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Collaboration and Cooperation is the Only Way!

In a much-publicised deal with US President Biden, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico has agreed to spend $1.5 Billion on a 'smart' border between Mexico and the USA.

In a joint statement the two countries agreed to jointly fund security infrastructure along their shared border.

This will be seen as a great victory by the Biden administration, as it has faced heavy criticism from Republicans for being so-called 'soft' on immigration and border security. It will be especially sweet as President Trump failed to secure a deal of this sort after memorably promising during his presidential campaign, "I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively. I will build a great, great wall on our southern border and I'll have Mexico pay for that wall."

As part of the quid pro quo for this deal President Biden has agreed to increase the number of work visa's available to Mexican citizens, take more refugees, create more joint patrols to help Mexico stop traffickers along the Mexico / Guatemala border, as well as a full range of other cross border facilitation issues.

This is a victory for the co-operational approach over the more confrontational approach of the previous administration.

In Europe meanwhile, the European Union and Niger have signed a deal to increase their cooperation with the launch of an Operational Partnership to tackle migrant smuggling.

At the heart of the deal is an effort to combat a shared challenge that requires robust cooperation and coordination with key partner countries along migration routes in the Sahel.

The two parties have worked together in the past, but this new agreement is said to be moving up a gear, from both an operational and a political point of view.

Since 2017, the EU has funded the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) in Niger, with officers from services in EU Member States and Niger working side by side to disrupt the business model of people smugglers and criminal networks. Over seven hundred criminals have been arrested and over four hundred judicial proceedings have been launched.

This new Operational Partnership will maximise the impact of the JIT and strengthen links with other operational activities in the region to address migrant smuggling.

The Operational Partnership comprises a number of actions that can be expanded to ensure that the Partnership can adapt as the migration and the phenomenon itself evolves. New information and awareness-raising campaigns will also be launched, explaining the risks of irregular migration and migrant smuggling, as well as setting out alternatives.

A working arrangement between Frontex and Niger, currently under discussion, will support the Nigerien authorities with regard to integrated border management by strengthening risk management and assessment capabilities, with a view to facilitating legitimate border crossings and tackling irregular migration and cross-border crime.

The European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) in Sahel Niger has been collaborating with partners in Niger for almost ten years to tackle terrorism, organised crime and people-smuggling networks operating in the region.

The signing of a working arrangement between Frontex and the EUCAP Sahel Niger will support the joint commitment by the European Union and Niger to improve border-management structures in Niger.

The arrangement will also facilitate and enhance efforts to exchange information, offer targeted training activities, share best practices, and advise the Nigerien authorities.

The Coordination Platform on Migration will operate as a coordination and monitoring mechanism for implementing the Operational Partnership to ensure consistency across activities and coordination.

The Operational Partnership will work in tandem with the two Team Europe initiatives on the Central Mediterranean route and the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean route. Projects conducted under these two initiatives will help to implement the Operational Partnership and strengthen efforts by the European Union and the Member States to tackle irregular migration and forced displacement.

The EU will include EUR 195 million in budget support to help Niger in its efforts to implement key reforms and address security and socio-economic challenges as well as challenges related to migration management.

These are two notable examples of where a collaborative approach to shared problems can start to make a real difference on the ground. It's of no use for the rich states like the US and super states like the EU placing the blame and responsibility for illegal migration on countries of origin or transit countries.

It is up to the rich states to help change the conditions that drive migration and the associated evils of trafficking and help with the problem in countries of origin and transit, before people get sucked into the dangerous world of illegal migration routes!

Tony Kingham
Editor

World Border Security Congress

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Developing Border Strategies Through Co-operation and Technology

SAVE THE DATES

The Republic of North Macedonia is a landlocked country in the Southeastern region of Europe known as the Balkans. It gained independence in 1991 as one of the successor states of Yugoslavia.

In March 2020, North Macedonia acceded to NATO, becoming the 30th member state and accession process to join the European Union remains ongoing.

Ranked as the fourth "best reformatory state" out of 178 countries ranked by the World Bank in 2009, North Macedonia has undergone considerable economic reform since independence. North Macedonia has witnessed steady, though slow, economic growth and has implemented policies focused on attracting foreign investment and promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The country has a rich and diverse history and Skopje, the capital has been inhabited since at least 4000 BC; remains of Neolithic settlements have been found within the old Kale Fortress that overlooks the vibrant modern city centre.

By virtue of its position North Macedonia sits on the Balkan route for illegal migration into the European Union and therefore faces border challenges that require a collective, collaborative, and holistic response, making it the ideal place for the next meeting of the World Border Security Congress.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

We look forward to welcoming you to Skopje, North Macedonia on 27th-29th April 2023 for the next gathering of border and migration management professionals.

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UNODC World Drug Report 2022 highlights trends on cannabis post-legalization, environmental impacts of illicit drugs, and drug use among women and youth

WEAK RULE OF LAW IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO THE ILLICIT DRUG TRADE

Cannabis legalization in parts of the world appears to have accelerated daily use and related health impacts, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)'s World Drug Report 2022. The report also details record rises in the manufacturing of cocaine, the expansion of synthetic drugs to new markets, and continued gaps in the availability of drug treatments, especially for women.

According to the report, around 284 million people aged 15-64 used drugs worldwide in 2020, a 26 per cent increase over the previous decade. Young people are using more drugs, with use levels today in many countries higher than with the previous generation. In Africa and Latin America, people under 35 represent the majority of people being treated for drug use disorders.

Globally, the report estimates that 11.2 million people worldwide were injecting drugs. Around half of this number were living with hepatitis C, 1.4 million were living with HIV, and 1.2 million were living with both.

Reacting to these findings, UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly stated: "Numbers for the manufacturing and seizures of many illicit drugs are hitting record highs, even as global emergencies are deepening vulnerabilities. At the same time, misperceptions regarding the magnitude of the problem and the associated harms are depriving people of care and treatment and driving young people towards harmful behaviours. We need to devote the necessary resources and attention to addressing every aspect

of the world drug problem, including the provision of evidence-based care to all who need it, and we need to improve the knowledge base on how illicit drugs relate to other urgent challenges, such as conflicts and environmental degradation."

The report further emphasizes the importance of galvanizing the international community, governments, civil society and all stakeholders to take urgent action to protect people, including by strengthening drug use prevention and treatment and by tackling illicit drug supply.

Early indications and effects of cannabis legalization

Cannabis legalization in North America appears to have increased daily cannabis use, especially potent cannabis products and particularly among young adults. Associated increases in people with psychiatric disorders, suicides and hospitalizations have also been reported. Legalization has also increased tax revenues and generally reduced arrest rates for cannabis possession.

Continued growth in drug production and trafficking

Cocaine manufacture was at a record high in 2020, growing 11 per cent from 2019 to 1,982 tons. Cocaine seizures also increased, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, to a record 1,424 tons in 2020. Nearly 90 per cent of cocaine seized globally in 2021 was trafficked in containers and/or by sea. Seizure data suggest that cocaine trafficking is expanding to other regions outside the main markets of North America and Europe, with increased levels of trafficking to Africa and Asia.

Trafficking of methamphetamine continues to expand geographically, with 117 countries reporting seizures of methamphetamine in 2016–2020 versus 84 in 2006–2010. Meanwhile, the quantities of methamphetamine seized grew five-fold between 2010 and 2020.

Opium production worldwide grew seven per cent between 2020 and 2021 to 7,930 tons – predominantly due to an increase in production in Afghanistan. However, the global area under opium poppy cultivation fell by 16 per cent to 246,800 ha in the same period.

Key drug trends broken down by region

In many countries in Africa and South and Central America, the largest proportion of people in treatment for drug use disorders are there primarily for cannabis use disorders. In Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and in Central Asia, people are most often in treatment for opioid use disorders.

In the United States and Canada, overdose deaths, predominantly driven by an epidemic of the non-medical use of fentanyl, continue to break records. Preliminary estimates in the United States point to more than 107,000 drug overdose deaths in 2021, up from nearly 92,000 in 2020.

In the two largest markets for methamphetamine, seizures have been increasing – they rose by seven per cent in North America from the previous year, while in South-East Asia they increased by 30 per cent from the previous year, record highs in both regions. A record high was also reported for methamphetamine seizures reported from South-West Asia, increasing by 50 per cent in 2020 from 2019.

Great inequality remains in the availability of pharmaceutical opioids for medical consumption. In 2020, there were 7,500 more doses per 1 million inhabitants of controlled pain medication in North America than in West and Central Africa.

Conflict zones as magnets for synthetic drug production

This year's report also highlights that illicit drug economies can flourish in situations of conflict and where the rule of law is weak, and in turn can prolong or fuel conflict.

Information from the Middle East and South-East Asia suggest that conflict situations can act as a magnet for the manufacture of synthetic drugs, which can be produced anywhere. This effect may be greater when the conflict area is close to large consumer markets.

Historically, parties to conflict have used drugs to finance conflict and generate income. The 2022

World Drug Report also reveals that conflicts may also disrupt and shift drug trafficking routes, as has happened in the Balkans and more recently in Ukraine.

A possible growing capacity to manufacture amphetamine in Ukraine if the conflict persists

There was a significant increase in the number of reported clandestine laboratories in Ukraine, skyrocketing from 17 dismantled laboratories in 2019 to 79 in 2020. 67 out of these laboratories were producing amphetamines, up from five in 2019 – the highest number of dismantled laboratories reported in any given country in 2020.

The environmental impacts of drug markets

Illicit drug markets, according to the 2022 World Drug Report, can have local, community or individual-level impacts on the environment. Key findings include that the carbon footprint of indoor cannabis is between 16 and 100 times more than outdoor cannabis on average and that the footprint of 1 kilogram of cocaine is 30 times greater than that of cocoa beans.

Other environmental impacts include substantial deforestation associated with illicit coca cultivation, waste generated during synthetic drug manufacture that can be 5-30 times the volume of the end product, and the dumping of waste which can affecting soil, water and air directly, as well as organisms, animals and the food chain indirectly.

Ongoing gender treatment gap and disparities in drug use and treatment

Women remain in the minority of drug users globally yet tend to increase their rate of drug consumption and progress to drug use disorders more rapidly than men do. Women now represent an estimated 45-49 per cent of users of amphetamines and non-medical users of pharmaceutical stimulants, pharmaceutical opioids, sedatives, and tranquilizers.

The treatment gap remains large for women globally. Although women represent almost one in two amphetamines users, they constitute only one in five people in treatment for amphetamine use disorders.

The World Drug Report 2022 also spotlights the wide range of roles fulfilled by women in the global cocaine economy, including cultivating coca, transporting small quantities of drugs, selling to consumers, and smuggling into prisons.

WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING - A MONUMENTAL TASK WHERE NETWORKS ARE KEY

ByAzzedine Downes, President and CEO of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

Responsibilities are heaped upon us in our daily lives. From ensuring our own wellbeing to the wellbeing of our families and the community at large---assuming responsibility is a mainstay of adulthood, often an indication of growth, maturity, and even personal ability. But what happens when that burden of responsibility grows exponentially?

When a role of responsibility grows to the point that the bearer is expected to become a 'blanket expert on all things'? The end result is often a sense of overwhelm---of a task nearly impossible to complete. But, make no mistake --- it is not the difficulty of the task per se but rather the volume of the ask.

Such is the situation in which so many border security officials find themselves facing day in and day out. An insurmountable charge where borders are expected to be hermetically sealed, poetically speaking, from all possible pitfalls related to migration. It is not limited however to human migration---they now face the added challenge of presiding over species migration, including both plants and animals. And yet, this doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of the spectrum of illicit goods that are derived from each. From globally recognized illegal drugs that need no introduction to the intricately carved ivory trinket to the mystical jaguar tooth pendant. All these products are illegal---and they all migrate, thanks to humans, from one point to the next, from one border to another. We rely on the eyes and expertise of border security officials across the globe, in essence, asking them to recognize and stop any and all dangers related to the migration of wildlife products; and to do so within a span of no greater than 15 minutes.

It is untenable, especially to those who are given this task day in and day out. There is one saving grace in all of this that allows border security officials, and in essence society as a whole, to chip away at this herculean task. It is this---the concept of networks. The networks of those partners and agencies both directly and indirectly involved in the

hallowed duties of border security, that continue to serve as a critical barricade against the migration and proliferation of illegal wildlife products across the globe.

To those immensely dedicated border security officials who tirelessly protect the world's borders and who no doubt face this overwhelming challenge---the reality is, when it comes to illegal wildlife products and species, you do not need to be an expert. You have organizations like the one I lead at IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) ready to assist you with whatever tools or expertise we have at our disposal---tools to assist you with identification of animal products or even release and re-habitation of seized animals back into the wild. Ultimately though, it is not about the actual product identified---it is about disrupting the network---in this case, the criminal

network that brought that product or animal to the border in the first place.

At IFAW, our focus has long been on disrupting the network. Why? Because migration and travel and trade dynamics are all global. From source countries to transit countries to countries of final destination---the sheer magnitude of moving pieces involved in the trade and migration of illegal wildlife and associated products makes it ultimately impossible to place the burden of decision fully on the shoulders of the individual border security agent. If there are multiple links involved in the illegal trade chain, then there must be multiple parties---a network---collaborating together to create an effective decision-making process that gives the border agent the necessary tools to make informed decisions. These can include access to the

expertise or trained eye of a wildlife biologist or an expert vet to the extensive technological tools from external partners that can provide image recognition at a rapid pace. Ultimately, these all boil down to tools that facilitate the sharing of information both between, as well as among, agencies.

Sharing information within organizations is always a challenge---regardless of the organization, regardless of the field. Agencies, like so many other organizations, work in silos far too often. We understand however that the sharing of information outside of long-established, trusted boundaries is even harder. This is not made any easier when dealing with profoundly sensitive information or where there may be issues of trust or competition. Will the sharing of information disrupt ongoing investigations? Will the information be kept secure? These are all valid questions. But know

that there are those out there who you may not be aware of who can become a trusted partner. On behalf of IFAW, I offer our organization, our resources, our commitment. And we are just one of many.

Why do we offer this? Because tackling wildlife trafficking is not only an immense challenge, but also a responsibility that must be shared by all of us, not exclusively by those who work to secure our borders. And why? Because the issue of wildlife trafficking is one of immensely broad impact with implications that affect both the environment as well as humanity. From health concerns related to biological wildlife migration to broader threats of zoonotic disease, to a range of aspects associated with animal welfare to the deleterious impacts and repercussions of the turbulent black market trade---the tentacles of wildlife trafficking extend in some way to us all. It is a global problem.

As a global problem, it requires a global solution. For we all share in that same global goal---the protection and preservation of both humanity and the environment. If we are to achieve this noble goal, global stewardship is fundamental.

As someone who recently had the immense pleasure of participating in a convening of the World Border Security Congress in Lisbon, I recognize wholeheartedly the enormity of the challenge you face. The protection of nothing less than the world's sacred borders. As we all work together to disrupt the extensive network involved in illegal wildlife trafficking, I offer you in return a different type of network---one of trusted partners and collaborators, of like-minded stewards willing to bear this immense mantle of responsibility. May we all join in this network so crucial to the wellbeing of the natural environment and of humanity itself.

