



# **Assistance to Border Services in the Southern Caucasus**

## **Project Report 2002**

### **Part I**

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the Federal Republic of Germany for its generous contribution to this project.  
The views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the official views of the  
Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.*

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Executive summary**

In the first half of 2002 the ODIHR, in co-operation with the IOM Office in Yerevan, organized a training visit to Poland for border officials from Armenia with the purpose of familiarizing them with Polish policies and practices of border control as well as with the training system. In addition, following an assessment of recent developments in Azerbaijan, a visit of the Commandant-in-chief of the Azerbaijani Border Service to Poland was organized jointly with IOM Baku.

### Armenia

The visit by Armenian border guards followed a similar programme as those of the earlier Georgian and Azerbaijani delegations organized in 2001 and included meetings at the Training and Personnel Department of the Border Guard Headquarters in Warsaw, visit to Warsaw airport and to a checkpoint at the Russian-Polish border, as well as training courses at the Polish Border Guard Centre in Kętrzyn.

In comparison with their colleagues from neighbouring countries, the Armenian representatives showed considerably less enthusiasm during the training visit. Given this apparent lack of interest, the ODIHR is not in the position to plan any follow-up activities until there are concrete proposals for further activities that will respond to the current priorities of the Armenian Border Service.

### Azerbaijan

Following the ODIHR's successful co-operation with the Azerbaijani Border Service in 2001, in May 2002, with assistance from the ODIHR, the Commandant-in-chief of the Border Service visited Poland to discuss practical issues of bilateral co-operation with his Polish counterpart.

The programme of the visit included meetings with the Commandant-in-chief of the Polish Border Service, Director of the Border Control Department, Director of the Operational and Investigations Department and the Director of the Training and Personnel Department. As a practical part of the program, the delegation visited Warsaw airport, the Training Centre in Kętrzyn, and a checkpoint on the Polish-Russian border.

The Commandants agreed to sign a protocol on information exchange between Border Services of Poland and Azerbaijan. In addition, following the agreement between Commandants, a group of 15 mid-ranking border officials from Azerbaijan will be trained for a period of one year at the Training Centre in Kętrzyn from the Autumn of 2002 through 2003.

Given the commitment of Azerbaijani authorities in moving ahead with the institutional reform of the Border Service, the ODIHR is planning to continue its work in Azerbaijan through organizing an annual training in Poland, assisting in the development of domestic training capacities and supporting any further bilateral Polish-Azerbaijani initiatives as well as other international co-operation between border services.

## **Background**

One of the legacies of the Soviet past are the so-called Border Troops or military Border Service composed of untrained draftees and non-commissioned officers. Depending on a country, this institution is under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Defence or Ministry for National Security or both. The staff's training is held either in military schools or in special border guards' schools whose curriculum is very similar to military schools. While most of training is taken up by military courses, very little stress is made on social sciences, law and interaction with persons crossing the border. The aforementioned situation is reflected in a poor human rights record of the Border Troops and insufficient efficiency in controlling cross-border movements. A particular challenge for the Border Services in the Southern Caucasus arises from an unstable security situation at the borders resulting from "frozen" internal and bilateral conflicts.

The project in the Southern Caucasus is a part of the OSCE/ODIHR programme of assistance to institution building and development of training systems for Border Services in the Newly Independent States. Similar projects were implemented in Uzbekistan in 1997-98, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan in 2000. The training was implemented in co-operation with IOM Offices in Yerevan and Baku and based, as in previous ODIHR programmes, on Polish experience.

Poland was chosen to illustrate how the transition to democracy and a state where respect for human rights is promoted, requires institutional reform of law-enforcement agencies and their training capacities. Over the last ten years, the Polish Border Service has undergone transformation from a military structure under the Ministry of Defence to "border police" under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. In addition, human rights issues have been incorporated into training programmes for border officials.

In 2001 the ODIHR, in co-operation with International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched its programme on Assistance to Border Services in the Southern Caucasus. Two training visits for delegations of border officials from Azerbaijan and Georgia were organised in co-operation with the Office of the Commandant-in-Chief of the Polish Border Service. In addition, an expert on training curriculum development from the Polish Border Guard Training Centre in Koszalin went to Baku for a one-month assessment mission to assist in the elaboration of training programmes for the Border Inspection Training Centre. The expert's report, containing recommendations for training programmes and methodology, has been presented to the Azerbaijani authorities.

In the first half of 2002 the ODIHR, in co-operation with the IOM Office in Yerevan, organized a training visit to Poland for border officials from Armenia. In addition, following an assessment of recent developments in Azerbaijan, a visit of the Commandant-in-chief of the Azerbaijani Border Service to Poland was organized jointly with IOM Baku.

