Republic of Macedonia
Goverment of the Republic of Macedonia
National Integrated Border Management Coordination Centre

NATIONAL INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015 - 2019

September 2014
SKOPJE

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

FVA – Food and Veterinary Agency

UN – United Nations

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

EU – European Union

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OIE – World Organization for Animal Health

EFSA – European Food Safety Authority

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces

FRONTEX – European Agency for Management of Operational Co-operation at External Border of the European Union

MARRI –Migration, Asylum, Refugee Regional Initiative

IBM – Integrated Border Management

IBM ITS – Integrated Border Management Information technology System

IOM – International Organization for Migration

ICMPD - International Centre for Migration Policy Development

MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MoI - Ministry of Interior

MD – Ministry of Defence

RSD – Radiation Security Directorate

MF –CO - Ministry of Finance – Customs Office

UN-OCHA - Office for coordination of humanitarian assistance

INSARAG - International search and rescue advisory group

EAPC – Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

EU SBC - EU Schengen Border Catalogue

IPPC - Plant Protection Convention

INTRODUCTION

One of the priority aims of the Republic of Macedonia and the Balkan countries is to become part of the European family, by integrating and membership in EU. In this regard, the **National Integrated Border Management Development Strategy 2015 – 2019** was drafted as per the specific circumstances, social and political background and the legal system of the Republic of Macedonia, considering the comparative studies, international instruments and legislation of EU member countries (as well as EU membership candidate countries), including recommendations stated in the Schengen Code of Best Practices.

With the aim of integration and approximation towards European standards and sustaining national and regional peace and stability, the National Strategy was drafted in accordance with the recommendations and commitments undertaken by the Republic of Macedonia stemming from:

- The signed Stabilization and Association Agreement;
- EU Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia from 2013;
- EU Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges for 2013-2014;
- Accessed European and Regional Agreements and Mechanisms for promotion of border management and
- Signed international conventions.

The Common EU Border Management Model is being implemented to preserve internal security of member countries, to prevent and detect illegal migration and cross-border crime. In fact, IBM covers: border surveillance in accordance with the Schengen Border Code, relevant risk analysis, the operative service for fight against crime and operational crime-fighting services; detection and conducting investigations for cross-border crime in co-operation with all law enforcement institutions; the four level model - measures in third countries, co-operation with neighboring countries, border surveillance, in-country free movement area surveillance measures, including return, inter-agency co-operation in border management, international co-operation and harmonization in EU member countries action.

Initial foundation taken into consideration when drafting the present Strategy has been taken from the following documents:
- Strategic Guidelines for Integated Border Management of the EU Council, Brussels, 21.11.2006;

- European Surveillance System for External Borders, Return and Readmission – Recommendations and Best Practices (updated version from 2009)
- EU Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in EC external co-operation , 2009;
- EU Guidelines for Integrated Border Management for Western Balkan, 2007;
- National Integrated Border Management Development Strategy and Action Plan from 2009;
- National Strategies of Ministries and institutions involved in IBM;
- Rules of Procedure of the National Coordination Centre for Border Management;
- Experience from the work of the National Coordination Centre for Border Management and institutions involved in IBM.

This Strategy presents the firm commitment of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and of its bodies and institutions with competence in IBM to continue to improve the efficiency of the system for border control and increase flow of people, goods and capital.

This will further contribute in strengthening the partnership, stability and economic growth, but also in reducing security risks, especially in view of suppression of illegal migration and cross-border crime.

1.1. Specificities of the border of the Republic of Macedonia

Located in the south-eastern part of Europe or in the centre of the Balkan, the Republic of Macedonia even though landlocked – has a quite favourable geographic location, being a "bridge" cross-connecting all Balkan countries. Lot of European pathways cross Macedonia connecting it with the remaining European countries and the closest countries from Africa and Asia. The Republic of Macedonia is also great transport corridot from Western and Central Europe towards the Aegean Sea and from South-eastern Europe towards Western Europe.

The Republic of Macedonia has an area of 25,713 km^2 with a national border of around 894 km, 24.856 km^2 of which are land and 477 km^2 water border.

The Republic of Macedonia is bordering:
- Serbia and Kosovo towards the north, with state border – 263 km;
- Bulgaria towards the east with state – 177km;
- Greece towards the south, with state border – 262 km and
- Albania towards the west, with state border - 192km.

The northern border towards the Republic of Serbia and Kosovo spans in a west-east direction. Its path crosses 7 border crossing points, 6 mountains, 1 ravines and 3 big rivers. The following border crossing points are established towards the border with Serbia: Tabanovce (road and railway), Pelince and Golema Crcoria. The following border crossing points are established towards Kosovo: Blace, Jazince, Volkovo and Strezimir.

The eastern border towards the Republic of Bulgaria runs in meridian direction in a small dome-shaped line. Its span crosses 3 border crossing points, 5 mountains, 1 plain and 1 big river (Strumitza River). The following border crossing points are established towards Bulgaria: Deve Bair, Deltchevo and Novo Selo.

