

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PROCEDURES AND STANDARDISATION

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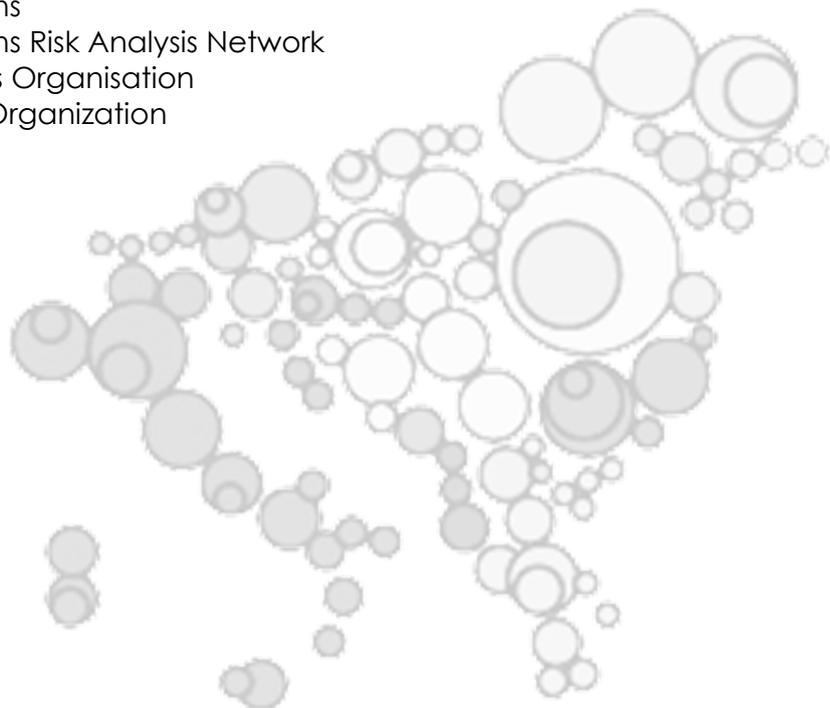
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Glossary – Abbreviations

AAD	Accompanying Administrative Document
AEO	Authorized Economic Operator
AF	Application Form
AFIS	Automatic Fingerprint Identification System
ASYCUDA	Automated Systems for Customs Data
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BIP	Border Inspection Post
CCTV	Centralised Video Surveillance System
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CEPOL	European Police College
CIBMS	Common Integrated Border Management System
CIRAM	<i>European Union</i> Common Risk Analysis Model
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMR	International Carriage of Goods by Road
COTIF	Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail
CVED	Common Veterinary Entry Document
EC	European Commission
ECS	Export Control System
ENS	Entry Summary Declaration
EORI	Economic Operators Registration and Identification
EPPO	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Police Office
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
EUSDR	<i>European Union</i> Strategy for the Danube Region
EWS	Early Warning System
EXS	Exit Summary Declaration
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



FIIS	Facial Image Identification System
FRONTEX	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the <i>European Union</i>
FTSS	Functional (Transit) System Specifications
IBM	Integrated Border Management
ICS	Import Control System
ICS	Import Control System
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
INTERPOL	International Organization of Criminal Police
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
JBCP	Joint Border Crossing Point
LO	Liaison Office
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCTS	New Computerized Transit System
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
RILO	Regional Intelligence Liaison Office
RPM	Radiation Portal Monitors
SAD	Single Administrative Document
SECI	South-East European Cooperative Initiative
SEE	South East Europe/ European
SEED	Systematic Exchange of Excise Data
SEMS	South-East Europe Messaging System
SIS	Schengen Information System
TETRA	Terrestrial Trunked Radio
TIR	Transport International Router
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
VIS	Visa Information System
WB	Western Balkans
WBRAN	Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WHO	World Health Organization
WP	Work Package





1 Introduction

The present report "Implementation plan for improvement of procedures and standardisation" has been elaborated according to the description of the activities of Work Package (WP) 3 in the Application Form (AF) and Implementation Plan of the ACROSSEE project. Specifically, it constitutes a specific output defined in the AF, corresponding to the Deliverable foreseen by Activity 3.2.2 for the development of an Implementation Plan for improvement of procedures and standardization, on the basis of the results of the survey on the Border Management policies and applied practices in the ACROSSEE participating countries that has been elaborated within the Activity 5.2.2 "Surveys at border crossings", and the relevant desktop research on the corresponding EU standards and guidelines.

1.1 Objective

According to the AF, the objective of the Implementation Plan aims to the activation towards fostering the administrative cooperation for cross-border procedures standardization and the formulation of proposals for improvement of procedures (including customs clearance, working methods, waiting times), in line with the European Union (EU) standards and best practices.

More widely, the scope of the Action in line with the European and the regional (South East European - SEE) strategic goals can be described by the following:

- goal for ensuring the facilitation of movement of people and goods as a mean of guaranteeing social and economic cohesion;
- aim at addressing specific issues with a view to both simplifying legislation (harmonize the national legal framework with relevant EU legislation in this field) and enhancing security features;



- aim of increasing the harmonisation of border procedures, especially in the traffic of goods; and
- aim of simplifying the clearance procedures for forwarders and thus further reducing processing times.

In this framework, the report is structured as follows:

The first – introductory – chapter presents the objective, the contents and the methodology and activities for the elaboration of the report and the formulation of a proposal of an Implementation Plan.

The second chapter presents the EU standards and guidelines concerning Integrated Border Management (**IBM**) activities and the procedures to be followed by the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border crossings, according to the available official sources.

In the third chapter are assayed the findings of the investigation and the combined inventory, in forms of inclusive tables, in an effort to categorise good applied practices and identify problems and solutions commonly met, summarising the corresponding input from the ACROSSEE surveys, and the information collected and presented in the previous (second) chapter.

In the fourth chapter are presented, in aggregated way, the analysis of the deficiencies identified at the border crossings surveyed in the concerned ACROSSEE countries.

In the fifth chapter is formulated a proposal of an Implementation Plan with potential improvements at organisational, administrative and operational levels for the standardisation and harmonisation of border procedures at local/ national and regional level.

Finally, a chapter with main conclusions completes the report.



1.2 Methodology and Activities

The methodology for the development of this report included initially the exploitation of relevant official documents and bibliography, studies and projects in the region under research, where available. For the review of the EU standards for procedures and standardization, European Union's official documents including Regulations, Decisions, Proposals and Commission' s guidelines were exploited, with main identified references/ documents the following:

- Schengen Borders Code,
- EU Schengen Catalogue - Recommendations and best practices,
- Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans and
- Community Customs Code.

Furthermore, the report incorporates information raised from the review of studies and documents of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (**UNECE**), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (**CEFTA**).

Moreover, in the aspect of the incorporation of the outcomes of the relevant ACROSSEE Actions and deliverables, input was exploited from the output 5.2.2: Surveys at border crossings - for the review of the situation/ deficiencies in the SEE/ Western Balkans (**WB**), the output 5.3.1: Surveys on types of transported goods (Road) - draft report submitted by ERDF PP6 – UCV, and the “Report on the relationships and processes of harmonization of national legislation to the Customs Code of the European Union: Customs and Multi-Annual Strategic Plan (Decision no. 70/2008/EC)” - submitted by ERDF PP6 – UCV. Furthermore, partners' surveys and in-house research were also conducted regarding IBM strategies and progress of implementation of its provision.

Consequently, the proposals for the formulation of the ACROSSEE Implementation Plan emerge from the elaboration of all the aspects presented in



the current report, aligned with the EU standards and best practices, as well as the needs and the mishits identified and assessed.





2 European Union standards and guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans

The EU has guaranteed the free movement of persons to EU citizens, as a fundamental right. The development of the Schengen area and cooperation, founded on the Schengen Agreement of 1985, and the extension of the Schengen area enhances this right by enabling citizens to cross internal borders without being subjected to border checks. However, the abolition of internal border controls at the borders between Schengen states cannot come at the expense of security. Therefore, EU States have decided to join forces to attain the dual objective of improving security through more efficient external border controls, while facilitating access of those having a legitimate interest to enter the EU territory.

Concerning the neighbouring, non-Schengen countries located in SEE, the European Commission (EC), aiming to reach the objective of open, but well controlled and secure borders, defined for the first time in October 2004 the principal of IBM in external assistance ("Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans"), as a basis for consistent implementation of border management-related activities in the WB. According to this and the revised/ updated versions, IBM encompasses both security aspects and aspects of facilitated movement of persons and trade. Therefore, the EC IBM principal for the WB covers national and international coordination and cooperation among all the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation.

Further to the IBM policy established, the EC has developed and proposed legislation, common rules, programmes, organizational and financial instruments, has embraced new technologies and created large-scale IT systems to establish effective, efficient and integrated border management, which are described in the current chapter.



2.1 Intra-agency Cooperation

Intra-service cooperation describes the efficient internal cooperation and management of processes, information and resources within a ministry or agency responsible for specific tasks between local (at the border), regional and central levels (between ministries or state bodies with different tasks related to border management) - vertical cooperation - and different units of the same levels - horizontal cooperation.

Namely, it refers to interaction between:

- a. The different administrative departments of a ministry or agency at headquarters;
- b. The ministry/ agency and regional centres;
- c. The ministry/ agency/ regional centres and the units working at the borders/ inland;
- d. The various Border Crossing Points (**BCPs**)/ Border Inspection Posts (**BIPs**) and inland control stations.

Border Police

According to the EU Integrated Border Security Strategy, a four-tier access control model contains a) inland activities, b) activities at border, c) cooperation across border and d) activities in third countries. Therefore, the border control, constituted by border checks, border surveillance and risk analysis, provides migration management, fight against crime and facilitation of cross-border traffic.

The legal documents on border guard issues are:

- Schengen Convention (Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985);



- Council Regulation (EC) No. 2007/2004 of 26 October 2004 (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders - FRONTEX);
- Regulation (EC) No. 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community code on the rules governing the movement of persons across-borders (Schengen Borders Code);
- Commission recommendation of 06/XI/2006 establishing a common "Practical Handbook for Border Guards (Schengen Handbook)" to be used by Member States' competent authorities when carrying out the border control of persons;
- Council Conclusions of 4-5 December 2006 on Integrated Border Management (2768th Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Brussels);
- Regulation 863/2007/EC of 11 July 2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a mechanism for the creation of Rapid Border Intervention Teams and amending Council Regulation No. 2007/2004 as regards that mechanism and regulating the tasks and powers of guest officers;
- Commission "Border Package" communications of 13 February 2008 Council Conclusions of 5-6 June 2008 on the management of the external borders of the Member States of the European Union (2873rd Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg).

Procedures

The external borders should be crossed only at designated BCPs and during fixed opening hours. The opening hours should be clearly indicated at BCPs that are not open 24 hours a day and Member States should notify the list of their BCPs to the Commission.

The procedures carried out by the border guards at a BCP or along the border or the immediate vicinity of that border, according to the Schengen Borders Code and national laws, is the border control consisting of border checks



at BCPs and border surveillance between BCPs and the surveillance of BCPs outside the fixed opening hours. On entry and exit, the first service in contact with passengers and drivers is usually the border guard service responsible for border control of persons. Further to the first line control at the location at which all persons are checked, second line check may be carried out in another special location.

Following the Schengen Borders Code, all persons should undergo a minimum check that can be carried out in the traffic line, as a rule for persons enjoying the Community right of free movement, in order to present their travel documents. This minimum check should consist of rapid and straightforward verification information exclusively on stolen, misappropriated, lost and invalidated documents, of the validity of the document authorizing the legitimate holder to cross the border and of the presence of signs of falsification or counterfeiting.

The checks may also cover the means of transport and objects in the possession of the persons crossing the border. Checks should be carried out, wherever possible, by two border guard officers. The law of the Member State concerned should apply to any searches which are carried out.

Third country nationals, according to the Schengen Borders Code, must be subject at entry to a thorough check, which in addition to the examination of the travel document involves verifying their purpose and length of stay and whether they possess sufficient means of subsistence, as well as a search in the Schengen Information System (**SIS**) and in national databases. Consequently, the checks involve a number of conditions that are verified by the border guard through questions put to the traveller. Also, the validity of the travel document needs to be inspected by the border guard in each case. Checks are the same regardless of whether persons are subject to the visa requirement or not. Border guards are obliged to manually stamp – indicating the date and place of entry and exit – the travel documents of third country nationals crossing the external border.



In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, where unforeseeable events lead to traffic of such intensity that the waiting time at the BCP becomes excessive, border checks at external borders may be relaxed and the border checks on entry movements should in principle take priority over border checks on exit movements.

Checks on rail traffic should be carried out both on train passengers and on railway staff on trains crossing external borders, including those on goods trains or empty trains. Those checks should be carried out either on the platform, in the first station of arrival or the last one before departure in the territory of a Schengen State, or on board (on the train), during transit.

