Abstract

The DCAF Border Security Programme, implemented at DCAF Ljubljana, offers assistance to the border police and services of the ministries of the interior/security of the Western Balkan beneficiary countries with the aim to implement the Integrated Border Management concept in the region and contribute to an efficient tackling of modern threats to the regional and wider European border integrity. The Programme focuses on three main components – (1) EU/Schengen Integration, (2) Education and Training, and (3) Common and Coordinated Measures in Crime Prevention, Fight against Organised Crime.
**Activity Facilitators**

The above event was executed in cooperation between DCAF Ljubljana and RACVIAC, based on the “Exchange of Letters between RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation and DCAF Ljubljana”, signed on 18th December 2012 in Rakitje, Croatia. DCAF Ljubljana supported the event financially and content-wise, while RACVIAC hosted it.

**Activity Venue, Duration and Participation**

The event was held in the period of 9 – 11 September 2013 in the RACVIAC facilities and gathered 24 participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, France, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and DCAF.

**Activity Description and Content**

Participants focused primarily on the ongoing process of self-evaluation in the area of Schengen integration. This is conducted under the auspices of the Border Security Programme with the participation of beneficiary countries, aided by the Schengen Self Evaluation (SSE) software tool, a web application with secure on-line access for data collection and analysis developed by DCAF. The self-evaluation process – based on the EU-level Scheval model – has been appreciated by beneficiary countries as a solid form of preparing for Schengen integration. The nationally appointed experts have been contributing regular input with great dedication.

The first day started with arrivals and lunch, followed by the working part. In the opening session, the first to welcome the audience were Mr Branko Kromar, M.Sc., PM, SSR Pillar and Mr Marko Gašperlin, Mol Slovenia, Leading DCAF Expert.

On the first day, presentations on the results of the 1st phase of the Schengen Self-Evaluation e-application were given by Mr Marko Gašperlin and representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro and Serbia.

The second day continued with discussions and conclusions on the 1st phase of the Schengen Self-Evaluation. After that, presentations were given about Croatian and Slovenian experiences with

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* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.
using relevant information systems for border police work (SIS, VIS, EURODAC).

Mr Robert Moro, MoI Slovenia, gave a presentation on the European border surveillance system (EUROSUR), while later on the carriers’ obligations and national legislation concerning family members were discussed.

The third day was dedicated to further instructions and agreement regarding the Schengen Self-Evaluation e-application and ideas and plans for 2014.

The received feedback regarding technical aspects will be considered by DCAF to improve the application. Participants agreed on the upcoming tasks for the 2nd phase of self-evaluation commencing in September, which should be finalised by the end of January 2014. Participants exchanged good practices and experiences based on case studies from Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia, while novelties in the information systems relevant for border police work, such as SIS, VIS, EURODAC, EUROSUR, as well as novelties in the EU legislation were also outlined.

This is particularly significant since Montenegro has been deeply involved and has been making continuous advances in the EU negotiation process. First-hand experience, especially regarding Chapter 24 and the role of border police, will be beneficial for the overall process. Participants proposed the topics for the next meeting of the Task Force in March 2014. The meeting will focus on some of the most current issues in the area of border management and the process of fulfilling Schengen conditions, which play the most significant role in the EU Accession Chapter 24.

General remarks

Participants highlighted the need for a further, intensified mutual communication and exchange of information regarding progress in this area. They supported DCAF’s proposal to share insight into evaluation reports with beneficiary countries to provide an overview of the regional state-of-play.

Compiled by DCAF Ljubljana and RACVIAC
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