The southern border towards the Republic of Greece runs in a parallel east-west direction. Its span crosses 3 border crossing points, 5 mountains, 4 plains, 2 lakes and the greatest river in Macedonia, the Vardar River. The following border crossing points are established towards Greece: Bogoroditza, Medzitlia, Star Doyran.

The western border towads the Republic of Albania runs in relatively meridian south-north direction. Its span crosses 4 border crossing points, mountains, 2 lakes, 1 plain and 1 big river, the Crn Drim River.

Categorization of border crossing points has been made based on their significance from the aspect of commercial, social and national traffic flow, as well as the strategic and trade movement in view of facilitating trade on the 8th and 10th corridor.

The categorization has been done according to their stratetgic positioning, the movment of the citizens and the commercial flow of goods. There are three categories of border crossing points:

1st - Strategic

2nd – Regional

3rd – Local

Border crossing points of the Republic of Macedonia

Strategic border crossing points (1. category) are the greatest BCPs in the Republic of Macedonia, having an infrastructure as per modern standards and equipment, permanently open for international traffic and constant manning provided by all state bodies having competences at the state border.

Strategic border crossing points on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia are: Tabanovce - road; Bogoroditza - road; Deve Bair - road; Qafthane-road; Dolno Blatze-road; Medzitlia–road; airport „Aleksandar the Great "-Skopje - air ; Tabanovtze – railway and Gevgelia - railway.

Regional border crossing points (2. category) are open for international traffic for movement of persons, transport means and material goods with specific restrictions and/or bans, such as the crossing of only specific type of transport means.

Regional border crossing points on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia are: Deltchevo - road; Novo Selo -road; Jazintze - road; Star Doyran - road; Blato - road; St.Naum -road; Pelintze - road; Stenye - road; Airport St.Paul", Ohrid– air ; Volkovo - railway and Ohrid– Pogradec, boat line.

Local border crossing points (3. category) are open for border traffic– movement of persons, transport means and material goods with specific restrictions and/or bans, such as:

- Ban on transporting material goods of commercial character as per the custom and other regulations;
- Possibility to only move by foot or travel motor vehicle;
- Ban on movement (transport) of animals, specific types of food and
- Restricted work hours during the day or season.

Local border crossing points (Third category) being planned to be opened :

- Towards Republic of Bulgaria: Klepalo (Berovo) – Simitly; Ayducki Kladenec (Pehtchevo) – Simitili; Crna Skala (Delctchevo) – Nevestino;
- Towards Republic of Serbia: Ogut – Trgovishte; Tanushevtzi – Debalde; Loyane – Miratovac; Sopot– Strezovtze and Petrovac– Slavuyevac.

Local border crossing points being in function:
- Towards Republic of Albania: Dzepchishte (Debar)
- Towards Republic of Serbia: Strezimir- Rastelica and Golema Crcorija-Golesh;

1.2. Organizational structure
National Integrated Border Management Coordination Centre

The National Coordination Centre was set up by a Decision of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia from March 2007 based on the Law on State Border Surveillance ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 71/06 and 66/07), and the Law on Border Control ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No.171/2010). National Integrated Border Management Coordination Centre is a body of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia with the aim of establishing efficient coordination, exchange of data and information and laying down a higher level of integrated border management. Several ministries participate in the NIBMCC. They are represented by their employees acting as liaison officers, specifically: Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Finance – Customs Office; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management – Phytosanitary

Office and National Agricultural Inspectorate; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Health – Medicinal Bureau and National Sanitary and Health Inspectorate; Ministry of Transport and Communications; Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Radiation Safety Directorate and Food and Veterinary Agency. The liaison officers and their deputies from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water management, Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Radiation Safety Directorate are located within their premises, while representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Customs Office and the Food and Veterinary Agency are located in the Coordination Centre.

In the process of realization of its basic competencies, the NIBMCC uses the Integrated Border Management Information Technology System.