In order to facilitate rail traffic flows of high-speed passenger trains, the Member States on the itinerary of these trains from third countries may also decide, by common agreement with third countries concerned, to carry out entry checks on persons in trains from third countries either at the stations in a third country where persons board the train, or in the stations where persons disembark within the territory of the Schengen States, or on board the train during transit between the stations on the territory of the Schengen States, provided that the persons stay on board the train in the previous station/ stations.

Regarding high-speed trains from third countries making several stops in the territory of the Member States, if the rail transport carrier is in a position to board passengers exclusively for the remaining part of the journey within the territory of the Schengen States, such passengers shall be subject to entry checks either on the train or at the station of destination, except where checks have been carried out as described above. Persons who wish to take the train exclusively for the remaining part of the journey within the territory of the Schengen States shall receive clear notification prior to the train's departure that they will be subject to entry checks during the journey or at the station of destination.

When travelling in the opposite direction, the persons on board the train shall be subject to exit checks under similar arrangements.



The border guard may inspect the cavities of carriages in order to ensure that objects subject to border checks are not concealed in them. Border guard officers will always search the train thoroughly when there is a suspicion of hidden explosive materials or drugs.

Due to the stringency in terms of staff and facilities/ equipment and the fact that the waiting times at borders should not become excessive, the checking of all the traffic crossing the borders is both impracticable and inefficient, especially in cases of heavy traffic. Therefore, the evaluation of the probability of non-compliance with legal provisions through risk analysis either *ex ante* (before preparing an action) and *ex post* (after action) in all fields is required, in order to facilitate the application of selective but effective controls and minimise the disruption to trade and traffic flow, based on risk indicators, risk profiles and typical operational methods of individuals involved in cross-border crime.

Risk analysis needs to be based upon systematically gathered and centrally coordinated communication flows and management. Professional border management systems should be able to gather information, analyse it and utilise the results in field work.

The risk profile is the means by which the risk analysis is put into practice. It is a tool for border authorities, assisting them in the operation and management of their office, station or region and therefore should be made as accessible as possible. It is designed to replace a certain percentage of random and routine examinations of documents and goods with planned and targeted checks, which are based on a set of predefined criteria. It is essential that the risk profile is flexible and kept up to date at regular intervals (e.g. every three months) to remain effective. Officers at all fields and levels should be trained to gather relevant information and to contribute to the review.

Thus, the criterion for the evaluation of the effectiveness of a risk analysis system is the correlation of the number of checks and the number of detected cases: the aim is to keep the difference between these figures as small as possible.



Infrastructure and equipment

The required equipment at BCPs consists of technical devices for ensuring effective checks on cross-border traffic.

Concerning the required infrastructure, at road borders, Member States, aiming to facilitate checks on persons and to obtain safety and smooth traffic flows at BCPs, may, where they deem appropriate and if circumstances allow, install or operate separate lanes at certain BCPs. Separate lanes may be dispensed at any time by the Member States' competent authorities, in exceptional circumstances and where traffic and infrastructure conditions so require.

Additionally, in cases where need for thorough checks to be carried out occurs, and if local circumstances allow, areas designated for that purpose should be disposed. In the interests of staff safety, checks there should be carried out by two border guards.

Communication and Information Exchange

Regarding communication and information exchange, IT systems for collecting, processing and sharing information relevant to border management should be installed at the border guards' offices. Therefore, the border police can consult the relevant national and European databases, namely the SIS/ SIS II for public security in Europe, the Visa Information System (**VIS**) for visa data exchange and other large-scale IT systems in the area of Internal/ Home Affairs.

Customs

Following the EU guidelines on the customs' institutional framework, there is a trend towards moving detailed cargo control further inland. However, customs personnel should remain present at BCPs and border checks should focus on the security aspects and should be supplemented by inland mobile checks by specialized units, while commercial and fiscal checks can be carried out elsewhere. The major advantage of inland cargo clearance is the shorter waiting



time at the BCP, allowing for smoother traffic flows and more effective use of resources and clearance facilities. Thus, appropriate facilities and infrastructure for customs control do not have to remain at the border, where the terrain may be unsuitable or the geopolitical situation difficult.

The controls at BCPs and Import Control Systems (**ICs**) are based on the respective border/ inland control policy and sector-specific border control strategy. This strategy should be reflected in border control operational instructions (manuals), which ensure consistency of controls at BCPs as well as at ICs. Customs controls should take the relevant international conventions into account, as well as trade/ customs agreements, which also need to be included in operational instructions. The main EU legal documents, with which the customs administration law should be in line, according to the EU IBM guidelines for WB, are the following:

- EU Customs Blue Print - Pathways to modern customs (2007);
- Community Customs Code: Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2913/92 (valid until 1 May 2016);
- Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 2454/93 of 2 July 1993 laying down provisions for the implementation of Council;
- Modernised Customs Code: Regulation (EC) No 450/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 laying down the Community Customs Code;
- Union Customs Code; Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013 laying down the Union Customs Code
- Council Directive 92/12/EEC, general arrangements for subjects to excise duty;
- Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 2719/92 on the accompanying administrative document (**AAD**) for the movement under duty-suspension arrangements of products subject to excise duty;



- Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 3649/92 on the simplified accompanying document (SAD);
- Decision No. 70/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on a paperless environment for customs and trade;
- Electronic Customs Multi-Annual Strategic Plan.

Procedures

For trade facilitation, clear and simplified workflows are required. Customs control should be systematic, comprehensive and flexible and needs to be applied consistently at all BCPs and ICSs.

For transit shipments, including goods entering at a BCP and destined for final clearance at an ICS, pre-lodgement/ pre-clearance needs to be available and examinations should take place only if a risk of fraud has been identified.

All customs controls should be based upon intelligence-led risk analysis and selectivity techniques. The use of centralized risk management for the whole country ensures the consistency of controls. However, each BCP or ICS should also perform specific risk management taking into account the specifics of the respective BCP or region.

Customs controls are to be performed at the border and inland, and should cover imports, exports and goods in transit:

- Customs control for transit, export (exit), temporary importation (in cases of oral declaration) and travellers is performed at BCPs.
- On the other hand, control of commercial goods released for free circulation, customs control for temporary storage, transit (commence/ discharge), warehousing, inward processing, processing under customs control, temporary importation, outward processing and export (release) should be exercised at ICSs.



- The above-mentioned does not exclude the use of combined BCP and ICS facilities.

Communication and Information Exchange

Communication and exchange, as well as dissemination of information and the easy access and availability of updated information are essential for:

- Consistent and uniform decisions when applying customs procedures;
- Functioning risk management;
- Smooth flow of traffic of people and goods.

Instructions on proper information management should be established with the obligation for every customs officer to be familiar with the content of any transmitted information before starting his/ her daily work.

Veterinary inspection

The responsibility of the veterinary border inspection service covers consignments that are intended for import, consignments in transit, with or without temporary storage, and foodstuff of animal origin intended for ship supply. The inspection service controls customs warehouses and ship suppliers and is responsible for animal welfare inspections at BIPs, for arranging checks on pet animals and for checking products of animal origin for personal consumption.

Inspections should be carried out by border inspection veterinarians at specially designated veterinary BIPs, although customs officers usually assist in controlling consignments of animal origin and live animals introduced into the country. Consignments should be allowed to enter a country only at specifically designated BIPs that have the necessary staff, equipment and facilities.

The veterinary inspection must first determine at how many and which BCPs the BIPs should be situated, as well as the number of staff to be deployed. This should be determined based on the demands of the import flow and in coordination with the other border agencies, especially the customs service.



The World Organisation for Animal Health (**OIE**) develops normative documents relating to rules that Member States can use to protect themselves from the introduction of diseases and pathogens. OIE standards are recognized by the World Trade Organisation as international reference rules for live animals. Additionally, the legislative basis of veterinary border inspection and the cooperation procedures are formed by the following Council directives and Commission Decisions, according to the EU IBM guidelines for WB:

- Directive 91/496/EEC laying down the principles of veterinary checks on animals;
- Directive 97/78/EC laying down the principles of veterinary checks on products;
- Commission Decision 2007/275/EC of 17 April 2007 concerning lists of animals and products to be subject to controls at border inspection posts under Council Directives 91/496/EEC and 97/78/EC;
- EC Regulation 136/2004 on the Common Veterinary Entry Document (**CVED**);
- Trade Control and Expert System introduced by Commission Decision 2004/292/EC;
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 745/2004 of 16 April 2004 laying down measures with regard to imports of products of animal origin for personal consumption;
- Regulation (EC) No 454/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movements of pet animals, as regards the extension of the transitional period;
- Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules Decision 2001/812/ EC (BIP requirements);
- Commission Decision (2000/208/EC) of 24 February 2000 establishing detailed rules for the application of Council Directive 97/78/EC concerning the transit of



products of animal origin from one third country to another third country by road only across the European Community;

- Commission Decision (2000/571/EC) of 8 September 2000 laying down the methods of veterinary checks for products from third countries destined for introduction into free zones, free warehouses, customs warehouses or operators supplying cross-border means of sea transport.

Procedures

After the veterinary border inspection has been carried out, the border veterinarian should issue a document on the consignment – in the EC is used the document known as the Common Veterinary Entry Document (**CVED**) in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 136/2004 (for products) and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 282/2004 for live animals (as amended by Commission Regulation 585/2004). The CVED documents are linked to the customs procedures by adding a number referring to the customs documents. The original CVED document is then passed on to the customs officer by the border veterinarian, the importer or the shipping agency as a proof that the veterinary clearance of the consignment has been completed. The customs should only allow customs clearance of the consignment in accordance with the border veterinary decision stated in the document. Before clearance of the consignment, the customs should also ensure that the fees imposed by the border veterinarian (to cover the costs of the veterinary border inspection) have been or will be paid.

Communication and Information Exchange

The EU has introduced an Internet-based information exchange IT system (**TRACES**), consisting a tool for veterinary authorities, in order to grant easy access to all relevant information regarding consignments of animal origin and live animals. The border veterinarian would receive all pre-announcements in electronic form. After completion of the veterinary checks, the document



containing the veterinary decision on the consignment could thus be forwarded electronically for customs clearance.

Connection of the non-EU Member States' veterinary services to the TRACES system, at least at a certain level, and access to the system would provide important information regarding risks to public and animal health and would thus be an important part of an early warning system.

Phytosanitary inspection

Plants and plant products destined for import or transit through a country are inspected by phytosanitary inspectors, in order to prevent the spread and introduction of harmful organisms and such should be carried out in close coordination with the customs control agency.

It is not recommended that the phytosanitary border inspection service is present at each BCP. Instead the service should focus its activities at selected land, sea and air BCPs and all traffic which requires phytosanitary inspection or certification should be channelled accordingly. BCPs along the main trading routes should be chosen so as not to unnecessarily impede international trade. In some countries the phytosanitary inspection service delegates some responsibilities to the customs agency, particularly at BCPs where it is not or not permanently present.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) regulates the movement of plants and plant products and their protection against harmful organisms. Moreover, the main EU legal documents for the phytosanitary inspection, according to the EU IBM guidelines for WB, are the following:

- EU Directive 2000/29/EC codifying the whole range of Community measures against the propagation and introduction of harmful organisms;



- Part of the general framework laid down by the International Plant Protection Convention regulating the movement of plants and plant products and their protection against harmful organisms.

Procedures

Procedures relating to the inspection of plants and plant products should be in line with customs control, and therefore a clear coordination mechanism between these two agencies is necessary. Customs officers should be aware of the tasks of plant and plant product inspectors, so that they know which products have to be controlled, which species are safe-guarded under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**) and which (small) amounts of regulated plants or plant products are exempted from control. In some countries, certain tasks relating to the inspections of plants and plant products are under the responsibility of the customs agency, which usually has more human resources and is present at each BCP. The plant protection agency would still be involved in complex cases, but would not have to maintain staff at the border.

2.2 Inter-agency Cooperation

Inter-agency cooperation refers to the cooperation and coordination between all border management agencies and aims at an overall workflow, which ensures a smooth processing at a BCP. In the following paragraphs the recommended fields of cooperation and coordination between border services are described.

Cooperation procedures, joint operations and controls

The standardized and streamlined workflow for the coordination of procedures between agencies is of great importance and should be aimed. Beyond that, controls and procedures, including their sequence, should be clear for all parties, as should the division of responsibility for the different tasks between



the respective authorities, emphasis should be laid on joint controls, instead of duplication, ensuring also the economic use of resources. For this purpose, operational instructions or manuals should be available to all officers based on formal agreements with other agencies, while EC legislation and good practices should be taken into account when establishing or revising procedures.

Customs constitute a link between the other agencies, since customs officers should have regular contact with border guards, veterinary and phytosanitary control. Therefore, customs authorities should be especially active in ensuring optimal coordination between all partners.