## **Part I: Training visit of the delegation of Border Guard Officials from Armenia (13-17 May 2002)**

Armenia was the last out of the three Southern Caucasus states to be introduced to Polish policies and practices of border control through a training visit of border guard officials. In 2001, same visits were organized for representatives of Azerbaijani and Georgian Border Services.

The purpose of these visits was to familiarise border guard officials from Southern Caucasus countries with Polish experience in border protection and control, as well as with training methods. Each of the three countries was then expected to formulate a concrete follow-up.

The visit by Armenian border guards took place on 13-17 May 2002 and followed a similar programme to the visit by Georgians and Azerbaijanis: meetings at the Training and Personnel Department of the Border Guard Headquarters in Warsaw, visit to Warsaw airport and to one of the checkpoints at the border with Kaliningrad, as well as training courses at the Polish Border Guard Centre in Kętrzyn.

The delegation of Armenian border officials consisted of the following persons:

6. Lieutenant-Colonel Shavarsh Mikaelyan, Head of the Border Control Department of the Border Troops of Armenia
7. Major Sevak Davtyan, Head of the Border Checkpoint at the airport “Gyumri”
8. Major Mnatsakan Mirzoyan, Head of the Border Checkpoint at the Yerevan airport
9. Major Jivan Hovhannisyan, Head of the Land Border Checkpoint “Bagratashen”, border with Georgia
10. Major Mher Tsaturyan, Head of Land Border Checkpoint “Gogavan”, border with Georgia
11. Major Samvel Aprozian, Head of the Railway Border Checkpoint, border with Georgia
12. Ms. Marina Solakhyan, Programme Assistant, IOM Yerevan

### **Programme of the visits**

The programme of the visit was set up by the Training Department of the Polish Border Guard Headquarters, taking into account the current priorities of the Armenian Border Service. The Polish side also assisted with necessary logistic support during the visits. The programme included:

- visit to the Training and Personnel Department of the Border Guard Headquarters in Warsaw
- visit to Warsaw airport
- visit to the Polish Border Guards Training Centre in Kętrzyn
- visit to the checkpoint Bezledy and the “green” border post Sępólno (Polish-Russian border)
- meeting with the ODIHR staff

## **Visits to Border Guard Headquarters and Warsaw airport**

On the first day of the visit the delegation met with the Director of the Personnel and Training Department of the Polish Border Service. The delegation was briefed on the structure of the Polish Border Service, its role and tasks in light of recent changes in Polish legislation on border guards. Special focus was put on the ongoing reform of Polish Border Service, which was transformed from a military structure to a civil police-type institution under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. The delegation received detailed information on the advantages and deficiencies of the new system, recent amendments to the law on border service that empower border guards to combat illegal migration not only in the border areas but in the rest of the country as well.

In the afternoon of Day 1, border guard officials visited Warsaw airport Okęcie. The delegation was briefed on the legislative basis and practical functioning of the airport's checkpoints, on security measures and the rights and responsibilities of customs, border and security officers. Polish officials shared statistical information on asylum-seekers and attempts at illegal border crossings. The delegation was informed that the clear definition of the category of officials who have the right to check a person's identity documents and search one's luggage is a basic condition for a good functioning of the airport. This presentation aimed at highlighting the need to address co-operation between different services.

## **Visit and Sessions at the Border Guards Training Centre in Kętrzyn**

Kętrzyn Training Centre is one of the two Training Centres of the Polish Border Service, the other one being in Koszalin. While the Centre in Koszalin specialises in preparing border guards for serving at the "green border", the Centre in Kętrzyn trains personnel for checkpoints.

The delegation was received by Lieutenant-Colonel Jarosław Suszek, Commandant of the Centre and was briefed on the structure of the Centre, training system and methods. Then the delegation met with the heads of all the departments, visited the library and classrooms and sat in on some classes.

The Centre in Kętrzyn is similar to any civil educational institution. The only visible difference between the trainees of the Centre is the uniform. The Centre has four departments: communication and computer sciences; general human sciences (law, history, political geography, ethics, psychology, languages); control of border crossing (visas and readmission, border control and identification techniques) and border protection (operational activities, emergency situations, shooting, topography, detention techniques, first medical aid).

The above demonstrates that the only typically military course is pistol shooting. At the same time, a clear emphasis is placed on preparing well-educated border guards with significant level of knowledge of social sciences and humanities. Armenian border officials were provided with training materials and programmes.

To take a close look on how the knowledge received at the Training Centre is implemented in practice, the delegation visited a border crossing checkpoint Bezledy and the “green” border post Sępopol (Polish-Russian border).

