



British Embassy
Skopje

MARRI

Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative



Third Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security - Western Balkan Region
"Authenticity of Identification Documents"
MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, 20 – 21 September 2007

CONCLUSIONS

The MARRI Regional Centre organised the Third Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security – Western Balkan Region titled "Authenticity of Identification Documents," held in Skopje on 20-21 September 2007. The event was attended by regional experts from the national institutions managing areas related to document security and establishment of identity in the MARRI region.

The Third Meeting presented an excellent opportunity to exchange views, ideas and best practices, to identify gaps and solutions for the prevention of possible misuse of legal channels in the procedures of handling and issuance of identification documents, detection of forged identification documents, verification of authenticity of identification documents, as well as to develop indicators for recognising abuse of identification documents. Also, it contributed to establishment of contacts among MARRI Member States' national experts which will increase and facilitate regional co-operation.

A national feedback on "Authenticity of Identification Documents" focused on types of national identification documents, national legislation regulating identification documents, national institutions responsible for production/issuance of identification documents, procedures of handling and issuance of identification documents, developed projects on new identification documents, identified gaps and solutions for the prevention/combating fraud in respect of civil status and misuse of legal channels in the procedures of issuance of identification documents, forgery of identification documents, abuse of genuine identification documents and development of possible solutions.

Due to the fact that new technologies have enhanced the security of identification documents, terrorist networks and organised crime groups are increasingly focused on attacking vulnerabilities within document issuing systems.

Recognising the need for more efficient approach to protect identification documents handling and issuance procedures from end to-end, prevention and combating all forms of criminal activities related to document security, irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling of human beings, stolen identity, human organs trafficking, slavery, terrorism and other issues, the participants of the Third Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security agreed on the following Conclusions:

- ✓ Well established procedure from end to-end for handling and issuance of identification documents will reduce possible misuse or abuse of legal channels and procedures and will provide practical solutions that will enable civil status officials to perform duties more effectively. Without good and precise civil status registers and records, without precise data, there is no future development of high quality identification documents. Furthermore, well-established audit procedures have been recognised as crucial (as detailed within ICAO document 9303).
- ✓ The MARRI Member States need to implement ICAO, G8 and OSCE minimum security standards for the handling and issuance of identification documents.
- ✓ There is a need to establish a good record of all losses and thefts of national documents and to ensure full and speedy reporting of those losses/thefts are notified to INTERPOL.
- ✓ The MARRI Member States need to improve both intra-agency (permanent horizontal and vertical cooperation within national institutions responsible for handling and issuance of identification documents) and inter-agency co-operation (permanent co-operation among different national institutions responsible for handling and issuance of identification documents) through enhanced co-operation procedures and inter-state co-operation. This shall be achieved through improved co-operation on international and regional level (document security and authenticity of identification documents, establishment of identity of persons, identified misuse or abuse of legal channels, exchange of views, ideas, best practices, etc). That co-operation among countries, in particular among neighbouring countries, has been recognised as essential.
- ✓ Development/improvement of comprehensive IT data and information support systems in order for various national institutions responsible for handling and issuance of identification documents and national institutions responsible for verification of authenticity of identification documents to have the ability to collect considerable data, its in-depth analysis, assessment, monitoring and evaluation. This approach shall enable them to exchange information and to perform duties more effectively.
- ✓ Development/improvement of permanent training systems for civil status officials dealing with handling and issuance of identification documents and officials which are dealing with verification of authenticity of identification documents and to explore modalities for enhancing such training.
- ✓ Development of compilation of all existing identification documents, including basic documents from the civil status registers (certificates/extracts) from MARRI Member States, which will serve the national institutions dealing with identification documents to have updated information about current state in all MARRI Member States.
- ✓ To elaborate follow-up strategies from the conclusions reached during the Third Meeting of the Working Group on Document Security.

Skopje, 21 September 2007