3 arrested on human smuggling charges following HSI Douglas, multiagency investigation

three individuals were arrested and charged by complaint with conspiracy to harbor and transport noncitizens for profit following the execution of two search warrants resulting in the discovery of 86 undocumented individuals. The investigation in this case is being conducted by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Douglas, with assistance by HSI Sells and Phoenix offices, as well as Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) and U.S. Border Protection Tucson Sector.

The individuals arrested were identified as Jesus Gabriel Villela-Duran, 28, of Mexico, Salvador Lopez-

Vargas, 36, of Mexico, and Eleazar Soto-Diaz, 34, of Mexico. Between the two residents in southwest Phoenix, nearly 100 individuals were identified as citizens from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras – all waiting for further transport within the United States. Federal agents executed two search warrants resulting in the discovery of 79 undocumented individuals inside a house and an apartment at the Sundowner complex in Phoenix. An additional seven undocumented noncitizens were in a nearby vehicle driven by Lopez-Vargas; Gabriel Villela-Duran and Soto-Diaz were identified as caretakers of the residences.

While federal law enforcement gathered evidence and interviewed those detained, a 36-year-old Mexican national male was found to be wanted for a felony warrant out of Travis County, Texas, for aggravated sexual assault of a minor. The individual will be extradited to Texas. HSI Arizona continues to work vigorously alongside partner law enforcement agencies to address the serious public safety threat posed by human smugglers and their inhumane disregard for the health and safety of the people whom they exploit.

Coast Guard nabs 2 smugglers, seize $7.5 million in cocaine following interdiction in Caribbean Sea

The Coast Guard Cutter Reef Shark transferred custody of two smugglers and offloaded approximately 250 kilograms cocaine at Coast Guard Base San Juan Saturday, following Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore's interdiction of a go-fast smuggling vessel in the Caribbean Sea.

The apprehended smugglers are Dominican Republic nationals, who were charged with possession with intent to distribute cocaine aboard a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. The cocaine seized has an estimated wholesale value of approximately $7.5 million dollars. U.S. Coast Guard Special Assistant United States Attorney Jordan H. Martin is in charge of the prosecution of this case.

The interdiction resulted from multi-agency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere and coordination with the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF).

During a routine patrol Wednesday, a U.S. Maritime Enforcement Aircraft (MEA) detected a suspect go-fast vessel, approximately 145 nautical miles south of the Dominican Republic. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Kathleen Moore to carry out the interdiction. With the assistance of the cutter's small boat, the crew of the Kathleen Moore interdicted the 25-foot vessel that was carrying two men and 10 bales of suspected contraband onboard, which tested positive for cocaine.

BORDERS AND CYBER-THREATS: HOW SAFE ARE WE?

By Petros Chatzis
Specialist – Border Management
and
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In the recent decades, the border landscape has dramatically evolved, from the traditional geographical related boundaries, which defined national sovereignty territories, towards a critical infrastructure, involving checks and surveillance and falling under law enforcement jurisdiction. Nations rely upon well-controlled borders, especially due to the interchanges of globalization and the increasing demand for movements, using all technological advances. On the other hand, the interdependence of cyber and physical areas and the heavy reliance on technology have greatly expanded the attack surface, giving more opportunities to malicious actors to attack borders. Due to the criticality of the borders, the impact from a cyberattack could be far-reaching. This article highlights the
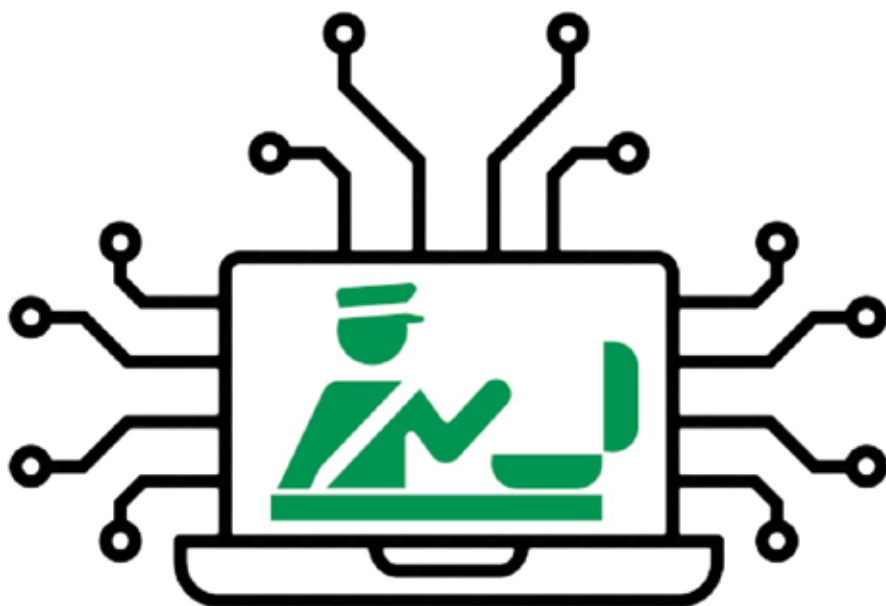
importance of the topic, presenting a list of cyber-threats and threat actors relevant to borders' control management operations.

To effectively protect border control management operations, one must first obtain a clear view of the different assets that take part in this complex infrastructure and then identify the cyber-threats that can jeopardize their operation. Border control increasingly relies on databases, large information systems and algorithms, which are stored in the cloud or controlled by third-parties. In parallel, the systems become more and more interconnected and interdepended, thus any failure to one of them could have a cascading effect to the others. Moreover, the heterogeneity of the different systems contributes to the complexity of the border control management infrastructure, which may consist of components of different types and origin, e.g., the manufacturers of cameras,

sensors and operating system. The advanced interconnectivity of systems, people, and processes along with the heavy reliance on smart technologies increase the exposure to cyber-threats, such as personal data breach and disruption of services, which could have a serious impact, resulting even in harming national security and sovereignty.

Existing cyber-attacks against the borders, reveal the reality and the dimension of the problem. The following list of examples is indicative and not exhaustive, aiming to demonstrate the range of cyber-attacks that can be executed against the borders:

• 2021. Belarus: Hackers claim to have accessed full database of those crossing the country's borders (Woollacott, 2021).

• 2021, Ukraine: Border control was hit with data-wiping malware, slowing refugee crossing (Alspach, 2022).

• 2019, USA: CBP Says Thousands of Traveler Photos Stolen in 'Malicious Cyber-Attack' (Levin, 2019).

• 2017, Taiwan: Since 2011, Taiwan used biometric e-Gates allowing fast-track passport control at main airports. It is suspected that the system had been compromised by a foreign government, due to a pre-installed 'backdoor' by the manufacturer (Everington, 2017).

• 2015, USA: Drug traffickers invested in spoofing and jamming the GPS systems of the border surveillance drones (Thompson, 2015).

These examples are indicative of the different threats that the borders face which extend the traditional "physical" threats, for example a person by-passing the border control by hiding in a vehicle or the use of a look-alike passport. Also, it needs to be taken into consideration that cyber-threats are not limited to intentional malicious actions, but extended also to non-malicious actions, like human errors, systems' misconfigurations or natural disasters (ENISA, 2021).

There are various threat taxonomies developed for different critical infrastructures. Specifically for the border control infrastructures, the relevant threat categories could be summarized as follows:

• **Natural and social phenomena** can cause serious disruptions in the functioning of the society, and it is a category where the border

management agencies do not have direct control such as the "push and pull" factors, e.g., a war situation causing mass migration movements. Other examples falling under this category are natural disasters, e.g., a fire destroying the border assets, a pandemic or even climate conditions such as strong winds not allowing the UAV surveillance flight. Disinformation or fake news is also a recent trend e.g., mass movements of people have been recently encountered trying to abolish border controls.

• **Third-party failures** are a great threat due to the interdependencies between border control management and third parties, which could seriously disrupt the border functions and assets; for example, a disruption caused by the internet service provider, errors or delays by companies to provide passenger or crew lists.

• **System failures & outages**, especially related to hardware and software failures, communication disruptions or even false alerts, e.g., a false alert of a database, could mean that an innocent person might be perceived as a threat.

• **Human errors** include all range of unintentional human activities which could harm the efficiency of border control processes and harm a range of assets. Fatigue could result to data-entry errors, non-compliance with security policies could lead to exposure of sensitive data, improper use of equipment could damage it and use of non-secure equipment might become a target of a malicious actor.

• **Malicious actions**: The core element of these threats is the intentional character and the aim, such as the disruption, destruction and unauthorized access to assets. Three subcategories are identified, in particular: a) Insider threats are caused by the border staff with malicious motivation, e.g. a corrupted officer misusing his data access rights to sell information, b) Physical attacks take place with traditional "physical" methods and tools, without reliance on technology, such as vandalism, sabotage and theft of assets, and c) Cyber-attacks are those targeting the ICT systems, in particular:

o **Malware** which is a generic term for software that has a malicious purpose, e.g., ransomware,

trojan horses, virus, and spyware. Unpatched systems could be easily become target of an attacker. Malware could be also installed due to negligence of the users in a variety of border systems, from PCs to remote border control assets.

o In **Denial of Service (DoS)** attacks the attackers block access from legitimate users and could be conducted by cyber-criminals to disrupt functions, e.g., the access to travel authorization systems, possibly requested as a service by criminals.

o **Penetration attacks** is a broad category for describing all those attacks involving breaking into systems and networks by using known vulnerabilities of hardware and software assets, including interception and network attacks. Such attacks can take place at the borders considering the vast reliance on wired and wireless networks, e.g., drones, remote cameras and radio communication devices, possibly to steal sensitive data.

o **Social engineering** is defined as the act to influence a person

to take action against their personal or organization's interest, including disclosure of confidential information (Sutton, 2017). A typical attack type is 'phishing' which is the process of attempting to obtain personal information, e.g., credentials from a target, using techniques like mass emails, which entice recipients into clicking a 'legitimate' website but in fact they end up in a phishing website (Computer Security Fundamentals 4th Edition, 2019). Border guards could be deceived by social engineering attacks, so that malicious actors can gain further access to a range of systems or even the border databases. Such attacks could be also addressed to other relevant stakeholders, such as third-party service providers, persons with access to the database servers, airport and port staff, as a way to gain cyber access to the border systems.

o **Advanced Persisted Threats (APTs)** are sophisticated and focused network attacks in which an individual or a group gains access to a network and stays undetected over a long period of time. APT groups may obtain open-source intelligence or use social engineering methods and perform monitoring of a specific target, aiming at high-value information in companies and governments, usually in a long-term campaign involving different steps, and they are potentially

funded by governments (Chain, Desmet, & Huygens, 2014).

The list above provides a broad categorization and description of threat types mainly affecting border control infrastructures. Moreover, threat types should not be seen in isolation but, sometimes complementing or even overlapping each other, e.g., APTs might use sophisticated malware as a main tool for their attack, whilst social engineering attacks may be the first step before spreading malware.

The coherent overview of the cyber-threat landscape should certainly incorporate the different threat actors as well. Gaining a good understanding of the threat actors and their motives is essential to prioritize decision-making and effectively address the relevant threats. In terms of threat actors, there are those that unintentionally impact assets and those that have a malicious intent. Unintentional

human errors can be caused by a variety of factors, e.g., lack of sufficient training, lack of a proper security policy in place, lack of skills or negligence. This dimension does not only apply to the custom officers or border guards but also to the wider border community, e.g., airport and port staff, service providers, etc. On the other hand, there are several threat actors with a malicious intention, in particular: a) Insiders motivated mostly by financial gains, for example corrupted border guards. b) Irregular travelers are all those persons trying to enter/exit the borders without fulfilling the legal requirements, e.g., by presenting fake documents. c) Nation States is a main category of threat actors as they have the adequate resources for sophisticated attacks, while they can use advanced technology and methods. Main motive is espionage, seeking to gain access to sensitive information, such as personal data

and commercial information. In the frame of a warfare, their motive could be even harming national security or disrupting critical infrastructure. d) Criminals and criminal groups are largely driven by financial gain and try to exploit different vulnerabilities to achieve their target. Examples of criminal groups include migrant smugglers, drug and weapon dealers. e) Cyber-criminals are all malicious actors using cyber techniques, usually in an attempt to generate money for example by selling personal data in the dark-web. In addition, these actors could offer their services to criminal groups to facilitate their illegal cross-border activities. f) Terrorists may use the borders for illegally trafficking small arms, weapons, and explosives (UNCCT, 2018), whilst illegal border crossing could be part of a plan for a terrorist attack. g) Activists are driven by the willingness to affect the political

or social change and some of the respective groups are exclusively dedicated to a struggle against border controls, e.g., the "no borders" movement.

It is common that synergies are established among the different threat actors. Some examples are:

- Nation States could "instrumentalize" the migration flow as a part of their political agenda, whilst borders can be a favorable target for long-term espionage campaigns undertaken by cyber-criminals.

- An organized crime group might facilitate irregular travelers, using the classified information provided by insiders.

- A cyber-criminal can be used by traditional criminals for accessing patrolling information or gaining access to the surveillance equipment.

Of course, threat actors are highly flexible and can constantly adjust their attack strategies, for example, a malicious actor can easily target another border post, if the one initially targeted is well secured.

Cyber-threats are a modern challenge for the border infrastructures and specific actions are required to reduce the vulnerabilities and mitigate the impact of a cyber-attack. Border control shall be considered a "critical infrastructure" requir-ing a multifaceted security approach: staff trainings, focused risk assessments, en-hanced information exchange and strengthened collaboration with the private sector. It is also important to keep privacy and fundamental rights as essential pa-rameters of every policy, since these aspects need to be well protected. Technolo-gy solutions could also help amplify security states in borders. Absolute security cannot be guaranteed, however, a holistic security approach focusing on enhanc-ing awareness and preparation of people, implementing appropriate technologies and processes would assist in minimizing risks and protecting the operation of border control infrastructures (Chatzis & Stavrou, 2022).

Chile Receiving Synthetic Drugs From Netherlands, Belgium

Record-breaking MDMA seizures in Chilean ports have linked yet another Latin American country to synthetic drugs from the Netherlands and Belgium, some of the world's largest ecstasy producers.

Authorities in Iquique and San Antonio, port cities in northern Chile, discovered nearly 475,000 MDMA tablets on various ships departing from the Netherlands and Belgium in the past two months. The

shipments, valued at $17 million, came from the ports of Rotterdam, Zeebrugge and Antwerp.

The operation led to the arrest of seven Dominican nationals, hinting that the Dominican Republic may have been a transit point for these drugs.

The smugglers hid pills in a motor home, three cars and a mechanical compressor. Due to the route and modus operandi of the various shipments, authorities established that the drugs belonged to the same organization.