Within NIBMCC there is also a Video Monitoring System, modern technologies used for inspection of the border crossing points (24 hours)v.
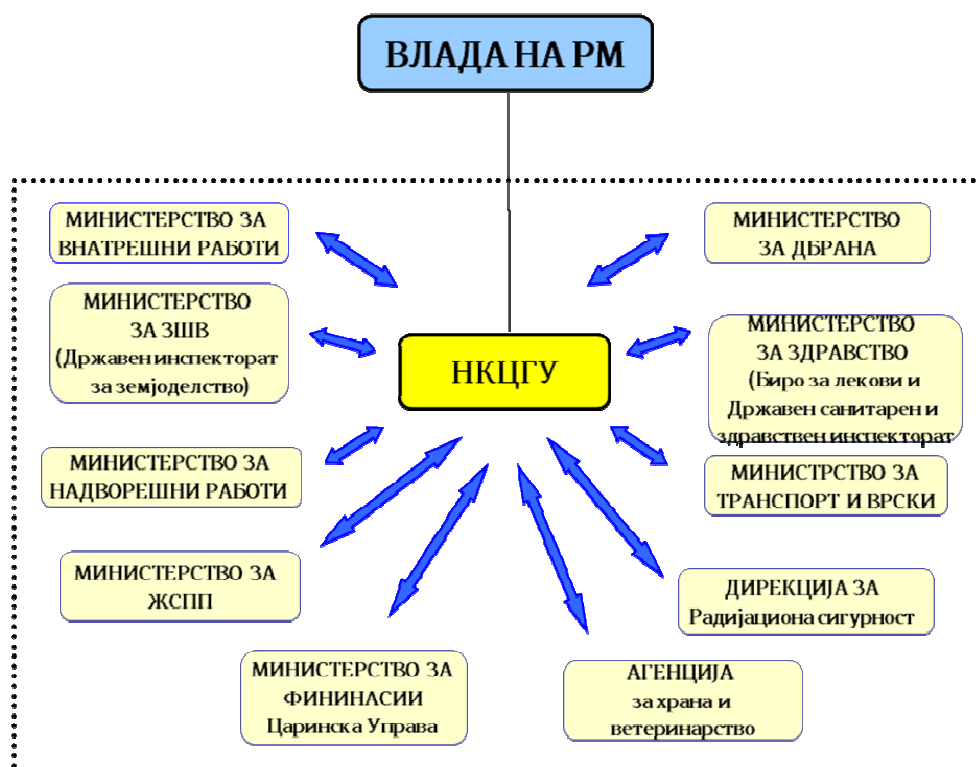
Functional setting of NIBMCC

Its basic tasks are the following:
- coordinates activities related to border management among state bodies tasked with border management,
- performs activities in view of facilitating data exchange and information among state bodies tasked with border management,

- contributes towards greater integration in border management among among state bodies tasked with border management,
- coordinates the realization of joint plans and emergency and
- coordinates activities in cross-border co-operation in border management among state bodies tasked with border management in accordance with ratified international agreement.

Priority activity of NIBMCC is to improve coordination and co-operation among state bodies and institutions tasked with border management.

Ministry of Interior

Pursuant to the Law on Police, the control of the border in the Republic of Macedonia is responsibility of the Ministry of Interior (hereinafter - MoI). With the adoption of the Law on Police ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 114/06 and 6/09) the state border security and border control (border surveillance and border checks) are tasked to the Border Police, being part of the MoI.

The **Law on Border Control** ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", бр. 171/2010) was adopted with the aim of promoting the work of the Border Police and in view of harmonization with European standards in the area of border management. It regulates the border control (border checks and border surveillance), competencies of the police within the state, co-operation among state authorities with competencies in border management and international police co-operation. The Law is largely harmonized with the Schengen Border Code[1]. The relevant bylaws resulting from the Law have been adopted.

The border control covering issues relating to border checks and border surveillance, as well as analysis of the risks for national security and threat assessment for state border security has the aim of:
- prevention and detection of crimes and misdemeanous and detection and apprehension of their perpetrators,
- prevention and detection of illegal migration and trafficking in human beings,
- protection of life, health and personal safety, property, environment and nature, and
- prevention and detection of other hazards as per the public order, national security and international relations.

Border surveillance means set of measures, activities and authorizations related to state border surveillance amont border crossing points and surveillance

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[1] Regulation (EC) No. 562/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15.03.2006 for establishing the Community Code on the Rules Governing the Movement of Persons across Borders (Schengen Border Code), (OJ of the European Union, OJL 105 of 13.04.2006 p. 1-32).

of the border crossing points outside working hours in order to prevent attempts of avoiding border checks.

Border checks include measures and activities undertaken at BCPs to determine if persons, transport means and objects they carry may enter or exit the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

The following organizational units have been established within the Sector for Border Affairs and Migration:
- Regional Centre for Border Affairs and Migration – North;
- Regional Centre for Border Affairs and Migration – West;
- Regional Centre for Border Affairs and Migration – East;
- Regional Centre for Border Affairs and Migration – South.

There is a Duty Operational Centre in each Regional Centre for Border Affairs and Migration, along with Cross-border crime, Foreigners and Readmission Section, Unit for Foreigners and Readmission, Joint Affairs Section, Criminal-intelligence Analysis section. Within the Regional Centre for Border Affairs and Migration – North there is a Foreigners Reception centre. Within all regional centres for border affairs and migration there are several police stations for border checks and border surveillance, as well as police stations and border surveillance sections.

All required activities in managing, regulating and maintaining facilities at road traffic BCPs are being implemented in accordance with the **Annual Program for Management, Regulation and Maintenance of Facilities at Road Traffic Border Crossing Points** и the adopted categorization of border crossing points. Special Decree on Standards and norms on planning, construction and refurbishment of facilities used by the Ministry of Interior at BCPs ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 164/2011). In October 2013, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a Decree on categorization, scope of use and work hours of Border Crossing Points.