### **Main conclusions**

Comparing to their colleagues from neighbouring countries, Armenian representatives showed considerably less enthusiasm during the training visit. On delegation’s request, the initial program had been changed to favour practical part (courses on fraudulent documents, visit to the checkpoint) over the overview of the training system and functioning of the Training Centre, although it did not prevent some of delegation’s members from not attending a significant part of the program. Given this apparent lack of interest, the ODIHR is not in the position to plan any follow-up activities until there are any concrete proposals for further activities that will respond to the current priorities of the Armenian Border Service.

## **Part II: Visit of the Commandant-in-chief of the Azerbaijani Border Service to Poland (21-22 May 2002)**

Azerbaijan is the first state in the Southern Caucasus to actively launch the reform of its border service. The first step was the establishment, with the assistance of the IOM Office in Baku, of the Border Inspection Training Centre. The Centre was inaugurated in March 2001 and is preparing around 100 border officials per year with skills and knowledge to control cross border population movements. At the same time the Ministry for National Security prepared a multi-year program aiming at Border Troops' transformation to a semi-civilian police-type institution, where most of the staff will be professional border guards and not draftees or non-commissioned officers any more.

In February 2002 the ODIHR delegation paid an assessment visit to Baku. One of the recommendations which emerged during the ODIHR delegation's meetings with the Deputy Minister for National Security, Mr. Fuad Iskanderov as well as with the Commandant-in-chief of Azerbaijani Border Service, General Elchin Guliyev, was to organize a visit to Poland by Azerbaijani top level officials headed by the Commandant-in-chief of the Border Service to discuss practical issues of bilateral co-operation. In the official letter to his Polish counterpart, the Commandant-in-chief of the Azerbaijani Border service proposed the following main topics for discussion:

- prospects for co-operation in the field of fight against illegal migration and international terrorism
- possibilities of information and experience sharing, further co-operation in the field of border control
- further experience sharing in the light of the ongoing institutional reform of the Border Service of Azerbaijan
- possibility of the training of a group of Azerbaijani border officials in Poland
- support in developing domestic training capacities as well as sharing of training materials
- other issues of bilateral interest

The visit was prepared by the ODIHR and IOM Office in Azerbaijan in close-co-operation with the Training and Personnel Department of the Polish Border Service and took place on 21-22 May 2002.

The delegation was headed by General Elchin Guliyev, Commandant-in-chief of the Azerbaijani Border Service and included Colonel Akif Shafiev, Head of the Border Control Department, Captain Elchin Ibrahimov, Head of the Protocol and Mr. Ahmed Shirinov, Programme Co-ordinator of the IOM Office in Baku. The ODIHR Migration Unit accompanied the delegation.



## **Programme of the visit**

The programme of the visit was elaborated by the Training and Personnel Department of the Polish Border Service and included:

- Meeting with General Josef Klimowicz, Commandant-in-chief
- Meeting with the Director of the Border Control Department
- Meeting with the Director of the Operational and Investigations Department
- Meeting with the Director of the Training and Personnel Department
- Visit to Warsaw airport, meeting with the Commandant of the airport
- Visit to the Training Centre in Kętrzyn, meeting with the Commandant of the Centre
- Visit to the checkpoint on the Polish-Russian border
- Meeting with the ODIHR Migration Unit
- Final meeting with the Commandant-in-chief

## **Main outcomes of the visit and follow-up activities**

### *Exchange of information*

- The Commandants agreed to sign a protocol specifying the conditions and all the details of information-sharing process to be launched between Border Services of Poland and Azerbaijan.

### *Training of border officials*

- The Commandants agreed that a group of 15 mid-ranking border officials from Azerbaijan will be trained for a period of one year at the Training Centre in Kętrzyn from the Autumn of 2002 through 2003. They will follow an annual officer's course, which includes 9 months of lectures on communication, computer sciences, general human sciences (law, history, ethics, psychology, etc.), control of border crossing (visas and readmission, border control and identification techniques), as well as border protection (operational activities, emergency situations, shooting, topography, detention techniques, first medical aid) and 3 months of practical work at the checkpoints. The process of the trainee's selection will be closely monitored by the Ministry for National Security of Azerbaijan and IOM Baku. Prior to the training in Poland, selected group will attend Polish language courses, organized by the IOM Baku. In its turn, the ODIHR will work closely with the Commandant of the Training Centre on elaborating a program that in the best way reflects the current priorities of the Border Service of Azerbaijan.

### *Further bilateral contacts*

- The Polish Commandant-in-chief General Klimowicz accepted his counterpart's the invitation to visit Baku in the nearest future, tentatively in the end of 2002-beginning of 2003.

### *General*

- Given the commitment of Azerbaijani authorities in moving ahead with the institutional reform of the Border Service, the ODIHR is planning to continue its work in Azerbaijan through organizing an annual training in Poland, assisting in

the development of domestic training capacities and supporting any further bilateral Polish-Azerbaijani initiatives as well as other international co-operation between border services.