The discoveries in northern Chile are not the first hauls of Dutch ecstasy in Chile, but recent seizures have entered the country by plane, not ship. In April 2022, authorities at the Santiago airport found over 6,000 ecstasy tablets in luggage originating in the Netherlands, while in 2019, ecstasy was found in a table shipped from the Netherlands by plane.
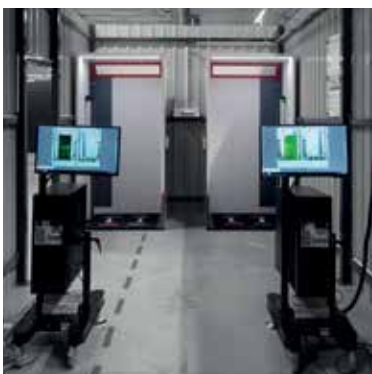
39 arrests in cross-border operation against migrant smuggling in small boats across English Channel

Concerted work on several national law enforcement investigations across the EU has led to the dismantling of one of the most active criminal networks smuggling

migrants across the English Channel in small boats. The final blow to the network was the result of the close cooperation between law enforcement and judicial authorities from Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom, supported by Europol and Eurojust.

A number of logistical cells operating from Germany and the Netherlands, alongside UK-based hawaladars, served the organisational needs of this criminal structure. The competition for control of the lucrative migrant smuggling business and for launch sites for the boats regularly resulted in acts of serious violence inside the criminal network, including two attempted murders in committed in France and Germany.

More than 130 arrests during EU-wide action against child trafficking

In a joint action supported by Europol, officers of the participating European law enforcement entities and labour inspectorate authorities arrested over 130 criminals and successfully identified around 60 new suspects. The joint action days against trafficking in

human beings were coordinated by Frontex with the participation of 22 countries alongside INTERPOL.

More than 22 480 law enforcement officers took part in the action days, during which checks were carried out at European sea, land, and air borders, with an additional focus on heavily utilised routes into Europe.

The action days resulted in over 130 arrests and around 60 additional suspects being identified, as well as more than 100 new investigations being initiated. In total, over 130 possible victims of human trafficking were identified, more than a dozen of them being confirmed as minors. The checks led to over 220 forged documents being detected.

Three arrests after police action against religious extremist propaganda in Germany

The German Regional Police (Landeskriminalamt) struck against the so-called 'Caliphate State' religious extremist organisation. During the action day, coordinated by the Landeskriminalamt Rhineland-Palatinate, German law enforcement officers from six German States raided 50 locations in a joint operation and arrested three individuals. The arrested individuals are suspected members of 'Caliphate State', which is a banned organisation in Germany. During the house searches, officers seized three firearms, propaganda material, and more than EUR 270 000. Investigators are currently working on identifying international links.

Germany made membership of this organisation illegal in 2001. The prohibition order states that the ideology of the 'Caliphate State' violates the principle of democracy since it demands the primacy of the Sharia law over democratic institutions. At that time, the so-called 'Caliphate State' organisation had about 4 000 members. The members of this well-structured illegal network, which is widely spread across Germany, focus on radicalisation and collection of funds.

Arrests, thousands of seizures in African clampdown on firearms trafficking

Operation Trigger VIII involved some 520 law enforcement officials targeting 35 hotspots across eight African countries: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

More than 20,000 checks were carried out against INTERPOL's global databases, resulting in the recovery of 480 firearms and 42 arrests tied to firearms offences. In addition, 14 organized crime networks were identified and dismantled.

Authorities seized some 6,000 firearm parts, components, ammunition and explosives, and EUR 110,000 in cash.

Reinforced border controls and surveillance once again demonstrated that organized crime groups are benefiting from a convergence of crimes and using the same routes for a number of illicit activities.

An additional 78 arrests were made in connection with trafficking in illicit goods, with more than 45 tonnes seized, including more than 3 of fake medication, 1.5 tonnes of drugs (cannabis, amphetamines and opioids) and more than 10,000 litres of contraband petrol.

Operation Weka II: Nearly 700 human trafficking victims rescued

In an INTERPOL-led crackdown on the criminal groups behind human trafficking and migrant smuggling, authorities across 44 countries have rescued nearly 700 victims of human trafficking.

Operation Weka II was carried out where officers progressed cases and carried out intensified checks at border points. Results yielded a total of 300 arrests, including 88 suspected traffickers and 83 migrant

smugglers. Some 100 additional arrests were made for other crimes such as document forgery, organized crime, firearms and drug trafficking, highlighting the poly-criminal nature of organized crime groups.

Weka II saw successful outcomes for a number of human trafficking cases linked to previous INTERPOL operations. For example, authorities in Morocco located and arrested a 34-year old man long suspected of recruiting, housing and trafficking women from Nigeria to Morocco, then on to Spain and other European destinations, where they were forced into prostitution. This high-profile arrest is the result of sustained cooperation between countries since Operation Weka I (2021).

In a separate case, police in Côte d'Ivoire arrested an Ivorian man suspected of running a transnational crime group trafficking women from Morocco and Guinea to Spain for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Hundreds of stolen cars recovered in global police operation against vehicle trafficking

A global police operation targeting stolen vehicle trafficking has led to the recovery of hundreds of cars, trucks and motorbikes in just two weeks.

Operation Carback saw frontline police at seaports and land border crossings in 77 countries use INTERPOL's secure global police communications network – I-24/7 –

to check vehicles and their owners against INTERPOL's databases and instantaneously detect potential criminals or criminal activity.

Strengthening border security co-operation with Mediterranean Partners

A meeting of OSCE Mediterranean Points of Contact Network on Border Security and Management, organized by the Border Security and Management Unit of the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and

the Spanish Policía Nacional concluded. The Spanish National Police hosted this meeting in Madrid and brought together high-level participants from the border and customs services of Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Morocco.

Participants exchanged information on current border security related challenges in the region and have identified future training and co-operation needs. The Permanent Mission of North Macedonia, as Chair of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group, presented its priorities while the Spanish National Police provided insight on its efforts to prevent and combat terrorist attacks and the cross-border travel of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF).

OSCE promotes enhanced co-operation on border security in Central Asia

A three-day regional meeting of 35 senior representatives of the border services from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan took place in Issyk-Kul province.

The main purpose of the meeting was to conduct practical exercises on the "Line of Conduct of Border

Guards" with the aim to strengthen co-operation and security, as well as contribute to confidence building, good coordination and neighbourly relations in the Central Asian region.

The event served as a platform for the participants to discuss how to effectively address common threats such as international terrorism, violent extremism, illicit trafficking in weapons and drugs, transnational crime and illegal migration. In light of regional developments, including in Afghanistan, it is particularly important to ensure stability and security in the Central Asian region. Thus, one of the key messages discussed at the regional meeting was to enhance the common understanding that today's transnational threats can be tackled effectively only with proper co-ordination and co-operation.

OSCE and Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency mark the International Day

Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

To mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe supported Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency (Agency) in organizing awareness-raising campaign.

The campaign titled "Anti-drug Caravan 2022 – Youth against drugs" took place in Khorog, Kulob, Bokhtar, Tursunzoda, Khujand and Dushanbe cities. Over 850 participants, including representatives of local governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society

and youth, participated in the campaign and raised awareness of the significant problem illicit drugs represent to society.

IOM Deplores Deaths at Chad-Libya Border and Calls for Stronger Action for Migrant Protection

The IOM deplores the deaths of at least 20 migrants in the Libyan desert and renews its call for stronger action to protect migrants along the Chad-Libya border.

On 28 June, the bodies of 18 persons believed to be Chadian and two Libyans were reportedly recovered near the border with Chad. According to the Libyan Ambulance and Emergency Services, the group is believed to have died of dehydration.

"The death of twenty people in the Libyan desert yesterday is yet another wake up call for the whole international community and a reminder that we are very far from achieving the goal of 'leaving no one behind', the mantra of the 2030 Agenda," says Federico Soda, IOM Libya Chief of Mission.

"The loss of lives we are witnessing both in the Mediterranean Sea and in the deserts of southern Libya are both unacceptable and avoidable."

The Sahara Desert is among the world's most perilous and deadliest migration routes. According to IOM's Missing Migrants Project, more than 2,000 migrant deaths have been documented since 2014 in the Sahara Desert alone, but experts believe the numbers are higher.

Expanding Evidence Base on Child Labour, Forced Labour, and Human Trafficking

The IOM, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) join forces to host a conference showcasing new research findings on child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking.

Worldwide, more than 25 million people were in forced labour for the commercial gain of others, while 160 million children – 63 million girls and 97 million boys – were estimated to be engaged in child labour globally at the beginning of 2020. Nearly half of those were involved in hazardous work.

Through the IOM and ILO's Research to Action (RTA) project, 16 junior researchers have been awarded fellowships and seed grants to address knowledge gaps and produce high-impact studies, while four projects have received awards from IPA's Human Trafficking Research Initiative (HTRI) Competitive Research Fund to carry out exploratory research and evaluate the effectiveness of counter-trafficking interventions.

Returns Increase in Ukraine, but 6.2 Million People Remain Internally Displaced

More than 5.5 million displaced persons have returned to their homes in Ukraine while the overall number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains high at over 6.2 million, according to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) latest report. About half of those who had left their homes due to the war since 24 February have now returned, especially to the North of the country and to the capital Kyiv.

The number of returns has grown significantly – by 24 per cent – over the last month. Most returnees have returned to their homes from other locations within Ukraine and about three-quarters of those people plan to stay. Only 10 per cent of people are returning to Ukraine from abroad. Considering the situation in Ukraine remains highly volatile, and despite a majority of all returnees (internally displaced and coming from abroad) indicating their intention to stay in their homes (74 per cent), returns may not be long-term.

Frontex supports European and international authorities combat firearms smuggling

Arms smuggling is a criminal threat affecting law enforcement officers around the world. Frontex has published a new international version of the Handbook on Firearms for Border Guards and Customs Officers to help national authorities fight against this crime and protect their citizens.

As the current conflict in Ukraine may have a long-term impact on weapons proliferation in Europe and beyond, it is important to treat the trafficking of illicit firearms as one of the key law enforcement priorities. The international version of the firearms handbook, which builds on the EU edition published last year, puts together the recent developments and best practices existing on both European and international levels to support national border and customs authorities in both EU and non-EU countries to reinforce their operational response against arms-related crime.

The handbook contains the latest information on firearms, their parts and ammunition, associated documentation, and the phenomenon of firearm trafficking itself. It also provides guidelines for border control and further handling of seized weapons.

Frontex opens risk analysis cell in Lomé

Frontex has opened a risk analysis cell in Lomé in cooperation with the Togolese authorities as part of the European Union-funded Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) support project.

Composed of local analysts, the role of the cell is to collect and analyse strategic data on cross-border crime. This includes information on illegal border crossings, document fraud, trafficking in human beings and other types of cross-border crime and illicit trafficking. The data shared between the national authorities and Frontex will make it possible to produce analyses and recommendations to effectively address cross-border criminal threats.

For Joaquín Tasso Vilallonga, Ambassador of the European Union to the Togolese Republic, the inauguration of the risk analysis cell will contribute to "defining common and effective responses to cross-border offences".

Located within the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection, the Lomé Risk Analysis Cell is the seventh created within the framework of the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC).

Frontex Management Board selects interim Executive Director

The Frontex Management Board has decided that Aija Kalnaja will serve as Executive Director ad interim of the Agency as of 1 July.

Ms Kalnaja, previously Deputy Executive Director for Standing Corps Management, was deputising for the Executive Director since May. She will continue leading the agency with the support of Uku Sarekanno, Deputy Executive Director for Information Management and Processes and Lars Gerdes, Deputy Executive Director for Returns and Operations.

The executive management team will focus on strengthening the operational activities of Frontex and continuing its support to Member States and our partners outside the European Union. The agency is currently deploying more than 2200 officers and staff at and beyond EU's external borders in 17 operations.

Transregional cooperation promoted by SEACOP

Transregional cooperation is a key principal of SEACOP V's project. Operating across three world regions (Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean) faced with similar difficulties, we strive to enhance partnerships, information sharing and opportunities for joint maritime operations between different countries.

The project organised a visit of the intelligence centre of the Armada Nacional de Colombia for partners from Cabo Verde, Ghana, and Senegal.

This seeks to improve these countries' respective fight against illicit maritime trafficking by adapting to the constantly evolving methods of organised crime groups.

This came as part of a regional meeting organised in Cartagena by the SEACOP Regional Coordinator, which witnessed the participation of partners from Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Senegal, Ghana and Cape Verde.

Over three days, participants witnessed general presentations by country, an introduction to SEACOP's objectives in the Latin American region, as well as expected results for the following months.

US Border Patrol, FURA Seize 898 Pounds of Cocaine near Cabo Rojo Puerto Rico

U.S. Border Patrol Agents and the Puerto Rico Police Department Joint Forces for Rapid Action (FURA, for its Spanish abbreviation) detected and intercepted Monday morning a vessel with four non-citizens from the Dominican Republic transporting 898 pounds (407 kilos) of cocaine near Cabo Rojo. The estimated value of the seized contraband is $8.5 million.

"One of the most important activities of a Border Patrol agent is line watch, which involves the detection, prevention and apprehension of smugglers at or near the coastal border by maintaining surveillance from a covert position," stated Scott Garrett, Acting Chief Patrol Agent for the Ramey Border Patrol Sector. "This interception demonstrate that cooperation and coordination are critical to interdict these smuggling ventures into the island."

Early morning on July 7, Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents detected a suspected smuggling vessel with four subjects onboard traveling without navigation lights approximately twelve nautical miles west of Cabo Rojo. The agents coordinated with a FURA Martine Unit, an Operation Stonegarden Partner, to intercept the vessel.

Prior to intercept, the individuals inside the vessel made evasive maneuvers while jettisoning several bales overboard. Once stopped, the vessel had four adult non-citizens claiming to be citizens and nationals of the Dominican Republic. A search of the vessel revealed a concealed firearm. A total of 346 bricks were recovered from the water.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) took custody of the individuals and the contraband for investigation and prosecution.

APPLICATION OF ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION (API) AND PASSENGER NAME RECORD (PNR) SECURITY SYSTEMS BY USING TRAVEL INFORMATION

An abstract of a research report conducted by by Rovshan Namazov Head of Division at the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The full research report can be read at www.border-security-report.com

Protecting the borders from the threats such as terrorists, criminals, illegal movement of weapons, drugs, and contraband, as well as facilitating the seamless and lawful movement of people across the borders is quite significant to national security, economic prosperity and sovereignty of the nations.

Broadly speaking, border risk priorities ranges for each country and each operation is based on risk analysis and uniquely tailored to the circumstances identified by law enforcement agencies. The scope of threats ranges from terrorists who may have weapons of mass destruction to transnational criminals smuggling drugs or counterfeit goods, to unauthorized migrants intending to enter the

country. However, there is one truth that a top priority mostly for all law enforcement agencies is to keep terrorists and their weapons away from their borders while facilitating the legitimate travelling of passengers and vehicles.