In October 2013, within the Sector for Border Affairs and Migration we set up the **Mobile Unit for Cross-border crime** tasked to operationally apply risk analysis, detect illegal migrants and other types of cross-border crime.

The concept of organization of the Border Police is constantly harmonized as per operational needs and the practice of EU member states.

Ministry of Finance – Customs Office

The Customs Office is a body of within the Ministry of Finance. It is a leading body for procession of legal goods, detection of illegal goods and investigations relating to custom misdemeanors and criminal acts in custom affairs. Authorizations and responsibilities of the Customs Office and the custom officers are laid down in regulations relating to organization of state administration,

customs regulations and the special regulations for authorizations and competencies of customs officers.

The work of the Customs Office is being implemented through the following organizational forms:

- Central Office and

- custom offices

Organizational units with the Office are: Sector for Professional responsibility, Sector for Customs System, Excise goods and non-tarrif measures Sector, Sector for Control and Investigations, Sector for Human Resources Management Accounting and Finance Sector, Administrative and Technical Affairs Sector and the IT and Communication Technologies Sector.

Regional units within the Office are: the Customs Office Bitola, the Customs Office Kumanovo, the Customs Office Skopje, the Customs Office Gevgelia, the Customs Office Stip.

Basic tasks of the Customs office are:

1) to conduct custom supervision;

2) to implement custom control;

3) custom clearance of goods;

4) custom control, investigative and intelligence measures in order to prevent, detect and investigate custom misdemeanors and crimes;

5) to initiate procedure for custom or other misdemeanors, as well as crimes laid down in a law and to collect mandatory fines;

6) to calculate and collect or repay the import and export duties, taxes and other public levies on importation, exportation or transit of goods, as well as to conduct forcible collection of the above in a ccordance with law;

7) to conduct the customs-administrative procedure in first degree;

8) to conduct the control of the entering and exiting of cash in domestic and foreign currencies, cheques and monetary gold;

9) to conduct the control of the importation, exportation and transit of goods for which special measures are prescribed in the interest of security and public morality, protection of people's health and lives, animals and plants, protection of the living environment, protection of items of temporary protection or cultural heritage or natural rarities, protection of copyright and other related rights and industrial property rights, as well as other measures of commercial policy prescribed by law;

10) to organise the customs information system and provide data on imports and exports for statistical purposes;

11) to organise and conduct control of the professional liability of the employees;

12) to draft normative acts in the area of customs affairs

13) to organise and carry out training, testing of the knowledge and professional skills of Customs officers, as well as human resource management;

14) to give expert assistance for the application of the customs regulations for the purpose of which it organises seminars and public platforms with the right for compensation;

15) to conduct storage and safe-keeping of goods, as well as procedure of sale of confiscated, abandoned or discovered goods;

16) to carry out monitoring of customs goods with compensation of costs;

17) to conduct chemical-technological examination of goods with compensation of costs;

18) to cooperate with other state authorities;

19) to cooperate with foreign customs administrations and international organisations and

20) to exercise other powers prescribed by this Law and other law.

In view of the competencies of the Customs Officer, there is a tendency of improved organization of the work in the previous period, with the issue of realization of the new competencies in the prevention and suppression of illegal trafficking and smuggling at BCPs and in-country custom offices.

Having said this, the control on the application of laws by way of proper and efficient work in intelligence activities is being constanly improved, as well as risk management and the work of mobile teams. Professional standards are also established, contributing to successful suppression of forms of corruption and strengthening the integrity of employees and the Customs Office. Financial and material work is regulated with adopted internal regulations in order to rationally and efficiently use them in realization of the tasks. There is continuous development of IT and Communication technology systems, and their reliability and endurance is provided. There is improved cooperation based on signed international agreements, and new international agreements are signed. There is active participation in all international customs organizations.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has competences related to international cooperation, conclusion of international agreements and chairing and participation in the work of the two border commissions (Commission for the protection, maintenance, renewal and demarcation of border lines and border marks at the borders of the Republic of Macedonia with the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia and the Commission for border crossings of the Republic of Macedonia with the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of

Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia) established by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages the Visa Centre and the National Visa Information System which ensures that all entities involved in the process of issuance of visas for entry and stay in the Republic of Macedonia are properly linked, working as well on the further harmonization of the visa policy of the Republic of Macedonia with relevant regulations of the European Union.

Most of the diplomatic missions and consular posts of the Republic of Macedonia are linked with the National Visa Information System, and there are regular activities for linking the newly opened diplomatic missions and consular posts. All persons assigned to diplomatic missions and consular posts of the Republic of Macedonia abroad attend previous training for work under the National Visa Information System.

