

## **Ministerial Conference of the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI)**

16/17 April 2012, Vienna, Austria

### **MINISTERIAL DECLARATION<sup>1</sup>**

At the initiative of the Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior, the Ministers and senior officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as Afghanistan, the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and high-level representatives of other states and of international organisations contributing to Border Security and Management in Central Asia met in the framework of the Ministerial Conference of the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI) on 16 and 17 April 2012 at the Vienna Hofburg Congress Centre.

The Conference was jointly organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The CABSI Ministerial Conference recalls the recommendations for the further improvement of security, including border management, and stability in Central Asia and the wider neighbouring region, notably, highlighting the Kabul Conference in July 2011, the Istanbul Conference in November 2011, the Second Bonn Conference in December 2011, the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners in February 2012 and the Dushanbe Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V) in March 2012.

The aim of this 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of CABSI, exceptionally held at Ministerial level, was to underline the political importance of security and stability in Central Asia and the regional and global implications. Taking note of the Dushanbe Border Security Conference in 2008, the Ministers acknowledged that CABSI is an important forum to exchange information and to coordinate international activities in assisting Central Asian states in their efforts and

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<sup>1</sup> The CABSI Ministerial Declaration was adopted by Ministers and high-level representatives of Austria, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the United States of America, in the presence of Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Hungary. The Delegation of Uzbekistan abstained from supporting the present declaration at the current stage.

facilitating regional cooperation. Ministers emphasised that CABS I is an important tool to promote a sustainable and integrated border management approach, as well as to facilitate legitimate trade between countries and movement of persons and to ensure the management of migration flows while simultaneously encouraging economic development. During the last decade, border infrastructure, equipment and procedures have been modernised throughout the region, by contributions of the Central Asian states in close cooperation with bilateral, regional and international donors. In addition, an extensive exchange in good practices and know-how in the field of border management and security took place within the region as well as with the international community. If used efficiently, these assets constitute an invaluable basis for the further promotion of trade and the overall economic development of the region.

The participants notably recognised the contribution made by the Central Asian states, the Russian Federation, the United States of America as well as other states, the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE and other international institutions in strengthening border security of Central Asian states and their efforts to enhance regional cooperation facilitating coordination and exchange of information between Central Asian states including on migration issues.

Participants welcomed the significant progress made by some countries in the region by improving national legislation on border management and adopting their National Integrated Border Management Strategies, which serve as a good basis for more effective international coordination and support. The Ministers recognise the contribution made by the EU-UNDP Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) in this regard, including the efforts to enhance cooperation on migration issues. Participants emphasised that in close cooperation and with other international initiatives and programmes, BOMCA plays an important role in enhancing regional cooperation, facilitating the coordination and exchange of information between Central Asian states.

The participants discussed important topics, such as recent developments in the field of border security in Central Asia and coordination in this area among Central Asian states and all relevant international and regional stakeholders such as CSTO, CIS and SCO contributing to border management modernisation in the region. In addition, the means to further improve existing cooperation in the region were also discussed. The participants of the conference expressed their support for the existing regional initiatives, including the recently adopted

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UNODC Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries aiming at assisting those countries in their fight against illicit trafficking of opiates and precursor chemicals.

Furthermore, participants acknowledged the capacity building contributions made by the OSCE in the field of border security and management in the region and welcomed the continued development of the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe and also appreciated the work of the NATO-Russia Council Counter-Narcotics training project which has trained more than 2000 officers since 2006.

The Ministers exchanged views on the possible impact of the reduction of international forces from Afghanistan on the border security situation and management of the northern Afghan border. Ministers agreed to further enhance cooperation on border management in this context.

The Ministers agreed to jointly strengthen border management systems in Central Asian states and overall border security in the region referring to international best practices and experiences where applicable. It was underlined that well-functioning borders are of the utmost importance not only for the region but also for the international community. It contributes foremost to promoting trade and sustainable economic development as well as to the fight against various forms of trafficking, organised crime and illegal migration, for example within the framework of the border security operations organised by the Border Guard Commanders' Council of the CIS Member States and the Issyk-Kul Initiative of Central Asian Border Guard Services.

The participants noted the importance of coordinated actions in the development and implementation of international initiatives and programmes for strengthening border security in Central Asia including those aimed at building confidence and providing assistance to countries in the region.

The Ministers acknowledge the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) as an effective tool to promote regional cooperation, exchange of best practices and information amongst Central Asian authorities responsible for countering illicit drug trafficking, diversion of chemical precursors and enhancing cross-border cooperation. In this



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regard, CARICC is invited to present the results of cross-border cooperation in the framework of the annual CABSİ Conferences.

The Ministers stressed the importance to effectively prevent and fight corruption in all its forms. They support initiatives in this context and took note of the activities of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA).

The Ministers therefore agreed to further enhance border management cooperation with neighbouring countries at both a strategic and a technical level. The EU, OSCE, UNDP and UNODC expressed their readiness to support such actions within the current cooperation framework.

The Ministers welcomed the decision by the Government of Turkmenistan to host the 11<sup>th</sup> CABSİ Conference in 2013.

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