The border activities against the potential threats are differing from the availability of various types of borders – air, land, sea, and railway. Implementation of effective border management and security activities particularly presents unique challenges at the air borders. Because of that, the huge volume of arrivals and exits and high frequency of the flights make it very hard to detect risky passengers on time at the airport

by law enforcement agencies, while ensuring the smooth movement of legitimate passengers.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has reported 4.3 billion passengers globally carried by air transport on scheduled services in 2018, a 6.1% increase over 2017. It is estimated that the global volume of air passengers grows at a rate between 5% and 7% every year and could reach 7.2 billion by 2036 (Commission, European Commission, 2020).

Certainly, the pandemic plunge in air traffic since 2019 and right after wide-scale lockdown measures, border closures, travel

restrictions and strict quarantine rules dramatically reduced the international passenger traffic. ICAO reports that as seat capacity fell by 50% in 2020, passenger totals dropped by 60% with just 1.8 billion passengers taking to the air during the first year of the pandemic, compared to 4.5 billion in 2019 (ICAO, 2021). The pandemic is going to be over and following ICAO, in an optimistic scenario, passenger traffic is expected to recover to 86% of its 2019 levels by December 2022, based on 73% international traffic recovery and 95% domestic (ICAO, 2022).

The modern world is developing and witnessing many large-scale events and conferences and first

and foremost tourism development is a key strategy of each country. With the dramatic growth in passenger numbers on scheduled and charter flights across the world on one hand and the increasing trend of terrorism and other transnational crimes on the other, it is difficult to ignore the threats against the airline industry and passengers. This continuous growth has greatly increased the workload of border agencies (customs, border service, immigration, police, etc.) and additionally, it requires certain proactive measures aiming at speeding up border controls while combating irregular immigration and ensuring internal security, like the processing of Advance Passenger Information (hereafter API) and Passenger Name Records (hereafter PNR).

API data is the set of data consisting of the details of the flight by the aircraft operators and the biographic data of a passenger or crew member available on his

or her travel document collected by air carriers during check-in and, complemented with travel route information, transmitted by these carriers to the border control authorities of the country of destination. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), over 90 countries now require airlines to send API before the flight's arrival. More countries are planning to introduce similar requirements soon.

In general, API data includes:

• Surname;

• First name;

• Middle name;

• Date of birth;

• Gender;

• Citizenship or nationality;

• Passport number;

• Country of passport issuance.

API data elements are transmitted by the airline companies to the law enforcement agencies of the arrival

country during check-in, more clearly prior to the flight departure and the time or frequency of the data transmission requirements can be different under the established procedures between the governments and airline companies.

PNR data – is a generic name given to records created by aircraft operators or their authorized agents for each journey booked by or on behalf of any passenger. PNR data are used by operators for their own commercial and operational purposes in providing air transportation services. More clearly, PNR is related to travelers' reservation and itinerary data contained in the carrier's departure and control reservation systems. The PNR data can contain some more sensitive personal data and the set of data required from the carriers can be varied according to the legislation of each country. Normally the PNR data includes, but is not limited to the following:

• PNR locator code ;

• Date of reservation;

• Dates of intended travel;

• Ticketing information;

• Travel agency information;

• Seat information;

• Check-in information;

• Baggage information;

• Phone number, mail address, payment details and some other sensitive data can also be required.

API data elements are transmitted by the airline companies to the law enforcement agencies of the arrival

country during check-in, more clearly prior to the flight departure and the time or frequency of the data transmission requirements can be different under the established procedures between the governments and airline companies.

It is important to note that countries should limit their data requirements to the minimum necessary and according to national legislation. Principally, API data can be divided into two main categories:

Non-interactive Batch Style API Systems - It is a simple form of API to implement and the data are transmitted as a single data file or batch. The definition of API Batch is an electronic communications system whereby required data elements are collected and transmitted to border control agencies prior to flight departure or arrival and made available on the primary line at the airport of entry (ICAO, Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, 2017). Non-interactive batch style API data is covering all passengers and, in many cases, all crew members on board a specific flight are gathered during the check-in process and then transmitted in a single manifest message at or immediately following flight reconciliation or departure (WCO/IATA/ICAO, 2014).

Interactive API System (i-API) – It is an electronic system that transmits, during check-in, API data elements collected by the aircraft operator to public authorities, who

within existing business processing times for passenger check-in, return to the operator a response message for each passenger and/or crew member. i-API allows government and carriers to take precautionary activities interactively and reduce any potential risks prior to travel. Implementation of i-API systems is more complex than non-interactive batch style API systems in terms of cost and time. Governments should establish best practices when working with individual carriers and service providers, to ensure adequate network protocols are available. Therefore, formulation of certain action plans and comprehensive analysis is the key part of general the implementation process.

Legal readiness

Legal readiness and having a strongly complied legal basis is the first key pillar of the implementation process of API and PNR systems. At first, the availability of appropriate legislation adjusts and reinforces collaboration matters

on data transmission between the airline industry and governments. The stipulation of certain articles in national legislation on data transmission issues (set of data, format, frequency, time etc.) makes clear the format of cooperation and create legal obligations as well as penalty mechanisms between the parties. In as much as, airline companies are sometimes not willing to transmit the passenger data in advance to law enforcement agencies of the arrival country, and it creates additional difficulties for law enforcement agencies to require the data from the carriers in advance if there is no legal obligation between the parties.

On top of that, one of the important aspects of API and PNR systems is the consideration of data protection mechanisms and this issue need to be legally adjusted before the application of the systems. Legislation on data protection must be enacted in countries to protect the individual's right to privacy and allow individuals to exercise

their rights relating to the use of their personal data. Certainly, each country has its own legislation and data protection mechanisms vary from country to country. However, there is a common provision of such legislation. Such as, personal data (WCO/IATA/ICAO 2014) :

• should be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully;

• should be stored for legitimate purposes and not used in any way incompatible with those purposes;

• should be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which they are stored;

• should be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;

• should be preserved in a form which permits identification of the data subjects for no longer than is required for the purposes for which that data is stored.

Concerning the international obligation on States to implement API and PNR systems at a national level, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has already

elevated the deployment of API capacity initially as a recommended practice and followingly, accepted as a Standard in Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention. On 23 October 2017, a standard was established under Annex 9 — Facilitation, regarding the use of Advance Passenger Information (API) systems by the ICAO's Member States, and recognized that many ICAO's Member States have yet to implement this standard.

Article 9.5 clearly states that each Contracting State shall establish an Advance Passenger Information (API) system and Article 9.6 stipulates that the API system of each Contracting State shall be supported by appropriate legal authority (such as, inter alia, legislation, regulation or decree) and be consistent with internationally recognized standards for API. In addition to that, the obligation to develop the capability to collect, process and analyze, PNR data should become a standard according to the Amendment 28 to the Annex 9 .

Another great sample of international obligation, the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) was adopted and the resolution clearly states that the Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law, underscoring that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures, and are an essential part of a successful counter-terrorism effort and notes the importance of respect for the rule of law to effectively prevent and combat terrorism. Additionally, it has been stressed in the resolution that foreign terrorist fighters increase the intensity, duration and intractability of conflicts, and also may pose a serious threat to their States of origin, the States they transit and the States to which they travel.

In connection with these provisions, the UN Member States are called upon to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted entry into or transit through their territories, and further calls upon Member States to report any such departure from their territories, or such attempted entry into or

transit through their territories, of such individuals to the UN Security Council Committee, as well as sharing this information with the State of residence or nationality, as appropriate and in accordance with domestic law and international obligations.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017) is another obligation that was put in place for States to implement a Passenger Name Record (PNR) system in the fight against terrorism and serious crime. Chapter VII, "Border security and information sharing", calls upon the Member States to prevent the movement of terrorists by effective national border controls and controls on the issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents and urges the Member States to expeditiously exchange information, through bilateral or multilateral mechanisms and in accordance with domestic and international law.

Moreover, resolution double stresses that in furtherance of paragraph 9 of resolution 2178 and the standard established by ICAO that its Member States establish advance passenger information (API) systems as of October 23, 2017, Member States shall require airlines operating in their territories to provide API to the appropriate national authorities, in accordance with domestic law and international

obligations, in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted travel to, entry into or transit through their territories.

However, the latest and most important part of this resolution was an obligation about the PNR data collection. Article 12 clearly states that the UN Member States shall develop the capability to collect, process and analyze, in furtherance of ICAO standards and recommended practices, passenger name record (PNR) data and to ensure PNR data is used by and shared with all their competent national authorities, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for the purpose of preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist offenses and related travel.

Further, calls upon Member States, the UN, and other international, regional, and sub-regional entities to provide technical assistance, resources and capacity building to Member States in order to implement such capabilities, and, where appropriate, encourages Member States to share PNR data with relevant or concerned Member States to detect foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin or nationality, or travelling or relocating to a third country, and also urges ICAO to work with its Member States to establish a standard for the collection, use, processing and protection of PNR data.

Furthermore, the UN Security

Council Resolution 2482(2019) states that implement obligations to collect and analyze Advance Passenger Information (API) and develop the ability to collect, process and analyze, in furtherance of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards recommended practices, Passenger Name Record (PNR) data and to ensure PNR data is used by and shared with competent national authorities, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which will help security officials make connections between individuals associated to organized crime, whether domestic or transnational and terrorists, to stop terrorist travel and prosecute terrorism and **organized crime.**

WCO/IATA/ICAO (2014) API guidelines are also one of the main international regulatory instruments on API and joint recommendations by the World Customs Organization (WCO), International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) are quite useful and productive in this regard.

Conclusion

In summary, effective implementation of API and PNR systems requires governments to apply a comprehensive approach by considerin the legal, technical, operational and cooperation sides of the implementation stages. The transmission of high-quality data from the carriers to law enforcement agencies, the establishment

appropriate implementation of the concept of integrated border management. The development of cooperation among all relevant authorities and agencies involved in border management extremely enhances the data and information sharing practice and a risk-based data-driven approach in operational activities.

The full research report can be read at www.border-security-report.com

of closer cooperation between stakeholders and application of effective targeting by using intelligence and risk management tools help border officials to identify high-risk travellers on time, prevent serious crimes and facilitate movement of legitimate passengers across the borders. The effective processing and profiling of API and PNR data play a crucial role in ensuring national security and

NAPTIP DG Seeks Increased Collaboration Between Judges and Prosecutors for Seamless Dispensation of Justice on Human Trafficking Cases

Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Dr Fatima Waziri – Azi, has called for an increased efficiency in the Prosecution and Justice administration of cases of Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Courts across the Country in order to serve as deterrent and reduced impunity associated with the phenomenon.

Dr Fatima Waziri – Azi said that it is clearly evident that Trafficking in Persons offences created under the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, (TIPPEA) 2015, are serious offences which have a nexus with national security and stability of the nation and as such require the full cooperation of both the Bar and the bench in addressing the menace.

The Director General stated this in Abuja at the commencement of a two day Judges and Prosecutors Conference on Human Trafficking.

The conference is a component of a project funded by the European Union and implemented by the International and Ibero – American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP) under the Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Nigeria (A-TIPSOM).

It would be recalled that Dr Fatima Waziri – Azi, had listed the increased prosecution of high profile cases among her major priorities on assumption of office in September 2021. Impressively, she has continued to matched words with actions as no fewer than four high profile traffickers across the World are currently been prosecuted by the Agency in partnership with sister Law Enforcement Agencies in the target destination Countries.

The NAPTIP Director General told the participants that "The objective of this conference is to create awareness among legal practitioners and the Judiciary on the current ills and trends of Human Trafficking as well as analyse the various elements of TIP offences thereby, ensuring seamless investigation, effective prosecution and more conviction of human trafficking cases.

"To create an avenue whereby the Judges and Prosecutors share experience on issues of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants for a better understanding of the crime and proffering ways of addressing it. To encourage strict punishment to offenders of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants by Courts to serve as deterrent to offenders.

"To encourage the award of compensation and restitution to Victims of Human Trafficking by the Courts across the Country. To sensitize Judges on the ills of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants in Nigeria."

She pointed out that at the end of the well – attended conference which was the first of its kind since the establishment of the Agency, NAPTIP hoped to get increased efficiency in the Prosecution and Justice Administration of cases of Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Courts across the Country.

"Improved protection for Victims of Human Trafficking by the Courts. Increase awareness on the effect of Trafficking in Persons to the society. Increase output on the conviction rate in cases of Trafficking in persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

"Increased Knowledge on Trafficking in Persons offences amongst the Judges and Prosecutors as well as enhance speedy dispensation of justice especially on human trafficking cases", Dr Waziri – Azi stated.

TRAVEL THE WORLD CONTACTLESS WITH SEAMLESS TRAVEL

By Corinna Schindler, Global Vice President Business Line Verification at Veridos.

Travel and mobility are key factors in our fast-paced and globalized world. Seamless travel describes concepts that offer a user-friendly and secure travel experience by allowing digitalized processing at borders. However, there are still several challenges to overcome when it comes to its implementation.

Over the last few decades, economic crises and critical

security situations have repeatedly hit international air traffic and the travel industry. However, customer demand has never collapsed for long. It is therefore not surprising that passenger numbers are already recovering and even increasing following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against this backdrop, airport operators, airlines, and authorities are facing increasing challenges in terms of the structural organization

of air travel. Higher passenger numbers mean a greater need for more efficient and easy processes throughout the entire customer journey. At the same time, safety standards must not be compromised. Seamless travel is one possible solution to these complex challenges. The concept of seamless travel aims to minimize the traveler's individual touchpoint with controls, check-ins, and physical documents and in its place provide a simplified, convenient travel experience.

Seamless travel: The journey starts in the app

Digitalized travel starts with the planning and organization of a trip. Users can easily book their hotel in just a few clicks, view suitable flights and pay for everything online from the comfort of their home. At their destination, they can easily reserve a rental car, and the corresponding app even takes care of check-in via self-service.

But one component remains physical for the time being: travelers must always carry ID cards or passports with them. In some places, they even still must physically apply for a visa or an entry application for their destination country. In the future, steps such as updating and applying for documents, such as passports, could also be implemented digitally.

However, the most serious obstacles on the road to fully digitized and seamless travel arise at the airport itself.

Contactless through the airport of tomorrow

Individual concepts of seamless travel have been implemented to varying degrees in certain regions. Within the Schengen Area, for example, EU citizens can scan their passports at an e-gate, which is far faster than the manual inspection lines.

However, current concepts and processes are not yet truly contactless. Passengers still need to provide credentials to enter security zones and the aircraft itself, such as in the form of a printed boarding pass or by showing their passport.

So, what would a traveler's journey look like in an airport that truly embraces seamless travel? After booking online, passengers pass through the arrivals' hall and, on the way to airport security, walk through a biometric corridor. There, a state-of-the-art camera system verifies the individuals and compares their passport and biometric data with both the information in the database and the passenger list. In this ideal scenario, the entire process takes place while they are on the move, so that travelers don't even notice the security check. As well as simplifying and speeding up the process, it also eliminates contact points with equipment and direct contact with airport personnel - aspects that have become particularly important since the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, the toolset for identifying fraudulent identity documents has also developed. Even when identification is carried out via automatic biometric methods, manual checks are possible in cases of doubt or irregularities.

