European Conference 2016

Promoting the multidisciplinary approach in addressing migrant smuggling

Organised by the European Migration Network (EMN) and the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice

12th -13th January 2016

Europe Building, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

# Introduction

The facilitation of irregular migration (“migrant smuggling”) is a global phenomenon challenging the integrity of national borders, exposing migrants to the risk of severe human rights violations and causing the loss of thousands of lives. In the EU, in particular in the past years as a result of the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, the numbers of migrants attempting to reach the Member States has drastically increased. Smugglers take advantage of the large number of migrants willing to take risks in search of protection or better life prospects, when they cannot access legal channels of migration. This had led to many dramatic and deadly events occurring in the Central Mediterranean route, as well as on other routes both outside and within the EU. The fight against migrant smuggling has been a key part of the EU common migration policy for more than a decade. However, because of the clandestine nature of migrant smuggling, data on the magnitude of the phenomenon is precarious and the numbers of detections of irregular border-crossing at the external borders and of detections of unauthorised stay can only be used as proxy indicators.

The mounting scale of the problem has spurred new action at the EU level to prevent and fight migrant smuggling. This is reflected in the [European Agenda on Migration](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf) and the [European Agenda on Security](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/basic-documents/docs/eu_agenda_on_security_en.pdf), both of which identify the fight against migrant smuggling as a top priority. Furthermore, the [EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2015-2020](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/eu-action-plan-against-migrant-smuggling-2015-%E2%80%93-2020_en) set out a number of concrete actions to better address this transnational crime by ensuring adequate investigation and prosecution, enhancing information gathering, sharing and analysing, preventing migrant smuggling and protection vulnerable migrants more effectively, and step up cooperation with third countries of transit and origin. Not only at the EU-level, is the fight against migrant smuggling a priority. Addressing migrant smuggling is also a priority of the Dutch government.

Smuggling criminal networks are increasingly organised and able to rapidly adjust their modus operandi to law enforcement and policy responses, offering “services” of facilitating clandestine entry or “secondary movements” throughout the EU and/or unauthorised stay at great costs and associated risks. Against this backdrop, a multidisciplinary approach, including close cooperation amongst Member States and with other relevant stakeholders, as well as third countries, is necessary to effectively implement actions to prevent and disrupt smuggling activities and networks. Within this context, this conference aims to present and discuss the scale and nature of the phenomenon of migrant smuggling, the measures undertaken to combat it at EU and national levels and the challenges faced by EU Member States in implementing actions in this area.

# Aims and objectives of the conference

The objective of the conference is to discuss the latest developments in the area of migrant smuggling and, in line with the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling (2015-2020), to identify good practices and measures to be activated at the national and EU levels to fight smuggling in a holistic way. By bringing together practitioners, representatives from EU Member States, third countries, EU institutions and agencies, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), academic and research institutions, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and other experts, it will provide impetus for the implementation of the EU Action Plan against Smuggling by producing a set of concrete recommendations that can provide input for the work of all relevant stakeholders, at different levels.