According to EC principles, customs and border police should cooperate as closely as possible, in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of both services and speed up procedures. While each service is concentrating on its basic tasks, the possibility of joint controls should be examined.

Coordination with both veterinary and phytosanitary services is also needed in this regard. These controls are mainly carried out at the state border and cannot be moved inland. Consignments from which samples for a laboratory test are taken have to be held under customs supervision and the goods have to be sent to inland warehouses. In addition, both destruction and return of a consignment in the case of a positive result have to be executed under customs supervision. To ensure that all consignments entering the country concerned undergo the necessary border agencies should coordinate with other enforcement services to gather all pertinent information regarding consignments.

Close cooperation in terms of the processing of goods traffic for the benefit of the clients is foreseen also in the single-window concept of the European Commission centred on all goods and merchandise, so as to simplify the clearance procedures for forwarders and thus further reduce processing times.



Joint controls

If any control agency initiates physical examination within its authority, services should consider either joint or coordinated controls so as to give them (the services/ agencies) the opportunity to carry out further necessary physical examinations simultaneously, as appropriate, and thereby save costs and inconvenience for all parties involved. To the extent possible, double checks of vehicles and identity documents should be avoided.

Joint operations

Based on risk analysis, customs and border guard services could also benefit from joint operations, as both services have different tasks and access to different information.

Joint training/ awareness-building and joint responsibilities

Staff and inspectors at local and/ or regional offices should be fully aware of how to act with regard to the tasks and responsibilities of other services, gather relevant information, to analyse it locally and to pass it on to the central level for further processing. This could lead to actual shared responsibilities between agencies.

Especially customs officers have to be aware of items that fall under the authority of veterinary or phytosanitary officials, primarily when the latter are not present. The customs and the border guards should thus have lists of consignments that can only enter the country following veterinary or phytosanitary inspection. The products on these lists should be linked to the customs code system, in order to assist the forwarding of relevant consignments to the relevant inspection. Relevant consignments should be forwarded immediately for the inspectors to carry out documentation, identity and physical checks. Samples may also be taken.

Namely, in cases where there is an attempt to introduce a consignment via a BCP where there is no BIP – or the categorisation of the BIP does not include the consignment concerned – entry should be refused by customs.



Sharing/ Joint use of equipment and facilities

For the institutionalization of cooperation procedures, especially between border guards and customs, the sharing or joint use of appropriate border infrastructure and facilities is considered essential.

Thus, infrastructure at BCPs could be laid out aiming to enhance integrated control in one building (goods and passengers separated from goods on trucks), or at closely placed workplaces obtaining easy reach within the cooperating services.

The availability of the equipment by the officers needed is also essential and, therefore, it should be installed close to the location where controls are carried out. Especially at the BCPs situated on transport corridors with permanent X-ray and mobile X-ray scanner units, all agencies should have the convenience to use the equipment. Also, the sharing of service dogs among the relevant agencies could provide good results.

Particularly for the coordination between the customs and the phytosanitary services, the sharing of equipment and facilities for the inspection of goods and incineration facilities is of great importance. Concerning the coordination with the veterinary services, particular facilities for intensive checks of vehicles, unloading of trucks and incineration facilities should also be used in common, since ideally the control itself should be carried out by representatives of all relevant agencies. On the other hand, sharing of other infrastructure/ equipment is not allowed for veterinary services.

Further to the sharing of specialized equipment, the shared use by all officers/ inspectors of service rooms' facilities, such as kitchens or common rooms, is also recommended, with taking restrictions related to hygiene and risk of contamination into consideration. Therefore, is again promoted the efficient use of resources and amenities, the informal relations and the feeling of pursuing a common goal.



For the above mentioned purposes, the development, modernisation and construction of new BCPs should adapt the EU and Schengen requirements in this direction and on the basis of the standards to be followed for each type of BCP, for example based on the services' presence at BCPs.

Agreements should also be established with reference to joint use of equipment/ resources, addressing questions of ownership and priority, maintenance, accountability/ documentation, responsibilities and the limitation of use of specialised equipment by respective specialists.

Finally, sharing of resources and joint acquisition/ tendering could also be taken into consideration for reasons of cost-effectiveness. Where possible, the creation of a joint tendering office should be envisaged.

Information and data exchange obligations and mechanisms

Regular and efficient exchange of information is essential for effectively carrying out the respective tasks related to border management. Moreover, data flow management analysis can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of information exchange between the relevant authorities. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to communication, information and data exchange should be taken and agreed upon by all agencies. In order to institutionalise communication and information exchange, the coordination at all levels is recommended:

- local level: heads of a shift of all agencies at a BCP discussion on problems arisen;
- regional level: heads of the agencies of all BCPs/ ICSs in the region (of a country);
- central level: representatives of all agencies discussion on future/ ongoing and past activities and strategies.



Naturally, each agency has special needs regarding the information it requires from the respective other services, in order to fulfil its functions in the most effective way. However, the different information gathered by the services is often complementary and interlinked. Thus, as a starting point, there should be a realistic needs assessment with regard to the type of information to be exchanged, as well as to which agencies should be included in the exchange system. An important matter to take into consideration is possible cooperation among the various agencies with regard to risk analysis, which needs to be based on reliable and up-to-date information. Data protection issues should be also taken into consideration. The agreed approach should form part of an inter-agency agreement and relevant instructions/ rules on procedures should be made available to all staff.

Such a comprehensive approach includes communication, information and data exchange between representatives of the agencies at all levels (as described above) with different objectives, from coordination of priorities and long-term strategies, as in the form of an inter-agency working group for sharing/ comparison of statistics and operational briefings related to day-to-day operations at BCPs based on common definitions, priorities and risks between headquarters, and at the regional and local levels to the coordination of operations at BCPs.

Regular formal meetings and informal contacts between the officers/ inspectors of the various services at the BCPs are a simple tool to improve coordination among services at the border. They could report to each other on issues such as the announced arrival of special travellers, animals, products, very important persons, large army contingents, special animal transport, dangerous goods, weapon transport, and persons on special medication. Other issues to be shared could be new smuggling tactics or similar knowledge received by one of the services. This could be a starting point for common risk analysis. Regular meetings should be short (10-30 minutes) and focused.



Information (new or updated) should be shared as quickly and efficiently as possible among all the relevant officers to ensure optimal results. Therefore, integrated or at least compatible systems of information-gathering, secure storage and exchange are required. Those systems could range from responding to individual requests to direct-read access or even common databases. They could permit multi-agency access and sharing of information in different levels of access, in order to ensure that only the relevant information is shared.

To further simplify procedures, speed up the transfer of information and support of a comprehensive risk analysis system, the establishment of a contact point system, as a starting point for possible more advanced mechanisms, or the development of IT systems in line with international and/ or EU standards and good practices are essential. Therefore, information exchange mechanisms are not only defined for "business as usual", but as efficient *early warning systems* put in place.

The development of an early warning system comprises an inter-connected area of information management and sharing and aims at rapid response. It refers in case of implicit problem/ extraordinary situations faced in a country or by a border management agency that may affect a country's border situation or both sides of the border. For its implementation and for the dissemination of information in due time, are required a harmonised approach based upon existing risk assessment/ profiles and officers (at each level), horizontal and vertical structures as well as clear description and training in standard operational procedures.

Electronic communication, electronic forms and data exchange with other authorities should be made available, where feasible, including all information required by agencies involved in border management. These data could be channelled, allowing for a *single-window solution*. In the establishment of new IT solutions, technical solutions should take into account the questions of compatibility with relevant international systems, later integration with systems of other services and access certain data.



At present, in almost all of the Western Balkan states, large projects and programmes are ongoing with the objective of upgrading the IT capacities and database management of various agencies at borders. The project leaders of these projects/ programmes, and when relevant, their local partners should inform each other about their plans and activities in order to ensure proper allocation of the huge sums of – public – money involved. Issues to be coordinated include:

- EU standards in place for particular issues,
- standards and programmes used in general,
- possibilities of exchanging data between the various systems,
- possible advantages of joint tendering for hardware and
- compatibility with international standards and existing EU systems.

The communication flow, however, should not be limited to the authorities directly involved in border management. There are also other relevant stakeholders that could be possibly taken into consideration, such as operators and shipping agencies.

Common risk strategy/ control network

It is confirmed within the EU that a joint approach to risk management strategy and methods based on common EU-standards is essential and could further contribute to the rationalisation of the control systems at borders. The central level should compile all information country-wide, process it into usable form and deliver it to local authorities as a tool for tactical risk analysis and local operational planning. The starting point should be the identification of those controls which can be moved inland, instead of been performed at the borders, without having a negative impact on the risks they address, and those which have to be carried out at border posts. The objective is to ensure that priority is given to the need for security and that controls are carried out where they are most



effective, but taking into account the requirements of EC legislation on checks that should be carried out at the border.

As certain operations may be more usefully carried out inland, as defined in the common risk strategy, the close cooperation of mobile units by all relevant agencies is required.

On this basis, a comprehensive rationalised common risk strategy can be developed, identifying and addressing the strong and weak points of the present border-related activities. One point in creating a comprehensive control network based on a common risk strategy could be, for example, the identification of adequate inland control points on major transit routes and the establishment of mobile units of customs officers and border guards.

All authorities concerned must work together to establish these priorities and to define the relevant common risk profiles. The profiles established must then be used to select the most useful information for risk analysis from the data made available by all agencies concerned and to identify any improvements or innovations that may be necessary. Special targets of surveillance and checks should also be made known to the personnel.

It is vital that customs share relevant information, in particular related to smuggling and trafficking, with other agencies in order to improve the common risk strategy. Traders have to declare their goods to customs, which, based on the customs tariff combined with common risk profiles and additional risk-related information, carry out an initial risk selection. This allows for centralisation of data collection and simplifies administrative procedures for the traders.

For this joint risk management to be effective, a common approach to the control of vehicles is also essential. Controls required must thus be defined and standardised, determining where and by whom controls should be carried out and whether one service should have priority to start its check and which type of specialised equipment is needed.



2.3 International Cooperation

The close and constant cooperation between the EU, the Member States and the accession/ candidate country neighbours is vital for the development of a common understanding in policing matters, for the effective implementation of border control and for the development of a common approach to tackling particular cross-border phenomena (trafficking, smuggling and cross-border crime). The Member States should assist each other and report to the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU (FRONTEX). The bordering accession/ candidate countries could thus benefit from their experience in the alignment of procedures and practices to EU standards.

The international cooperation should thus consist of cooperation:

- at local level between officials on both sides of the border;
- between neighbouring countries covering various issues, e.g. from border management to the organisation of patrols and the organisation of common contact offices; and
- at the multinational level to better approach common fields of work (such as trans-border crime, smuggling of goods etc.).

To achieve this goal, the countries and the administrations conclude agreements on coordination activities, which could cover the following issues, depending on the intensity of cooperation and the closeness of relations, ranging from the basics (e.g. opening times of BCPs) to the more sophisticated (e.g. one-stop control):

- harmonisation of working practices/ day-to-day work practices,
- one-stop controls,
- establishment of joint contingency plans and exercises,



- associated training/ exercises,
- joint patrols,
- cross-border-surveillance,
- controlled delivery - permanent control of an illicit cross-border consignment with the aim of identifying the consignee,
- exchange of information,
- designation of an official contact point/ Liaison Office (**LO**) or establishment of contact offices and
- publication of regulatory information.

Harmonising rules and procedures – Joint patrolling – One-stop control

Member States with internal borders jointly control their common borders and in this case persons may be stopped only once for the purpose of carrying out entry and exit checks.

Concerning the external border checks on persons, the Schengen Borders Code provides EU States with a single set of common rules that govern these checks, entry requirements and duration of stays in the Schengen Area. Specifically, the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of management of external borders is coordinated by FRONTEX, established by Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004. By harmonising these rules, the EU seeks to render them more efficient, whilst increasing their transparency.

Particularly concerning the checks on rail traffic, Member States should conclude bilateral agreements on their performance and inform the Commission thereof.

Generally, all the border management staff should be fully aware for the cross-border procedures and international cooperation activities in the respective fields within the necessary manuals established.



One-stop control

In view to further enhance cooperation and to smooth the flow of traffic at the land borders, the EU Council has adopted a recommendation on the usage of flexible measures between EU Members participating in the Schengen Agreement and their neighbours in the field of border controls. Therefore, a process has been developed leading to common control conducted by competent border guards' authorities.

Since such an effort should not be limited to EU Member States, similar solutions should be adopted by other countries. Therefore, agreements on simplified border processing should stipulate the following issues, according to the Commission guidelines for IBM in the Western Balkans:

- What, how and where the controlling authorities operate;
- The sequence of control;
- Who has what kind of competence and obligation (uniform, firearms);
- Definition of a particular area where each authority can perform their duties;
- Where and in what form more intensive controls can be carried out, jointly or independently, and what the content of those controls should be;
- What the process is in the case of detection of an illegal act (who has the competence and what kind of competence and tasks exists);
- What the order is of entry, stay or return at the BCP (the area where the control is carried out determines which border control authority is responsible for the order of the BCP);
- If possible, separate control lanes have to be established, where preferential citizens, citizens subject to visa requirements or citizens subject to more intensive control can cross the border;
- Order of control at bus lanes.