Once at the destination, the passenger data is already stored on the system and no additional

checks are required. The rental car company will also have received the required information and the booked car will be available without customers having to wait. Immediately, the entire trip becomes less bureaucratic, more convenient and far faster due to reduced waiting times. If optimally implemented, passengers will no longer even be aware that they are passing through the various zones of an airport; instead, they can expect a contactless and seamless travel experience. However, the road to reaching this goal is a long one, full of challenges.

A concept in its infancy

Even if there are concrete ideas about seamless travelling concepts, decisive foundations for their implementation are still missing. What are the reasons for this? In addition to the technical requirements, the main obstacles lie in the need for international cooperation at all levels. While the private sector, especially

airlines and airport operators, has already joined forces in umbrella organizations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) or the International Air Transportation Association (IATA), there are significant challenges of cooperation between government authorities with sovereign tasks.

Travelers' personal data is a basic prerequisite to realize international seamless travel – both at the point of departure and destination. But the exchange of data between individual countries is not yet uniformly regulated. And even though there are isolated bilateral agreements and corresponding programs for air travelers, for example between the US and Germany, there is a lack of standardization – a problem that certainly cannot be solved in the short term. Such a solution would have to consider a lot of different legal aspects, as well as data protection issues. This shows that

there is still a lot of work to be done in this area before a seamless travel concept can be implemented globally.

Different data protection laws in various countries are still an unsolved problem in this regard. Working groups such as the Secure Identity Alliance (SIA) are endeavoring to develop standards for interfaces and system concepts to realize an efficient exchange between countries.

To accelerate respective developments, some airlines and local authorities have already joined forces and offer their customers programs that promise fast processing of entry and exit procedures thanks to stored data. As sensitive personal data is collected here, providers should focus on cyber security, transparent handling and obtaining consent to ensure acceptance from travelers.

A question of technology

In addition, technology still faces some challenges. A biometric corridor that can identify and assign people beyond doubt requires powerful cameras, as well as the appropriate software. Notable innovation under development includes long e-gates that perform biometric identification. The use of a long field of vision is often the preferred method of choice here - capturing compliant images has become increasingly reliable in recent years. However, in a government environment, such

as when running security checks, fingerprints are still considered more accurate. Iris identification is one trend attracting attention. This is considered highly secure. However, given the iris's comparatively small area, high-resolution cameras need to perform the scan while in motion. Although the technology still has some challenges to overcome, iris scanning may prove to be a viable solution in the future.

The self-service offering is an important aspect of modern travel for passengers. The easier and less complicated it is for passengers to submit their personal data in advance, the less waiting time this process will take further down the line. To this end, approaches such as e-kiosks in airports have proved to be highly successful. Here, travelers fill out a questionnaire before their flight, scan their passport and verify their identity using biometric methods – such as facial recognition. Once the data has been successfully collected, they currently receive a printout that is checked by security. This solution, which is particularly widespread in the US, is a step towards simplified travel and offers great potential.

However, even if modern airports implement the latest solutions and enable seamless travel, not all countries are at the same technological level. Airports that cannot implement current technologies will therefore continue to exist in the future and will inevitably limit seamless travel offerings.

Quo vadis, seamless travel?

Many aspects influence the trend towards seamless travel. Automation and digitization are constantly leading to new solutions, for example in the field of touchless biometrics. Contactless biometric verification is not yet accurate enough for governmental standards and verifications, but shows huge potential for the future.

One of the biggest challenges is certainly the interaction between many different parties, especially the different requirements for private and government sectors. While airports and airline operators strive for an increase in digital technology, the security stakeholders don't want to exclude human checkpoints altogether. Here, the focus is on safe and repeatable execution.

Nevertheless, the trend is clearly moving in the direction of seamless travel, albeit at locally varying speeds and despite the many local and global discussions that remain open. On the way to this goal, it is important to create new standards in international cooperation that enable collaboration between states and airlines and thus ensure the best future travel experience.

EU launches the Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova

In the margins of the informal Home Affairs Council Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson and the Moldovan Minister of Internal Affairs, Ana Revenco launched the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova. As an operational platform, the EU Support Hub will support cooperation on internal security and border management between the EU, its Agencies, the Member States and the Moldovan authorities. The hub will be established in Chișinău and coordinated by the Delegation of the European Union to Moldova.

Russia's unjustified war against Ukraine led to risks to the internal security both in the EU and in Moldova. Due to its geographical location, Moldova has a key role to play in addressing the criminal and security implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The launch of the EU Support Hub is a further reflection of Moldova's European perspective, in accordance with the decision of the European Council to grant the status of a candidate country to Moldova.

Vice-President for Promoting our European way of Life Margaritis Schinas said: "Today we are taking a tangible step to further enhance the security partnership between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, facilitating cooperation and operational action to address shared security threats. The EU Support Hub will serve as a gateway for the Moldovan authorities to access EU cooperation and support mechanisms and is testament to our strong commitment to an ever closer partnership."

Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson said: "Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is a challenge to all of us and has a significant impact on our internal security. With the launch of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova, we take the cooperation with our Moldovan partners to the next level to address related security threats. The hub will enhance our joint operational action with Moldova to address the challenges posed by organised crime, including the trafficking of firearms or trafficking in human beings. It will also help Moldova to participate in our EU tools and instruments on internal security."

As part of the EU's comprehensive support package to Moldova, the objective of the EU Support Hub will be to:

   coordinate the support that the EU and its Member States provide to Moldova to strengthen law enforcement and border management;

   provide a one-stop-shop for Moldovan authorities offering the comprehensive toolbox of support measures that the EU and its Member States provide to Moldova on internal security and border management;

   support the existing mechanisms on internal security and border management, notably the support that Europol provides on information sharing, analysis and operational cooperation, that Frontex and EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) provide on border management and notably on the detection of firearms trafficking and on countering trafficking in human beings, as well as the operational support through the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT);

   identify the needs of the Moldovan authorities in terms of capacity building for law enforcement and border management, supporting the programming of EU financing instruments.

The EU Support Hub in Moldova will be operating along the six priority areas, which are based on the risks and threats jointly identified by the EU and Moldova. The Hub will focus on: firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime and drug trafficking.

Each meeting of the EU Support hub will focus on specific priority areas and will result in operational actions, such as the launch of investigations or targeted trainings. The first operational meeting of the hub took place today together with the political launch of the initiative. It focused on addressing the threats posed by firearms trafficking.

Combatting Transnational Organized Crime in the Western Indian Ocean through Maritime Law Enforcement Mentoring

UNODC's Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 14, 16 and 17 by supporting Member States to combat maritime crimes.

With the aim of disrupting transnational organised crime at sea, UNODC through the GMCP programme is working with Western Indian Ocean States on capacity building and training for their criminal justice systems from maritime law enforcement agencies to Judiciaries. The initiative includes effective patrolling of trafficking routes based on accurate maritime domain awareness (MDA); development of prosecutorial, investigative, and judicial expertise; and enhanced cooperation through sharing of information and active operational coordination to ensure legal finish for maritime crimes. These efforts now include the deployment of a Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) mentor in each of seven regional partner countries, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania, on a long-term basis.

In Mauritius, the programme is working with relevant MLE agencies, including the Mauritian National Coast Guard (NCG), through our MLE mentor to provide

seamanship training. This involves working towards qualifying host nation MLE personnel on a regionally standardised set of essential skills and establishes a set of improved basic operating procedures that will be deployed when maritime crime threats arise.

During the seamanship training that took place in Mauritius this month, Heerven, one of the training's participants, commented that "the training provides self-confidence and teaches us skills we should have had in our work. It teaches us how to do our work right". Ash Gordon, UNODC MLE mentor, expressed his satisfaction that participants already have the qualities needed to teach them: curiosity, dedication, and attention.

In Tanzania, UNODC GMCP is similarly working with the Tanzanian Marine Police and the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) to establish standardized essential skills to improve the MLE agencies' basic fitness, and visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) procedures along with essential skills as boat crew members or engineers.

Transnational illicit tobacco crime groups disrupted as part of global action on illicit tobacco trade

A prominent organised crime syndicate has been dealt a heavy blow by the multi-agency Illicit Tobacco Taskforce (ITTF) after months of sustained action aimed at strangling the group's operations in Australia and offshore.

The syndicate, predominately based in Victoria, is heavily involved in the domestic cultivation, manufacture, importation, distribution, and sale of illicit tobacco in Australia.

The Australian Border Force (ABF), Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and Victoria Police recently executed Excise Act 1901 warrants at a Broadford property, the latest in a series of warrants and disruption activities

undertaken by the ITTF against the syndicate over the past few months.

Since February 2022, multiple illicit tobacco crops throughout rural Victoria have been seized and destroyed. The ATO and Victoria Police also seized equipment related to tobacco cultivation and processing, vehicles, cash and weapons. Victoria Police has been heavily involved in assisting the ITTF in targeting this syndicate through multiple traffic stops resulting in the seizure of recently harvested tobacco.

Since July 2021, the ABF has also thwarted the syndicate's activities as they attempted to import more than 283 million cigarette sticks and over 8 tonnes of loose leaf tobacco.

AGENCY NEWS AND UPDATES

Poland accepts 4.53 mln refugees since war in Ukraine started

Since February 24, when Russia invaded Ukraine, 4.53 million people have crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border into Poland, the Border Guard (SG) tweeted on Monday morning.

According to the SG, Border Guard officers carried out around 24,100 border checks on people entering Poland from Ukraine, the number of arrivals had reached around 5,900 people in 24 hours.

The Border Guard also said that 2.59 million people had left Poland for Ukraine since the beginning of the war. 28,900 people crossed the border from Poland to Ukraine.

Honduran migrants found crammed into tool boxes in El Paso

Three Honduran men crossed the US border into Texas jammed into two tool boxes on the back of a pick-up truck.

The three migrants were discovered by Border Patrol agents at the Ysleta Station checkpoint in El Paso, Texas, after the black Chevrolet Silverado transporting them was pulled over for a routine check, according a press release from El Paso Sector US Border Patrol.

Border guards turn six irregular migrants away on border with Belarus

Lithuanian border guards turned away six migrants attempting to cross into the country from Belarus illegally, the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) said. Lithuanian border guards have sent more than 10 300 people back to Belarus since last August, when they were given the right to deny entry to irregular migrants. However, the number includes repeated attempts by the same people to cross the border. Almost 4 200 irregular migrants crossed into Lithuania from Belarus illegally last year.

Turkish forces stop 40 illegal migrants on eastern border

Turkish forces held 40 irregular migrants in eastern Van province, authorities said.

Gendarmerie officers at a checkpoint attempted to stop a suspicious vehicle that was on its way to the Saray district, the governor's office said in a statement.

The driver of the vehicle did not comply with their "stop" command and the tires of the vehicle were blown out, it said.

The vehicle was subsequently found to be used in migrant smuggling and there were 40 irregular immigrants in it, it added.

UK signs deal to share police biometric database with US border guards

The UK has signed up to a US plan for sharing police-held biometric data about citizens with US border officials.

According to a member of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), the body met "informally" with representatives of the US Department of Homeland Security this week to discuss the plans.

They come under the auspices of the Enhanced Border Security Partnership (EBSP), which is designed to increase the US Department Of Homeland Security's ability to detect threats through biometric information sharing. Israel signed up to the arrangement in March.

Saint Lucia's Border Management System goes Live

The new Border Management System (BMS) went live on Monday, July 4, with a brief launching ceremony and demonstration hosted by the

Department of Home Affairs. The BMS and all new procedures associated with it, forms part of the national security plan of the Government of Saint Lucia.

The implementation of the project employs a phased approach, starting with the George FL Charles Airport, the Rodney Bay Marina, and the Ferry Terminal at Lac Toc. The Border Management System will eventually be replicated throughout all border control points on island.

With the implementation of the Border Control solution, the traveling public can anticipate faster and more secure border operations. This would mean automated travel document identification and verification, biometric data capture and quality assurance, biometric traveler verification and identification, among other features.

Finnish Border Guard streamline maritime rescue with a new IT system

The Finnish Border Guard has implemented a new Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) Command and Control System to aid the agency's work. The new system will enhance and digitize the exchange of information between maritime SAR command centers and search & rescue units – providing robust support for saving lives during maritime emergencies.

The Maritime SAR Command and Control System, which became operational in May 2022, is significantly more versatile than its predecessor. The new system builds on two decades of learnings and experience from the previous system, supporting this knowledge with the latest technology for command and control of marine rescue missions. The implementation

delivers many new functionalities to Finland's maritime SAR command centers.

Six land-based borders prioritised for one-stop border management roll-out in South Africa

South Africa is creating a Border Management Authority (BMA) that will unify the border control functions and processes from various national departments, and BMA CEO and national commissioner Dr Mike Masiapato says the authority will also help to manage crucial transport and trade corridors.

Six land-based ports of entry have been identified to be the first forerunners of one-stop border posts, which will see the BMA deploy personnel, information technology systems and intelligence and information sharing systems to improve the efficiency of immigration and the movement of goods.

The top six commercial ports identified for redevelopment with a view to implementing one-stop border posts are Beitbridge to Zimbabwe, Lebombo to Mozambique, the Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg posts to Lesotho, Oshoek to eSwatini, and Kopfontein to Botswana, he says.

The model, called juxtaposed, that South Africa will pursue uses separate infrastructure on either side of the border, but with staff from each of the

countries working in both facilities, enabling goods and people to be cleared for exit from a country and entrance into another through a single border post office, rather than on each side of the border.

Finnish Parliament approves border law change to thwart hybrid attacks

Finnish MPs on Thursday approved changes to the country's border laws that will enable authorities to shut down borders or limit the number of border crossing points during exceptional circumstances.

The change aims to protect the country from hybrid attacks that could potentially be aimed at its eastern border with Russia. Poland and Baltic countries were in a similar situation last year, when Belarus orchestrated a large number of migrants to try to enter the EU.

The possibility of restricting border crossings and centralising asylum applications has been seen as a priority against the backdrop of the changed security situation since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

Members of BiH Border Police arrested Eleven Persons

Members of the BiH Border Police arrested 11 people in an operation codenamed "Insider" for smuggling of persons.

"Officers of the Border Police under the supervision of the Prosecutor's Office of BiH, and according to the orders of the Court of BiH, successfully carried out the "Insider" operation and on that occasion searched nine locations in the area of Zvornik, Tuzla, Konjic and Brcko District," the Border Police stated in the press release.

All 11 arrested are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and during the search, temporarily confiscated items were discovered that can be used as evidence in further proceedings – three cars, mobile phones, SIM cards..

Horrific Migrant Deaths At Melilla Border

The deaths of at least 23 African men at the Melilla-Morocco border on June 24, 2022 requires an independent, impartial investigation capable of determining what occurred and who bears responsibility for such loss of life, Human Rights Watch said.

The deaths occurred during an attempt by as many as 2,000 people to enter Spain by climbing the high chain-link fences surrounding Melilla, one of two Spanish enclaves in North Africa. An independent, impartial investigation should identify the causes of death and whether security forces were responsible for the loss of life with a view to ensuring accountability and justice for families of the victims..