# Programme

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| **January 12 (program starts at 9:00 pm)** |
| **Plenary opening**  Keynote speeches:   * Klaas Dijkhoff, Minister for Migration, the Netherlands (10 min) * Dimitris Avramopoulos, EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship (TBC) * Member of the European Parliament (MEP) (TBC) |
| **Presentation of the study** "**Smuggling of Migrants- Characteristics, responses and cooperation with third Countries"** |
| **Plenary Panel I. Implementing the EU action Plan against migrant smuggling: Intra-EU agency cooperation**  Main questions/topics:   * Communication and information exchange * Implementation of the Hotspot approach * Addressing secondary movements * Challenges of interagency cooperation   **Speakers:** representatives from Europol, Frontex, Eurojust and EASO |
| **Plenary Panel II. Tackling migrant smuggling: A multidisciplinary approach**  Main questions/topics:   * The fight against migrant smuggling and the challenges faced * Ensuring coherence in a multi-disciplinary approach against migrant smuggling * Understanding and disrupting smugglers’ business models * Secondary movements and migrant smuggling: the private sector perspective (transport sector)   **Speakers:** Khalid Koser, a representative from the transport sector in the UK (TBC), IOM (TBC) and the Dutch National Public Prosecutor for Trafficking in Human Beings and People Smuggling. |
| **Workshops: Round 1**   1. Strengthening the exchange of information and intelligence on migrant smuggling 2. Dismantling organised criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling: Understanding the financial schemes used by smuggling networks 3. Innovative ways to tackle migrant smuggling: social media and predictive analytics 4. Engaging the private sector in the fight against migrant smuggling: transport and shipping 5. Development of effective information and prevention campaigns on the risks of smuggling and counter-narratives in third countries 6. Development of comprehensive responses to migrant smuggling, addressing push and pull factors |
| **Presentation of the short documentary “Hope”**   * Boris Lojkine, Director of “Hope” |
| **Dinner + drinks** |
| **January 13 (programs ends at 4:30 am)** |
| **Panel III: Smuggling routes, modi operandi and humanitarian assistance**  Chair: Dana Spinant, Head of Unit, Irregular Migration and Return Policy, European Commission (TBC)  Main questions/topics   * Smuggling by sea: the Mediterranean Route * Tackling secondary movements: Western Balkans Route * Smuggling by air: the challenge of document fraud * Facilitation of irregular stay * Providing assistance to vulnerable migrants   **Speakers:** Immigration Department of Italy (TBC), the Hungarian representative, European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Crime Threats (EMPACT) (TBC), Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, Netherlands, National Crime Agency, UK (TBC), Red Cross (local perspective) Hungary (confirmed) |
| **Workshops Round 2**   1. Strengthening the exchange of information and intelligence on migrant smuggling 2. Dismantling organised criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling: Understanding the financial schemes used by smuggling networks 3. Innovative ways to tackle migrant smuggling: social media and predictive analytics 4. Engaging the private sector in the fight against migrant smuggling: transport and shipping 5. Development of effective information and prevention campaigns on the risks of smuggling and counter-narratives in third countries 6. Development of comprehensive responses to migrant smuggling, addressing push and pull factors |
| **Plenary Feedback on the outcome of the workshops** |
| **Panel IV. Actions against smuggling: The way forward – next steps**  Main questions/topics   * Points to be taken forward from the conference * Next steps in the implementation of the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling * Ensuring coordination and policy coherence in EU actions against smuggling   **Speakers:** Jan-Kees Goet, Director-General for Migration, Ministry of Security and Justice, the Netherlands,  Mathias Ruete, Director General of Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission (TBC) |
| **Closing Remarks** |