Ministry of Transport and Communications

The Ministry of Transport and Communications, inter alia has competencies in adoption of *Rules for standards and norms for planning and regulation of Border Crossing Points.* The aim of the adoption of these Rules is to set the basis for specification of standards in view of architectutal arrangement of BCPs.

Ministry of Defense

The Ministry of Defense realizes its function and competencies in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the laws, bylaws and other strategic documents in the area of defense.
Even though the Ministry of Defense does not have direct competence of the state border, according to the Law on Defense, it provides for expert assistance to the minities and other bodies of state administration, as well as admistrative organizations in implementing defense preparations. This is very important to fulfill the basic strategic mission of the system of defense of the Republic of Macedonia and to support national security, to defend and protect territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Macedonia.

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is tasked with issuing import/export licenses and is part of the wider system of integrated border management.

In coordination with other bodies of the state administration, it has a role in providing consent in:
- trade (import, export, transit) of endangered animals and plants, their parts and derivates;
- toxic waste management and
- management of specific groups of toxic substances depleting the ozon layer.

Ministry of Health
Bureau of Medicines

The Bureau of Medicines issues import and export authorizations through the single window system EXIM according to the Legal regulation on medicines, medicine aids, chemicals and narcotics and psychotropic substances and the procedures provided according to the rulebooks therein.

The activities in relation with the competencies on the border crossing points are performed by the Customs with pre-authorization from the Bureau of medicines, and through the single window system.

According to the duties and the function, as well as the nature of the work tasks that it carries, there are plans to set up an Agency of medicines, resulting from EU Directives. Consequently, and based on the recent amendments to the Law on medicines and medical aids, the Bureau of Medicines plans to strengthen its personnel capacities for the needs of the border crossing points, their specialization and education.

State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate

The State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate performs its duties and functions according to the Law on Sanitary and Health inspection, Law on correctness of food products and general usage items, as well as the Law on safety of cosmetic products, Law on safety of products, Law on Protection of Population from Infectious Diseases and the Rulebook and Measures on Protection from Entry and Suppression of Infectious Diseases and the International Health Rulebook.

Thus, the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate controls health safety of imported products (cosmetic products, children toys and objects of general usage) at inner terminals in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as control of passengers in the

international traffic traveling to countries with danger of carrying infectious disease, aiming to protect the health of the population of the Republic of Macedonia.

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
State Inspectorate for Agriculture

The State Inspectorate for Agriculture fulfills its duties and function trough the state phyto-sanitary inspectors at the border crossing points according to the Law on health of plants (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No 29/2005, No. 81/2008, No. 20/2009, No. 57/2010 and 17/2011), the Law on Seed and Plant Material for Agricultural Plants (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 39/2006), the Law on Quality and Safety of Manure, Biostimulators and soil properties boosters (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 110/2007, No. 20/2009 and No. 17/2011) and the Law on products for protection of plants (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 110/2007, No. 20/2009, No. 17/2011, and No. 53/2011) and bylaws, detailing measures and activities to be undertaken to prevent entry and distribution of pestilent systems in plants and vegetative products and other premises and objects in the country. The Phyto-sanitary inspection at the border crossing points performs inspection on the deliveries of vegetative origin at import, export, transit and re-export in order to determine whether they fulfill the phytosanitary conditions pursuant to the legal provisions.

Radiation Safety Directorate

Within the IBM system, the Radiatgion Safety Directorate has the responsibility to implement a system of control over imports, exports and transit of the sources of ionization emissions on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia in order to prevent illegal trafficking and protection of the population and environment from the negative effects of the ionization.

In the process for approximation of the Republic of Macedonia towards EU the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was ratified (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 113/09). The Radiation Safety Directorate, being the competent institution in the field, nominated a contact person, and submitted its first report to IAEA on complying with the conditions of the Convention.

Food and Veterinary Agency

The Food and Veterinary Agency continuously secures the protection of the health of the people from diseases that are transmitted trough food, protects the consumers from misunderstandings and provides open, honest and timely information for them about possible threats from food, protection of health of the animals and their welfare, as well as protection of the environment from pollution with animal origin waste, by controlling the implementation of the regulation that are in accordance with the high standards of EU, as well as with the international standards ratified by the Republic of Macedonia.

Furthermore, it acts in the area of safety of food and animal food, performing control, supervision and monitoring of the veterinary activities in the area of health protection of the animals, their welfare, veterinary public health, as well as control over the national referent and authorized laboratories providing support to the activities of the Agency.

1.3. Geopolitical position and main security threats

The Republic of Macedonia is young European country born from the process of disintegration of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The creation of the Macedonian country was a result of the will of the Macedonian people and the desire of the Macedonian citizens to have their own country. From the point of view of national safety, this process could be marked with several elements: first, fight to gain sovereignty, independence and international recognition; second, entry in international institutions and peaceful integration; third, development of good relations with the neighbors and approximation towards euro-Atlantic organizations, emphasizing economic connections with the world and the need of strengthening inner political development and national safety.