Dismantled a criminal organization that distributed large quantities of drugs from the south of Spain to European countries

The Civil Guard and the National Police have dismantled a criminal organization that was dedicated to the purchase, storage and transport of large amounts of hashish from Andalusia to the rest of Europe. In total, 13 people have been arrested in the provinces of Cádiz, Huelva, Málaga, Seville and Ciudad Real, charged with drug trafficking and belonging to a criminal organization. In total, more than five tons of hashish have been seized, as well as three heavy trucks with which they transported the drug hidden between fish and fruit, in addition to technological means of inhibition and location of radiofrequency signals, with which they intended to hinder any police investigation that could fall on them.

The investigation began in January

2022, when the organization transported 850 kilos of hashish from Huelva to Seville in a previously stolen van. Later, the investigators detected again that the network had everything necessary to transport a new consignment of drugs camouflaged among frozen fish, so they proceeded to seize 1,300 kg of hashish.

Mexican Army seizes 315 kilograms of methamphetamine

The Ministry of National Defense informed that personnel from the Mexican Army seized possible methamphetamine, in Hermosillo, Son., in the framework of the National Strategy for Public Security and the Zero Impunity policy of the federal government.

When carrying out intelligence work and operational planning to strengthen the rule of law in the country and detect members of criminal organizations with a presence in said entity, it was learned of a transfer of drugs from Los Mochis, Sin., which he used as facade, a truck loaded with packages of fertilizer, which was destined for the city of Tijuana, B.C.

Through the monitoring carried out, the Mexican Army personnel implemented a land interception operation on the identified transfer route, applying deterrence techniques to force the truck driver to go to the Strategic Security Military Post "Querobabi", Son., in which the point of contact for the corresponding review was established.

The motor vehicle was taken to the non-intrusive gamma ray inspection area and later channeled to the unloading area for a more thorough review, where it was confirmed that it was transporting 1,103 packages that presumably contained fertilizer, of which 24 of them released 315 kilograms of a substance with characteristics of the drug known as methamphetamine.

Handover of five Patrol Vessels and two Surveillance Vehicles to Albania

A ceremony took place to officially hand over five patrol vessels and two surveillance vehicles to the Border and Migration Police of the Albanian State Police of the Ministry of Interior of Albania. The vehicles were procured within the framework of the project "EU Support for the Effective Management of Green and Blue Borders in Albania, (EU4SAFEALB).

Representatives of the Albanian Ministry of Interior, the Delegation of the European Union, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and other national and international counterparts gathered for the Handover Ceremony. After the opening speeches guests were invited to visit the boats for plaque reveal and partake in the traditional 'baptism'.

Police dog uncovers 5,000lbs of meth - one of the biggest busts in San Diego history

More than 5,000lbs (2,200kg) of meth

has been discovered hidden in a truck at the US-Mexico border in a "record-breaking" seizure, authorities have said.

Believed to be one of the largest methamphetamine busts in San Diego's history, the stash contained 148 bundles of the drug.

Four men from Tijuana, in Mexico, have been charged as a result.

"This monumental seizure represents another win against drug cartels that fuel addiction in the United States," said US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) special agent Shelly Howe.

North Macedonia Police discover 87 migrants in truck

North Macedonian police say they discovered 87 migrants in a truck and trailer at the weekend. Two men have been arrested on suspicion of migrant smuggling.

In the south of North Macedonia, not far from the Greek border, police in the country say they discovered 87 migrants from at least four different countries in a truck at the weekend.

The migrants, said police were "crammed into a truck with a trailer." The migrants reportedly come originally from Syria (45), Pakistan (39), as well as two from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and at least one from India.

THE FUTURE OF DRONES - BEYOND VISUAL LINE OF SIGHT

By Mark Andrews, Soliton Systems, Live Streaming Consultant

As drones become almost ubiquitous in their usage for law enforcement and other public agencies, what advances are likely to come with their continued deployment?

Drones and UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) are used for a variety of operational or situation awareness applications from evidence gathering, looking for missing persons, coordinating rescues, surveillance, and crowd control. Monitoring with drones is often used as a low-cost replacement for helicopters.

Outside of public safety drones are also heavily used in other industrial applications, for example in the energy industry they are used for inspection of powerlines, pipelines and windmills and in agriculture they are utilized for measuring the health of plants on large farms.

The one major restriction of drones currently is that they must be with the eyesight of the operator, restricting how far a drone can travel and restricting how effective a tool it can be, for example with border control and the potential thousands of kilometers that is required for coverage from a single location. But with so much adoption of drones across many industries, it is only natural that they will move onto the next generation of evolvement – in this case drones that can fly Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS).

One of the major considerations for utilizing BVLOS is the issue of safety and the risk of collision with other Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's), aircraft, buildings, and even trees. There are many initiatives being worked on to address this. Flying commercial drones is highly regulated, especially when it comes to even allowing companies who want to develop BVLOS drones being given permission to test. These regulatory authorities such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the US and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EUASA), with the guidance of The Royal Netherlands Aerospace Centre, are responsible for issuing permits to develop BVLOS drones in tightly controlled environments. The majority of permit requests for the BVLOS to the FAA are currently rejected.

BVLOS of drones is not new, Amazon have spent a small

fortune since 2012 in developing delivery drones and the military has been using UAVs for many years for surveillance and delivering ordnance. The big difference is that these drones are used for payloads with differing requirements – BVLOS for border control ideally need a real-time "eye-in-the-sky" for monitoring, surveillance and evidence gathering though these requirements are expected to evolve.

How do we make BVLOS drones safe to operate from a remote teleoperations center?

One strategy is the BVLOS Sense and Avoid. This is a detect and avoid system, also known as sense-and-avoid, where drones can detect obstacles and then make rapid adjustments to their flight plan to avoid a collision. Collison avoidance technologies such as LiDar, acoustic sense & avoid , ultra-low latency live video, and radar are all technologies that are

being developed. These outputs from the drone can be used by AI technology, either locally or remotely, to automatically detect and avoid obstacles.

A second technological breakthrough with a BVLOS drone is to have a flight view of the onboard camera that can be used for real time manual navigation from a remote location. This allows the drone to be manually flown from a faraway position which would open a whole range of new possibilities for the use of drones. New technology with ultra-low latency that can live stream over multiple cellular networks while controlling the drone from a remote location is changing how drones can be used effectively in the fight against illegal border crossing.

In both cases security is paramount – any chance of a hacker either controlling the drone or intercepting the live stream must be mitigated against.

What are the applications for BVLOS?

The possibility of BVLOS drones is going beyond how drones are used today. Imagine the border control agents being able to monitor vast areas of country without the need for regular relocation.   The ability to implement a missing person search or a mountain rescue can be much more effective with BVLOS then they are today with line of sight drones.

It is expected that once firmer regulations are enacted, the market will continue to open to new players and applications with BVLOS drones becoming routine. It is expected a new sky control system, or an Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) system, an air traffic control equivalent for drones, will be put into service that will ensure drones and UAV's can interact and operate safely, especially over busy cities. This will include a range of exciting

new possibilities such as urban air mobility (UAM). UAM will include vehicles like air taxis, which can revolutionize travel and will advance enormously how taxi services are operating today. UAM vehicles will have practical applications with point-to-point low-altitude air-travel, such as lowering the time of commutes, journeys to airports. It will also allow the delivery of emergency personnel and first responders into areas that are difficult to access, either through natural disaster or war, and then using the same drone technology, it will evacuate people and onto hospital as required.

Initiatives such as Fast Forward 2020 is a three-year collaborative research project that will develop a new Urban Air Mobility (UAM) ecosystem to demonstrate safe drone deployment in urban cities and its integration into Smart City infrastructure with the feedback utilized to create the necessary regulations. With

many companies and universities involved, researchers are looking at technology beyond current levels including the implementation of new 6G infrastructures. Such initiatives really demonstrate how much is yet to be done and the growth-potential there is within the drone industry.

Live Streaming with Drones

A major element of BVLOS technology is the live stream from the onboard camera for remote control. These cameras typically have low levels of power and high reliability, but importantly they require an ultra low latency connection from the drone to its remote operator. And by low latency BVLOS datalinks would ideally need to perform below 100ms end-to-end. This must include all the video encoding and decoding that is normally a part of the process of any live video stream. Typical latency for streaming is over a second, and with satellite connected drones this can be multiple seconds and the video can be compromised. Having latency below 100ms, especially for an untethered device such as a BVLOS drone, that would normally rely on either cellular or satellite communication, is especially challenging. RF (radio frequency) is another form of communication that has a low delay but relies on line-of-sight which becomes impractical with BVLOS drones.

The live streams generated from the drone are also used as real-time surveillance. The ability to capture

video in ultra high definition (UHD) offers a new range of surveillance applications where AI is utilized for video surveillance to spot anomalies over vast areas.

Ideally drones can fly autonomously with data gathered from onboard instruments and sensors. Typically, these UAVs have long-range telemetry, as well as a command-and-control link with the user ground control station. It is using

these secure data IP links that an encrypted live stream and return remote control can be sent and received.

With both the FAA and the EUASA already allowing some restricted BVLOS operations to take place, albeit in very specific and regulated circumstances, as technology evolves further it is expected that this industry will evolve quickly. The sights of drones carrying

passengers flying over our heads, as often seen in futuristic science fiction movies, could arrive quicker than you think.

UNODC and Kenya Airways Cooperating to Counter Trafficking in Persons by air

Every year, thousands of men, women, and children are exploited and trafficked to and across the Eastern Africa region, including Kenya. Trafficking in Persons is a serious crime, a grave violation of human rights, and a threat to human security and sustainable development. Eastern Africa has in recent years become a new hub for trafficking routes, with criminal groups and illicit traffickers operating effectively across borders by trafficking their victims through airways.

In December 2021, UNODC combined the expertise of two of its programmes – the Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme and the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) to organise a specialised inter-agency workshop on combatting TIP

at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) in Nairobi, Kenya, as a first-ever workshop of the kind in the region.

This workshop brought together officers based at JKIA from police, immigration, airport authority, customs, prosecutors, and representatives of Kenya Airways. After four days of interactive sessions, the participants adopted recommendations, including for Kenya Airways to develop actions to prevent and combat TIP.

Kenya Airways is now developing a comprehensive strategy to prevent and counter TIP that includes an anti-slavery and human trafficking policy, the development of training for all Kenya Airways staff on TIP, data collection, public communication, and partnerships. UNODC is honoured to accompany Kenya Airways on this journey.

UNODC and Kenya Airways are currently working to develop awareness-raising material for the travelling public on TIP. These designs will serve as a checklist to inform at-risk travellers about potential exploitation.

"Combatting Trafficking in Persons by air is every employee's responsibility" - Bernard Oganga, Kenya Airways Head of Corporate Security.

TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECO-FUTURE

by Prof. Zhiqiang Chen

According to UNEP-Interpol joint report1, Wildlife trafficking is estimated to be worth between US$7 and US$23 billion per year, making it one of the world's largest international crimes after drugs, counterfeit goods and human trafficking. It usually involves the illegal importing and exporting of protected species of wild fauna and flora, as well as their derivative products, such as handicrafts, clothing, food items, beauty products or traditional medicines. The multi-billion-dollar illegal industry often entails illegal poaching, smuggling and transnational organized crime.

With unlawful poaching, illegal wildlife trade threatens the survival

of countless species in the wild, causing devastating impacts on biodiversity and our vulnerable eco-system. Also, it negatively affects local communities' economic livelihood from eco-tourism and deprives government of their tax revenues. As other organized crimes, illegal wildlife trade promotes social instability and fuels corruption. And alarmingly, it poses potential risks for human health through the spread of zoonotic diseases like SARS, MERS, or possibly COVID, making the fight against Wildlife trafficking even more urgent than ever before.

First line of defense

Slightly different from country to country, enforcement is often the responsibility of customs or border authorities. Customs are uniquely mandated and strategically positioned at the borders of a country, or at critical point in the supply chain, thereby they could play a critical role in combatting illegal wildlife trade when they practice control on the flow of people and goods. Serving as the first line of defense against the smuggling of wildlife contraband, customs might be the guardian to protect the biodiversity and our precious ecosystem.

Working for years to highlight the problem, WCO Council unanimously adopted the WCO Declaration on the Illegal Wildlife Trade in 20142, demonstrating the commitment of the global Customs

community to address these crimes in a timely, coherent, and coordinated manner. As Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of WCO, stated in his latest remarks to celebrate the World Wildlife Day, the customs community is committed to 'ensuring the sustainability of natural resources through legal trade' and 'maintained their efforts in disrupting the illegal trade in wildlife and forestry products, to continue to protect both communities and the environment' despite the challenges during COVID. These endeavors pay off with successful interceptions and confiscations made through campaigns like Thunder operations3, dealing heavy blows to the illegal wildlife crimes across the world.

An uphill battle

Despite some success over the years, the fight against illegal

wildlife trade is not an easy one for customs authorities. As one of the most lucrative illegal trades, it keeps permeating all the transportation mode and occurring in nearly every part of the world. Constantly changing routes and patterns, the organized criminal groups behind wildlife smuggling never stop searching for ways to avoid being noticed or intercepted by the authorities.

Concealed within carry-ons, checked baggage, courier packages, air freight or maritime shipping containers, wildlife contrabands find their way into the global network with increased creativity and sophistication. Finding a whole rhino horn or elephant tusk might be relatively easy. While with physical make-up constantly changing, wildlife products in various disguises can be very hard to identify or locate. Take rhino horns for example. They

can be broken into cross-sections, smaller pieces, shavings, worked products like bracelets, handicrafts as carvings, or most tricky of all, powders for easier concealment. The huge varieties of shape and form pose great difficulty for human operators to detect them with bare eyes.

The evolving workforce is also casting a shadow on Customs' fight against illegal wildlife trafficking, as COVID has resulted in labor shortages and great difficulty in retaining staff. The added workload for wildlife investigation can be a huge burden for the already strained workforce. In face of mounting pressure to enforce security and tax collection, customs officers might find it difficult to juggle among these missions in a time-constrained manner.

In addition, the close contact in manual inspection may potentially expose officers to dangerous infectious disease or even physical harms inflicted by live animals, making it somehow a risky task for frontline customs officers.

With E-commerce quickly picking up momentum these years, wildlife traffickers tend to increasingly exploit the new business model to transport wildlife contraband via parcels or express mails across borders. As low-value consignments flooding border crossings, the task for customs to fast detect and stop wildlife contrabands can be quite overwhelming.

Arsenal at hand

In possession of a sizable fleet of NII systems, most customs are well equipped with the necessary arsenal of detection tools already at their hands. For years, most customs have invested strategically on the X-ray inspection technology to stay at the forefront of their control mission. With constant upgrades and regular maintenance, most systems stay in good shape and well suited for detection of contrabands.

