



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Regional Workshop on Travel Documents Central Asia

Project Concept Paper

Within the framework of the overall OSCE approach to border security, the Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) at the OSCE Secretariat, Vienna, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior are organizing a workshop to promote regional co-operation on travel documents for the Central Asian region. The workshop meets prominent provisions of two far-reaching OSCE documents to prevent and combat terrorism: the Bishkek Programme of Action and the Bucharest Plan of Action. The Bucharest Plan of Action forms the basis for all OSCE activities to prevent and combat terrorism, and its implementation remains a top priority for the Organization.

The workshop centres on a three-day regional co-operation workshop on travel documents, modelled on a successful workshop conducted in Ohrid in April. As in Ohrid, the workshop aims to bring together key governmental experts from regional states as participants, and facilitate discussion among them on detecting false travel documents and interdicting border crossings of persons with legitimate travel documents, but used for illegitimate purposes. The overall goal of the workshop is to foster cross-border and regional co-operation among OSCE participating States. The workshop is therefore designed to be concrete, practical and relevant for immediate action. The workshop will be held in Bishkek on 9 –11 October 2003.

The workshop will focus discussion on issues of trafficking in human beings when related to detecting legal documents for illegitimate purposes, detecting false travel documents used for entry of trafficked persons, and improving non-technical means of detection, such as interview techniques. In addition, the workshop will focus on means to protect the right to travel and move across borders legally and for legitimate purposes.

The OSCE will identify and invite approximately two (2) participants with technical and/or managerial portfolios on travel documents and border control (as opposed to front line border officials) from each country in the region to participate in the workshop. It is envisaged that participants from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will be invited to participate.

At the workshop participants will present their own in-country assessments of priority issues related to travel documentation, collaborate directly with participants from neighbouring states in working groups, and exchange challenges, good practices, and lessons learned both in working groups and in plenum. Participants will produce a document on lessons learned and immediate recommendations for regional and cross-border co-operation. The workshop will encourage participating experts to identify specific priority areas related to travel documents on which to begin pursuing bilateral and multilateral co-operation agreements. The workshop will also suggest to participants to create an informal Technical Working Group for the region, to serve as a network for information sharing after the workshop.

The workshop will incorporate international experts on travel documents and terrorism for insights and lessons learned from outside the region. International experts will also facilitate working groups. The regional co-operation workshop intends to dovetail with border management initiatives of other International Community organisations. Experts from these organisations already active in providing training in travel documents in the region will be given priority consideration to take part in the workshop. Other officials from the International Community active in the region on border-related issues will be invited as observers.

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