The Republic of Macedonia is becoming a modern country, but, this process, most certainly, continues further on. From a geostrategic point of view, Macedonia does not have stable northern and western neighborhood. This is especially true for the north, where one can witness presence of latent, and sometimes open ethnic conflicts. Laid in this manner, the Republic of Macedonia is a crossroad of different cultures and civilizations.

Being at the end of the transition processes, the Republic of Macedonia has to continue to develop and implement the global universal standards of democracy in its inner political area. As for the foreign affairs, Macedonia must build cooperative and partnership relations with the neighboring countries (solving border issues, free flow of goods and services and similar).

Having in mind the geopolitical position and the perofmed risk analysis, the following main safety threats may be identified:

Illegal migrations

The Republic of Macedonia, for most illegal migrants, is mostly transit country since their destination are other countries, via the so called western Balkan route. Having in mind that the line of the eastern border largely goes through mountains and less populated places, the detection of illegal migrants requires appropriate equipment of the border police when discovering and suppressing this type of cross-border crime.

Furthermore, an evident phenomenon showing increase faced by the Republic of Macedonia has been faced is the number of persons seeking asylum during the past several years.

Cross-border crime

Next to the stated migration flows, one should point out that the so called Balkan route is still active, and while connecting the EU to the Close and Far East, it is also used for smuggling of drugs, stolen vehicles and weapons, all of which represents a real challenge for all institutions involved in border management.

Smuggling excise duty and other goods is additional challenge, not only for the Customs Office of the Republic of Macedonia but also for the other institutions with responsibilities in the suppression of the cross-border crime.

Main challenges in the area of border control

The average rate of passenger in the cross-border traffic during the past five years is estimated to around 15 million annually, showing a growth trend from 3% to 6,3%. The total flow of passengers (foreign and domestic) in the past five years is 76.119.484. Foreign citizens comprise 62% from the total number of crossings of the state borders, while the Macedonian citizens represent only 38% from the total number of passengers.

The highest percentage of passenger flow is on the Macedonian - Greek border, between 36,3% and 29,3%, while the lowest, is at the Macedonian - Albanian border, ranging between 9,0% and 11%.

Compared to previous years, data show an increased number of passengers at the air border crossing points, following the current trend of increased mobility at EU level.

The risk analysis, performed by the relevant institutions of the European Union, show different models of techniques of forgery noticed on the travel

documents of nationals from different countries, imposing the need of constant education on detection and suppression of this type of forgeries.

Having in mind the increased flow, which is significantly conditioned by the increased flow during the tourist season and during the holidays, the attempts to illegally cross the state border with forged travel documents presents an additional potential challenge for efficient managing of the border.

1.3.4 Main threats in state border surveillance

The state border surveillance is a key element in border control and important segment of the scope of work of the Border Police.
Considering the terrain configuration (mountains, rivers, roads cutting through the border), the routes of illegal migrants and cross-border crime at the green border – there is continuous strengthened surveillance of mostly used routes that can be used for illegal state border crossing in order to develop technical solutions for constant surveillance at external borders.

The political and humanitarian crises in third countries resulted in dissettlement of large number of people, seeking international protection in European Union countries.

Exactly because of these threats, it is even more necessary to connect all state bodies with responsibility in border management, specifically: Border Police, Customs Office, Radiation Safety Agency, Food and Veterinary Agency, State Agricultural Inspectorate, Medicine Bureau etc.

2. DEVELOPING DYNAMICS OF THE INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

Reasons for establishing civilian surveillance over the border of the Republic of Macedonia in the period 2003-2005 and the IBM system resulted from the need of more successful implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement and application of generally accepted EU standards and best practices in this area, thus contributing to the realization of the strategic aim, full-right membership of the Republic of Macedonia into the European Union. Within this period, competences related to the state border security of the Republic of Macedonia were transferred to the Ministry of Interior – the Border Police.

The Centre for asylum seekers and the Foreigner's Reception Centre were also built within this period.

Priority activities in the period 2009-2014 were realization of activities from the Action Plan for implementation of the IBM Strategy, primarily construction

and improvement of the border security system, as a part of the overall security system of the Republic of Macedonia, adoption of documents in the relevant areas of border, foreigners, asylum, visas and their harmonization with EU regulations, promotion of cooperation within institutions, inter-agency and international co-operation, preprations for signing international agreements relating to the state border with border crossing points with the neighbouring countries, cross-border police cooperation and joint patrols along the border, contributing to the good-neighbourly relations, stability in the region and respect for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia.

Priority activities in this period were also signing and implementation of Memorandums of Cooperation and their adequate application relating to police, customs, veterinary, phyto-sanitary issues, adoption of bylaws for implementation of the relevant laws, continuation and realization of training programs, ethic and anti-corruption codes, harmonization of procedures, realization of the project for electronic state border surveillance, establishing IBM information system, etc.