They provide customs sharp eyes to see through all sorts of conveyances in a quick and intrusive way, whether it be large Cargo/vehicle inspection system, small-apertured X-scanner, or the increasing popular Computed Tomography systems. They come in different size and configuration to cater for different carry-on, luggage, air freight or containers to help operator detect security threats or contraband without the

need for physical checking, greatly facilitating the flow of people and goods across borders.

However, as is always the case, any system is only as good as the human who operates it. Despite being effective tools to identify anomalies, screening systems usually require operators to leverage rich expertise and constant training to find out the suspicious items and outmatch wildlife smugglers in the tough race to protect our ecosystem.

Image interpretation of an expansive wildlife items can be highly demanding and time-consuming. Irregularities of shape and form of wildlife items and intriguing ways of concealment also complicate the task for effective identification. Growing numbers of people, baggage and shipments also put pressure on customs officers for quick adjudication, negatively affect their judgement and result in risks of negligence or
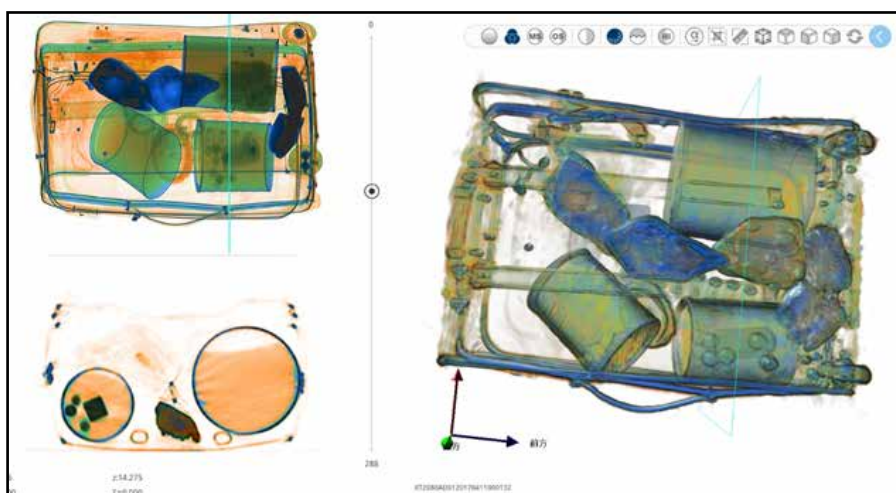
Ivory beads and seal hidden inside a Milk powder jar

human error.

Upskilling with AI

Challenging as it is, there is good news for customs authorities to address the illegal wildlife trade. Over the years, technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning have made great strides. Especially during the pandemic, they have been greatly accelerated in terms of application around the world. It is also the case for security sector. With more and more AI algorithms developed and deployed, increasing threat items, like explosives, narcotics, weapons, sharps, lithium batteries, now can be detected in an efficient manner.

The AI technology is a force-multiplier for the pre-existing X-ray systems to significantly augment their detection capability. Especially when integrated into the state-of-the-art CT scanners, the algorithm works best with the rich data including shape, density, atomic number, as well as the 3-dimensional volumetric information. The suspicious items can be virtually divested and rotated on-screen for a thorough investigation.

The AI technology is highly versatile when it comes to targets of interest. Exposed with image datasets of certain objects, AI algorithm climbs up the learning curve in a rather quick way. Also, its detection capability is not set in still. Instead, when feeding with increasing images, it can be a fast learner to constantly expand its detection scope and sharpen its skill with improved accuracy over time. Integrated into a bigger network, AI could take in all the information across different sources, piece them together, find out the pattern, reach a judgement and help detect coordinated threats from fragmented components.

AI algorithms knows no fatigue. With steady performance of all time, it greatly alleviates the cognitive burden of human operators by flagging the suspicious items on screen to alert for further inspection. With proper technical support, it can be the stellar 'employee' in the already volatile workforce with high level of loyalty and stability.

Most important of all, it boasts of high efficiency to detect varieties of wildlife items in different concealment within seconds. Time is gold, when it comes to the cross-border flow of E-commerce goods as well as some other special-purposed items like vaccines, or perishable goods. AI algorithms provides a sound solution for customs to facilitate the flow of time-sensitive goods, without compromising their duty to interrupt illegal trade.

Currently, the AI technology has already been applied on some of the X-ray systems, whether it be at airports, sea ports or border crossings. With initial focus mainly on security or revenue collection concerns, AI has proven its worth with increasing seizures and confiscations. Take weapon detection for example. It allows for a high detection rate of over 90% and low false alarm of less than 5% in field deployments. For high-value contrabands, like bottled liquids and cigarettes, the AI technology has also help customs officers to detect, interrupt and stop the smuggled goods. Numerous cases manifest
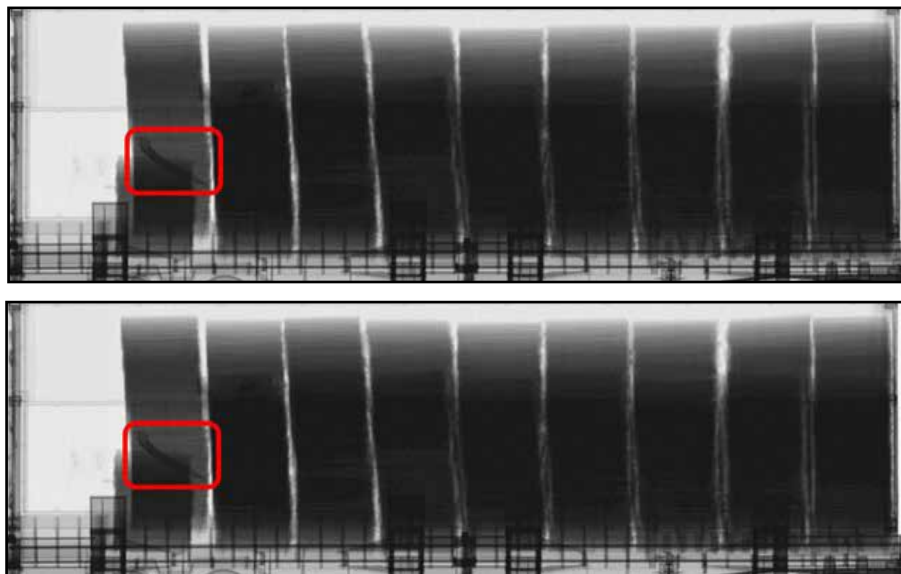
Elephant Tusks concealed inside large quantities of goods

the value of AI in the fight against illegal trade.

Leveraging the current fleet of NII, customs are well positioned to utilize AI to empower operators and boost their capacity to detect wildlife items in a timely manner. It saves them from other costly solutions like the workforce expansion or additional investment in new infrastructure, and ensures the high-pressured checkpoints running efficiently even with broader obligations to stop the illegal wildlife smuggling.

In addition, with only software investment, AI technology can be relatively more flexible and resilient to specific operational needs. It is envisaged that more and more bespoke algorithms would be developed and deployed to cater for different enforcement concerns, such as the ones already developed for ivory and rhino horn. Aided with information sharing, new trends

and patterns of smuggling can be incorporated to inform algorithms to watch out for emerging transportation routes or hotspots. Enforcement can be more dynamic and responsive to enable targeted implementation.

Enforcement in action

Across the world, efforts to leverage AI into wildlife detection are well underway. The application of automatic detection of ivory and its ever-changing worked products, has proven to be highly successful in China for years. With expansive image training, the AI technology integrated into CT scanners constantly sharpens its skills and can now easily pinpoint tiny beads of ivory out of clutters within baggage. With automatic detection covering 100% inbound baggage, the customs of Chengdu have successfully thwarted over 86 cases of smuggling with a combined seizure of over 500 pieces of ivory

products in a single year of 20184.

As a booster shot for inspection systems, AI allows customs to unleash the full potential of their legacy systems. It empowers and upskills the operators to better address the illegal wildlife crimes rampant across the world. With adequate training pictures, imagination is the only limit for its power.

For illegal wildlife combat, AI empowerment is no longer a distant call, but a here and now proposition. Coordinated efforts between public and private sectors needs to be promoted. With the integration of AI into inspection systems, customs hold the key to better protect wildlife species and safeguard our environment in a more responsible way. As human beings, we are not alone in this planet. Together, we could save the world for a bright eco-future.

Further arrest made as part of international operation targeting suspected small boat people smuggling networks

A man appeared in court today in the UK after being targeted by the National Crime Agency as part a major international operation against small boat people smugglers.

Kaiwan Poore, a 37-year-old Iranian-born UK national, was detained by police at Manchester Airport before he could take a flight to Turkey.

He had been listed as wanted by the NCA, who were working with law enforcement partners in France to track him down. French prosecutors accuse him of being part of an organised crime network involved in

people smuggling.

Poore is thought to have arrived in the UK from Germany a day before a series of raids across Europe that saw around 40 people arrested.

NCA Deputy Director Jacque Beer said, "The investigation into this suspected criminal group has involved law enforcement in the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

It is targeting criminal networks alleged to have used small boats to smuggle up to 10,000 people into the UK."

Gendarmes detect a parcel with 1,283 illegally transferred ammunition

Members of the "Colastine" Road Safety Section, dependent on the "Santa Fe Norte" Core Squadron, stopped the march of a vehicle belonging to a parcel company that was traveling from the capital city of Santa Fe to the city of Paraná, Entre Ríos.

When inspecting the load of the vehicle, on kilometer

10.4 of National Route No. 168, the uniformed officers were alerted by the weight and size of a package, for which they reported the fact to the Attorney General's Office of the Public Ministry of the accusation.

Consequently, the officials proceeded to open the parcel, verifying that it was moving two boxes with a total of 1,133 caliber 22 Long ammunition, as well as three other boxes with 150 caliber 22 Magnum ammunition.

By order of the intervening Magistrate, the personnel of the Force seized the projectiles, for being in violation of Law 20,429. They remained in the custody of the Santa Fe Police, while the driver of the transport continued his itinerary, after providing the corresponding testimonial statement.

Traffic and transportation section seized 180 kilos of marijuana

On the la libertad-fresno bridge road, road controls allowed the detection of a vehicle, which through the stash modality was carrying 41 rectangular brown packages, inside which they contained transparent hermetically sealed bags with the narcotic known as marijuana according to the Homologated Preliminary Identification Test (PIPH), in total there were 180 kilos of marijuana with a commercial value of 167 million pesos.

While the uniformed officers of the transit section verified the regulatory documentation of vehicles, a van-type vehicle entered the checkpoint and after verifying the documentation, the uniformed officers asked the driver to open the gate to check the cargo.

Once said hatch was opened, a characteristic smell of marijuana came out of the internal part; reason for which they carried out the inspection finding on the roof of the truck, the packages that contained the narcotic.

The 39-year-old man, a native of Ibagué (Tolima), was made aware of his rights as a person captured for the crime of trafficking, manufacturing or carrying drugs; the substance with an estimated value of 167 million pesos and the vehicle valued at $18,000,000 were left at the disposal of the competent judicial authority.

BORDER SECURITY; TAKING A BOLD STEP IN AFRICA

By Martin Igwe, The Director Media & Advocacy, West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA Nigeria)

As a young school leaver conscious of what we were thought in school about the best economy in West Africa, I set out on a risky voyage to Ivory Coast not putting into consideration the risk of arrest by security operatives, trans-border criminals rather to step my toes on Ivorycoast soil and be proud of visiting one of the best African countries from Owode a border community in Badagry West local government of Lagos State, Nigeria. I entered the Republic of Benin, arriving Lakonji, I crossed into Togo a tiny West African country within 2hrs, and I found myself in Alflao town in Togo bordering Ghana.

I was welcomed with Acheke at Elubo border a side dish made from cassava very popular to Ivorians.

From Owode border to Elubo, Ghana/Ivorycoast, I identified one

thing happening in all the borders, well organized groups, illegally coordinating movement of goods, crossing people illegally from point A to point B.

Many of them never knew the content of goods they are carrying, what they want is to pay them an agreed finical reward for their service. I realized why those routes remain one of the worst in Africa. Today most of the concerned countries have lost revenues unknowingly made their borders human and drug trafficking hot spot and above all destroyed legitimate economic activities capable of attracting genuine development to the communities.

Concerned Regional bodies in Africa must not watch the remaining borders to be claimed by criminal non-state actors, Sahel region is

endowed with great potentials for renewable energy and sits a top some of the largest aquifers on the continent.

Before our very eyes the Sahel region is now ghost of itself almost one of the hottest beds of conflict in African region no thanks to climate change.

Educating border host communities who are not aware of any technological development rather a waiting tool to destroy their own immediate community through ignorantly engaging in human trafficking and other trans-border crime remains a bold step towards checking border insecurity in Africa.

Criminal network that smuggled migrants across Europe dismantled

Eurojust has assisted authorities in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Poland, Germany and Hungary in dismantling an organised crime group (OCG) that was involved in migrant smuggling. During an action, nine suspects were arrested and nine locations were searched. Eurojust provided financial support and assisted the authorities in setting up a joint investigation team (JIT).

According to the investigations, the OCG had been organising the smuggling of illegal migrants from Vietnam at least since March 2021. The victims were transported through the territories of Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany and Belgium, to their final destinations, usually France or the United Kingdom.

For this activity, the suspects used their personal

motor vehicles and, in some cases, used inflatable motorboats for the final stage of the journey, endangering the victims' lives.

During an action carried out from 20 to 22 June 2022 in the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Belgium, nine people were arrested and seven home searches were carried out, together with two searches of other premises. Several motor vehicles and cash amounting to several hundred thousand Czech crowns were seized.

In addition to supporting the establishment of the JIT and providing it with funding, Eurojust actively facilitated the cross-border judicial cooperation between the national authorities involved. The Agency organised three coordination meetings and a coordination centre during the action.

2022 WORLD BORDER SECURITY CONGRESS:

LISBON, PORTUGAL

The 2022 World Border Security Congress took place in Lisbon, Portugal on 17th-19th May 2022, fto discuss the current challenges facing the border security, protection & management community.

Following 3 days of great discussions, sharing of information and challenges, the 2022 World Border Security Congress in Lisbon was brought to a close by Congress Chairman, John Donlon:

"We have had some excellent presentations by some distinguished, experienced, professional and charming people and a number of great discussions across a whole range of Border Management matters and much more and of course – some great interaction from a lively, intelligent, challenging and charismatic audience.

We have also - been fortunate to have been supported by the relevant agencies and Government Departments here in Portugal, the:

• Ministry of Internal Administration - Immigration and Borders Service, the SEF The

• The Policia de Seguranca Publica, the Public Police, the PSP - and the

• Guard Nacional Republicana, the GNR.

We have had 67 nations represented here this week, about a third of the World's total and over 350 people registered for the conference.

This just goes to demonstrate the will and the need for us all to meet and network, face to face and the real value that comes from that.

So, a significant global event, seeking to understand and address the border challenges that affect us all.

We were delighted to welcome the Secretary of State for Internal Administration and Civil Protection, H.E. Patrícia Gaspar, to open the event and provide the keynote address.

She gave some clear messages on migration matters, the border issues impacting on Portugal at this time and her Governments response to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. She outlined the Portuguese response and position on providing safe passage for those fleeing the war in Ukraine and stated that 36,000 Ukrainian citizens had already been welcomed into the country.