In case of introduction of the one-stop control principal, directives, requirements and restrictions established within national laws and international agreements must be followed and enforced strictly, in order to guarantee adequate cooperation. The rights, the obligations and the tasks of experts and assigned staff should be clarified and agreed within methods' contacts. Following the same guidelines, implementation of the tasks set forth in cooperation agreements should be assessed every month at local level, every half year at regional level and annually at central level.

One-stop control should be established – upon agreement between the neighbouring countries – on the side of the border where the facilities are more advanced or the improvement of the working conditions is less costly. The size of border control boxes and sanitary facilities should respond to the increased requirements.

Border guards

In cases that advanced stage of bilateral cooperation is achieved and when neighbouring countries and the relevant authorities accomplish confidence-building measures with the necessary legislation or treaty is in place, joint patrolling at particular BCPs could be considered. The conduction of joint border patrols on one side of the border, taking also into account the results of thorough risk-analysis, could enable economical use of means and resources in border protection and concentrate and group resources directly at the point of most pressure.

Customs

The customs issues and the harmonisation of the working practices on this specific field within agreements on mutual assistance and cooperation is also essential where the one-stop control is introduced. Harmonised working practices should also be established under the TIR Transit Convention, imposing the exchange of import and export data on a daily basis between the BCP customs staff on both sides of the border.



More specifically, the agreements concluded between neighbouring countries should introduce:

- the possibility of establishing common border posts on the territory of one of the countries (a specific attention thereby should be paid to the competences of the customs service that fulfils the duties in the neighbouring country, e.g. power to impose administrative fines, etc.),
- control in trains starting in the territory of the neighbouring country and
- common procedures like introduction of a common routing slip and re-admission procedures concerning persons and goods to which entry is denied.

Closing, concerning the border controls conducted by all the responsible border authorities, cooperation with regard to risk analysis constitutes the use of internationally recognised models, such as the EU Common Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM).

Coordination of BCPs' status – infrastructure and equipment

To achieve the goal of international cooperation, the status of the BCPs with reference to their infrastructure and equipment comprises a key factor. The starting point should be the determination of the border crossings to prioritise within common agreements. Thus, the operation of the BCPs, and consequently their construction or upgrading, should be coordinated not only among the border agencies at national level, as already mentioned, but also internationally, regionally, as well as at bilateral level. For this purpose, the coordination of strategies and resulting priorities related to comprehensive control networks should take place at central level.

The coordinated planning contributes to the classification of the borders as short-, medium- or long-term, with regard to future accession to the EU. Therefore, situations in which BCPs are substantially upgraded or inspection services are represented on only one side of the border are avoided. Besides, not only should the BIPs be built at the same BCPs on each side of the border, but there should



also be harmonisation of the tasks and responsibilities of the BIPs. For instance, both BIPs should be authorised to inspect foodstuffs or other products of animal origin requiring a certain storage temperature, or both BIPs should be authorised to inspect live animals.

Furthermore, since sharing of equipment should certainly be aimed, common premises at the border would be considered. Especially at BCPs located on highways or other international transit routes, the separation of the road haulage, according to direction, and the establishment of common infrastructure for export and import traffic of trucks respectively could be useful. Through this arrangement, a close cooperation between the customs authorities of import and export countries can be guaranteed, including the common use of data, which in this case need to be collected only once. Thus, mixing of cross-border traffic as well as the mixing of import and export traffic can be avoided.

Depending on the intensity of cooperation and the closeness of relations between neighbouring countries, the operation of Joint BCPs, the joint use of infrastructure on juxtaposed/ collocated BCPs or related to one-stop control would be most advisable, whereas it is permitted by the relevant national legislations. The operation of such Joint BCPs constitutes a useful and cost-effective tool in promoting cooperation across the border and in facilitating the legitimate movement of persons and goods.

External communication mechanisms and information exchange - sharing

Information sharing through external communication mechanisms is essential for European cooperation on border management and for creating appropriate interfaces between border agencies in different countries. Over the past years, the EU has introduced new technologies and implemented large-scale IT systems (such as SIS and VIS) that allow authorities throughout the Schengen Area to efficiently share and use data necessary for the execution of their tasks.



Currently, the EU is working to establish the European Border Surveillance System (**EUROSUR**), a new information sharing and cooperation mechanism. This mechanism will provide EU States located at the Eastern and Southern external borders with a common operational and technical framework.

Further to the information sharing within the Commission mechanisms, Member States should continue operational cooperation with other Member States and/ or third countries at external borders, by adopting the relevant institutional framework for information exchange. However, emphasis should be further put especially on neighbouring countries, countries of origin of significant flows of migrants, strategically relevant exporting and importing countries, industry representatives within these countries as well as relevant international organisations. Communication between border services can be enhanced at the local level (between BCPs), bilateral (central level) and multilateral/ regional levels.

Initially, meetings between representatives of border agencies from different countries should be held at all levels. At central or regional levels, meetings should address strategic issues, common planning and evaluation of the respective border control systems. They might also serve as fora for information exchange related to legislative, institutional and organisational changes and this will be more thoroughly described below. An important aim of regional meetings among the countries of the Western Balkans should have been the development of joint positions within the European process of multilateral cooperation, according to the EU guidelines. Locally, heads of border posts should be instructed to maintain regular contact and establish day-to-day working relations with their counterparts at the operational level and to promote exchange of data and intelligence based on relevant agreements.

The information exchange related to the evaluation/ monitoring of operations of BCPs, such as the exchange of statistical data or specific problems at individual crossing points, within the authorities of the neighbouring countries



should be further institutionalised. This information may serve as a basis for organisational changes with the aim of increasing the harmonisation of border procedures, especially in the traffic of goods. Following the EC guidelines, it is recommended to prepare such an analysis annually. Therefore, regional initiatives should be complemented by bilateral contacts.

Direct phone connections between the BCPs on either side of a border would facilitate regular information exchange. Direct radio communication at the operational and regional level with neighbouring countries should also be made possible whereas in this case the compatibility of the systems used should be taken into consideration. The systematic exchange of reports (e.g. on a weekly basis) would allow a monitoring of the situation at the state borders in the region.

The development of modern IT systems provides an essential basis for efficient information exchange. Therefore, direct and fast Internet access in all BCPs/ ICSs/ BIPs is an obvious advantage. With a view to closer cooperation between countries, it is important to consider the compatibility of their national IT systems. Furthermore, since the IT systems serve as a source for international data available on the Internet, there is eventual need for compatibility with the SIS and web pages of the EU, OIE and FAO, in the case of veterinary inspection.

Issues on the transmission of personal data and mutual protection of confidential information should be regulated within national data protection laws and regulations (in line with the EU Data Protection Regulation) and intergovernmental agreements following international obligations.

An example would be the development of procedures within customs authorities on sharing of information among all relevant officers and on relevant information. Particularly, the customs administrations in the Western Balkan region have agreed the use of a standardised information system procedure to inform the countries of the region about offences and suspicions that may be of interest for others. In case of an offence or suspicion, customs officers fill in a standardised information document and send it to its national central risk management. The



central risk management shares this information with the central risk managements of other countries in the region.

The specific forms/ mechanisms for the efficient information sharing and management, according to the guidelines for IBM in the Western Balkans, are the following:

Common contact offices

The establishment of common contact offices at certain strategically relevant BCPs or another location in one of the concerned countries contributes to fostering cooperation within speeding up exchange, clarification and forwarding information especially in the case of daily operations and emergency actions. The mutually information exchanged refers to:

- forgeries of passport documents, visas and stamps of border controls,
- personal data of owners of means of transport, residence and ownership of means of communication,
- identification of means of transport,
- ascertaining the identity of a person,
- re-admission of illegal migrants,
- special operations undertaken by border guard patrols: preventive and control measures carried out in the border zone,
- controlled deliveries and observations,
- information regarding cross-border hot pursuit, and
- general sharing of intelligence, for example, on forms and methods of smuggling.

The contact offices serve the needs for efficient flow of information between border guards, police and customs services of both countries, as well as courts, prosecutors and other authorities



The staff of the contact offices should be comprised of delegated officers (having good knowledge of the relevant language) from the border services of the two or more contracting parties.

Liaison officers (LOs)

The deployment or exchange of LOs among neighbouring countries or countries of origin of significant flows of migrants or goods aims at achieving optimal results in the pre-frontier area, by facilitating information exchange and coordination of border-related activities at operational and strategic level. It follows the example of the Common Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS).

All border-related agencies should be represented, but especially border guards and customs.

Regional platforms/inter-agency groups

The initiation of a regional IBM platform for the Western Balkan states and their neighbours consists an important element to further foster regional cooperation and coordination of national strategies within the formal or informal regional information exchange on specific topics.

Participation in relevant international organisations/fora

The participation of representatives of all agencies as members or, at least, observers in international networks, meetings of relevant international organisations or fora should be promoted. The main fora per border-related agency indicated at the guidelines for IBM in the Western Balkans, are the following:

- Border guards: International Border Police Conference in Siófok-Hungary (yearly), South-East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and Brdo Process;
- Customs administrations: regional meetings of SECI, European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) platforms and meetings of the World Customs Organisation (WCO),



heads of enforcement and intelligence or Regional Intelligence LOs (**RILO**) meetings;

- Phytosanitary services: membership of European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (**EPPO**) and accession to the International Plant Protection Convention for the improvement and establishment of international contacts and information exchange;
- Veterinary services: membership in the OIE, the WTO and Codex Alimentarius through the World Health Organization (**WHO**).

Participation in international operations/exchange programmes

Valuable contacts with services in other countries can also be established through the participation in international operations and/ or exercises and institutionalised exchange programmes. Some examples are the joint actions of FRONTEX, EU customs programmes (Customs 2013 and Customs 2020 European cooperation programmes), SEED/ SEMS projects and CEFTA related activities.





3 Practices applied for Border Management in ACROSSEE countries

In the current chapter is presented an aggregated comparison of the findings on practices applied in the ACROSSEE participating countries, as they have thoroughly presented in the 5.2.2 report (Surveys at Border Crossings), and the EU standards and guidelines on Border Management strategy and the principal of IBM.

Initially, **Table 1** summarises the IBM strategies (if applied) of the countries participating and been investigated within ACROSSEE project (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia¹), following the findings of the surveys (Questionnaires B1, B2 and B4, see 5.2.1 report on Methodology) and the in-house research.

Table 1. National IBM Strategies adopted by the ACROSSEE participating countries

Country	IBM Strategy
Albania	National Strategy on Integrated Border Management & its Action Plan, Tirana, November 2006. A new integrated border management strategy and an action plan covering 2014-2020 were approved.
Bulgaria	Strategy on Integrated Border Management in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2010-2013
Croatia	National Strategy and Action Plan for IBM, 2005
Greece	National Trade Facilitation Strategy and Roadmap, 2012
Hungary	Not attainable
Romania	STRATEGIA NAȚIONALĂ de management integrat al frontierei de stat a României în perioada 2010-2012
Serbia	Стратегије за интегрисано управљање границом у Републици Србији, 2012
Slovenia	Strategic platform of the Slovenian police for implementation of IBM, August 2011

The following tables contain the main methods and practices recommended within the EU official papers for issues on Intra-agency (**Table 2**), Inter-agency (**Table 3**) and International Cooperation (**Table 4**), in comparison with the currently applied practices by the National authorities at the borders of the corresponding countries.