Further, additional harmonization was made of the border related legislation with EU legislation. There is a need of additional harmonization of the Law on Border Control with the Schengen Border Code, the Schengen Convention and the Schengen Manual. This will contribute in more qualitative preparation for the take-over of the EU external border surveillance.

Further development in border management will be made in accordance with Strategies and plans, specifically:
- IBM Strategy;
- Action Plan for implementation of the IBM Strategy and
- Annual Action Plans;

2.1. Coordination Mechansms

Central point in realization of coordinative activities is the National Border Management Coordination Centre. Inter alia, it is tasked with implementation of the Strategy for Development of the Integrated Border management, while the implementation of concrete measures and activities is tasked to the bodies involved in the IBM system, in accordance to their competencies. The establishment of the NIBMCC improved the coordination among institutions with competence in the integrated border management system. It contributed towards greater coordination, facilitation and exchange of data and information, increased integration in the border management. NIBMCC tasks relating to implementation of the IBM Strategy and the Action Plan are the following:
- coordination, organization and synchronization of state administration bodies with competencies in the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan;

- determination of priorities, dynamics and deadlines for realization of activities and achieved results from implementation of the Strategy;
- monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy and Arrangements for mutual cooperation in integrated border management, removing gaps in its implementation;
- coordination of activities in drafting regulations in the area of integrated border management and mutual co-operation between border services;
- Coordination and organization of joint actions of the state administration authorities managing the border;
- Co-operation with appropriate international organizations, state authorities and local self-government authorities in relation to integrated border management;
- Prosposing measures for efficient tackling of issues emerging from movement of people, goods and transportation means across the border;
- Participation in realization of signed agreements related to building joint facilities and proposing priority measures for modernization of the border crossing points and development of the unique IT system for video surveillance of the border crossing points;
- Harmonization of the flow and the procedures for border control with the border services of neighbouring countries;
- Proposing measures for elimination of the percepted gaps in the implementation of the Strategy.

In order to perform its tasks, NIBMCC may form permanent or temporary specialized working teams for realization of its tasks relating to the border management concept, such as, drafting Strategy, monitoring and harmonization of legal and regulatory framework with the EU legislative flows, promotion of border and other procedures, drafting joint risk analysis, use of infrastructural facilities and technical equipment, organizing joint trainings, drafting manuals, etc. One of these bodies is the Advisory body responsible for: co-operation, coordination, policy creation, providing guidelines and proposal-measures on improving the system for coordination and prevention of criminal activities.

2.2. Schengen Action Plan

The Schengen Action Plan foresees overall measures and activities for adoption of Schengen Acquis and promotion of administrative capacitites of the border police in the area of border management, asylum, migration, visa policy, police cooperation, fight against organized crime and terrorism, co-operation and suppression of crime of narcotics, co-operation with custom services, co-operation with the judicial bodies in the area of criminal and civil issues.

2.3. Other significant documents

Beside the Strategy for Integrated Border management, there are other significant documents comprising the legal and regulatory system for efficient control of the state border and implementation of the EU best practices, as for an illustration the Anti-corruption Program of the Ministry of Interior.

In the area of managing migration flows, the Republic Macedonia has adopted the Resolution of the Migration Policy of the Republic of Macedonia and the Strategy for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, where the EU standards are being incorporated. Also, this Strategy is taken into account in the process of the implementation of the integrated border management.

III. CONCEPT OF INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT IN THE EU - BASIS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF IBM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The EU Concept for Integrated Border Management, adopted by the Council of EU on 21st November 2006 in Brussels, specifically the Conclusions of the Council of Justice and Home Affairs adopted at the meeting held on 4th and 5th December 2006, encompasses the following segments:

- **Border control (checks and surveillance),** in accordance with the definition in the Schengen Border Code, including risk analysis and criminal intelligence;
- **Detection and investigation of cross-border crime** in coordination with all competent law-enforcement services;
- **Four-layer access control model**, covering measures in third countries, cooperation with the neighbouring countries, border control and control measures in the area of free movement, including return;
- **Border Management Inter-agency cooperation** (border police, customs, and other relevant bodies and services) and international cooperation and
- **Coordination and connection** of MS activities, institutions and other bodies of the European Community and the Union.

The complementarity and harmonization of the mentioned segments which will also have impact on the successful implementation of this concept, have essential importance on the overaal success in the integration and implementation of the respective concept within country's national system. Having in mind the provisions from the Schengen Catalogue, not neglecting other elements, special emphasis will

be placed on the implementation of the four-layer access control model which in acccordance to the Schengen Catalogue, presents a basis for integrated border managing. The concrete activities will be elaborated in more detail in the Action Plan for Implementation of this Strategy.

The Republic of Macedonia will take into consideration, both the stated EU acts, and the provisions prescribed in the Schengen Border Code of 2006 (with all subsequent amendments and supplements) and in the Scengen Catalogue on Control of External Borders, Return and Readmission (recommendations and best practies) – updated version of 2009. In parallel, regulations and quidelines produced by Frontex will be continuously taken into consideration, as most significant EU agency in the domain of Integrated Border Management (IBM).

