



Community of Law Enforcement Practitioners - COLEP -

An initiative of the Budapest Process

Background

FACTSHEET

The Budapest Process has long prioritised the facilitation of transnational cooperation to address common challenges in regard to Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) and Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), thus staying aligned to its commitments and the 2019 Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan. As a result of discussions in Budapest Process meetings since then, a Community of Law Enforcement Practitioners (COLEP) was established in 2022, bringing together a select group of countries from the dialogue. SOM and THB from along the Silk Routes have become persistent phenomena, with increasingly dangerous routes and procedures utilised. Highly sophisticated transnational criminal networks, having operations along the routes, are highly adaptable and resourceful. In parallel, law enforcement agencies are increasingly challenged by the scope, scale, and sophistication of these criminal networks.

Objectives

COLEP'S MAIN OBJECTIVES:

1 To promote exchange of good practices and learning on SoM and THB for law enforcement officials from select origin, transit and destination countries.



2 To serve as a catalyst for bilateral and multilateral initiatives on operational cooperation against SoM and THB.



EXPECTED RESULTS OF COLEP:

Strengthened **operational cooperation and information exchange** among law enforcement agencies and practitioners on individual and joint responses to detection, investigation and prosecution of SoM and THB.

Enhanced **skills and knowledge** of the law enforcement practitioners.

Capacities developed to provide adequate support to victims of trafficking and other vulnerable persons.

Governance and Membership

- COLEP is chaired jointly by Iraq and Bulgaria.
- Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Pakistan, and Serbia.

Activities

Four meetings of COLEP have taken place since 2022, these meetings helped to:

1. Explore **country specific context** of the fight against SoM and THB
2. Discuss the topic of **law enforcement efforts against SoM and THB in the digital sphere**
3. Present **real-life case studies** to illustrate good practices and challenges in international cooperation against SoM and THB
4. Promote **interactive exchanges** on steps to improve **transnational criminal investigation and prosecution**.



2nd meeting of COLEP, Ohrid, North Macedonia, 18 May 2022



4th meeting of COLEP, Sofia, Bulgaria, 5-6 October 2023

Future outlook

- Establish and implement a **capacity building plan** for law enforcement practitioners participating in COLEP;
- Organise **meetings, training workshops** and **study visits**;
- Facilitate **research** on transnational irregular migration, SoM and THB patterns and trends along the Silk Routes.

Specific needs of COLEP participants:

- ➔ Building capacities for tracking and disrupting **online and technology-facilitated operations of criminal groups and networks** involved in SoM and THB
- ➔ Support with improving **trafficking victim identification procedures** and **standard operating procedures** for responding to victims' needs after identification
- ➔ Enhancing capacities and opportunities for **timely and action-oriented trans-national information sharing, collaboration and investigations**

Contact Information

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