Her Excellency also spoke of the need for continued and developing cooperation across, agencies, regions and nations.

In fact, the topic of cooperation, collaboration and coordination, alongside that of information exchange, was a key theme throughout the conference. Several speakers referenced these issues and provided examples of good practise and innovation and highlighting the need to combine the Policies – Processes and Systems of both Public and Private organisations engaged in border

activities. Almost all though, also making the point that there was still much work to be done in this area both across Europe and internationally.

We obviously had a number of discussions around the continuing impact of the pandemic and some of the lessons learned around the mistakes that had been made. And a significant amount of time was spent on the multitude of issues emanating from the war in Ukraine In particular how the greatest European refugee crisis since World War 2 was being managed and how crisis increases vulnerabilities and creates opportunities to exploit people in need.

The IOM ran a workshop examining this particular issue with considerations around how you carry out border control and registration activities when facing massive cross border flows of people at the same time as

ensuring proper, secured and safe border management.

The pandemic and the war in Ukraine were prime examples of how unpredictable our world can be and the enormous challenges that such major events can present to our Border Agencies.

Our agenda covered a wide array of topics looking across the changing trends in migration, security and trade. We had, this year, a significant focus on Terrorism and Organised Crime and we were clearly reminded of the ongoing concerns around the continuing Afghanistan situation, a topic which may have been pushed down the priority list with so much else going on at this time.

We had presentations and workshops covering:
• Aviation and Maritime
• Migration and Trafficking
• Processes and Policies

• Innovation and future Challenges, and the illicit trade in

• Antiquities and Wildlife.

We also had significant references to the use of:

• New Technology

• The Development of Digital Borders, and the impact of

• Social Media.

There were some excellent examples of how technology can enable the efficiency and effectiveness of our border activities delivered in the workshops and on display by the exhibitors.

We also saw some very lively discussion on the potential impact of the use of technology on Human Rights and the need for rigorous standards and safeguards to be in place.

We were a little surprised that we did not hear too much on the potential impact that Cyber Attacks may have on an increasingly Digital Border, either by criminals for financial gain or by conducted by State Sponsored Actors.

This may well be an emerging issue for next years World Border Security Congress.

There was a great deal of subject matter packed into a busy agenda and it was fantastic to see what a success the conference has been.

In 2023 the WBSC will take place in Skopje, in The Republic of North Macedonia between the dates of April 25th to 27th, we look forward to welcoming you there."

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SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA

25ᵀᴴ-27ᵀᴴ APRIL 2023

The World Border Security Congress moves to Skopje, North Macedonia on 25th-27th April 2023, for the next annual gathering for the border security, management and protection community.

World Border Security Congress

25ᵗʰ - 27ᵗʰ April 2023

SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA (BALKANS)

The Balkans Peninsula is usually characterized as consisting of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia—with Greece and Turkey also considered as part of that geographic region.

The Balkans has historically been the land route between Europe to the Middle East, the Levant, and North Africa, for both people and goods.

That East/West traffic in people and goods made the gateway city of Constantinople, (modern day Istanbul), one of the richest and most sophisticated cities on earth,

and certainly the richest in Europe throughout the Middle Ages.

But the regions ethnic, religious, and cultural mix has led to a tumultuous history of political and religious upheaval. The last major conflict in the 1990's that left the region awash with weapons.

Parts of the region remain relatively poor compared to their richer neighbours in the European Union, and that means the region is fertile ground for corruption and organised crime.

Poverty combined with the regions historical instability, and the geographic location, has made the region a major route for illegal

migration and human trafficking, as well as a route for drugs, weapons entering the EU. It is also a main route for returning foreign terrorist fighters.

Weapons

The Western Balkans remains the main route of entry for small arms into the EU legacy weapons from the region and from conflict countries in the Middle East. Small arms trafficking is a highly profitable business for organised crime, with plenty of weapons cheaply available and a ready market in Europe. The "Small Arms Survey" estimates that more than 6.8 million firearms can be traced to the countries of the West Balkans. It was established that the weapons for the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, were bought over the counter in Slovakia as decommissioned weapons (easily re-activated) and the weapons used in the Bataclan club massacre also in Paris were also sourced in the Balkans.

Combine the easy availability of weapons in the region and returning foreign terrorist fighters transiting through the region and the potential problem is obvious.

Drugs

According to a UNODC report as far back as 2015, the estimated value of opiates trafficked through the Balkan route from Afghanistan to Europe was $28 billion annually.

More recently the UNODC has reported that an expansion of methamphetamine manufacture in recent years has added another layer of complexity to the illicit drug economy of Afghanistan and has increased the threat to consumer countries.

Between 2009 and 2012, UNODC, jointly with the Afghan Ministry for Counter Narcotics, conducted annual surveys on commercial cannabis production in Afghanistan. The 2012 survey estimated the total area under cannabis cultivation at 10,000 hectares, enough to produce 1,400 tons of cannabis resin.

These figures predated the recent return of the Taliban to power in that country, which threatens even greater quantities of drugs heading for Europe and elsewhere.

All these drugs find a ready market in Europe and a substantial percentage of it via the Balkan route.

Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking

According to the IoM since 2015, some 1.5 million migrants have transited through the Western Balkans. In 2020, Europol noted, "a growth of migrant smuggling activities in the region, with criminal networks employing increasingly exploitative measures to defeat controls. Early and proactive identification of risks and vulnerabilities among mixed migration flows remains a challenge and obstacle for authorities to address and suppress trafficking effectively."

It is also inevitable that such large flows of migrants will be used by terrorist groups to infiltrate returning foreign terrorist fighters into Europe.

The Balkans is and will remain a complex and fragmented region, often buffeted by global and regional crisis whilst struggling with its own major economic and political challenges.

Only through increased consultation and cooperation across the region and with help from international agencies, intergovernmental organisations and the European Union will those be met.

Which is why the World Border security Congress is coming to the region to play its part in making that a reality.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level three day event that will once again discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

The Congress looks forward to welcoming you to Skopje, North Macedonia on 25th-27th April 2023 for the next gathering of border and migration management professionals.

Further details can be viewed at www.world-border-congress.com

Registration will open in September for you to apply for your delegate pass to attend the Congress.

BORDER SECURITY REPORT

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Implementation of a Human Rights-Based Approach to Border Management in the Fight against Terrorism: Challenges vs Opportunities

View directly at www.border-security-report.com/webinar-human-rights-at-borders

The Migration Crisis in the Digital Age: How the Use of Smartphones and Technology has Impacted Migration and Trafficking

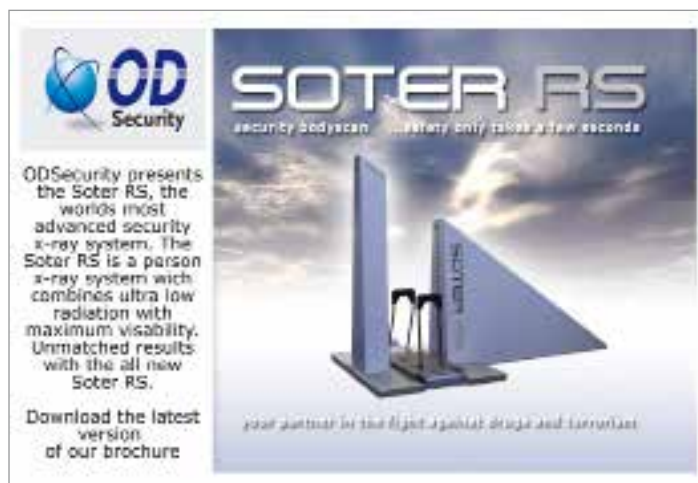View directly at www.border-security-report.com/migration-crisis-webinar

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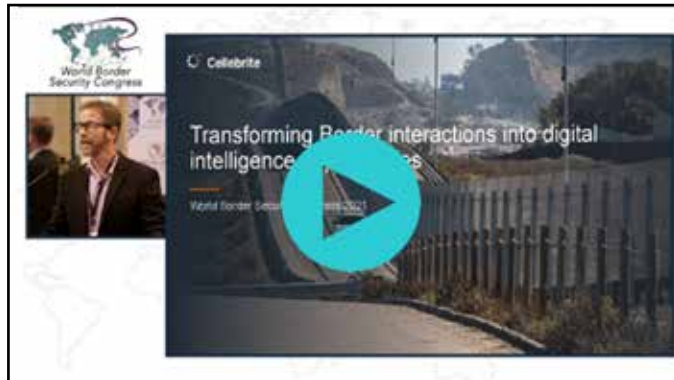
Birmingham Airport Invests in New Security Screening

Birmingham Airport Security Screening Investment to Drive Economic Growth in West Midlands

Customers flying out of Birmingham Airport are to benefit from a simpler, speedier security screening process from June 2024.

This investment in the Next Generation Security system will achieve compliance with new Government standards as well as enabling greater numbers of customers to be processed more quickly at peak times.

In its Master Plan published in 2018, Birmingham Airport outlined its aspiration to grow customer volumes from 13m a year (pre-pandemic) to around 18m by 2033. Its new security hall supports this expansion, which in turn will help drive economic growth in the West Midlands region.

Nick Barton, chief executive of Birmingham Airport, said: "This investment paves the way for a better customer experience and economic growth in the West Midlands. For these reasons, I'm excited about our Next-Generation Security system."

Birmingham Airport submitted its planning application for this scheme to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council earlier this week.

Delivering the new system will also enable better use of existing space including an enlarged departures area and additional retail and seating for customers to enjoy.

Vision-Box introduces a new generation of accessible biometric technologies with their Seamless Kiosk solution

Vision-Box have recently unveiled their Seamless Kiosk, built upon a new generation of biometric technology aiming to transform the passenger travel experience of those facing accessibility challenges when navigating airports.

Using a new immersive camera system, the Seamless Kiosk provides an exceptional user experience through its enhanced biometric and biographic capture performance, increasing the speed of the passenger handling process with an accessible design, and a smart passenger guide system, based on artificial intelligence to help any user to follow instructions intuitively.

The key accessibility features offered by the Seamless Kiosk include an audible and highly tactile assistive interface for navigation and selection of screen-based content, braille signs to support visually impaired users, and a full-frontal face capture module optimized with automatic height and dynamic illumination adjustments to enable an accurate capture process.

The kiosks are compliant with European, United States and Canadian disability acts, and combine the newest Common Use Self-Service (CUSS) 2.0 platform and Border Control processing, including Entry/Exit System (EES) requirements.

ClanTect has launched a fully mobile Human Presence Detection System (or Heart-Beat Detector)

ClanTect Ltd. has launched the ClanTect MDT Mobile, a highly portable Human Presence Wireless Detection System, which has been specifically designed for mobile patrol units and vehicle check points to provide a highly accurate, non-intrusive, roadside system for detecting the illegal presence of humans hiding within vehicles, trucks, trailers and containers..

With the launch of their 2nd generation mobile systems, ClanTect provide smaller, more compact devices that are now fully wireless; making them easy to deploy in ad-hoc outdoor roadside locations even in windy weather conditions.

The MDT Mobile system comprises; a ruggedized tablet with a detachable keyboard, four wireless sensors and crucially, a proprietary wind sensor, which together with

ClanTect's unique signal processing software is able to remove the effect of the wind. The system is very quick to set up and the search is fully automated and takes only 60 seconds for each vehicle. The wireless sensors are supplied with magnetic mounts making them easy to attach to different vehicle types. The RF wireless sensors have a 60m LOS range and are powered by 3 rechargeable 1.2V AAA batteries.

Thales technology selected for the new Schengen 'Entry Exit System' in Spain

By the end of this year, Schengen Member States will be required to have a biometric entry and exit system to register non-European citizens crossing an external EU border.

Thales, in collaboration with the company Zelenza, has been selected by the Spanish Ministry of Interior to provide over 1,500 Manual Border Control Inspection units across all border-crossing points.

Those units located at the border officer's control point will be equipped with Thales EES Border Control Clearance Software and with Thales devices such as document readers with embedded document verification, fingerprint scanners, and face pods with a facial capture system. These integrated systems

will deliver a fast and secure identity enrolment and clearance process for non-EU citizens at borders.

The contract will be executed over the next eight months during which these modern systems will be deployed at airports, ports and land crossings throughout Spain. Funded by the EU's Internal Security Fund, the new system will facilitate the border clearance of travellers while increasing the security at the Schengen Borders.

Steadicopter supply its Black Eagle 50H system for maritime operations

Following an initial order, Steadicopter will supply the BlackEagle 50H – launched just a few months ago – to a naval customer in the current calendar year, for advanced maritime operations.

Designed for a wide range of law enforcement, maritime, civilian missions, the Black Eagle 50H is the first ever hybrid-powered unmanned helicopter. With a maximum takeoff weight of 50 kg, the system can carry multiple large or relatively smaller payloads, and is capable of up to five hours of flight time – extremely high endurance when compared to other VTOL platforms in its class. This enables high performance and maximum operational flexibility for various applications, such as maritime surveillance, search & rescue, cyber security, intelligence, offshore rigs, and high-end naval missions.

SCD introduces its innovative range of solutions across the IR spectrum

There is a growing need for cost-effective persistent surveillance solutions for multiple platforms, such as UAVs, drones, and fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft.

SCD has introduced the world's first 5-micron, 5 mega-pixel IR detector – the Crane. This breakthrough product is a game changer in EO/IR applications, offering excellent performance in a small, lightweight, and compact product. The Crane enables persistent surveillance from a cost-effective tactical platform or drone, while overcoming the need for multiple UAVs to be deployed, each with its own payload, to cover large areas. Instead, very high resolution can be achieved with just one highly-reliable Crane detector, reducing costs and operational complexity.

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World Border Security Congress

25TH–27TH APRIL 2023
SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA (BALKANS)
www.world-border-congress.com

Developing Border Strategies Through Co-operation and Technology

SAVE THE DATES

The Republic of North Macedonia is a landlocked country in the Southeastern region of Europe known as the Balkans. It gained independence in 1991 as one of the successor states of Yugoslavia.

In March 2020, North Macedonia acceded to NATO, becoming the 30th member state and accession process to join the European Union remains ongoing.

Ranked as the fourth "best reformatory state" out of 178 countries ranked by the World Bank in 2009, North Macedonia has undergone considerable economic reform since independence. North Macedonia has witnessed steady, though slow, economic growth and has implemented policies focused on attracting foreign investment and promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The country has a rich and diverse history and Skopje, the capital has been inhabited since at least 4000 BC; remains of Neolithic settlements have been found within the old Kale Fortress that overlooks the vibrant modern city centre.

By virtue of its position North Macedonia sits on the Balkan route for illegal migration into the European Union and therefore faces border challenges that require a collective, collaborative, and holistic response, making it the ideal place for the next meeting of the World Border Security Congress.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

We look forward to welcoming you to Skopje, North Macedonia on 27th-29th April 2023 for the next gathering of border and migration management professionals.

www.world-border-congress.com

for the international border management and security industry

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