Table 2. Intra-agency Cooperation: Comparison of applied practices with EU/ EC guidelines

Country	Border Police	Customs	Veterinary/ Phytosanitary	On-board checks on trains
	Risk analysis/ IT system	Risk management/ Risk management system	CVED/ IT system	
Albania	Risk analysis - applied percentage: 14% Total Information Management System (TIMS)	Level of physical controls of goods (2010) - applied percentage: 14% Automated Systems for Customs Data – ASYCUDA World Use forms copied or inspired by the Single Administrative Document (SAD) for customs entries through ASYCUDA	TRAdE Control and Expert System (TRACES)	No information
Bulgaria	Application of Risk Analysis Simplification of road checks/ Focus on highest risk profiles during summer months Linkage of the IT system to all Ministry of Interior databases	Application of Risk Management Bulgarian Integrated Customs Information System (BICIS) Application of SAD since 01/01/2007 Interaction between Customs Agency and the National Revenue Agency (NRA) - direct access to the database	TRACES Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED)	Application of on-board checks on international passenger trains (occasionally also by the customs authority)
Croatia (before accession/ 1st July 2013)	Application of Risk Analysis using the Border Police system - applied percentage: 5% National Border Management Information System (NBMIS)	Application of Risk Management - applied percentage: 5-10% Continuous efforts for the harmonization of the automated Risk Selection System within the Customs Information System (CIS) with EU standards and best practice Application of SAD since 01/07/2012 “National Single Window” between Customs Administration and Specialised Authorities for quick and paperless customs environment	TRACES CVED Phytosanitary Information System (PIS)	Application of simplified customs at all BCPs procedures are applied concerning trains crossing the borders (but no details provided on on-board checks)



Country	Border Police Risk analysis/ IT system	Customs Risk management/ Risk management system	Veterinary/ Phytosanitary CVED/ IT system	On-board checks on trains
Greece	Establishment of a simple, effective and straightforward system for the effective management, according to European models and in the framework of the Schengen Acquis	New Integrated Customs Information System (ICISnet) (electronic submission of electronic submission of all data/ documents related to the declaration procedure): Excise Movement and Control System (EMCS) Import Control System (ICS) (only for Entry Summary Declaration- ENS) License application (only for exports) Risk Analysis (only for ESS and Exit Summary Declaration- EXS)/ Customs risk assessment system System for the Exchange of Excise Data (SEED) Export Control System (ECS) TARIC (only for exports) Information portal No import/ export procedures at border customs offices (inland clearance) Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Application of SAD since 04/06/2007	TRACES CVED	Not applied by Customs Authorities
Hungary	No information	Risk Management Ratio of inspections over controls - applied percentage: 40% at the Ukrainian and 20% at the Serbian border Application of SAD since 01/05/2004	TRACES CVED	Not applied



Country	Border Police Risk analysis/ IT system	Customs Risk management/ Risk management system	Veterinary/ Phytosanitary CVED/ IT system	On-board checks on trains
Romania	<p>Application of Risk Analysis</p> <p>Integrated System for Border Security (ISBS) that comprises real-time exchange of information between national and international structures with responsibilities in the field of border control and surveillance</p>	<p>Informatics Integrated Customs System</p> <p>Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) system</p> <p>AEO</p> <p>Export Control System (ECS) implemented according to Functional (Transit) System Specifications (FTSS) since 02/07/2007</p> <p>Import Control System (ICS)</p> <p>Import and export (without ECS) since 28/ 2/2007</p> <p>New Computerized Transit System (NCTS) since 01/01/2006</p> <p>National Customs Authority information system</p> <p>IT security policy for border crossing improvements: edited according to the Modern European Custom Code and consisted of (i) issuing procedures for IT security according to the Modern European Custom Code; (ii) implementing the digital signature for Import Custom Declaration; (iii) training the custom personnel in the new IT security policy</p> <p>Implementation of Regulation No. 2286/03 in informatics system was done by updating the Automatic Processing System of the SAD CDPS/ASYCUDA++</p>	<p>TRACES</p> <p>CVED</p>	<p>Performance of checks on-board on trains entering/ exiting Romania</p> <p>Break-of-gauge on the border with Moldova and Ukraine: transshipment; bogie changing</p>



Country	Border Police Risk analysis/ IT system	Customs Risk management/ Risk management system	Veterinary/ Phytosanitary CVED/ IT system	On-board checks on trains
Serbia	<p>Application of tactical Risk Analysis has been reported by Serbian PP.</p> <p>However, the EC Progress report of October 2014 states that a risk analysis system has yet to be established in order to enhance control of the borders.</p>	<p>Risk Management: Post-clearance controls, Risk analysis and selectivity: a risk assessment system incorporated into the Customs Information System (CIS): 17% & 5% of the trucks at the entrance and 2% of trucks at the exit</p> <p>Submission of Customs documentation electronically</p> <p>Simplified Procedures regarding the Imported and Exported Goods Declaration and the procedures for Authorized Importer and Approved Exporter</p> <p>Joint Border Management System (no details provided)</p> <p>Early Warning System (EWS)</p> <p>Successful implementation of a red and green control system for passengers and vehicles, and the separating of import cargo from TIR (transit) at Batrovci, Gradina and Horgos BCPs</p>	<p>Joined TRACES in early 2012</p> <p>CVED</p>	<p>Performance of checks on-board on trains entering/ exiting Serbia at Dimtrovgrad BCP</p> <p>Simplified procedure regarding the declaration of goods which are in transit in railway traffic</p>
Slovenia	<p>Application of Risk analysis at national level, regional and local level</p> <p>Operative-communication center of the General Police Directorate (GPU)</p> <p>Intranet of police and Slovenian National Document Portal (PORLIS)</p>	<p>Risk Management</p> <p>Risk analysis systems are integrated in almost every electronic system available to traders and customs (NCTS, ICS, ECS) - applied percentage: 6-8%</p> <p>Application of SAD since 01/01/2006</p>	<p>TRACES</p> <p>CVED</p>	<p>No information</p>



Table 3. Inter-agency Cooperation: Comparison of applied practices with EU/ EC guidelines

Country	Inland cargo clearance	Joint controls	Joint approach of risk management/ Common Risk Strategy/ Joint operations	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange
					Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Albania	No information	Joint standard procedures by common IBM teams	Joint risk analysis	Cooperation Agreement between all border agencies for joint use of equipment Installation of specially designed booths with computers for joint working	Meetings Intranet service Partial reciprocal access between TIMS and ASYCUDA systems
Bulgaria	No information	Joint controls/ inspections, formation of mobile units, joint assessment of operational situations, joint operations and investigations, joint training Inter-agency Mobile Units for Control and Surveillance (MGCS) Common Entry Document (CED)	Joint risk analysis (Legal framework, 2006) – <i>not implemented</i> Sharing of risk profiles	Joint use of infrastructure and equipment (Legal framework, 2006) Arrangement of the BCPs' management for the use of a technological line for automated processing of incoming and outgoing traffic by all BCPs' border agencies (Ordinance, 2002 & 2009) "Single line" inspection	Information exchange, appointing liaison officers, joint public and press announcements (Legal framework, 2006 & 2010) Singular Automated Information System (SEAIS) - data exchange in digital and paper using the form "Bypass Sheet checkpoint" Intra-agency meetings at the BCPs daily Phone calls and e-mails Use of formal channels Daily bulletins on operational situations Annual Inter-agency agreements and internal regulations Cooperation initiatives in annual plans and regional initiatives in their six-monthly plans



Country	Inland cargo clearance	Joint controls	Joint approach of risk management/ Common Risk Strategy/ Joint operations	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Croatia <i>(before accession/ 1st July 2013)</i>	No information	Implementation of joint inter-agency actions: systematic border checks, joint patrols and actions of the Mobile Units "Single window" concept <i>(under preparation)</i>	A joint risk analysis is missing	Sharing of equipment at the BCPs: joint use of buildings, technical equipment and telecommunication links, such as Centralised Video Surveillance System (CCTV) and Licence Plate Recognition system as well as interconnection of the Radiation Portal Monitors (RPM)	National Border Management Information System (NBMIS) Inter-agency meetings at national level: monitoring of the implementation, revising of the IBM Action Plan and making strategic decisions on risk analysis management Phone calls and e-mails
Greece	Operation of inland customs offices for the customs formalities (import and export)	MoUs between the border authorities Coordinated and simultaneous controls	Not applied	Not applied	Regular meetings between the heads of the local border services Partial access at other border agencies' information systems From ICISnet to Single Window (under development)
Hungary	No information	No information	Focus of the central level: joint protection and surveillance of the border sections most at risk, cooperation at BCPs on day-to-day operational issues	No information	Surveillance camera system (Closed-circuit television - CCTV) Enhanced Data Rate (EDR) radio with a Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) technology <i>(use by custom officers)</i> Incidental submission of information via Phone calls and e-mails



Country	Inland cargo clearance	Joint controls	Joint approach of risk management/ Common Risk Strategy/ Joint operations	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Romania	No information	No information	Romanian Inter-ministerial Group for the Integrated State Border Management (GIRMIFS)	No information	<p>GIRMIFS work meetings and periodical reports</p> <p>Voice - data communication subsystem within the ISBS: Wide Area Network (WAN), Local Area Network (LAN), voice and data traffic between ISBS users</p> <p>ISBS Interconnection with: national public order and national security system, national crisis management system to prevent and combat terrorism, National Alert Information System (SINS)</p> <p>Mobile radio-communication subsystem: exchange of information (voice and data) between the mobile operational elements, command and control centres; analogically, in the frequency range VHF and HF, for the naval mobility units & digitally Professional Mobile Radio-communication (PMR) in Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) radio-communication</p>



Country	Inland cargo clearance	Joint controls	Joint approach of risk management/ Common Risk Strategy/ Joint operations	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Serbia	No information	No information	Common risk analysis, organization of joint actions, establishment of common operational and technical teams to resolve individual cases, development of standards, technical criteria and alignment procedures, actions in emergency situations (Inter-agency Cooperation Agreement, 2009)	Occasional Joint use of equipment (Inter-agency Cooperation Agreement, 2009)	<p>Daily operational contacts at BCPs</p> <p>Formal arrangements (central and regional levels on a 3-monthly basis and local (BCP) meetings monthly)</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>Intranet</p> <p>Exchange of information, exchange of expertise and technical assistance (Inter-agency Cooperation Agreement, 2009)</p> <p>Customs Administration of Serbia (CAS) interconnected IT system (<i>under preparation</i>)</p>



Country	Inland cargo clearance	Joint controls	Joint approach of risk management/ Common Risk Strategy/ Joint operations	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Slovenia	Operation of inland customs offices for the customs formalities	Agreement on Mutual cooperation between Customs administration and Police (Agreement, 2008): internal cooperation within the country (mobile units) and not only at cross-borders	No information	No information	<p>Information exchange between Police and other Ministries and Authorities, such as the Customs, Maritime Administration, Veterinary administration and other inspection services</p> <p>Contact persons - officers for connection between Customs administration and Police (Agreement, 2007)</p> <p>Real time connection/ communication between Ljubljana and Novo Mesto and between Obrezeje and Brezice</p> <p>Nova Gorica: Slovenian central office responsible for enquiry and recovery procedure in transit: communication with the national customs offices via telephone, e-mail and hardcopies</p>



Table 4. International Cooperation: Comparison of applied practices with EU/ EC guidelines

Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Albania	<p>Intergovernmental working group for development of common strategies, standards</p> <p>Agreement on setting up a new joint border control point with FYROM</p>	<p>Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network (WBRAN)</p> <p>FRONTEX trainings and joint operations</p> <p>Consolidated practical cooperation with FRONTEX in joint risk analysis</p> <p>FRONTEX joint return operation under the method of self-collection</p> <p>Operational agreement with Europol for joint operations</p> <p>Pilot project for implementing the single window concept with FYROM and Greece</p> <p>Joint border control agreements with Kosovo</p> <p>Joint controls at Morine / Vermice (Kosovo) BCP during summer</p> <p>Joint and synchronised patrols with FYROM</p> <p>Agreements on reciprocal movement of citizens and on veterinary cooperation with</p>	<p>Agreement with Montenegro on their rail transport connection</p> <p>Accession to International Conventions to facilitate the crossing of frontiers for goods, for passengers and baggage carried by rail (accession: 22/04/2004) and COTIF</p>	<p>Joint BCP (JBCP) Murriqan/ Sukobine (Montenegro): sharing offices and a common database system</p> <p>JBCP Xhepishit Trebishtit (FYROM)</p>	<p>Joint Police Cooperation Centre at Murriqan/ Sukobine JBCP (bordering with Montenegro) (<i>currently being setting up</i>)</p> <p>Joint Police Cooperation Centre at Morine BCP (bordering with Kosovo)</p> <p>Establishment of two new Joint Police Cooperation Centres: in FYROM (12/2013) and in Bosnia-Herzegovina (03/2014) (<i>although in the latter case police officers have not yet been posted</i>): exchange of statistical reports, risk analysis, cases of drugs and forged documents, and information on vehicles and people</p> <p>Access to the International Organization of Criminal Police (INTERPOL) database</p> <p>Criminal intelligence information system (MEMEX)</p> <p>Participation in the European Police College (CEPOL) exchange programme on the basis of a cooperation agreement</p> <p>Operational agreement with Europol for exchange of strategic and</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
		<p>Serbia</p> <p>Agreement on joint patrols with Greece (<i>pending signing</i>)</p> <p>Agreement allowing travel for citizens with biometric ID cards with Bosnia and Herzegovina (<i>under preparation</i>)</p>			<p>operational information</p> <p>Participation in the EU South-East Europe Messaging System/ Systematic Automatic Exchange of Data (SEMS/SEED) projects</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2013 as Candidate country</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2020 as Candidate country</p> <p>TIR Convention (acceptance: 04/01/1985)</p> <p>ATA Convention (25/02/2013)</p> <p>Istanbul Convention (28/05/2009)</p> <p>International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (accession: 28/12/2004)</p> <p>Revised Kyoto Convention (04/06/2013)</p> <p>Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (accession: 20/07/2006)</p> <p>CEFTA 2006 Agreement</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Bulgaria	<p>Bilateral agreements with Greece, FYROM, Serbia and Turkey for maintenance and upgrade of borderline</p> <p>Bilateral Agreement with Greece and FYROM for the construction of new border crossings and road links</p>	<p>“One-stop” controls at the internal/ EU borders</p> <p>“Checking line” at the external borders</p> <p>Bilateral agreements with Romania and Greece, for border management cooperation and joint controls</p> <p>Bilateral agreements with FYROM, Serbia and Turkey for border management cooperation</p> <p>Bilateral Agreement with Serbia and Montenegro on border control and procedures in rail traffic</p>	<p>COTIF</p> <p>Agreement with Serbia on border control and procedures for railway traffic</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>Interconnection of the existing information systems with the customs information systems</p> <p>Bilateral agreements with Romania Greece, and FYROM for the construction and operation of joint contact centres</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2013 as Member State</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2020 as Member State</p> <p>Participation in European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR)</p> <p>Schengen candidate</p> <p>Common and Community transit</p> <p>TIR Convention (acceptance: 20/10/1977)</p> <p>ATA Convention (31/07/1964)</p> <p>Istanbul Convention (11/03/2003)</p> <p>International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (accession: 27/02/1998)</p> <p>Revised Kyoto Convention (17/03/2004)</p> <p>CMR (accession: 20/10/1977)</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
<p>Croatia <i>(before accession/ 1st July 2013)</i></p>	<p>Bilateral Agreement with Hungary determining the location of the BCPs, the order of use, the opening time and the nature of the traffic</p>	<p>Bilateral agreement with Slovenia on one-stop control</p> <p>Bilateral Agreement with Hungary on public road, railway and water border traffic control, including the principles and rules of cooperation</p> <p>Bilateral agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina: i) Joint Interpretative Note on the Neum/ Ploče Agreement, ii) Border Crossing Point Agreement and iii) Local Border Traffic Agreement</p> <p>Contract with Serbia on the regulation of road traffic</p> <p>Agreement with Serbia on combined transport of goods</p> <p>Joint patrols with Serbia on local border traffic in line with the acquis</p> <p>Implementation of the working arrangements with FRONTEX (joint operations on the border between Croatia and EU Member States,</p>	<p>Agreement with Serbia on the regulation of railway transport</p> <p>COTIF</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>Developing full compatibility and interconnectivity of Croatian Customs information systems with the EU customs systems</p> <p>Introduction of a faster information sharing of between local Veterinary BIPs, the other BCP Agencies, counterparts from neighbouring countries and EU Member States, as well as with other regional and international organizations</p> <p>Agreement on Cooperation on IBM: plans for the appointment of LOs from the Border Police and Customs and the signing of joint international bilateral and multilateral agreements for undertaking joint actions and sharing joint Contact Centres</p> <p>Bilateral Agreement with Slovenia on Computer exchange of data for Customs control</p> <p>Operation of a common contact point with Serbia at the Bajakovo/Batrovci BCP</p> <p>Contract with Serbia on mutual help on questions regarding Customs</p> <p>Preparation and submission to Serbia</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
		<p>exchange of information between Risk Analysis Units, cooperation in training, technical cooperation and participation in joint readmission actions and pilot projects)</p>			<p>of two protocols on information exchange</p> <p>Operation of Nova Sela BCP, close to Metkovic, as the common contact point with Bosnia and Herzegovina</p> <p>Cross-border meetings</p> <p>Croatia's contact point with FRONTEX at Bajakovo BCP</p> <p>Participation in EU programmes cross-border inter-agency cooperation and the adoption of a more integrated approach towards the services involved in border management and the development of compatible information systems throughout the region establishing an effective and successful cooperation with neighbouring countries mainly in the field of Border Police and Customs</p> <p>Participating in the EC programmes Customs 2013 (from 01/07/2013 on) and Customs 2020 as Member State</p> <p>Participation in EUROSUR</p> <p>Schengen candidate</p> <p>Common and Community transit since 01/07/2012</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
					<p>TIR Convention (succession: 03/08/1992)</p> <p>ATA Convention (29/09/1994)</p> <p>Istanbul Convention (01/03/1999)</p> <p>International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (succession: 20/05/1994)</p> <p>Revised Kyoto Convention (02/11/2005)</p> <p>CMR (succession: 03/08/1992)</p> <p>CEFTA 2006 Agreement</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Greece	Not applied	Not applied	<p>Simplified customs procedures – use of the CIM consignment note, in conformity with the community customs code provisions (COTIF)</p> <p>Controls upon entry/ exit of trains only at the customs station bordering with FYROM by a CIM consignment note as a transit declaration</p> <p>Carriage of all other customs controls at the inland train stations of departure/ destination of the trains</p>	Not applied	<p>Meetings between the Greek Directors General of Customs with those of the neighbouring countries</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2013 as Member State</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2020 as Member State</p> <p>Participation in EUROSUR</p> <p>Building capacity on procuring complex equipment and infrastructure with the support of the EC and FRONTEX</p> <p>Schengen <i>Acquis</i></p> <p>Common and Community transit</p> <p>TIR Convention (ratification: 15/05/1980)</p> <p>ATA Convention (23/10/1975)</p> <p>Istanbul Convention (18/06/1997)</p> <p>International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (ratification: 12/06/1987)</p> <p>Revised Kyoto Convention (30/04/2004)</p> <p>CMR (accession: 24/05/1997)</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Hungary	Bilateral Agreement with Serbia, Ukraine, and Croatia: determining the location of the BCPs, the order of use, the opening time and the nature of the traffic	No information	COTIF	No information	<p>Schengen <i>Acquis</i></p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2013 as Member State</p> <p>Participating in the EC programme Customs 2020 as Member State</p> <p>Participation in EUROSUR</p> <p>Common and Community transit</p> <p>TIR Convention (ratification: 09/03/1978)</p> <p>ATA Convention (22/11/1965)</p> <p>Istanbul Convention (signature subject to ratification : 26/06/1991, signature without reservation or of deposit of instruments of ratification or accession: 31/01/2005)</p> <p>International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (approval: 26/01/1984)</p> <p>Revised Kyoto Convention (29/04/2004)</p> <p>CMR (accession: 29/04/1970)</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
<p>Romania</p>	<p>Integrated border security: participation of all competent institutions in this field through an active management and institutional cooperation, national and international</p>	<p>Participated in FRONTEX joint operations and pilot projects</p>	<p>COTIF</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>Integrated System for Border Security (ISBS): includes a set of applications supporting real-time exchange of information between national and international structures with responsibilities in the field of border control and surveillance</p> <p>ISBS Interconnection with: EURODAC, EUROPOL, SIS, SIS II, VIS, Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), Complex System for Observance, Surveillance and Control of the Traffic at the Black Sea (SCOMAR)</p> <p>Finalizing the implementation of the Smart Borders package</p> <p>Participating in the EC programmes Customs 2013 and Customs 2020 as Member State</p> <p>Participation and Implementation of EUROSUR system</p> <p>Participation for the development of the Maritime Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE)</p> <p>Schengen candidate</p> <p>Common and Community transit TIR Convention (accession:</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
					14/02/1980) ATA Convention (07/03/1967) Istanbul Convention (26/11/2002) International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (accession: 10/11/2000) Revised Kyoto Convention (22/02/2011) CMR (accession: 23/01/1973) NATO Agreement on military forces



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
<p>Serbia</p>	<p>Cross-border cooperation to promote border demarcation, capacity building and dialogue between the local and regional authorities of neighbouring countries</p>	<p>Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network (WBRAN)</p> <p>Joint activities with FRONTEX</p> <p>Joint patrolling and joint actions with Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina</p> <p>Joint patrolling at the external borders with Croatia and Hungary has been agreed upon but is not yet implemented.</p>	<p>Agreement with Bulgaria and Montenegro on border control and procedures for railway traffic and official discussion on the same subject with Croatia and FYROM</p> <p>Bilateral Agreement with Montenegro: one-stop control for freight trains at a joint manned station at Bijelo Polje, and a joint Customs and Border Police control of passenger trains whilst still travelling, including crossing the border, between Vrbnica, Serbia, and Bijelo Polje, Montenegro,</p>	<p>Joint border police office at Batrovci/ Bajakovo (Croatia) BCP</p> <p>Joint interim BCPs with Kosovo</p>	<p>Bilateral electronic data exchange with Montenegro</p> <p>Well-functioning electronic system for exchanging pre-arrival information with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and FYROM</p> <p>Joint Contact Centre for Cooperation of Police and Customs with Bulgaria: exchange of information in real time (Bilateral Agreement, 2012)</p> <p>Joint centre for police cooperation between Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in Trebinje (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (opened officially in March 2014)</p> <p>Joint Contact Centre for border police authorities' cooperation with FYROM at Tabanovce BCP (bordering with Presevo)</p> <p>Regular meetings at Batrovci BCP between Serbian and Croatian Heads of the BCPs</p> <p>Operational agreement (into force since June 2014) and interconnection with Europol database</p> <p>Partial interconnection with Interpol database</p>



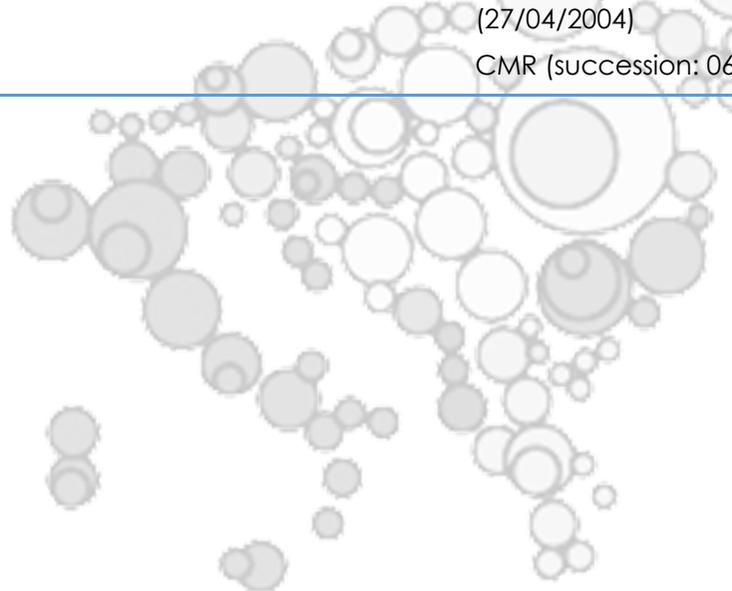
Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
			and vice versa COTIF		Cooperation with CEPOL and participation for in the CEPOL exchange programme (<i>a working arrangement remains to be signed</i>) Participation in the EU SEMS/SEED projects Participating in the EC programmes Customs 2013 and Customs 2020 as Candidate country TIR Convention (accession: 12/03/2001) Participation in the system of Security and Advance Cargo TIR Information ATA Convention (27/12/2001) Istanbul Convention (07/07/2010) International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (accession: 10/03/2001) Revised Kyoto Convention (18/09/2007) CMR (accession: 12/03/2001) CEFTA 2006 Agreement



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
Slovenia	No information	<p>Application of Risk Analysis based on information received from diplomatic and consular representations of other countries</p> <p>Implementation of police tasks for prevention, detection and inspection of crime acts with cross-border secret observations: cross-border pursuit, control shipments, joint patrols, joint operations, cooperation in crisis situation and joint inspection units</p> <p>Implementation of one-stop control/ joint border controls at 31 BCPs on the border with Croatia but on the territory of Slovenia</p> <p>Green border development with Croatia: joint border controls at certain BCPs</p> <p>Participation in FRONTEX Cooperation joint operations</p>	COTIF	Construction of four JBCPS on the border with Croatia	<p>Nova Gorica: Slovenian central office responsible for enquiry and recovery procedure in transit: communication with other countries via IE (Information Exchange) messages</p> <p>Common Contact Centre for police cooperation at Vrata-Megvarje (between Austria, Slovenia and Italy)</p> <p>Common Contact Centre for police cooperation at Dolga Vas (between Austria, Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia)</p> <p>On-line connection with SIS, VIS, Interpol-searched persons data, Stolen and lost documents basis, stolen cars basis</p> <p>International cooperation with FRONTEX, Europol, Interpol</p> <p>Participating in a working group responsible for single window concept in maritime transport at EC</p> <p>Participating in the EC programmes Customs 2013 and Customs 2020 as Member State</p> <p>Participation in EUROSUR</p>



Country	Coordinated planning	Joint approach of risk management/ Common risk strategy/ Joint controls/ Joint operations	Performance of checks on rail traffic	Joint use/ Shared infrastructure, equipment & facilities	Communication/ Data exchange Type of data/ Methods/ mechanisms
					<p>Schengen <i>Acquis</i></p> <p>Common and Community transit</p> <p>TIR Convention (accession: 06/07/1992)</p> <p>ATA Convention (23/02/1993)</p> <p>Istanbul Convention (23/10/2000)</p> <p>International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (succession: 06/07/1992)</p> <p>Revised Kyoto Convention (27/04/2004)</p> <p>CMR (succession: 06/07/1992)</p>





4 Analysis of deficiencies in ACROSSEE countries

After the tabular presentation of the combined inventory on the applied border management and cooperation practices in the relevant ACROSSEE countries in comparison with the EU standards and guidelines concerning the IBM activities and procedures, it is possible to identify proposals at institutional level for improvements on coordinated and integrated procedures and work-flow at BCPs at local level, as well as at national and regional level (horizontal and vertical measures), according to the needs and the mishits/ deficiencies indicated at every case, and, thus, to establish an Implementation Plan.

