction to the general definition of IBM through the 3 pillars, in line with 'Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation' developed with the support of the ICMPD.
- The Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) roles and responsibilities.
- International Police Cooperation against cross-border crimes and tools to perform police cooperation/coordination.
- Examples of recent developments and good practices in the European Union (including Hungary).
- Inter-agency cooperation: Checknet (Integrated Management Centre) and use of ILLMIGRINFO system.
- Reinforcement of the border surveillance of the Western-Balkan countries external borders by police troops (in Serbia, North-Macedonia), based on bilateral agreements.
- International Customs and Police Cooperation Centres.
- International Police Liaison Officer's Networks.
- Introducing the Border Surveillance System in Hungarian-Serbian border relation.

After the lessons the trainers organised interactive sessions, presenting and discussing case studies. The Lebanese partners were asked to give their own views on how they could incorporate the shared experiences into their own border management systems.

In the second part of the project, from 17 to 21 July 2023, Lebanese law enforcement leaders visited Hungary and gain practical experience about the IBM system and work of border police units there. During the study trip, the Lebanese border security managers were able to learn about the University of Public Service Law Enforcement Faculty border policing training and education system. They were escorted all around the campus and they had opportunity to see the special border policing classrooms, where Hungarian border police cadets are trained and educated. They visited the Ludovika Hussar Stable where cadets have opportunity for horse riding. The delegation also visited the sports and recreation centre, the shooting range, the obstacle course. The upcoming days they visited the National Police Headquarters, where they got a presentation on risk analysis related to border-related crimes. In addition they had opportunity to visit the Nickelsdorf-Hegyeshalom (Austrian-Hungarian) contact office, where representatives of the Austrian and Hungarian police exchange relevant border-related crime's data in 24 hours a day. They were able to see the implementation of the joint Hungarian-Austrian patrol activity and the technical equipment they use. On the M1 motorway, runs from Budapest to Vienna is a major route for illegal migration, the guests were shown how police check suspicious vehicles, as part of fight against Trafficking of Human Beings. During the project, Lebanese border security managers gained useful theoretical and practical knowledge that they will be able to apply in the future in their own work at home.

## **VII. Conclusions**

Security challenges from the Middle East and North Africa, such as illegal migration, trafficking of human beings, terrorism, will be a long-term challenge for the EU. These security risks can only be effectively reduced if we support the countries of origin in developing their own border management capabilities. Border security related operational and training cooperation should not only be maintained between EU Member States or neighbouring transit countries. It is very important to involve the MENA countries in this kind of cooperation. From EU side sharing border management experience and best practices can significantly enhance

the capabilities of the MENA countries. In addition to providing economic assistance, the countries of the region should be continuously supported in developing their border management capabilities. Hungary, which lies on the main route for illegal border-related activities, has accumulated decades of professional experience, sharing this can also support the MENA countries operational capabilities.

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