ICMPD
International Centre for Migration Policy Development

3rd International Border Management Conference

23-24 November 2020, online event

(Monday 23 November 10:00-13:00, Tuesday 24 November 10:00-12:30)

Concept note

Background:

ICMPD organised **the 1st International Border Management Conference** in Lebanon in 2018, bringing together representatives of numerous countries, institutions and agencies. The conference addressed four main topics: integrated border management (IBM); trade facilitation; technology driven challenges; and educational initiatives for border personnel. In 2019, **the 2nd International Conference on Comprehensive Border Governance** was organised in Armenia as a continuation of the previous conference, addressing topics from various different perspectives, ranging from the academic point of view to the perception of practitioners. The 2019 conference explored how a change from the management of borders towards comprehensive border governance may provide the tools needed to face the dynamic challenges facing border management professionals.

This year, **the 3rd International Border Management Conference** is organised in an online format, as imposed by the current pandemic and thereby the related travel and gathering restrictions. However, this online arrangement gives the opportunity to a larger variety of speakers to share and exchange their respective experiences.

Intimately connected to human activity and mobility, the border management sector constantly faces challenges that require swift and efficient adaption and responses. Border agencies are often tasked by the political sector with "solving" problems, the root causes of which are not directly linked to the frontier domain. This was the case with the migration crisis of 2015 where hundreds of thousands of people fled from Syria, and more recently in 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic border closures and other travel restrictions; a situation many people around the globe have never faced before. The ability to adapt varies greatly depending on the geopolitical context, as well as on human, financial and technical resources available, along with many other parameters.

The global lockdown, imposed in many countries all around the globe amidst the pandemic, and the gradual re-openings, have showcased the importance and strength of the link between security, economy and trade, and public health at the national and global levels. In the months following the first wave of COVID-19 and in anticipation of the second one, the countries who best managed their borders and could reopen them in a harmonised way are recovering the fastest. They are open to trade, re-establishing business and restoring confidence in national security systems. In these scenarios, border management played an important role and was often, if not always, in the spotlight of public attention.

Overall, the main functions of border management generally stay the same – it is mostly the circumstances that change, that require border agencies to seek innovative solutions to continue ensuring border security, trade facilitation and the protection of public health. These challenges can be addressed from different angles: **technological**, **organisational (procedural)** and most importantly, **human**.

Border management must overcome challenges that are linked to rapid change, modernisation and digitalisation by making relevant processes quicker, safer and more transparent. Seamless (and likely soon, even "touchless") and automatic border controls are already a reality at a number of border crossing points worldwide, whether at land, air or sea. These innovations have a tremendous impact on how border controls and trade facilitation are performed, as well as on the methodology applied by border agencies nowadays and in the years to come. Progress in making border control more effective and efficient is exceeding forecasts, thereby turning it into one of the fastest developing areas in border governance. This growth is matched by the constant and rapid increase in worldwide travellers and global trade. Border management not only has a significant impact from a security and economic perspective, but also supports social and cultural exchange, rural development in remote areas and education, and plays a key role in public safety and health. It positively contributes to de-radicalisation, promotes business and provides new accessibility to jobs, and plays a key role in global mobility.

Nevertheless, despite the obvious progress and development, certain regions are still struggling to meet the basic standards and requirements needed to ensure effective border management. This is mainly due to a lack of human, material and financial resources, but also in some cases due to a lack of political will, unstable and unpredictable security environments, a lack of delimitated and demarcated borders, and armed conflicts within the vicinity of border areas. Border officials require constant training updates and further education, to provide them with the skills needed to keep up with contemporary challenges and to perform their daily duties in a highly qualified manner.

While all of the above-mentioned topics remain highly relevant, global border governance must adapt continuously to the highly dynamic political, security, economic and sanitary environments we live in today. 2020 has already particularly demonstrated this need for adaptation, as the COVID-19 pandemic has directly challenged our mobility, work and our daily lives.

The aim of the 3rd International Border Management Conference will be to discuss a framework that brings border guard, police and customs agencies, as well as many other actors from the public and private spheres together, in an environment where the safe and orderly movement of people and goods across borders is the number one priority.

Speakers will have an opportunity to present their daily practices and achievements related to border management on the topic of tomorrow's era and morphing methods of detection (as a focus discussion related to use of the latest technologies used within border agencies) during two roundtable discussions. These will provide the occasion to exchange views and discuss potential developments in border governance as a means to address today's global threats, whether from a security or economic perspective.

The conference will bring together experts with practical and technical professional backgrounds, including academics, policy-makers and decision-takers from various public institutions and agencies, as well as private sector representatives working in the international theatre of border governance.

Objectives of the Conference

The main objective of the conference is to address the challenges to border management in the era of tomorrow and the challenges of morphing technologies, and suggest different paths to streamline the work of border agencies in a comprehensive and methodological way. The conference will be divided into two thematic roundtables as a platform for open and solution-oriented discussions.

Conference format

Two roundtables are envisioned in addition to the opening and closing sessions. Thematically, the two roundtables will address the following topics:

1. **Border Management Responses for the Era of Tomorrow**
2. **Morphing: Challenges and Opportunities in Biometrics, and New Modalities and Approaches**

The conference will be held in English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian, French and Arabic. The conference will be recorded and shared afterwards with participants.

Conference set-up: WebEx