Albania

The application of Risk Analysis, following the conducted assessment of the corresponding IT system, has managed to reduce the level of goods' physical controls to 14% the last years, but it's still considered high. Moreover, the physical controls and documentary checks for post-clearance controls (currently 100%) need to be efficiently managed and diminished. Therefore, further developments are proposed in the field of Risk Assessment, Risk Management and Post-clearance controls, in view to reduce the congestion and delays caused, especially during the summer months.

The review of the previous 2006 IBM Strategy and Action Plan², of relevant Commission Documentation and other international evaluation Studies also indicated that the internal communication and the communication procedures within the Customs Service remained fundamentally bureaucratic and inflexible, since centralised circulation of documents remained the official communication method. This practice is often responsible for delays in passing information between the centre, the regional Directorates and local offices. Thereby, the current intranet service should be upgraded, in order to get effective, and,



moreover, an efficient mechanism for data exchange should be developed and installed.

In terms of inter-agency information exchange, according to the research, certain authorised customs officers working at BCPs have access to the Police Information System (TIMS), even if it has been linked to the civil registry database at BCPs since July 2012, but only at a limited basis. The same applies with information available via the customs system (ASYCUDA), where border police would like to have more authorised users appointed. In this direction, it is recommended that the availability of both, TIMS and ASYCUDA, should be wider and direct as possible, following thus the agreements signed between the two agencies.

Regarding the information exchange at regional and international level (international cooperation), the pre-arrival information received in various forms from border police and customs of neighbouring countries is a good practice, however, the coverage and supply remains patchy. The deficiencies should be faced and a system for the automatic exchange of data (real time transfer of information and pre-arrival information and customs declaration submission and acceptance) should be established, based on the pilot trial of the EU funded SEMS/ SEED (South-East Europe Messaging System/ Systematic Automatic Exchange of Data) between Albania, FYROM, Kosovo and Montenegro. However, for its satisfactory installation, as well as for the information exchange within EU, the Albanian data protection legislation on data exchange through IT systems should be amended in line with the international standards, beyond the further efforts required for achievement of interoperability of the Customs' IT systems with the EU, following the recommendations of the 2011 Blueprints Report for the Albanian Customs Service and the EC Progress report of October 2014.

Closing, concerning the improvement and correct usage of the physical layout of border crossings, it is recognised that new BCPs have been constructed, reconstructed and supported with technical assistance through EC support and EU funding. However, according to the information derived from the Commission



Documentation and other international evaluation Studies and the several recommendations formulated, all the Albanian BCPs should be further upgraded with adequate facilities for undertaking Phytosanitary and Veterinary Inspection. Also, the successful operation of JBCPs in Albania should comprise an example and be followed for the reconstruction of the Hani I Hotit, major BCP with Montenegro or for other main BCPs of the country.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria has performed efforts and institutionalised directions for developing inter-agency cooperated practices, like the single coupon system, which was developed in 2004 (however annulled in 2010 by the amendments to the Regulation on border crossings) and the Instruction for Cooperation between the Authorities of the Ministries of Finance and of Interior of 2006, as well as plans and other normative documents prepared by the expert working group established for the assistance of the Inter-agency Council. However, many forms of inter-agency cooperation between BP and Customs had never been put into practice, like the joint risk analysis. Both agencies contribute resources to joint operations, mostly by providing equipment and information. The major concerns, however, are the unclear division of powers and the poor planning for coordination and information management and exchange. Therefore, it is proposed that further efforts should be supported for setting into force the national guidelines, develop a joint approach for risk management and risk analysis and for achieving the implementation of the single window concept, so that the necessary information and documentation can be provided only once to the designated host agency without inefficiencies and delays.

The implementation of the single window concept can be accelerated by creating the conditions for electronic submission and processing of supporting documents and data, and through the interconnection of the Customs Information System with the other national mechanisms used for data exchange.



Thus, the automated checks for validity of documents/ licenses that accompany the customs declaration and the use of Single Administrative Document, which is already applied, could considerably ease and simplify border crossing, improve efficiency and reduce the time needed for border controls, including the customs formalities. In view for the realization of this concept, the coincidence of the requirements in terms of reliability of data transmissions and the synchronization between the different control authorities, including the required certifications, are essential and should be further supported.

Concerning the international cooperation with the neighbouring countries, the one-stop control concept is applied at the borders with EU Member States, where the border control is carried out by officers of both of the neighbouring countries. At the external border crossings the control system is implemented with a "checking line" at the checkpoint by the Customs Agency, where the infrastructure of the station allows its application. For its successful implementation and further enhancement, the upgrade of the infrastructure is recommended at the BCPs, where obstacles have been reported also by the Study "Better management of EU borders through cooperation" (Center for the Study of Democracy, 2011).

Croatia

The Risk Management developed on behalf of the Customs Department to facilitate the flow of commercial goods and non-commercial traffic, has been integrated by putting into practice the Convention on a common transit procedure and with the usage of the New Computerised Transit System (**NCTS**) at national level from July 2012. It is considered as fully compatible with the EU NCTS system. However, its regular update should be supported and further efforts should be made in the area of interconnectivity and interoperability with the EU customs systems.



In terms of Inter-agency Cooperation, the operational implementation of the IBM Action Plan falls under the responsibility of an IBM Inter-Ministerial Working Group and overall it is being strengthened. However, the development of a joint risk analysis system is proposed, since it is missing, according to the most recent EC monitoring report for Croatia (as a candidate EU Member State) of 2012. In the same direction (within the inter-agency cooperation), it is reported by the Croatian ACROSSEE partner that the preconditions for the implementation of the “single window” concept exist. Therefore, the acceleration of the preparations is also recommended.

Greece

Greece implements the National Trade Facilitation Strategy and Roadmap, focusing at the main aims of exports procedures simplification and deployment of the single window concept for exports. The electronic submission of all data/documents related to the declaration procedure via the ICISnet system is an important step for the simplification of the procedures, but the system should be further optimized and gradually upgraded, in order to constitute the access point to Single Window for the economic operators within its portal.

Moreover, the supervisory body Coordination Committee of the National Strategy for Trade Facilitation (**CCNSTF**), established in January 2013, should be actively involved to guarantee the coordination and smooth implementation of the applied practices, such as the implementation of the signed MoUs for cooperation between the border related authorities for the enhancement of clear and simplified workflows and for the trade facilitation. Still, a reporting mechanism has to be created, where all involved Ministries shall report systematically and directly to the highest political level, according to the roadmap.

Even stronger efforts are needed in the field of the international cooperation, since, beyond the interconnection with EU Member States within the EU systems, Greece does not apply good or simplified practices for coordination



planning, joint approach of risk management, joint use of infrastructure/equipment and systematic data exchange with its external neighbours.

Regarding the road traffic crossing the border, it is indicated that during traffic pick hours with large number of trucks exporting and importing goods simultaneously, congestion and delays arise due to the lack of customs' personnel. Therefore, the employment of additional personnel for the customs department at the BCPs is recommended.

Hungary

The Hungarian Customs Administration has already adopted and implements good practices at the BCPs (Risk Management, Single Window, National Single Window - data exchange between Specialised Authorities and Customs Administration) and, thus, the focus of the efforts on soft/ low cost measures for the enhancement of inter-agency and international cooperation on IBM issues is mainly highlighted by the Hungarian ACROSSEE partner, like the development of efficient information technology and traffic control systems, rather than physical capacity enhancement.

For instance, the delays at border stations along Rail Corridor IV cannot be controlled with pure infrastructural investments. The implementation of soft measures is mainly required and recommended for the minimisation of the border-crossing time. More specifically, delays at state border stations along Rail Corridor IV in most cases occur due to railway technical problems, rather than because of border procedures performed by police and/ or customs.

Particularly, due to lack/ inadequacy of appropriate Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) developments, the operative traffic management often fails to handle traffic disruption. Consequently, freight trains very often stay at border stations for hours, because the receiving railway undertaking cannot provide a locomotive or a train driver in time for train



forwarding. The electronic recording and forwarding of data concerning the expected arrival time, the train configuration and other relevant issues between the railway undertakings and the border stations in advance could facilitate the border crossing transport and trade and, therefore, are proposed.

Finally, the Hungarian project partner reported the absence of coordination in the field of planning track closures and revealed the perspective that if/ when Hungary reaches the respective level of the neighbouring countries, the average running time of the transit freight trains could be significantly reduced (even for hours), and, therefore, the development and application of infrastructure investments would not be necessary for the increase of the rail freight service speed. For this reason, the enhancement of the information exchange for coordinated planning at regional level (between the SEE countries) is proposed within the ACROSSEE project, including also cooperation and coordination in the field of planning track closures.

Romania

Regarding the existing infrastructure of the BCPs, it is indicated that at some BCPs it is insufficient, particularly on the border between Ukraine and Romania. Thus, the development of the local border infrastructure is recommended with the support of EU structural funds.

EU structural funds should be also deployed for the improving of cross-border cooperation between Romania and Moldova for oil and food products. Accordingly, it is proposed that the previous territorial cooperation programmes (Common Operational Programme ENPI CBC Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine 2007-2013) will be also addressed the future programming process for 2014-2020 and will support measures and projects for strengthening the cross-border cooperation between those countries.



Generally concerning the achievement of International cooperation at the borders, the bilateral sides/ neighbouring countries should be enforced to adopt the agreements referring to instruments to increase the security of the border. This can be achieved by establishing appropriate work mechanisms for information exchange, establishment of appropriate channels of communication, local contact points, coordinated procedures in cases of emergency cases and of an objective way of action in case of incidents, to avoid the political disputes and others. The development of these work mechanisms are also proposed within the ACROSSEE project.

Serbia

The investigation and surveys performed indicate that Serbia's preparations for aligning with EU IBM standards are moderately advanced. The Customs have been applying risk profiling, selectivity and Risk Management, through a risk analysis system, established in order to enhance control of the borders, which is incorporated into the Customs Information System. Other good practices adopted by the Customs Administration at the Serbian BCPs are the "Joint Border Management" and the use of Single Administrative Document for several years.

According to the 2013 EC progress report for Serbia, equipment at BCPs has improved by increasing operational field equipment (special cameras, scanners, fingerprint capturing devices and detection devices, upgrade of operational biometric system solutions at borders, such as Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (**AFIS**) and Facial Image Identification System (**FIS**)). However, the field visits elaborated for the evaluation of the EU's support to IBM and Organised Crime, entitled "Thematic global evaluation of European Union support to Integrated Border Management and fight against Organised Crime" (April 2013), showed that the BCP infrastructure is constructed and purchased incoherently. Therefore, the identification of the inadequacies and the rational re-installment of equipment are recommended. Moreover, the smaller BCPs need to be



modernised. According to the two most recent EC progress reports (2013 and 2014), a big challenge remains the upgrading of the customs declaration processing system (**CDPS**) and the customs laboratory.

In the area of phytosanitary policy, the specific framework for border phytosanitary inspections is revised, but still needs to be further aligned with the EU Acquis. It is demonstrated that the inspection services are markedly behind customs and border police in terms of capacity and development. Particularly, it is considered that the inspection services are the reason for the customs long queues of trucks observed at Serbian borders. Therefore, it is recommended that Serbia should keep up the efforts with regard to setting up phytosanitary BIPs and further strengthen administrative capacities.

Regarding information exchange, there have been several efforts made for its enhancements. The Border Police, through the provision of telecommunication equipment (such as mobile radio systems with accompanied auxiliary equipment and instruments for diagnosis and maintenance, telephony equipment, portable computers and Wireless LAN), has effective networks with access for all staff. However, interconnectivity between the databases and biometric devices (in both directions) still needs to be improved to support the operations of the border police, while all BCPs need to be connected to the INTERPOL database too.