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| Conference Workshops  (Each workshop will be opened by short introductions of three panellists) |
| **Workshop 1: “Strengthening the exchange of information and intelligence on migrant smuggling”** |
| This workshop will focus on exploring ways to foster the effective exchange of information and intelligence on smuggling at the national level, between the EU Member States, at the EU level (e.g. between relevant agencies) and with third countries. It will examine which information should be shared and through which channels, and how to promote closer cooperation between relevant authorities. The workshop conclusions should give pointers in support of the establishment of a network of single national contact points on smuggling in all the Member States.  Main questions/ topics to be addressed:   * Sharing information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities within the EU; * Enhancing information exchange within the context of cooperation frameworks with third countries; * Moving forward in the creation of a network of single national contact points on smuggling. |
| **Workshop 2: “Dismantling organised criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling: Understanding the financial schemes used by smuggling networks”** |
| The aim of this workshop is to discuss recent investigative approaches aimed at dismantling criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling, which focus detecting and analysing the financial transactions and schemes used by smugglers, to map the full network and to ultimately identify those at the top. This includes discussions on different types of investigations and EU cooperation. The results of a recent study on the financial schemes used by smuggling networks will also be presented.  Main questions/issues to be addressed:   * The use and development of financial investigations; * Joint investigations undertaken amongst Member States; * Measures undertaken at EU and national level including: * Freezing and confiscation of assets; * Measures to inhibit payment mechanisms. |
| **Workshop 3: “Innovative ways to tackle migrant smuggling: Social media and predictive analytics”** |
| This workshop will focus on the opportunities and challenges that the use of innovative technological solutions poses in the fight against migrant smuggling. Social media is increasingly being used by people smugglers to advertise their services, which requires new investigative techniques. In addition, predictive analytics can help law enforcement authorities sort through big data sets to identify potential targets for intervention, prevent future criminal offences or investigate past crimes. The development of tools and methods to accurately filter and identify potentially useful internet content is thus critical, as is the establishment of effective partnerships with internet and social media service providers.  Main questions/ issues:   * Implications of social media analysis for law enforcement authorities; * Best practices in the use of innovative techniques in risk analysis and criminal investigations; * Establishing effective partnerships between law enforcement authorities and internet and social media service providers. |
| **Workshop 4: “Engaging the private sector in the fight against migrant smuggling: Transport and shipping"** |
| This workshop will focus on the role that the private sector can play in combating migrant smuggling, in cooperation with public authorities and other stakeholders. Supporting business operators to detect and prevent migrant smuggling, in particular in those sectors most at risk such as road transport and shipping, can make a significant difference in anti-smuggling efforts.  Main questions/ issues:   * Role and responsibilities of the private sector in combating migrant smuggling; * Establishing partnerships against smuggling between public and private actors; * Best practices in promoting security measures and controls by business operators to prevent smuggling. |
| **Workshop 5: “Development of effective information campaigns on the risks of smuggling and counter-narratives in third countries”** |
| The main aim of this workshop is to discuss how to effectively reach potential migrants in their countries of origin and/or in the countries of transit, in order to prevent them from using the services of smugglers and undertaking a dangerous journey. The workshop will include discussions on the current use of information campaigns and their effectiveness. The involvement of different stakeholders, such as civil organisations, diaspora groups, in the co-design of such information campaigns, as well as their potential impact will also be discussed. Furthermore, as migrants often obtain information from relatives already residing in countries of destination, information campaigns developed in these countries will be also addressed as well as the development of counter-narratives to those put forward by traffickers and smugglers.  Main questions/issues:   * Which types of communication tools have proved to be most effective to raise awareness? (e.g. the use of social media) * Which stakeholders should take part in the development and/or co-design of such information campaigns? E.g. civil society organisations, diaspora groups, community leaders of irregular migrants; * What type of information should be disseminated? E.g. exploitation of irregular migrants and return measures; * Awareness raising and protection measures integrated into information campaigns. |
| **Workshop 6: “Development of comprehensive responses to migrant smuggling addressing push and pull factors”** |
| This workshop will aim to discuss current measures to address the push and pull factors of migration and their effectiveness. At the EU level, these include legislation to prevent irregular work, i.e. the Employers Sanctions Directive (2009/52/EC), which requests Member States to carry out effective and adequate inspections to control the employment of illegally staying third-country nationals, as well as the Return Directive (2008/115/EC) which provides common standards and procedures to return those illegally staying third-country nationals. Cooperation with third-countries will be also discussed, for example in the context of the implementation of readmission agreements and how this cooperation can be strengthened. Other strategies to prevent irregular migration will be discussed, such as those based on the “barrier model” which is centred on the establishment of barriers and sanctions to interfere with the smuggling networks when executing their criminal activities. The model also defines the organisations that could play a role in interfering with and imposing criminal sanctions on those activities, for example by putting in place barriers to access entry/recruitment, accommodation, identity and finance.  Main questions/issues:   * How to strengthen cooperation with third-countries? * Multidisciplinary approach and cooperation needed to implement the "barrier model"; * Protection of migrants' rights; * Effectiveness of return measures. |

# Further Information

* Please note that the language of instruction during the conference will be English.
* While registering you will able to indicate the workshops you would like to attend.
* The conference will take place at the Europe Building (Marine terrein), Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Address:

Europe Building Amsterdam  
Kattenburgerstraat 7 (Voorwerf)  
1018 JA Amsterdam