IV. VISIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF IBM IN MACEDONIA

For future development of IBM in the Republic of Macedonia, consideration will be made to the concept for IBM in EU, specifically EU provisions and efforts for development and improvement of the IBM system.
In accordance with the aforementioned, the future visions will go in the following directions:

4.1. Border Control

Having in mind the geopolitical position of the country, the safety risks and threats, in view of adopting Scengen standards of future external Schengen borders, the border control shall be aimed at:
- protection of the internal security and prevention of illegal migration and cross-border crime using systematic checks at the borders based on threat analysis according to the Schengen Code, prevention of illegal crossings of the green, blue border and the border crossing points, suppression of drug crime, fight against terrorism and providing security during international sport events.
-promotion of activities of the border police in the areas of state border surveillance and border checks, in line with the Law on Border Control in order to improve the efficiency of the border control system and to increase the flow of people and goods.
-Implementation of border procedures and further upgrading of the state border surveillance system in harmonization with the Schengen standards.
-Building up the necessary infrastructure,

-Strenghtening the risk analysis system and criminal-operative analysis and bi-directional exchange of information,
- Improvement of the co-operation with the Customs Adminsitration and inspection services.

4.2. Fight against Cross-border Crime

This component covers detection and suppression of cross border crime. The specific forms of cross-border crime identified as main threats will be taken into account in its implementation, aimed at:

- Promotion of the cross-border police co-operation in suppression of cross-border crime,
- Strengthening cross-border police and customs co-operation in fighting smuggling and forgering,
- Prevention and suppression of trafficking in human beings and smuggling illegal migrants,
- Suppression of smuggling and misuse of illicit drugs and their precursors,
- Contribution to the safety at international sport events,
- Fight against terrorism.

4.3. Four-Layer Access Control Model

4.3.1. Measures in Third Countries
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4.3.2. Co-operation with Neighbouring Countries

The cooperation with the neighbouring countries will be carried out in order to maintain and further strengthen the established co-operation level. To this end, the following measures will be undertaken:

- Further practical implementation of the existing agreements with neighbouring countries;
- Signing and implementation of new agreements with the Republic of Albania, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Greece, Republic of Kosovo and Republic of Serbia;
- Strenghtening the network of Joint Conatct Centres (JCC) for police and customs co-operation;
- Opening of new border crossing points;
- Participation in regional projects and initiatives.

4.3.3. Measures in the area of Free Movement, including return

-Control of movement and residence of foreigners;
-Implementation of measures referring to readmission;
-Establishing cross-border co-operation with the neighbouring countries;
- Co-operation with the authorities in the area of asylum and establishing EURODAC.

4.4. Coordination and Coherency in Actions of Member States, institutions and other EU authorities (Frontex and others)

The IBM concept, being developed in the Republic of Macedonia for several years, foresees close co-operation with the EU Member States and with the relevant EU agencies and bodies. In that direction, work will be focused on achieving the following goals:

- Advancement of the existing co-operation with Frontex;
- Advancement of the co-operation with OLAF;
- Active participation in the work of the work and expert groups at international level;
- Active participation in the regional initiatives and projects in the domain of border management;
- Participation in joint and coordinated operation activities of the internal and external EU borders.

They will be achieved through realization of set of measures and activities, considering the following aspects:

- The need to harmonize the legal framework;
- Further development of the existing procedures;
- Human and technical capacities;
- Necessary infrastructure and technical support;
- Essential measures for efficient management and organization;
- Provisioning appropriate system for communication and exchange of information.

The time frame for realization of the activities was defined in accordance with the goals stated in the Strategy and the National Action Plan.

4.5. Schengen Information System and SIRENE Bureau

Aiming at preparation for accession towards the Schengen Area, Action Plan on Establishing IT Platform for inclusion in SIS 2 and IT support of the national SIRENE Bureau will be drafted in the following period. This activity will be realized within a bilateral project between the MOI of the Republic of Macedonia and the MOI of the Republic of Slovenia on strengthening the national capacities in the area of police cooperation.

V. CONCLUSION

The Strategy for Development of Integrated Border Management, as a strategic product, has special importance for all participants and institutions involved in the integrated border management. It provides the possibility for better management, especially when crisis situations are at stake, creation of good recruitment policy and appropriate equipment of the border service, improvement of the operational co-operation between the state authorities and institutions involved in border management, as well as improvement of bilateral and multi-lateral co-operation. The findings based on this Strategy and the Action Plan for Integrated Border Management, should be a basic tool for the annual plans related to further activities and development of the integrated border management in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Strategy and the Action Plan for IBM fully express the concept for integrated border management in the European Union.

The Strategy and the Action Plan were drafted with a support by an expert from the Republic of Slovenia, and they will be adopted in accordance with the set forth procedure.