Concerning the Customs internal communication processes, based on the interviews conducted during the field phase within the above mentioned evaluation carried out on behalf of the EC in 2013, they are performed either through formal arrangements, or informally with newsletters, intranet and, therefore, it is considered still hierarchical compared to this of the border police. The Customs Administration of Serbia aims to establish a functioning IT system based on interconnectivity between various departments. However, Serbia still needs to align its legal framework with EU legislation on the use of technology for customs purposes too. Therefore, it is proposed that Serbia should enforce the



alignment of the relevant legal framework and afterwards develop the inter-agency IT system.

Inter-agency cooperation between the bodies operating at the borders needs to improve as there is lack of coordination between border police, customs and phytosanitary services. Also, the activities of the coordinating body for implementing the IBM strategy need to be strengthened.

In the same area (of inter-agency cooperation), despite the policy for joint use of equipment by all the authorities working at BCPs, in fact there is almost no shared equipment. Each service uses its own equipment and only exceptionally, at certain border crossings, the equipment is jointly used. The EC has also supported the provision of telecommunication equipment, in order to improve information exchange and technical capacity, but still weak inter-agency cooperation between related border services is observed that is mainly based on informal arrangements. It is recommended that the smooth cooperation and coordination among various services working within IBM system should be enhanced throughout the joint use of equipment and the improvement of information exchange between various border services at all levels.

The EU SEED system is being fully used by Serbian Customs for data sharing and comparison. Also, in terms of trade facilitation, the electronic system for exchanging pre-arrival information with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and FYROM is functioning well. What is missing is practical application of this data for enforcement and risk analysis purposes and this is what is proposed to be further supported.

Overall, the development of preconditions for the electronic forms and data exchange as well as the mutual recognition document for inspection services between different national and neighbouring authorities, the implementation of the single window and the one-stop control concepts and the use of the New Computerized Transit System are recommended for the improvement of border procedures at BCPs.



Slovenia

At the Slovenian BCPs the existing infrastructure and equipment is adequate, consisting of appropriate infrastructure, technical equipment, vehicles, technical means for border control and telecommunication equipment. Overall, the main problem met at the border stations in Slovenia, according to the survey, is the lack of human resources, and, therefore, the employment of additional personnel at the BCPs is recommended. However, this has been identified prior to the Croatia's EU accession and, therefore, the situation should be reassessed.





5 Proposals – Implementation Plan

The analysis contained in this report has intended to define the progress that has been made in the ACROSSEE participating countries to eliminate barriers to trade and facilitate the movement of goods and define where more work needs to be done. Particularly the “strengths” have been presented at the Chapter 3 of this report and the discrepancies/ areas for improvements have been presented at the Chapter 4.

Therefore, following these findings for each participating country, the EU guidelines, as well as main outputs and recommendations formed within relevant studies by European or International organisations (UNECE, OECD, CEFTA, etc.), in the current chapter, is formulated an Implementation Plan with recommendations/ measures for the improvement of procedures and standardization, to be achieved/ implemented by the countries of the region. These measures require medium- or long-lasting processes and efforts, depending on the current conditions, readiness and the required costs, time and resources in each of the ACROSSEE countries.

It should be noted that the recommendations in the present report are made horizontally for the ACROSSEE participating countries, while more specific ones are made per BCP surveyed, in the ACROSSEE Report 5.1.





Table 5. ACROSSEE proposal for the formulation of an Implementation Plan – A. Intra-agency Cooperation

Actions/ Measures recommended		Medium-lasting process	Long-lasting process
A.1	Definition of the roles of inland and frontier customs offices – separating the release from clearance procedures – moving detailed cargo control further inland		
A.2	Improvement of the capacity of the customs IT system		
A.3	Installation and strengthening of capacity of Information and notification mechanisms/ IT systems at every agency's offices		
A.4	Premises for electronic lodgement and process of customs documents (electronic submission of Entry/ Exit Summary Declarations, digital certificates and signatures)		
A.5	Definition of risk profile (based on a set of predefined criteria) designed to replace a certain percentage of random and routine examinations of documents and goods with planned and targeted checks Continuous evaluation of the defined risk profile with the view of possible reduction		
A.6	Implementation of Risk analysis: ex-ante and ex-post evaluation		
A.7	Efficient implementation of centralised Risk Management (beyond the specific risk management performed by each BCP): acceleration of the implementation of pre-arrival customs processing and integration of post-clearance audit		
A.8	Introduction of legal framework for the implementation the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) concept or increase the number of the AEO (where is already implemented)		
A.9	Training to familiarise staff with the tasks and activities - training of customs officers in the area of issuing of AEO authorisations (where not already applied)		
A.10	Implementation in principle of border checks on entry movement over checks on exit movements		
A.11	Establishment of special organisational units in charge of simplified procedures		
A.12	Installation of adequate communication network in all BCPs, ICSs and BIPs: telephones, IT, internet access, etc.		
A.13	Installation/ operation of adequacy of physical structures, such as separate control lanes, designated areas and inspection facilities, in exceptional circumstances, where traffic and infrastructure so require		
A.14	Establishment of operational guidelines or handbooks describing working procedures, work flow objectives for risk analysis, including the flow and exchange of information regularly passed down through all levels of the agency (vertical communication) - gathering relevant information and contributing to review/ evaluation		





Table 6. ACROSSEE proposal for the formulation of an Implementation Plan – B. Inter-agency Cooperation

Actions/ Measures recommended		Medium-lasting process	Long-lasting process
B.1	Efficient implementation of Inter-agency Risk Management: common risk profiles/ development of national valuation database as a risk assessment tool involving customs and all other border agencies at national level		
B.2	Development of a comprehensive inter-agency risk analysis IT system/ efficient early warning system with other border agencies (e.g. through contact points) – Inter-agency agreements		
B.3	Adoption of the relevant institutional framework for joint, coordinated or delegated controls with a shared risk management process, control and payment procedures – Inter-agency agreements (definition, standardisation)		
B.4	Development of <i>single window</i> : all data required by the different border agencies to be submitted once, where possible electronically, in order to simplify procedures		
B.5	Elaboration of realistic needs' assessment with regard to the type of risk analysis information to be exchanged – Inter-agency agreements		
B.6	Development of inter-operability and inter-connectivity of the border agencies' IT systems		
B.7	Development of an integrated IT system/ <i>single window platform</i> for electronic communication, electronic forms and data exchange with other authorities, channelling of data		
B.8	Elaboration of data flow management analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of information exchange		
B.9	Regular formal meetings and informal contacts among services at the border on day-to-day operations at BCPs: short (10-30 minutes) and focused		
B.10	Formulation of an Inter-agency working group/ National contact point to monitor the coordination and implementation of the simplified workflows (e.g. the implementation of the signed Inter-agency agreements) and the evaluation of the statistics on the operations at BCPs based on common definitions, priorities and risks		
B.11	Joint use of appropriate border infrastructure and facilities by the different border agencies Convenience for joint use of equipment – Inter-agency agreements		
B.12	Operational instructions or manuals available to all officers based on formal inter-agency agreements		





Table 7. ACROSSEE proposal for the formulation of an Implementation Plan – C. International Cooperation

Actions/ Measures recommended		Medium-lasting process	Long-lasting process
C.1	Coordinated planning – harmonisation of working practices – in line with EU guidelines, International Conventions, Bilateral/ Multilateral agreements e.g. TIR Transit Convention: imposing the exchange of import and export data on daily basis between the BCP customs staff on both sides of the border		
C.2	Bilateral/ Multilateral agreements to be assessed every month at local level, every half year at regional level and every year at central level		
C.3	Agreement between the neighbouring countries on the determination of the BCPs Classification of BCPs as short-, medium- or long-term, with regard to future accessions to the EU		
C.4	Harmonisation of opening hours of border agencies/ Coordinating planning of track closures		
C.5	Rail: checks should be carried out either on the platform, in the first station of arrival, or the last one before departure in the territory of a Schengen State, or on board (on the train), during transit/ Bilateral/ Multilateral agreements		
C.6	Development of an overall Regional Risk Management Strategy/ Efficient implementation of Regional Risk Management: joint risk profiles/ contribution to the regional valuation database as a risk assessment tool involving customs and all other border agencies at regional level		
C.7	Development of inter-operability and inter-connectivity of the national IT systems with other national IT systems, the web pages of EU (e.g. TRACES), the Western Balkans information system, the CEFTA system, etc.		
C.8	Adoption of the relevant institutional framework for joint, coordinated or delegated controls with a shared risk management process, control and payment procedures – Bilateral/ Multilateral agreements		
C.9	Development of the <i>one-stop shop</i> concept: physical and documentary controls required by different authorities and agencies involved in the clearance of goods to be performed only once at the same time and place (BCP/ ICP)		
C.10	Sharing of equipment/ Common premises: separation of road haulage according to direction, use of common infrastructure for export and import traffic of trucks respectively/ Bilateral/ Multilateral agreements		
C.11	Establishment of common border posts on the territory of one of the countries, depending on the BCP status (infrastructure, facilities, equipment)		
C.12	Construction and operation of Joint BCPs (JBCPs): joint use of infrastructure on juxtaposed/ collocated BCPs		





Actions/ Measures recommended	Medium-lasting process	Long-lasting process
<p>C.13 Maintenance of regular contact and establishment of working relations among counterparts at the border on day-to-day operations at BCPs/ Bilateral/ Multilateral agreements</p>		
<p>C.14 Systematic (on a weekly basis) exchange of reports for the monitoring of the local/ regional borders</p>		
<p>C.15 Formulation or active participation at working groups to monitor the coordination and implementation of the simplified workflows (e.g. the implementation of the signed agreements) and the evaluation of the exchange of statistical data within the authorities of the BCPs in annual reports</p>		
<p>C.16 Additional specific forms/ mechanisms for the efficient information sharing and management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishment of common contact offices at certain strategically relevant BCPs or another location in one of the concerned countries ▪ deployment or exchange of liaison officers among neighbouring countries ▪ active cooperation at Regional platforms/inter-agency groups (e.g. Western Balkan regional IBM platform) ▪ active participation of representatives of all agencies as members or observers in international networks, meetings of relevant international organisations or fora (e.g. OLAF, WCO) ▪ active participation in international operations/exchange programmes (e.g. FRONTEX, Europe 2020) 		





6 Conclusions

The assessment of the current situation concerning the administrative and technical barriers to trade in the SEE region border crossings, through the survey elaborated within the Activity 5.2.2 "Surveys at border crossings", combined with the investigation on the European and international guidelines, recommendations and good practices applied, that was performed in the framework of the ACROSSEE project activities, led to the formulation of a proposal of an Implementation plan. The recommended actions and measures focus on: a) simplification of customs documentation, b) risk management, c) electronic data interchange, d) single window, e) establishment of pre-arrival customs processing, f) separation of release from clearance procedures, and g) post-clearance audit, aiming to the standardisation and harmonisation of procedures at local/ national and regional level, towards the reduction of the impacts of delays at border crossings and the facilitation of the international transport and trade.

Besides, it is widely accepted that transport systems with well-functioning integrated border management system, implementing simple and effective tools and achieving streamlined procedures, simplified and reduced number of documents, smooth transit, fast lane clearance of trains or trucks etc., are essential and contribute to competitiveness, development of trade flows and growth of economies.

Therefore, in view to reduce unnecessary burdens on the flow of goods and transactions costs, it is recommended through this report that customs and border procedures should be designed and implemented to provide consistency, predictability, simplicity and transparency: simplified clearance systems, harmonised administrative requirements, reducing burdensome procedures, application of agreed standards at national and international level and regulatory cooperation, risk management, automation for the processing of customs documentation and implementation of electronic customs clearance systems.



Among the countries' current situation concerning their border administrative and technical characteristics, significant differences have been observed, based on the current status of the countries, mainly between EU Members and candidate EU Members, on their geopolitical/ strategic location and their bordering countries. Therefore, during the medium- or the last-lasting process for the development and the implementation of the recommended measures, countries that the introduction/ application of simplified and standardised procedures are at early stage should make remarkable efforts and even develop some practices from scratch, while countries that have a better level of progress should continue enhancing the further alignment with international and EU requirements.

Achieving efficient border management is not an easy task. It requires strong political drive, dedicated efforts of all the stakeholders and concrete forms of regional cooperation leading to regulations which are harmonized from one country to another. Indicators representing the goals to be achieved could also be established, since they constitute an efficient way to monitor, at all stages of the implementation, the progress made as well as indicate the fields that may need reconsideration, but also they provide a convincing estimation of the economic and trade impact of the trade facilitation measures adopted. Their use could be bound to enable decision-makers to better assess which trade facilitation dimensions deserve priority.





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Endnotes

¹ It should be reminded that EU-Schengen countries not involving external EU borders (Italy, Austria) have not been investigated.

² The new IBM Strategy and Action Plan covering 2014-2020 finalised in 2014 could not become attainable yet.

